



Together Always

**AVVA - AT LARGE NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 3
OCTOBER, 2018**

Happy Halloween! Here are my notes from the last State Council meeting on September 29, 2018.

AVVA Notes:

Pat's report included the following information:

- Pat received information that AVVA has received approval from the IRS to change from a 504(c)4 to a 501(c)3. Since the AVVA.org website didn't have a copy of the Leadership Conference minutes at the time of this meeting, Pat was unable to confirm what she heard regarding the 504(c)3 change.
- Pat reminded everyone that this is an election year and strongly encouraged everyone to attend meetings/town halls and ask questions, especially with respect to veterans issues.
- Pat provided background information on AVVA including that they were formed in Washington, DC (rather than New York as VVA was); Washington DC was chosen due to the difference in regulations.
- In approximately 2008, AVVA established the Veterans Service Officers (VSO) Program; the Program is now being disbanded.

State Council Notes:

Guest Speaker – Dr. Jeff Whittle:

Dr. Whittle, a physician (at Zablocki VA Clinic in Milwaukee) and researcher, spoke to us about liver flukes and cancer (based on his position as a researcher).

- The liver flukes could have been acquired when serving in Vietnam. The liver flukes can result in Cholangiocarcinoma (bile duct cancer). The liver flukes were most common in northeast Thailand and Laos, rare in Cambodia; it was more common in North Vietnam than South Vietnam and there were related flukes in China and Korea.
- The flukes are ingested by eating contaminated fish, go from the stomach to the intestines, through the bile duct (they reproduce there), and the eggs are passed through the stool; flukes can live 20-30 years.
- Liver flukes are most often found in developing countries and are found in fresh water only. The flukes are killed in cooking but can survive being salted or pickled. There currently is no test for "resolved" liver fluke infections. Fluke infection is difficult to diagnose (using CT scans or ultrasounds) so it often isn't found until it is too late to treat if it becomes cancer. Screenings aren't usually done since they can be very invasive (generally doing more harm than good) and there is a small risk of this rare cancer.
- Dr. Whittle discussed some of his research. They surveyed 97 Vietnam veterans; 50 had eaten raw or undercooked fish; only 12 had antibodies to the fluke found in China and Korea (not those in Thailand or Vietnam); only 1 of the 50 had the cancer but he didn't have the antibodies.
- Dr. Whittle indicated VVA's experience advocating for veterans would enable the organization to assist veterans in increasing interest in identifying important and unimportant questions, advise what data to collect, who/how to enroll participants in studies, help interpret results, and getting the word out.
- Question and Answer discussion: Liver flukes are more common in third world countries where sanitation isn't as good; they are found in fresh water only; it is difficult to see inflammation in the bile ducts making diagnosis difficult.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes were amended to indicate that AVVA lifetime membership fees are \$175 for those aged 59 and less and \$100 for those aged 60 and over. Minutes were approved as amended.

President's Report (Richard Lindbeck):

- The Leadership Conference in Palm Springs went very well. A brief outline of Working Groups 1 and 2 were presented; more detailed information will be presented to the general membership at the 2019 Convention in Spokane, WA.
- Richard discussed the August Region 6 meeting in Iowa. The meeting including a presentation on Working Groups 1 and 2 and an excellent presentation on a personal experience with being pronounced dead and being discovered alive multiple times.
- September 22nd is the 30 anniversary of the dedication of The Highground.
- Richard will be attending an October meeting in Silver Spring.
- Richard and 2 other Chapter members will be on a panel (in West Bend) as part of a Washington County class on Vietnam.

Vice President's Report (Dan Sciuti):

- Dan will be heading the PSTD Committee and will work with Dr. Hall in that capacity.

Secretary's Report (Jim Mullarkey):

- Jim reminded everyone that only pages 1 and 2 of the election report should be sent to National but all 3 pages should be sent to the State Council.
- On the sign-in sheet, Chapter members listed with a "D" by their name should initial the sheet (the "D" indicates a delegate). All attendees should sign in (those without a "D" will be considered alternates); only delegates and alternates are allowed to vote.

Treasurer's Report (Pat Craney):

- Pat provided information on the checking account and CD balances.
- Expenditures are currently below budgeted amounts.

National VVA At-Large Report (John Margowski):

John discussed the Working Group Panels.

- The reason for establishing the Working Group Panels, and mission, was to suggest ways to close/dissolve VVA.
- VVA was incorporated in the state of New York, which includes very strict regulations for dissolution of non-profits.
- Discussions included the "implosion" of VVA with respect to asset distribution, government affairs considerations and the VSO (Veterans Service Officers).
- The panels will have a "list of recommendations" to help State Councils and Chapters decide what direction they want to see VVA go in.
- Nothing with respect to the panels is final!
- John reported the panel presentations at the Leadership Conference were videotaped and are supposed to be posted on the National website (VVA.org).
- John was part of Panel 1, which met multiple times and worked extensively on their presentation; since he wasn't part of Panel, he can't speak to the process they used for their presentation.
- Panel 1 would end the organization while Panel 2 would morph the organization into something else. The panels are seeking input from the general membership; presentations will be made to the entire membership, hopefully at the National Convention in 2019. The membership will be able to "choose" recommendations by Panel 1, Panel 2 or **both** panels to decide if/when dissolution would occur.
- John stressed that Congress will **not** sanction/charter a new veterans organization.
- In response to questions: John confirmed AVVA has a representative on each Panel and that cash assets can be given to any 501(c)3.

Committee Reports:

Scholarship (Virginia Nuske):

- The deadline for scholarship submission is 2/16/19.
- Copies of the application are on the State Council website (vvawi.org).
- College students can also apply for the scholarship.
- There may be another scholarship reading at the December meeting.

Toxic Exposure (Mike Demske):

- There is a possibility of a town hall in Milwaukee.
- It is important to send a request **NOW** to support the Blue Water Navy bill (H.R.299) then follow up with a call to our Senators; information can be found at www.capwiz.com/vva/issues. If the bill, unanimously passed by the House, doesn't make it through the Senate now, the entire process will have to start all over again when Congress reconvenes next year. Agent orange exposure information can also be found at: agentorangezone.blogspot.com.

2019 Meeting Dates (Mike Demske):

- 3/16/19 Waupaca
- 6/15/19 The Highground, Neillsville; annual picnic
- 9/21/19 Waupaca
- 12/6-12/7/19 Waupaca; annual holiday party and meeting

Membership (Richard Lindbeck):

- on 7/18: 84,016
- on 8/18: 83,530 (after 1,200 unreported deceased members were deducted)
- The change in lifetime membership fees (\$50 vs \$100) has been tabled for now.

POW/MIA (Duane Canon):

- 1,251 Vietnam
- 291 Laos
- 48 Cambodia
- 7 China
- 1,597 total MIA

State Council Appointments (Richard Lindbeck):

- 3 volunteers are still needed for open committee positions (Homeless Veterans, Incarcerated Veterans and Women Veterans)
- the AVVA Representative should be removed from the list; the position is elected by AVVA members
- Virginia Nuske should be listed as a Special Advisor rather than a committee chair
- Pat F. should be added as a Special Advisor to the Agent Orange /Dioxin committee
- the appointments were approved as amended
- Jim requested assistance with the newsletter; please contact him at jmullarkey@mac.com if you can help.

Old Business

None

New Business

- The National Convention is scheduled for 7/19-25/19 in Spokane, Washington.
- Today is Ginny's birthday!

Upcoming Events:

November 30-December 1, 2018:

- Wisconsin State Council quarterly holiday party (11/30) and meeting (12/1); Ramada Inn, Waupaca

May I send you this newsletter by e-mail? If so, please contact me at jlfoye@frontier.com with a subject line of "AVVA At-Large Newsletter" or by phone at 715-842-9197 (we don't have caller ID so please leave your phone number so I can contact you). If you have any suggestions on what (or how much) information to include in the newsletter, please let me know. Thank you!



Joy L. Foye
Wisconsin AVVA At-Large Representative