



**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL**

State Council Meeting  
Comfort Suites/Foxfire  
Waupaca, Wisconsin  
September 17, 2016

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**Agent Orange Committee Meeting**



Members in **Attendance**: Demske, Margowski, Lindbeck, Furno, Eiting  
Called to order by Demske at 9:00am  
Town Hall **Meetings**: in Milwaukee, Eau Claire, and Appleton – good turnout; however, there was a problem due to pairing with Hep-C speakers. This resulted in only about an hour for the AO Town Hall. Hep-C will no longer be paired with Town Hall meetings. The most positive piece of Appleton was the News Media coverage and it was good presentation on the TV stations – check out [VVA WSC](#) website to see the coverage.

Indian Summer did not happen. The original plan was to do several AO Town Hall meetings each day but we were advised it would be one each day.

Pat Ciofani, VVA Chapter 324, set up the AO Town Hall meeting in Milwaukee and contacted numerous organizations as well as the News Media.

There are a number of requests for Town Hall Meetings examples include: Manitowoc (Mike Demske is working to make this happen.), Racine's VVA Chapter has an interest in doing one in 2017.

**VVA WSV VVA Chapters please spread the word** in you areas to have good attendance.

Mokie Porter and Nancy Switzer did several AO Town Hall Meetings in Florida. They have requested our AO Logo.

Need to talk to National on more information regarding Iraq and Afghan Veteran toxic exposure.

Legislation on Agent Orange has been merged into a single piece of legislation – [Veterans First Act S.2921](#).

Contact your legislators to support. If it does not pass this session, we may have to start all over again with the next congress.

Pat Furno, Agent Orange Committee Co-Chair and AVVA State Representative asked, “Who does the folders for the Town Hall?” VVA Wisconsin State Council has the funding for the printing.

If interested in doing an Agent Orange Town Hall meeting planners need a room large room, a video projector with connections for a laptop PC or MacBook. This allows the Wisconsin Team to do one or more of the videos (DVD) touching on Agent or Issues. Additionally, there is a need for an audio system with microphones – preferably two microphones: one for the speaker and one for audience participation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:53 am.

### **Wisconsin State Council Meeting**

President Lindbeck called the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. on September 16, 2016, at the Comfort Suites/Foxfire 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. In the Secretary’s absence Mr. John Margowski took the roll call of Officers, Directors, VVA Chapter delegates, and guests.

The following were present: WSC President, WSC Vice-President, WSC Secretary (Excused), and WSC Treasurer, 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 present<sup>1</sup> included: 092(3)#1, 206(3)#2/##2, 224 (2)#1, 236(3)#1, 324(3)#1, 351(2)#1, 425(3)#3/2##, 448(3)#3/1##, 479(3)#2/##2, 529(3)1#, 635(1)0#3##, 731(3)#2, 767(3)#1, At-Large(3)#2.

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 was a motion by John Margowski and seconded by Mike Johnson to approve the Agenda. This motion was carried without objection.

The VVA WSC Unapproved Minutes of the June 2016 was motioned to be approved with the correction of Joe Eiting's name spelling by Marshall Giese and seconded Bob Morzenti. This motion was carried without objection. (These Minutes were made available via email using bulk mailer as provided on Election Reports and requests submitted via the VVA WSC email request option on [vvawi.org](http://vvawi.org) and requestes submitted to the Secretary at [secretary@vvawi.org](mailto:secretary@vvawi.org).) Following approval Minutes are posted to the VVA WSC website at [vvawi.org](http://vvawi.org).

**President's Report:** President Lindbeck and Mike Demske Traveled to Tuson, AZ for the National Leadership Conference, July 19-24, 2016. Even though Mike and I put up with the excessive temperature and humidity; we attended many beneficial seminars throughout the week. Both Agent Orange and the 50<sup>th</sup> Commeration activities were discussed during the Conference.

VVA Chapter 005 was recognized by the National Leadership Conference as having the largest membership growth in the country. Tom Hoffman volunteered to get a plaque for presentation to the VVA Chapter for their recognition.

An Agent Orange Town Hall was held in Appleton, WI on August 6, 2016. Joe Eiting coordinated the Town Hall; which was presented by Team Wisconsin – Demske, Furno, Lindbeck, Hackbarth, and Mullarkey.

In late August my wife and I traveled to Alaska where we me Vietnam Veterans nearly every place we stopped. On the ship going on the Inside Passage the ship staff held a Veterans Get Together where several Vietnam Veterans attended – some excellent conversations.

Labor Day weekend the Moving Wall was in Germantown and VVA Chapter 448 had the honor of conducting the opening ceremony. The Moving Wall was there for the entire weekend along with a Huey that actually flew in Vietnam. I actually had the chance to take a flight and it was very interesting.

The following weekend I traveled to Altus, Oklahoma for a Unit reunion – the Unit I was stationed with. There were only three of us that had served in Vietnam. One member had done three (3) tours during his time in the Air Force and retired Command Chief Master Sergeant.

Met Steven Pape at Ho Chunk in Wisconsin Dells to discuss a possible Car Show in 2017.

The next WSC Meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2016, at the Comfort Suites/Firefox in Waupaca, WI

**VVA Region 6 Report:** Mike Deske, VVA Region 6 Director, added to President Lindbeck's review of the Leadership Conference and added there is currently work being done on

legislation to upgrade some less than honorable discharges to enable veterans to receive the benefits they earned.

With respect to VVA Chapters and DD214s:

1. VVA Chapters must send a copy in with life membership applications. (National will scan and destroy the form).
2. VVA Chapter should maintain a DD214 for members who are not life members until the membership roster received from VVA National shows the member as having submitted the form; the DD214 should then be returned to the veteran or disposed of properly – shredded.

NOTE: Any VVA Chapter that has DD214s on file should return them to the Veteran. In the case that the veteran is deceased the DD214 should be returned to a family member. In cases where neither option is available the DD214 should be destroyed – shredded.

The number of Veterans committing suicide daily seems to be declining: 22 in 2012, 20 in 2014 (six (6) are in the VA). Most of the suicides are occurring among veterans who are over 50.

There is a National Board meeting next month to explore the future of VVA i.e., to keep from being a “Last man Standing” organization. Congress has indicated they will no longer allow organizations to make changes to their Charters so opening membership to Persian Gulf Veterans will need to be reconsidered.

With respect to Fundraising efforts through product sales, specifically the VVA Glasses, President Lindbeck reported the WSC has received \$3,000 in the past 2 months from sale of VVA glasses. If Steve Pape (Magnuson Inc.) contacts your Chapter regarding purchasing the glasses, he is legitimate. The glasses are shipped from Rockford, IL so you may want to consider driving to pick them up instead of paying the \$35 shipping fee.

**Secretary’s Report:** While there was no Report by the Secretary to an excused absence; the Secretary wanted the VVA WSC to know VVA Chapter 549 has been dissolved effective immediately. The Secretary needs WSC Region Directors input as to recommendation to send VVA members affiliated with that VVA Chapter.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Patrick Craney, VVA WSC Treasurer, provided VVA WSC Financial Report.

The Treasurer reported the WSC received a check from VVA National for “Household Goods.” The question was asked whether or not money will continue to come in. No clear answer on where the funds are being generated; funds may be from Racine and Hudson. It was speculated the funds may be due to Wisconsin locations within 50 miles of household goods stores in other states such as Illinois and Minnesota, respectively. Household Goods stores are contracted on a VVA National basis, National is considering closing all household goods stores.

A motion was made by Margowski, “To restrict the use or disbursement of household goods funds until it can be confirmed those funds belong to VVA WSC.” The motion was seconded by Mike Johnson (236) and passed unanimously. The Treasurer will add a new line to the Treasurer’s Report for restricted funds.

**AVVA Representative Report:** Pat Furno, Wisconsin's AVVA Representative, reported that Wisconsin AVVA members want to change the AVVA Policy and Procedures for delegate allocation and selection to match the VVA Constitution delegate allocation and selection process.

AVVA has revised the Policies and Procedure manual to get rid of duplication and unnecessary language. Changes to the manual will be voted on at the upcoming October Board meeting. There is no change in the reassignment of delegates in the new Policies and Procedures Manual. (Note: AVVA does not have a Constitution in lieu of that the organization has a Policies and Procedures Manual.)

Elections will be held next year. The position of Alternate Regional Director will now be an elected rather than an appointed office.

One of the VVA members requested clarification of AVVA's position on VVA members on voting when they join AVVA. Pat explained that VVA members who join AVVA are not restricted in providing input on AVVA decisions, they just can't "vote". The same situation exists for AVVA members who attend VVA meetings—their input is recognized but they cannot vote on. There has been concern expressed by some in AVVA that if VVA members join AVVA, they will try and "take over" the organization. Pat does not see that as an issue since VVA members are busy enough with their own organizations and don't have time to run another one.

Pat also reminded everyone in attendance that AVVA is not an auxiliary; an auxiliary usually requires a family connection in order to be a member.

The membership requirements have changed so that if you are younger than 60 years of age life membership is \$175 and 60 and over is \$100.

**VVA WSC Region Director Reports:** Region 1 (absent), and Regions 2 and 4 (No Report).

Tom Hoffman, Region 3 Director reported he wants to share a story from a Lao Hmong girl that was attending Washington Junior High School in Manitowoc. She was doing a Social Studies project about South East Asia, mostly about Vietnam. She was absorbing every bit of information we provided. Afterwards, her teacher asked if she would mind if he gave us a copy of Her Mother's Story. This is her story...

My mother was born from Laos. At the time she was 5-6 years old. She had 5 brothers and 5 sisters. One of her brother's died, and so did one of her sisters. After that incident, she walked to Thailand with her family for 3-4 months to reach Thailand. Once they reached Thailand the families that had young children and babies would drug their children so that they wouldn't cry, and would just go to sleep. If they were to cry the Vietnamese wouldn't hear them and shoot the whole family and everyone around them. Each group would have about 30 to 40 families. The first month, they ate and carried rice (50 Lbs), they also had meat to eat. My mother carried a gourd of water as her family carried all the other heavy materials. As the second month came around, their rice and meat ran out, they then started to eat bamboo, and a potato type vegetable, and sometimes banana flowers. There was once a moment where the Vietnamese spotted their families and shot a couple people, and

everyone ran. The group was then split apart. About 2 to 3 hours later, everyone found a safe place to sleep, and regrouped the next day. As for the Third month came, they reached the mountains, and my mother's mom (my Grandma) was sick, everyone in the group had nothing to eat, and also very sick. The families had second thoughts of going back to surrender as time passed, minute after minute. My mother's dad (my Grandpa) did a ritual to help them, and asked ours gods to give them guidance of what to do next. They replied and said not to give up. So they decided not to give up. A couple days later some of the Hmong men, that went ahead first, got help, and went back to my mother's group to help save them and told my mother's group to go back, they said Thailand was safe for them, and so they followed the small group of men. Their goal was to cross the Mekong River. After they reached the Mekong River, they bought inflatable rings for each family member. The people that didn't have money, would cut bamboo, and place them under their armpits and try to cross the river. Many Hmong has died trying to cross the river. After my morn's family crossed the river to Thailand, the Thai would pick them up, only if they got paid. My mom and her family paid, and got brought to refugee camps. They stayed at that refugee camp to 4 to 6 months, and the American Embassy arrived to transport the Hmong to America. My mother's family all passed the test, and went Vi Nai-a refugee camp. They then went to another refugee camp called Pananicorn to go learn a little bit of English and Thai for 6 months, then went to America and settled in Minnesota, then my family decided to go to Wisconsin to start something new for themselves. 4 As I asked my parents these questions and asking how she came to America; it makes me thankful. It makes me feel regretful at the same time. All of the harsh times she's been through, and I nag and bother her about problems; it makes me rethink about myself, and how I've been treat my mother. I am really, really, **deeply** thankful for my parents.

### **Committee Reports:**

John Margowski reported on the current status of the **Service Officer** files. All files have now been destroyed. There are 23 accredited Wisconsin Service Officers (certified through National). National is trying to determine exactly who the Service Officers are in Wisconsin and where they are located so they can be tested; if they do not pass the test, they will lose their accreditation. National is considering closing down the Service Officer program.

**Membership** according to Richard Lindbeck VVA is 156 short of 80,000 national members; that goal should be reached shortly and AVVA currently has 127 new members on a national basis for a total of 9,073 (394 are VVA members)

- Wisconsin is currently tied with Virginia for membership:
 

VVA	2,276 (up 13)
AVVA	322 (up 1)
- Regional 6 has 8,744 VVA members and 926 AVVA members

Mike Demske reported on the WSC **Agent Orange** committee, specifically on the have three (3) Town Hall meetings this year in Milwaukee, Appleton and Eau Claire. Racine and Appleton are possible additional meetings.

Additionally, SB901 (Toxic Exposure) has been merged with another VA bill (labeled as the "[Veterans First Act S.2921](#)" bill); if the new bill doesn't pass, we will have to start all over again with Toxic Exposure.

**At Large** Director Greg Foye shared information on the Persian Gulf tribute dedication at the Highground held in July; a Hmong Veterans Memorial will be dedicated in Wausau on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM on the east side of the County Courthouse (downtown Wausau); and the current exhibit at The Highground (My War – Wartime Photographs By Vietnam Veterans) is comprised of photographs, letters and poems by Vietnam veterans. A book detailing the exhibit is also available for purchase (\$25). The exhibit is tentatively scheduled for display in San Diego, CA for 6 months.

### **VVA Chapter Reports:**

**VVA Chapter 206** as reported by Marshal Giese, shared our VVA Chapter ran two brat stands this summer. They both turned out to be very profitable. The camaraderie we shared not only by Chapter 206 vets and the other Vietnam Vets that came up to us was very rewarding.

On August 31<sup>st</sup> VVA Chapter 206 took part in the opening ceremonies at the Shawano County Fair. This was also well received.

On a sadder note we lost three of our members this summer due to illnesses. They will be missed. We also picked up three new members.

The Chapter 206 remains very active.

**VVA Chapter 224** reported Chapter 224 marched, with it's Color Guard and Rifle Squad, in the Memorial Day parade in DePere and the Pulaski Days parade in Pulaski.

Our Color Guard took part in the Fire and Iron event and the Labor Day picnic at Bay Beach.

Members made the quarterly visit to the Homeless Veterans at King and delivered coffee and snacks to our Veterans.

Festival food cards of \$100 were sent to 26 Veterans and/or their families. Names were provided by the County Veterans Service Office.

The Chapter took part in the Harley Rally and Raffle, along with a golf outing. These are our largest fund raisers of the year. Proceeds are split between Chapter 224 and the Desert Veterans of Wisconsin.

Six \$1000 scholarships were awarded to children or grandchildren of Vietnam Era Veterans.

A POW/MIA ceremony was conducted on September 16<sup>th</sup> at the POW/MIA Memorial in Green Bay.

Our VVA Chapter members took part in our annual Bingo session at King Veterans Home.

The Chapter continues our "VVA 224 We Served" program where we record member's stories of their Vietnam experience.

**VVA Chapter 324** as reported by Pat Ciofani, shared For the most part a quiet summer. We did not hold an August meeting.

However, we did participate in a few events. The VVA Chapter took part in two parades. The Wauwatosa 4th of July Parade and the South Milwaukee Heritage Day Parade on July 30th. We also did an Orange Blossom fund raiser at Miller Park on July 30th and 31st. We raised \$1,685.00. That was with four people on Saturday and 3 people on Sunday.

**VVA Chapter 425** as reported by Joseph Deloria, Sr. July found the Chapter in a very busy month. The Chapter Color Guard members marched in the 4th of July parade and the Dousman Derby Day parade on July 31st. July 2nd and 3rd the Chapter was engaged in a fund raising event in Wales, Wisconsin.

July 20th thru the 24th, the Chapter manned its booth at the Waukesha County Fair. This continues to be a major venue for sales and exposure for the Chapter. Unfortunately, the Weather had a Major impact on this year's fair and fairgoers with very hot weather and severe storms, this impacted our sales.

A Shout out "THANK-YOU" to all the members who donated their time at the fair.

In August, President Deloria, AVVA member Ruth Keith and AVVA member Barbara Trout attended the funeral visitation to the Reverend Joe Medina who was also a Marine Corps veteran. It was learned that Joe passed from his Diabetes and Heart related issues.

September once again finds the Chapter and its members engaged in fund raising events to support needy veterans and community activities. The Chapter will be out for Gold Star Families day on Sept. 25 at the Pick N' Save in Wales, Wisconsin

As Chapter President I had the honor to issue 3 Certificates of Appreciation and I also became a life member of the AVVA.

**VVA Chapter 479** as reported by Gary Moll, we presented Flags and Color Guard for Independence Day at the Highground on July 4, 2016 and participated in the "**Operation Persian Gulf Welcome Home**" at the Highground \July 19 - 25, 2016.



We participated in two parade: The Colby Cheese Days Parade — July 17, 2016 and the Athens Fair parade on August 21, 2016— see photo below.

Chapter Activity Report: September 17, 2016  
VVA Chapter 479 Wausau, WI



VVA Chapter 479 Participation in the Athens Fair Parade – August 21, 2016

Chapter Activity Report: September 17, 2016  
VVA Chapter 479 Wausau, WI



VVA Chapter 479 Annual Picnic – July 31, 2016

Our VVA Chapter held its Annual picnic at AMCO Park, July 31, 2016, when we also conducted our VVA Chapter Quarterly business meeting, voted to donate \$500 and labor to assist a Veteran by installing handicap access to a bathroom in the Veteran's home, and VVA/AVVA/Family & Friends attended picnic. anticipated in the Veterans Outreach in Medford — August 27, 2016

Our VVA Chapter members attended the Moving Wall Memorial at the Tomah VA Medical Center on September 15, 2016.

**VVA Chapter 767** as reported by Jon Rybar shared that VVA Chapter 767 continues to bring smiles to many faces by hosting and funding Bingo on the 2nd. Tuesday of each month at the Southern Wisconsin Veteran's Home, Boland Hall, in Union Grove.



Recently, VVA Chapter 767 hosted a "Pizza Party" for residents of Fairchild Hall at the Southern Wisconsin Veteran's Home in addition to collecting a large amount of personal hygiene supplies for the Vets. Our VVA Chapter members gained a second "new" career as "pizza servers"!

The "Moving Wall - Racine 2019" Committee members visited and met with the Chairpersons of the "The Moving Wall" events held in Oconomowoc (Crosspoint Church) and in Germantown, WI. Many innovative ideas were gained to be incorporated

into the Racine Chapter's hosting of "The Moving Wall" in 2016.

VVA Chapter 767 has formed an Education / Scholarship Committee for the awarding of a \$1,000.00 scholarship to a 2017 graduating Racine or Kenosha County High School Senior.

The award will be for the most professionally written essay based on an interview of a local Vietnam Veteran's military experiences.

**Old Business:**

Reminder of the availability of the Libby glasses with VVA Logo and the Wisconsin State Council imprint. Information is available on the VVA WSC website at the News tab and then Fundraising Opportunity (<http://vvawi.org/news/fundraising-opportunity.html>).

**New Business:**

Richard Lindbeck informed the group that VVA Chapter 549 (Marshfield) has been dissolved; their charter will be surrendered at the next National Convention. Additionally, the state of Maine no longer has a State Council.

Joe Eiting had a question regarding hats/baseball caps for those who didn't serve in Vietnam. He has met a number of Veterans who don't feel comfortable wearing a hat that says "Vietnam Veteran" on it since they didn't serve in a combat area. Members suggested several web-sites he could visit to find what he's looking for.

Discussion regarding taking a train to New Orleans (estimated travel time is 19 hours) for the 2017 National Convention. Joe Eiting will research it and bring information to the December meeting.

When delegates are "reassigned" for voting purposes at the National Convention, you must an officer of the Chapter releasing the delegate votes sign the form.

National Convention: pre-register and bring a copy of your DD-214.

Richard Lindbeck brought up the possibility of having a Vietnam Veterans Car Show (see attachment) at The Dells in late July 2017 as a fund raising event. It would be a 2-3 days and would be held in conjunction with the Ho Chunk Nation. It is estimated WSC costs would be limited; WSC may need to purchase trophies and dash plaques for entrants. There is the potential to bring in substantial cash. Both the VVA WSC and Ho Chunk logos would be on any advertising. VVA WSC must write, and submit, a proposal to the Ho-Chunk nation for the event if we're interested. A motion was made by John Margowski and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Hoffman to "Pursue gathering more information for a car show with the Ho chunk nation in the Dells in 2017". Motion carried without objection.

Pat Furno suggested the WSC host another Two-day State Convention. Motion by John Margowski that the "WSC establish a committee to explore and plan a 2017 State convention", this motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Greg Foye and carried without objection. The State Convention Committee: Pat Furno, John Margowski (Chair), Mike Demske, Jim Mullarkey, Joe Eiting and Tom Hoffman.

Upcoming meetings:

- December 3, 2016 – Fox Fire, Waupaca; **Annual Holiday Party** on December 2<sup>nd</sup>; December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Agent Orange Committee and at 10:00 a.m. VVA WSC Meeting.
- March 18, 2017 – Ramada Inn, Waupaca, WI
- June 17, 2017 – The Highground, Neillsville, WI
- September 23, 2017 – Ramada Inn, Waupaca, WI
- December 1-2, 2017 – Ramada Inn, Waupaca  
 Note: **Annual Holiday Party** on December 1<sup>st</sup>  
 December 2<sup>nd</sup> **VVA WSC Meeting** at 9:00 a.m. **Agent Orange Committee** and at 10:00 a.m. **VVA WSC Meeting**.

Richard Lindbeck will be running for **Chair of the National Council of State Council Presidents**.

Tom Hoffman moved to adjourn; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joe Eiting. Meeting adjourned at 12:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Foye, Recording Secretary  
 VVA Wisconsin State Council

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary  
 VVA Wisconsin State Council

*Special Note from the Secretary:*

The Minutes of the September 2016 Meeting would not be available without the assistance and dedication of Joy Foye. As Secretary, I was unable to attend the September meeting and Joy without hesitation agreed to take the meetings minutes. And if it was not for Joy's meticulous ability to take copious and complete notes we would be missing the information from this very important Wisconsin State Council meeting.

As WSC Secretary I sincerely thank Joy on behalf of the Executive Board of the VVA WSC, VVA Region 6 Director, the VVA WSC Region Directors, the AAVA State Representative, the VVA Chapter delegates, and the many AVVA members present at the September 2016 for always being present, always stepping up when asked, and especially being the Recording Secretary for our VVA WSC Quarterly meetings when called upon. Joy is more than an AVVA member, VVA WSC colleague, she is a friend.

Again, thank you.

Jim Mullarkey