



Together Always

**AVVA - AT LARGE NEWSLETTER
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AVVA Notes

Pat's report included the following information:

- As of 12/31/18, there was a total of 10,121 AVVA members.
- AVVA National Convention information:
 - Wisconsin potentially has 11 Chapter representatives who would be eligible to vote at the Convention.
 - Registration information for the Convention is currently available on the AVVA website (avva.org).
 - Important dates to remember:
 - 3/27: last day to submit changes to the National by-laws
 - 4/1: candidate registration due (Rick Talford is running for the Region 6 Alternate position)
 - 4/19: any proposed changes must be sent to the membership by National
 - AVVA is planning a 20th anniversary celebration; details are not yet available.

State Council Notes

Approval of Minutes:

The December, 2018 minutes were approved as amended.

Special Presentation

John Weiler, Executive Director, was introduced by Greg Foye and gave a presentation to update the membership on the current state of The Highground. John served in the Army for 28 years and retired as a Warrant Officer before joining The Highground in July, 2017. John reminded the membership that The Highground is completely funded by donations--while there are some grants, there is no ongoing government funding. John gave a "state of The Highground" address:

- the organization was incorporated in 1984
- 313 stones were laid in 2018; the Persian Gulf tribute is 1/3 full; the stone section of the Korean tribute is being expanded to allow for more stones; Meditation Garden stones are almost gone
- the Working Dog tribute has been completed
- 40+ events are held each year
- the 30th anniversary celebration received excellent media coverage
- the Wisconsin Adventures on Wheels Camp (WAW) was donated to The Highground (its mission is to help individuals with limited mobility and special needs and their families, especially U.S. veterans); the sale was closed on 3/9; there will be an open house on 6/22; WAW is located about 15 minutes north of The Highground in Willard.
- 2,400 students visited in 4 days as part of its mission of education
- the Gold Star is being redesigned; it will be rededicated in August
- the 35th anniversary of the bicycle ride (originally 1,244 miles) will take place over 2 weeks in July/August this year and will cover 1,700 miles in Wisconsin and Minnesota; it will be called the "Heroes Ride"; you will be able to see the route daily; the primary mission of the ride this year is to raise awareness of veteran suicides
- The Highground has taken over "Freedom Fest" from the City of LaCrosse and will be held in Neillsville at the Clark County fairgrounds in July, 2020 (the weekend after the Clark County fair).

President's Report (Richard Lindbeck):

- President Lindbeck attended the State Council Presidents meeting in January.

- The Washington, DC Court of Appeals ruled the VA must follow the guidelines in the Blue Water Navy bill; 9 veterans organizations asked President Trump to stop the Department of Veterans Affairs from appealing the decision; if no appeal is filed, the bill becomes law.
- Dick advised the membership that \$10,000 in insurance coverage is automatically available for events held by the State Council and all Wisconsin chapters (except the Hayward Chapter since it is so new).
- life members must file a DD-214 with National if they haven't previously done so
- National Convention: 7/16-7/21 in Spokane, WA; registration materials are available at vva.org; there are currently some discrepancies on the website regarding the hotel accommodations.
- the next Leadership Conference will be in Columbus, Ohio (2020) and will include a tour of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.
- the 2021 National Convention will be held in Greenville, SC

Vice President's Report (Dan Sciuti):

- No report.

Secretary's Report (Jim Mullarkey):

- The State by-laws haven't been reviewed and updated since June, 2012; clarification is needed in several areas (i.e., membership). It was moved that the President set up a committee to update the by-laws so they match the national by-laws, including being 2 or less pages long. President Lindbeck appointed Jim Mullarkey as chair and Dan Sciuti and Tom Sachs as members of the committee. Notification of proposed changes must be made 30 days before the meeting where they would be discussed and/or voted on. The possibility of discussing the changes at the June meeting and voting on them at the September meeting were discussed.

Treasurer's Report (Pat Furno for Pat Craney):

- As of 2/28/19, expenses were less than budgeted and income was greater than budgeted for a positive financial result.
- The final amount due the Wisconsin State Council from household goods was received. Although it cost the State Council more than the amount received but 100% of the Chapters completed the paperwork to receive the funds.

At Large Report (Greg Foye):

- No report.

National Convention

- Chapters who aren't sending delegates to Spokane need to send a release authorization to Dick as soon as possible.
- The National criteria used to determine the number of eligible delegates (1 delegate for each 50 members) is different than that of the State Council State Council will have 5 delegates (including 1 for the at large members). The candidate roster as of 3/11/19 includes: John Margowski is running again for at an large member of the Board of Directors; Wayne Reynolds won't be running for Treasurer again as he is very ill.
- All delegates should bring a copy of their DD-214 to the Convention.
- Delegate reimbursement will be discussed at the June meeting.

National VVA At-Large Report (John Margowski):

John spoke about several items.

- Working Group I update: they will present their plan (2 weeks earlier than required). The 55-page report will be given to the National Board of Directors at their April meeting. John will also submit the report to Dick (hopefully it can be forwarded to Jim Mullarkey) for potential distribution.
- Legislation: the Blue Water Navy has now become a law, unless the Department of Veterans Affairs appeals its passage; the "Never Forget The Heroes Act" (for those injured in 9/11) was mentioned.
- The current administration is pushing to privatize the VA; contact your representatives to encourage them to say/vote "no" to this move.
- NBC did a piece on the effect of toxic exposure on the children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans. Additional information can be found at agentorangezone.blogspot.com.

Committee Reports:

Agent Orange/Toxic Exposure:

- A Waukesha town hall will be held May 7, 2019; a town hall for Milwaukee is being discussed.

Scholarship (Virginia Nuske):

- There was 1 previous scholarship that wasn't awarded (due to recipient health issues) but that has now been resolved. There were 4 members on the Scholarship committee; 6 scholarships were submitted (all were grandchildren of Vietnam veterans) for the (3) \$1,500 scholarships. Helen (from Virginia's Chapter) read a thank you letter from a 2015 scholarship recipient who will become a pediatrician.

Old Business

None

New Business

- The Junior National ROTC award was discussed again. Nominations must be submitted by mid-April; motion to award a medal (it can be awarded by the State Council and/or individual Chapters) to the top cadet at St. John's Northwestern Military Academy was tabled until 2020 due to the extremely tight timetable and lack of additional details regarding the award.
- There was no update on a Veterans Administration Volunteer Services (VAVS) Chair needed at Zablocki in Milwaukee.
- **Chapter financial reports** must be submitted by 7/15 to National (be sure to use the January 2018 version) in order to have your delegate seated at the National Convention. Reports can be sent by FAX; a copy should be sent to the State Council Secretary.
- **Chapter election reports** must also be submitted by 7/15 to National to have your delegate seated at the National Convention. Reports can be sent by e-mail (to "membership@vva.org) but not by FAX. Pages 1 and 2 go to National; pages 1-3 go to Jim (needed only if Chapter officers expired in 2019).
- Jim reminded attendees that valid telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are needed when they are submitting information to him.
- The proposed budget was discussed and approved without objection.
- With the change in the State Council minutes format, information e-mailed to Jim goes directly to the website. Newsletters and/or reports can also be handed to Jim or sent by mail. Information sent by hand delivered or sent by mail is scanned and then uploaded to the website.
- A question was asked regarding participating in the Million Veteran program. Some State Council members currently participate, however, they reminded all member to consider any/all potential repercussions of participating.

Upcoming Events:

June 15, 2019:

- Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting and annual picnic; The Highground, Neillsville

July 16-20, 2019

- AVVA National Convention; Spokane, Washington

September 21, 2019:

- Wisconsin State Council quarterly meeting; Ramada Inn, Waupaca

December 6-7, 2019:

- Wisconsin State Council holiday party (12/6) and quarterly meeting (12/7); 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