



**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL**

State Council Meeting
Foxfire/Comfort Suites
Waupaca, Wisconsin

March 19, 2016

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Agent Orange Committee Meeting



Attendees: Mike Demske, John Margowski, Richard Lindbeck, James Mullarkey, and Pat Furno.

Recorder: Richard Lindbeck.

Called to order by Demske at 9:00 A.M.

Mike and Richard did a mini Agent Orange Town Hall in Green Bay with a large turnout.

In Wisconsin plans for a number of Town Halls:

- On March 29th Team Wisconsin will be doing an AO at King at 1:00 P.M.
- April 2nd we will be doing an AO in Chippewa Falls
- Joe Heil gave a briefing on the program Dunn County is also doing, but it is conflict for Team Wisconsin.
- May 4th in Milwaukee at the Elks Lodge

Milwaukee VVA Chapter 324 has received a number of flyer formats and they will be handling the printing and advertising. The Milwaukee AO will be at 55th and Good Hope in the ballroom. Jim showed a new brochure on how to set up a town hall meeting.

There were questions from the audience on what the program involves.

Three Representatives have signed onto HR1769, with Representative Ribble the latest.

IOM looking at bladder cancer. Clif Sorenson reported that there is a study going on through IOM. IOM is not HMD (Health and Medical Division).

DOD has and does deny that AO was or is store on Okinawa.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 A.M.

Wisconsin State Council Meeting

President Lindbeck called the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. on March 19, 2016, at the Foxfire/Comfort Suites in Waupaca, Wisconsin. The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all

present and a *moment of silence* was offered to our POWs, MIAs, and our active duty service members. The Secretary was then directed to take the roll call of Officers, Directors, VVA Chapter delegates, and guests.

The following were present: WSC President, WSC Secretary, and WSC Treasurer, WSC Region 1 Director, WSC Region 2 Director, WSC Region 3 Director, WSC Region 4 Director, and WSC At-Large Director. VVA Region 6 Director, Michael Demske, and Wisconsin's AVVA Representative, Pat Furno were Present. The VVA WSC Chapters present¹ included: 005(1)#3, 092(1)#1, 101(1)#1, 115(1)#1, 206(1)#2/##1, 220(1)#1, 221(1)#1, 224(1)#1, 236(1)#2, 256(1)#2, 324(1)#1, 351(1)#2, 409(1)#1/##1, 425(1)#5, 437(1)#2, 448(1)#6, 479(0)##1, 529(1)#1, 618(1)#1, 635(1)#1/##1, 729(1)#1, 731(1)#3, 767(1)#2, 921(1)#2, At-Large#1. VVA WSC was pleased to have six guests, five of whom were Lao guests of Jerry Smith who was putting on presentation on the Secret War in Laos.

President Lindbeck invited Jerry Smith, VVA Chapter 448, to begin his audio visual presentation on the Secret War in Laos. In addition to this extremely revealing presentation Jerry introduced four Lao officers and a non-commissioned officer who fought on behalf of the United States mostly through the CIA. Jerry's program is one that truly described the horrific secret bombing war of Laos and its effects even today. The brave men who came with Jerry deserve our thanks and praise, as do their comrades and families, not only for their efforts during the war, but for that they and their countrymen endured following the war in Laos under Communist rule.

There was no reinstatement of suspended VVA Chapters.

President Lindbeck appointed John L. Margorski as Parliamentarian, and Mike Demske as Timekeeper.

There was a motion by Mike Demske and seconded by John Margowski to amend the Agenda to include the Legislative and Veterans Affairs Committee Report and the POW/MIA Committee Report. This amendment was carried without objection.

The VVA WSC Unapproved Minutes of the December 5, 2015 were corrected and later passed without objection. (These Minutes were made available via email using the VVA WSC mailing list and posted to the VVA WSC website at vvawi.org.)

President's Report: President Lindbeck attended the January National Board Meeting in Silver Spring, MD. HR 1769 and S901, The Toxic Exposure Bill, is still a major emphasis for all Veterans and their families. *Please* contact and re-contact your Representative and Senator(s) urging

¹ As per VVA WSC letter sent (October 6, 2014) to all VVA WSC Officers, WSC Region Directors, and VVA WSC Chapter Presidents, Officers and their delegates; it was declared that all VVA WSC Chapters must be represented at no less than one-half or 50 percent of the scheduled WSC Meetings – held quarterly during the calendar year. Failure to meet this minimum requirement will result in disciplinary action and VVA WSC suspension – refer to VVA Constitution and National Disciplinary Policy. The () following the VVA Chapters number (e.g., 007 **(3)**) indicates the number of meetings recorded as attended in the calendar year as of the roll call.

An underline of the VVA WSC Chapter number (e.g., 009 (1)) indicates that they have been suspended in the previous calendar year and have as yet attended the minimum meetings for the present calendar year. The number following the # sign indicates the number VVA members represented and ## the number of AVVA members.

their support (i.e., co-sign onto the Bill) and continued support of the Bill, regardless of where it is in the legislative process.

The Membership Committee made a motion to maintain the \$100 life membership fee. This was approved overwhelmingly by the BOD! The VVA \$100 life membership is a phenomenal recruitment price and tool.

As of December 2015, VVA has 78,314 members and AVVA has 8,992 members.

In late January I attended the CSCP meeting held in Lafayette, LA. Joe Sternberg gave a presentation on the new VVA Finance Report. (This report is on VVA National's site - <https://vva.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/VVA-Annual-Financial-Report.pdf> and at the WSC site at <http://vvawi.org/info/forms/index.html>. In using this form remember to attach the 990N acceptance message when sending in your report to both VVA National and VVA WSC.

The April trip to The Hill has been post-poned due to cost and the inability to meet with Representatives.

I gave a presentation on the Welcome Guide for new SC Presidents. The final copy should be available in April.

There is an Agent Orange Town Hall sponsored by VVA Chapter 324 and being presented by Team Wisconsin in Milwaukee on May 4, 2016, at the Elks Lodge on 55th and Good Hope Road.

The VVA Region 6 Meeting, being coordinated by our VVA Region 6 Director Michael Demske, is scheduled for June 3rd and 4th in St. Cloud, MN. You will be receiving more information through your VVA Chapter presidents and delegates. This is a meeting for all VVA members in the eight state area.

*Remember VVA WSC **elections** are on June 18th at The HighGround. If you plan on running for office contact the Nominations Committee with your intentions.*

In March I attended the Indian Summer Mid-Winter POW WOW at the Wisconsin State Fair Grounds. I had the honor of presenting the Eagle Staff for the Grand Entry. The announcer asked for a Veteran to assist in presenting the Colors.

In meeting with WDVA Secretary Scocos on March 17th, in West Bend, he gave an update on WDVA. He informed me King residents will have more activities and vending in the cafeteria. Secretary Scocos presented me with a Certificate of Recognition for Service to Veterans.

On March 29th Mike Demske, John Margowski and I will be doing an Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting at King.

VVA Region 6 Report: Mike Deske, VVA Region 6 Director, shared the latest information on the upcoming Region 6 Meeting to held in St Cloud, MN on June 4th with some pre-meeting activities scheduled for June 3rd. At this time there is a planned historical excursion to Camp Ripley on Friday, June 3, 2016. A bus will be available on a first come basis and a fee for the military museum at Camp Ripley. Additional details will be provided as they become available.

The actual meeting is Saturday, June 4, 2016, and will have a major focus on Agent Orange and Hepatitis C – leading the discussion of these topics are guests are coming to the meeting from Minnesota and California, respectively. Presently, membership and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are topics still under discussion.

The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Express located at 4322 Clear Water Road in St. Cloud. There is limited space so VVA and AVVA members and guests interested in attending should contact Holiday Inn Express in St. Cloud directly. Additionally, if you have an interest in the meeting please let Mike Demske know via email at Michael.Demske@yahoo.com.

Secretary's Report: James Mullarkey, VVA WSC Secretary, shared four pieces of information to taken back to VVA Chapters. First, as indicated by President Lindbeck, VVA National has not only modified the Financial Report the Election Report is also new. With respect to the former the 990 receipt must accompany the VVA Chapter's Financial Report or it will not be accepted. Additionally, if accepted VVA National will contact the WSC President of its acceptance of the report. In turn, the VVA WSC President will share the information the VVA WSC Secretary to be maintained with the VVA Chapter's Financial Report sent to the VVA WSC Secretary. The Election Report will follow the same procedure (i.e., after the election), specifically the VVA Chapter forwards the Election Report to VVA National and VVA WSC Secretary. After review by VVA National the VVA WSC President will receive notification of acceptance and forward a copy to the VVA WSC Secretary who will attach it to the VVA Chapters Election Report.

Second, three fliers were developed and distributed by the VVA WSC Secretary – one discussing VVA in Wisconsin, Women Veterans, and Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings: A process. Each of these fliers are considered DRAFTS. The Secretary appreciates any and all input from the VVA WSC to improve and/or expand these fliers as well as how they can best be used in our respective communities.

Third, the VVA WSC Secretary shared that Wisconsin' VVA website may need some improvements, especially making it more device friendly – better smartphone and tablet access, easier accessibility to information and content. The goal of the Secretary is to make this an easier site to access information within the Wisconsin VVA community and as a gateway to other Veteran community sites, services, and contacts. If you have ideas please feel free to share your thoughts at either secretary@vvawi.org or jmullarkey@mac.com.

Finally, the VVA WSC Secretary shared that the March meeting is the first quarterly VVA WSC meeting. Every VVA WSC Chapter is required to participate in a minimum of 50 percent of the scheduled meetings. Thus, for all VVA Chapters the slate is clean for this calendar year. However, those VVA WSC Chapters suspended for nonattendance in 2015 must attend a minimum of 50 percent of the scheduled meetings. Failure to do so may result in further disciplinary action.

Treasurer's Report: Patrick Craney, VVA WSC Treasurer, provided the WSC Financial Report as well as made a motion to have the proposed budget for 2016-2017 be approved. The Parliamentarian indicated that the budget came out of committee, therefore the motion did not require a second and was approved without objection.

Legislative and Homeless Veterans Committee Report: Clifton (Clif) Sorenson, Committee Chairperson, presented his report which, in part, stated:

- Current focus is on all Veterans and their families

- Although homelessness among veterans is down it is still pervasive and Veterans need assistance through:
 - Wisconsin Veterans Housing and Rehabilitation Program
 - Supportive Service for Veterans Families
 - WDVA Homelessness Resources and Services
 - NAMI Veterans Resource Center in Wisconsin
- Employment assistance for Veterans and family members is still critical
 - Wisconsin's LVERs and DVOPs are either available through the Workforce Development Center network or linked with a County's Veterans Service Office or the County's Mental Health Department.
- Mental health issues among veterans is still significant, especially the high rate of suicides among older veterans.
 - Veterans must be made aware of the misues of and the legislation for control of opioids among susceptible Veterans under VA care.
 - Mental health services within the VA for PTSD and TBI (i.e., traumatic brain injury and traumatic blast injury) needs expansion.

The key to change is for Veterans to contact their elected officials remind them of these issues and to remind them that **VETERANS VOTE!**

Agent Orange continues to be a topic of legislative discussion. Whether HR 1769 and S901, The Toxic Exposure Bill, or HR969 and S681, the Bill to resolve Blue Water Navy issues and the presumptive areas of Guam, Thailand and Korea.

Based on *listening sessions* sponsored by and attended by WDVA it appears, that WDVA's recent attempt to consolidate Veteran Service Offices was squashed in committee.

Comments, concerns and suggestions should be directed to Clif Sorenson at clifsorenson@gmail.com.

AVVA Representative Report: Pat Furno, Wisconsin's AVVA Representative, reported that VVA Chapters with AVVA members must select a representative by vote and that election must be held in April. The representative elected may represent AVVA at The HighGround in June and be a AVVA delegate at National in 2017. All AVVA elction policies and procedures must be adhered.

Veterans Benefits Committee Report: John Margowski, Chair, indicated that of the 800 files he had in his possession, 500 have been securely shredded. Of the remaining 300 files they are 10 years or older and indicated they too should be destroyed. John moved that they be destroyed. Coming out of committee this motion does not require a second and was approved without objection. This action, therefore, indicates VVA WSC has no service representaitve program.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary
VVA Wisconsin State Council