

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL

State Council Meeting
Comfort Suites Foxfire, Waupaca, Wisconsin
March 16, 2013
www.vvawi.org

The State Council Meeting was Called to Order by President Lindbeck at 12:02 P.M. on March 16, 2013. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all along with a Moment of Silence for our POWs/MIAs and active duty service was observed.

There was a Roll Call of Officers and Chapters by Vice-President Mayr. Secretary Mullarkey was excused and all Region Directors were present. There was a Roll Call of Chapters by Vice-President Mayr and the following were present: Chapters 101, 206, 220, 236, 351, 425, 437, 448, 479, 529, 635, 731, 767, and one at-large member. AVVA representation included: Chapters 425, 479, 635, and 767.

There were sufficient Chapters represented for a quorum.

President Lindbeck appointed John Margowski Parliamentarian and Mike Demske Timekeeper.

The Agenda was approved without objection, following a motion by Tom Hoffman and second by Mike Demske.

The December 8, 2012 Minutes were approved without objection, following a motion by John Margowski and seconded by Mike Demske.

The President gave his Report. The President noted that February 28, 2013 was the end of the fiscal year. Chapters need to have financial statements in by July 15, 2013. Chapters also have to have IRS Form 990 filed. When filing financial statements, attaché Form 990 to make sure National receives it. National has to have all financial statements and Form 990s for each Chapter to have their delegates eligible for the National Convention.

Chapters can be a partner for the 50th Anniversary Commemoration for the Vietnam War through Gen. Claude Kicklighter. When signing up, Chapters will receive a flag and a signed commemorative. If Chapters wish, they can take their commendations to the VVA National Convention, which will set aside time for each State Council and Chapter to attend a ceremony officially awarding the commendation.

The VVA National Convention is being held August 13 – 18, 2013, in Jacksonville, Florida. Information is available on the National VVA website (<http://www.vva.org/>) under the tab “Events.”

Beginning April 1, 2013, anyone going to the VA for appointments will get travel compensation through direct deposit.

Secretary of Defense Panetta authorized a new medal for drone operators placed between the Silver Star and Bronze Star. The President suggested that each veteran contact their Congressional representatives to have the medal placed lower – near the National Defense Medal and not above the others.

The next State Council meeting will be held at the Highground on June 22, 2013.

President Lindbeck read the Legislative Report (see full report below) due to the absence of the Legislative Chair Clif Sorenson.

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 112th Congress and are now being reintroduced in the **113th 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.

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

Get involved in the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War activities www.vietnamwar50th.com. **Thank you for your service and WELCOME HOME!**

If you have comments or suggestions, **new e-mail** the Chair, Clif Sorenson, at clifssorenson@gmail.com.

Respectfully Submitted,

Clif Sorenson

Clifton Sorenson, Chair
Legislative and Homeless Committees
Pat Craney, Treasurer, submitted the Treasure's Report.

AVVA Report presented by Pat Furno.

John Margowski submitted Region 6 Director Report, which include two major points. First, VVA National representatives and state representatives within the region will be

attending the Region Six Meeting planned for May 10, 2013, in Omaha, NE. Margowski encouraged WI Chapters to have a strong representation at the Region Six Meeting. Second, Margowski encourages a *strong attendance at the Highground Meeting in June* because it is the last State Council meeting before the VVA National Conference in August where a vote on resolutions will be held. Margowski plans to review the resolutions and seek input at the Highground Meeting.

Virginia Nuske, Scholarship Coordinator, presented the State Council Scholarship Report (available online). The essence of the report presented included: a) 46 essays were submitted; b) the committee reviewed and scored 46 essays resulting in eight (8) eligible applications – seven (7) were direct descendants and one (1) had a relative Vietnam War veteran; c) the Committee from VVA Chapter 206 reviewed and tallied their scholarship applications/essays and identified three (3) – all direct descendants; and d) each of the three (3) scholarship recipients will receive \$1,500 for the 2013-2014 academic year. The recipients of this year's scholarships are: Jason Bellmore from Appleton North High School, Forest Martinez from Sheboygan South High School, and Leandra Franzen and undergraduate at Viterbo University.

Mike Weaver gave a talk regarding the events at the Highground. Weaver indicated that the Persian Gulf War display is moving along well. A new exhibit is in the learning center through May, 2013, titled "Marking Time: Voyage to Vietnam." The exhibit presents stories through graffiti left on a troopship's bunk canvases done by young American soldiers and Marines going to Vietnam during the 1960's.

One Region Director Report submitted by Tom Hoffman, Region 3 Director. Hoffman commented on the high school social studies curriculum irregularities, specifically as it pertains to teaching students about Vietnam (Hoffman's full report is *available online*). Hoffman's bottom line was, "...we cannot let the History of Vietnam fade away." [Secretary's comment: Every member of every VVA Chapter should write a letter to their city's school Superintendent and to the Wisconsin Superintendent of Schools emphasizing the need to include the Vietnam War and the social and societal impact of the war through the 1960's and 1970's.]

There were six (6) VVA Chapter Reports – 101, 206, 351, 437, 448, and 731. All VVA Chapter Reports are available online. [Secretary's note: Please submit your Chapter's Report via email, preferably as a PDF; however, if you send your report as an email, not a PDF, the Secretary will convert and place it online. If the report cannot be submitted prior to the meeting send it to the Secretary following the meeting to both include it the minutes and to place online.]

New Business:

Election reports as well as financial reports must be submitted to VVA National for delegates to be eligible for the National Convention. Be sure to submit a copy of your election reports and financial reports with a copy of Form 990 to State Council Secretary Mullarkey (jmullarkey@wivf.org or jmullarkey@mac.com).

Robert Morzenti, VVA WSC Region 4 Director, made a motion to have the State Council compensate AVVA members the same amount as the VVA members for attending the National Convention since the AVVA National Convention is being held at the same time. Mike Martinez seconded Morzenti's motion. The amount of money to be allocated

for the National Convention will be discussed at the VVA WSC Meeting at the Highground in June 2013.

Mike Demske was appointed the Agent Orange Committee chairperson.

John Margowski suggested that all VVA Wisconsin members submit an email address [to the Secretary] to be able to create a “talk list” to disseminate information to members more quickly. **Secretary’s note:** Simply send an email to:

To: jmullarkey@wivf.org or jmullarkey@mac.com

Subject: Talk List

Include in body of email –

Name

Email address

Chapter #

Feel free to submit more than one member’s name, email, and Chapter # in the same email.

Without objection the meeting was adjourned at 2:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary
Vietnam Veterans of America Wisconsin State Council
jmullarkey@wivf.org or jmullarkey@mac.com