



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL

State Council Meeting
December 7, 2013
Waupaca, Wisconsin

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Agent Orange Committee

At 9:00 A.M. Mike Demske brought the Agent Orange (AO) Committee; in attendance were Mike Demske, Richard Lindbeck, John Margowski, Jim Mullarkey, Virginia Nuske, Bob Piaro, Clif Sorenson, Jerry Zechmeister, and Paul Pankoff.

Demske and Lindbeck provided a brief overview and success of the State Council's first Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting held October 2013 in Johnson Creek. The Co-Chairpersons, Mike Demske and Pat Furno established the location, time, and date for the meeting in Johnson Creek. In addition to Wisconsin State Council representation (i.e., Mike Demske, Pat Furno, Richard Lindbeck, John Margowski – also, VVA Region 6 Director, and Jim Mullarkey) Maynard Katerlick – Minnesota State Council, Nancy Switzer – Past and Founding National President, Associates of VVA, Gail Genin - AVVA Member from Minnesota, and Yvonne Duesterhoeft – Jefferson County CVSO served as the presenters for the two sessions.

The consensus of the AO Committee was that this was a successful first Town Hall with the need for a continued effort around Wisconsin. The committee discussed a possible Spring 2014 AO Town Hall in Green Bay and an Indian Summer Town Hall in September 2014. Mike Demske, Pat Furno, and Jim Mullarkey will be looking into the Spring meeting. Jim indicated a woman in Green Bay already contacted him about hosting a venue in the Green Bay area – information will be shared with Mike to check for dates and locations. Mike, Pat, and Richard Lindbeck will discuss and investigate an Indian Summer option. La Crosse and Eau Claire were also discussed as future venues for AO Town Hall Meetings.

Wisconsin State Council Meeting

President Lindbeck called the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. on December 7, 2013. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and A Moment of Silence for our POWs/MIAs and active duty service was observed.

There was a Roll Call Of Officers by James Mullarkey, Secretary. With the exception of the Treasurer, who was excused, Wisconsin State Council Officers were present as were Directors from Regions 1 and 4. The At-Large and Region 2 Directors were absent.

There was a Roll Call of Chapters by Mullarkey and the following Chapters were present: 005, 206, 236, 351, 425, 437, 448, 479, 529, 731, 767, and At Large. AVVA was represent. President Lindbeck confirmed a quorum.

There was no reinstatement of suspended Chapters.

President Lindbeck appointed John Margowski as Parliamentarian and Mike Demske as Timekeeper.

There was approval of the Agenda, which was moved, seconded and approved without objection.

The Minutes of the September 14, 2013, Wisconsin State Council Meeting, were moved, seconded, and approved with corrections.

President Lindbeck provided the President's Report, which included the two session Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting in Johnson Creek. Maynard Kaderlik, Nancy Switzer AVVA Past National President were on the panel and gave their personnel stories regarding AO problems. Those in attendance also presented their stories. A big thanks to Pat Furno, Jim Mullarkey, John Margowski and all that helped put this program together.

The State Council has been asked to do an AO Town Hall in the northern part of the state in the future. We need to look at Eau Claire and also one on the east side of the state to get more involved.

I attended the National Board and Council of State President meeting in Silver Spring, MD in October. This happened to be the same time that the US Government was shut down so we were not able to make contact with our National Representatives

While in Silver Spring I received a request to restart the VVA Chapter in Fox Lake. I returned with the start up kit and contacted the representative to set up a meeting. He has yet to get the meeting set up.

At our last WSC meeting, Jim Ramage, contacted some members of the Marine Corp League regarding starting a Native American Chapter with the Ho Chunk Nation. At this time I have not heard anymore on it.

Jim Ramage is also on the Sick List. He has lung cancer and one of the aggressive types. He has undergone treatment and so far is doing OK.

Kent Draper, Chapter 324, is also going through treatment for leukemia. I have been advised that he is not responding well to the treatment. Lets keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

November 4th I gave a presentation to the West Bend Common Council in their annual recognition to veterans. November 7th I attended the salute to veterans at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School in Jackson, WI. November 8th was the program in Madison and I gave a presentation to the groups that were there. Gary Wetzell, Medal of Honor Recipient was there along with Gov. Walker, Lt. Gov. Kleefish, Secretary Scocos and some 800+ veterans and family. November 11th I was in Green Bay for a Veterans Day Presentation with Secretary Scocos and Secretary Gotleib (DOT) on placing VETERAN on your DL. This program became effective December 2nd. For more information on this program go to WISVets on the WDVA website to get certified.

November 13th I gave a presentation to the History class at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School on Vietnam and the Cold War. This has been an ongoing program with them and is always rewarding.

Elections are coming up in June. So I am encouraging those that wish to take a Leadership Role in the Wisconsin State Council to think about stepping up. Think about it.

Virginia Nuske introduced one of the Scholarship Recipients to do a reading. Leandra Franzen, daughter of Vietnam Veteran and one of 2013's Scholarship Recipients read her moving essay to the group. Ms. Franzen is an undergraduate at Viterbo University in a pre-medical curriculum with hopes of becoming a pediatrician.

The Secretary indicated there was no Correspondence.

Clif Sorenson, who indicated the current focus continues to be on all Veterans and their families, provided the Legislative Report. We are seeing and assisting many of our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, neighbors and fellow Veterans who served in hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan (Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn). The Veterans Assistance Foundation (among others) has a **Supportive Services for Veterans Families Program** that is doing extensive outreach (866-823-8387). **Service** to our Veterans and their families is the most important item of concern to us at this time.

We have to renew our efforts on **jobs** for our returning Veterans and those who are currently in the job force or wanting to join the job force. The best point of contact is with our LVERs and DVOPs located at Job Service.

We are concerned a great deal about the **mental health** of our Veterans. I am joining forces to address the issues of mental health among fellow Veterans.

We continue in the development and expansion of **Veterans Treatment Courts** in Wisconsin. We are always looking for good mentors.

We have helped open a 72 bed Veterans Nursing Home in Chippewa Falls. Expansion of this facility is on the horizon. This facility is in addition to the Veterans Homes in Kin and Union Grove.

The returning Veteran must be made aware of the **benefits** that are crucial to transition to civilian life. Prevention from becoming homeless is very important. The telephone number for the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans is 877-424-3838.

I've been in Washington, D.C. in February, May, and September 2013 on behalf of Veterans and their Families.

I attended a Homeless Veterans Symposium in Houston in September 2013 as well as attending STANDOWNS in Wausau and Eau Claire.

Agent Orange continues to be an issue for those Veterans with boots-on-the-ground in Vietnam. We are still working to resolve the Agent Orange **Blue Water Navy** issue(s), and expanding presumptive areas to include more areas of Thailand and Korea. A new report

released by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) December 4, 2013, needs to be reviewed by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs.

Camp Lejeune Veterans have to be aware of the time periods when the water at that military facility was contaminated. They need to contact their respective CVSOs!

The Treasurer's Report was not given; however, representatives in attendance were informed to contact the Pat Craney with their budget reports and request for the coming fiscal year.

The Region 6 Director, John Margowski, suggested two potential avenues of revenue generation for the WSC: 1) a "simple" raffle such as a 50-50 and 2) various forms of affiliate marketing. On the raffle the suggestion was to get something off the ground March through June 2014 with winners drawn at the June 2014 WSC Meeting at The High Ground. Frank Mueller and Bob Morzenti agreed to work on the raffle and bring the Treasurer, Pat Craney, on board as details are developed. Margowski and John Kusko agreed to work on the affiliate marketing options.

Committee Reports began with Bruce Witt, Membership Chairperson indicating the following totals:

1. VVA WSC members at 2,042
2. VVA WSC At Large at 340
3. VVA Associate members at 275
4. National membership at 70,000



Judy Sanger mother of Lance Peter Sijan, the only graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy ever awarded the Medal of Honor, recently died.

Lance was shot down on November 9, 1967, and escaped and evaded the enemy for 45 days before he was captured on December 25, 1967. He again briefly escaped but was re-captured and interned in North Vietnam, where he died in captivity on January 22, 1968. His remains were recovered and returned on March 13, 1974.

John Margowski discussed the Power of Attorney (POA) files he has since 2006 when the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA) and VVA ended. Presently, Margowski has an estimated 850 files. WDVA cannot handle these records, a legislative option is unavailable, and he believes approximately two-thirds (2/3) of the POAs may still be active.

Margowski proposed that another accredited officer join him to review the files to 1) review the original documents, 2) those files and accompanying POAs that are no longer viable be shredded, and 3) the remaining files and POAs be sent to the VVA attorney.

Bob Morzenti moved Margowski's proposal into a motion to include 1) travel for an accredited officer, 2) review of documents, 3) shredding of documents, and 4) authority to forward remaining viable documents to the VVA attorney. Bob Piaro seconded the motion; which was passed unanimously.

There was a brief (continuing) discussion on the creation of a banner that should be placed in the lobby of the venue the Wisconsin State Council is meeting. No action taken.

Chapter Reports

Mike Voth Memorial Chapter 005, submitted by Joe Heil, indicated that their 1st Annual Benefit Dinner and Silent Auction held November 2013 was very successful with 50 percent of profit to be directed to the Chippewa Valley Veterans Home – purposes to be approved by the Chapter. The second annual benefit is being planned for August 2014.

Fifty percent of the revenue generated from MIA and Agent Orange poppy sales were combined with a donation from Vicki Voth for a Legacy Stone for Mike Voth at The Highground.

The Chapter has grown membership by 33 percent to 44 members with a goal of 60 members in 2014.

Chapter 351, submitted by Mike Weaver, indicated a present membership of 60 with a bi-monthly newsletter. Additionally, civic activities included the sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 57 and Cub Scout Pack 3157 and *Adopt-A-Highway* project (Hwy 10) – which is done three times throughout the year.

In addition to the Chapter's active participation with the Patriot Guard, VFW, DAV, American Legion, The Highground, and the Fox Valley Veterans Council; members continue their educational partnership with eight area high schools, including the Rawhide Boys Ranch. Chapter 351's Vietnam artifacts display is one of the best in the Midwest and has been seen by thousands of students.

Two poppy sales events were held in 2013 raising a total of \$14,000 - \$10,000 in Orange Blossom Poppies in May and \$4,000 in POW/MIA Poppies in September. The funds raised is given back to veterans in the Fox Valley, specifically the DAV, the Fox Valley Veterans Council, three \$2,000 scholarships, and a donation to The Highground. In 2013 the Chapter also donated to black marble POW/MIA benches for the Isle of Valor Vets Park in Menasha and the Ring of Honor Vets Park in Kaukauna.

The Chapter participated in the Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Veterans Day parades and ceremonies in Appleton with floats, restored military vehicles, and Color Guards.

The Chapter's Color Guard was at The Highground's 25th Anniversary in September and four members attended the *Operation Dustoff* ceremony in Madison in November.

Chapter 425, submitted by Joe Deloria, indicated that 2013's September and October's fundraising activities were successfully concluded. On behalf of the Chapter, Deloria gave out Certificates of Appreciation to area businesses and to Chapter members who participated and assisted in the Chapter's fundraising events.

In October, Joe Deloria was part of the Color Guard detail receiving Marine Corps Lance Corporal Jeremiah Collins who died in Afghanistan. President Deloria and AVVA Life Member Ruth Keith attended L/CPL Collins' funeral and paid their respects to his family.

October 26th Deloria attended the WSC's first Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting held in Johnson Creek.

Chapter 437, submitted by Duane Canon, indicated that the Chapter's 4th of July event held with Oshkosh AMVETS was a very successful fundraiser.

Duane Cannon was one of the 115 Vietnam Veterans selected from 570 applicants to go on the first *Yellow Ribbon* Old Glory Honor Flights commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the End of the Vietnam War. Returning to Oshkosh the War Bird Show was stopped so the Honor Flight could land. As we landed we were greeted by thousands of people along the flight line – the homecoming we never got! The welcome home celebration also featured the Lt. Dan Band.

The Chapter did the POW/MIA Ceremony in September at the South Park War Memorial in Oshkosh.

October was the Chapter's annual Orange Blossom Drive raising more donations than last year, meaning more funds for the Chapter's Christmas projects.

On Veterans Day the Chapter participated in a program at the Oshkosh North High School and a program at the Courthouse along with other veterans organizations and the public.

December has the Chapter at the Pearl Harbor Ceremony followed by shopping for a veteran family in need along with assistance to the Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services.

Chapter 448, submitted by Frank Mueller, shared 2013 was a very good year, especially with an increase in membership. The Chapter was able to dedicate the Veterans Memorial in Newburg by placing legacy stones, more stone were added on Veterans Day, and a renewed interest in adding more legacy stones in 2014.

The Chapter participated in numerous parades around Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Washington Counties, especially Washington County's County Fair during their Veterans Appreciation Day.

Throughout 2013 the Chapter gave several presentations on the Vietnam War enumerating the 50th Anniversary Commemorating the Vietnam War. **NOTE: For information on The United States of America Commemoration of the Vietnam War go to www.vietnamwar50th.com.**

The Chapter's Orange Blossom Program was very profitable this year with spots at Miller Park and in the West Bend Area.

Chapter 448 was well represented at the National Convention – for some this was their first experience. All said they are going to make time for both the 2014 Leadership Conference and the 2015 National Convention.

Chapter 731, presented by Tom Hoffman, provided information on the upcoming Branson Tour. If interested contact Chapter 731 at (920) 682-2508.

Chapter 767, presented by Paul Pankoff, was thankful that Color Guard for funerals was down in 2013; however, they are quite busy for opening ceremonies – two Brewers games, table and battlefield cross for Beta Sigma Phi (a women's organization celebrating our country in 2013), Veterans Day at Memorial Hall in Racine and Roma Lodge honoring veterans.

Overall, this was a good year for our Chapter – Vietnam Veterans, our members are being recognized.

Unfinished Business

Tom Hoffman and Mike Demske moved that we go with a new provider (Towsleys in Manitowoc, WI) to make the WSC pins matching our present pins. John Margowski made a motion to go with a new provider and Bob Morzenti seconded the motion. The motion was carried without objection.

News from The Highground includes 1) Greg will no longer be on the Board following the January Board meeting, 2) The Highground is interested in more people to serve, and 3) August 13-17, 2014 The Healing Wall is coming to The Highground.

New Business

Steve House was appointed by VVA-WSC to be the King VVA-WSC veteran representative. Steve indicated his involvement with the Wisconsin Historical Academy; which focuses on military history, conducts lectures and has and needs books. Steve is wondering if there is a way to revive The Badger Veteran.

John Kusko shared that Camp American Legion at Lake Tomahawk want to establish a Vietnam Veterans Week May 12-18, 2014. This is at no cost to the veteran. Also, John indicated you could contact him (jkusko@sbcglobal.net) regarding American Legion's Agent Orange activities. If you are seeking information on the American Legion's website use your browser's search tool with "American legion agent orange."

July 28 through August 2, 2014 EAA will have military representation.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary