

# VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

## WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL

State Council Meeting  
The HighGround  
June 22, 2013  
[www.vvawi.org](http://www.vvawi.org)

President Lindbeck called the State Council Meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. on June 23, 2013. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all along and A Moment of Silence for our POWs/MIAs and active duty service members was observed.

There was a Roll Call of Officers by Clif Sorenson, while awaiting arrival of Secretary Mullarkey and Regional Director Margowski. All State officers and Region 1, 3, and Directors were present. The At-large Regional Director was absent.

There was a Roll Call of Chapters by Sorenson and the following were present: Chapters 5, 92, 101, 115, 206, 236, 256, 331, 351, 425, 437, 448, 479, 529, 549, 635, 729, 731, and 767. AVVA was present. The President said there was a quorum.

There was no reinstatement of suspended Chapters.

There was approval of the Agenda. Moved/Seconded/Passed Without Objection.

There was approval of the March 2013 Meeting Minutes. Moved/Seconded/ Passed Without Objection.

President Lindbeck provided President's Report, which included his acceptance of a Proclamation from Governor Walker on March 29<sup>th</sup> commemorating the Vietnam Veteran Day in Wisconsin – this goes along with the 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Vietnam War, a program which will continue through 2025. As part of this program the President has been attending American Legion, VFW, DAV, and other veteran groups to discuss the 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Program.

Along with Messrs. Craney, Margowski, and Mayr, the President attended the National Board/CSCP meeting in Silver Spring, MD. The WSC contingent met with Congressmen Pocan, Ryan, and Sensenbrenner. They also had an excellent meeting with the Veteran Representative from Senator Baldwin's Office – an Iraq Veteran/Marine Corps.

In early June, I represented VVA-WSC at the dedication of Gates Hall in Union Grove where Lt. Governor Kleefisch was the main speaker in dedicating the new facility.

Medal of Honor recipient Gary Wetzel is the planned speaker at the Washington County Fair July 24<sup>th</sup> – Veterans Day at the Fair.

In the area of Correspondence Virginia Nuske, although not in attendance, received two Thank You notes regarding the scholarship program. Virginia will share the notes at the September, 2013 meeting.

Due to Jim Mayr's resignation from the Wisconsin State Council (moved to MN), Special Election was held to fill Mayr's position. Mr. Frank Mueller (448) was nominated/seconded and elected unanimously to fill this position.

Clif Sorenson presented the Legislative Committee and Homeless Veterans Report and is included in full - The current focus continues to be on **all Veterans and their families**. 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. Working closely with our friends at Department of Workforce Development – our DVOPs and LVERs – is especially crucial at this time. We participate in Veterans Jobs and Benefits Fairs.

We are concerned a great deal about the **mental health** of our Veterans. We continue to monitor the promises made by DoD, the VA and the White House. Help with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is being monitored closely. We continue to take action to prevent the growing numbers of **suicides** after service (1-800-273-TALK).

We continue in the development and expansion of **Veterans Treatment Courts** in Wisconsin.

We have helped open a new 72-bed **Veterans Nursing Home** facility in Chippewa Falls and there are many plans for expanding other long-term care facilities for our aging Veterans.

The returning Veteran must be made aware of the **benefits** that are crucial to his/her transition to civilian life. All Veterans need to be provided with the best services possible. We participate in **Veterans Jobs and Benefits Fairs**.

I've testified, petitioned, called, visited and written our legislators and aides to do the right thing for our Veterans.

I've been in **Washington D.C.** in June 2012, October 2012 and February 2013 (and again in May 2013) on behalf of Veterans and their Families, VVA's Legislative Agenda and Homeless Veterans. While there, I reiterated to all of the Congressional offices I visited, the VVA and I show solid support for our fellow Veterans and those who are homeless and of our efforts to eradicate the state of homelessness among our fellow Veterans. VA Secretary Shinseki and President Obama have initiated a plan to end homelessness among our fellow Veterans within five years. The clock is ticking, as we are now halfway there. I will continue to monitor that plan.

**Agent Orange** continues to be an issue. While the VA Secretary recently added three medical conditions that can be presumptively linked to exposure to Agent Orange (B cell leukemia, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease), we are still unable to get **Blue Water Naval Veterans** under the presumptively exposed category.

**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 for this and all Veteran-related issues. Recent legislation has acknowledged the toxins in the water.

There are a number of Veterans' bills that did not make their ways through the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress and are now being reintroduced in the **113<sup>th</sup> Congress**. I will track them diligently.

Our **State of Wisconsin** Veterans' (WDVA) benefits have not changed significantly. It is always a challenge to find alternative benefits sources for our Veterans. I just returned from Madison from a Budget briefing by Secretary Scocos. The WDVA Budget will attempt to save the Trust Fund, it will continue to take care of **Veterans and Families**, it will focus on **Jobs and Workforce Development** and it will increase access to **Education** [dva.state.wi.us](http://dva.state.wi.us).

The VVA in Wisconsin is commended for their support and work on behalf of Veterans and their Families and Homeless Veterans, in particular."

Mr. Pat Craney, VVA-WSC Treasurer, provided the Treasurer's Report.

Ms. Pat Furno gave the AVVA Report, which included the news that this will be the first time at the VVA National Delegate Convention (2013) AVVA Chapter members will be able to vote as delegates. Pat also gave an overview of the elections and bylaws additions and potential changes that will effect AVVA as well as the slate of individuals running for AVVA office.

Furno provided an update on the planning for Wisconsin's Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting tentatively scheduled for September 28, 2013, in Johnson Creek, Wisconsin. More information will be coming. The VVA-WSC AO Sub-Committee is composed of Richard Lindbeck, Mike Demske, Pat Furno, John Margowski (Region Six Director), and Jim Mullarkey.

Tom Hoffman, WSC Region 3 Director, gave his Director Report, which included the following: a) Hoffman had the *honor and privilege* to present the Richard Nuske Memorial Scholarship to Forrest Martinez from Sheboygan South High School, b) led the swearing in ceremony of Chapter 618's incoming Officers, and c) the need for VVA Wisconsin to get into the schools and educate children of all ages on the Vietnam War.

Please READ the following letter Tom Hoffman received from a ninth grade student at Wilson Junior High School in Manitowoc, "***...thank you [all] for coming in and talking about your experiences with us. You all had amazing stories to tell, and pictures to show us. I wish we had more time with you all.***

***I'm glad you now have the respect you deserved when you came back home. Now that we know some of the stuff you all experienced, we could pass our experience with you onto the next generations. And now your stories will never die.***

***I had grandpas and uncles in the war that were too afraid to talk about their stories, they died and their stories are lost forever.***

***I'm Native American and in my culture fighting for your people and helping out others in the process is the greatest and highest honor you can get. You all have fulfilled that honor and I thank you for doing that.***

**Saquora Romero-Cannon**

## Chapter Reports

In addition to a number of fundraising and community activities, Dennis Woodling, President, Chapter 005 shared that the chapter is in the process of changing the Chapter name to Michael Voth Memorial Chapter #5, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

Chapter 206 reported that Marshal Giese is the Chapter's new President effective April 2013.

Joseph Deloria, President, Chapter 425 shared his participation in Nebraska's Town Hall Meeting on Agent Orange in Omaha as part of VVA National's and Region Six's drive on Agent Orange and his recognized need to maintain this initiative. Deloria further shared his chapter's commitment to send VVA and AVVA delegates to the National Convention. In addition to fundraising activities, Chapter 425 is assisting Stepping Stones Horse Ranch, an equine therapy program, working veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and PTSD.

Chapter 437's President, Duane Canon participated in Oshkosh North High School's Veteran Video History Project, which was shared with the Oshkosh Military Veteran Museum. Chapter 437 has been making a concerted effort in not only increasing membership, but in actively increasing the number of AVVA Chapter members. The Chapter has made donations to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project, the Oshkosh Military Museum, and the motorcycle ride for MD.

Chapter 448 reported it is actively completing the Veterans Memorial in Newburg with 76 legacy stones dedicated on Memorial Day and more to be dedicated on Veterans Day. The Chapter has participated in numerous parades in Washington and Sheboygan Counties – with more being planned. In addition to robust fundraising efforts, Chapter 448 is planning to kick-off *Veterans at the Fair Day* at the Washington County Fair on July 24<sup>th</sup> with Medal of Honor Recipient Gary Wetzel as a main speaker Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War.

Gary Moll, Treasurer, Chapter 479 shared that his Chapter is moving to quarterly meetings. In addition to other fundraising initiatives the Chapter has focused on Memorial Day wreaths. As other chapters have been doing they too are making presentations to schools and other groups.

Chapter 529 reported a number of gifts made on their behalf including: a) five (5) \$500 scholarships, b) a \$240 gift to the Wounded Warrior Project, c) a \$200 gift to VFW, and d) a donated a commercial stove (valued at \$2,000) for the American Legion.

Chapter 731 did **seven** (7) Educational presentations in April and May and awarded a total of four \$1,000 educational scholarships – two of the scholarships were made available through the generosity of Dennis Seipel in honor of his wife and the Wisconsin State Council's good friend Karen – The Karen Seipel Memorial Scholarship. [A great honor to a great friend and a true Lady of VVA – WSC.]

Paul Pankoff representing Chapter 767 reported a number of veteran activities carried out on behalf of the Chapter as well as their educational efforts with students.

Respectfully Submitted,

*James E Mullarkey*

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary  
Vietnam Veterans of America Wisconsin State Council