



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL

State Council Meeting
March 22, 2014
Waupaca, Wisconsin

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Agent Orange Committee

At 9:00 A.M. Mike Demske, Co-Chairperson, brought the Agent Orange (AO) Committee to order.

Mike Demske and John Margowski stated that it was imperative that Vietnam veterans file and their children file for conditions associated with or believed to be caused by the effects of direct or hereditary herbicide / AO exposure.

John Margowski shared that he will be presenting to Wisconsin's County Veteran Service Officer Association Conference in April 2014. At this time, the presentation has been set for one hour. Margowski shared that in addition to himself; the presenters will be President Richard Lindbeck and Mike Demske.

Mike Demske provided additional information on the next Town Hall Meeting to be held in the Auditorium of UW Extension Manitowoc on September 26, 2014. There will be one session beginning at 12:00 P.M. (Noon) through 4:00 P.M. Additional information and specific plans will be discussed at The Highground AO Committee Meeting June 21, 2014.

President Lindbeck provided an update on an AO Meeting during *Indian Summer* held on Milwaukee's Summerfest Grounds Labor Day weekend – September 5, 6, and 7, 2014. At this time the Lindbeck believes the day selected is September 6, 2014. Additional information should be available at The Highground AO Committee Meeting June 21, 2014.

Virginia Nuske submitted a memo from William Williams, member of the Veterans of the Menominee Nation, Rolling Thunder WI 3, VVA WSC Chapter 224. The memo said,

“Virginia,

I attended the National Rolling Thunder Conference this last year (2013) and the VVA did an hour presentation about Agent Orange. That allowed hour segment was expanded to the next hour because of the interest from the attendees. They, the VVA representatives, had lots of information to deliver.

One of the most important pieces of information learned was that the effects of Agent Orange do not stop with the veteran. It is being passed to our children and grandchildren. Agent Orange was not exclusive to Vietnam. It was used around bases in the U.S.

I guess I am suggesting a 'title' as something like this '*How is Agent Orange Effecting our Children and Grandchildren.*' The vet knows what it has done or not done to him. He may not know the effects can be passed to his children and not show up till his grandchildren.

Preaching to the choir I guess. I am glad Indian Summer is having this forum."

Mike Demske submitted the following outline for future Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings conducted by the Wisconsin State Council:

- I. Opening and introduction of panel members.
- II. Welcome Home
- III. Set the ground rules for the Town Hall meeting.
 - a. The Town Hall meeting is not a bashing of the VA
 - b. We, the National Agent Orange Committee, need your stories.
 - c. Children and grandchildren problems
- IV. Do the Agent Orange videos provided by VVA's Agent Orange Committee.
- V. Agent Orange / Dioxin related medical situations.
 - a. How AO affected you and your family.
 - b. How AO affected your children and grandchildren.
 - c. What you should do.
- VI. Veteran Service Officer
 - a. Have the VSO do the work for you as the veteran, surviving spouse, dependents or extended family i.e. grandchild(ren).
 - b. Do not file a claim on your own!
 - c. If your claim is rejected, re-file, if rejected again, appeal.
 - d. DO NOT E-File and AO claim.
- VII. Stories from the audience
 - a. Do not get into *confidential* information regarding the veteran's case.
 - b. Answer questions or get answers for participants' questions.
 - c. Stress use of the Veteran Service Officer.
- VIII. Acknowledge and thank sponsors of the AO Town Hall Meeting.
 - a. State Council
 - b. Chapters
 - c. Outside sponsors
 - d. Individuals
 - e. *Thank everyone for coming and encourage him or her to spread the word.*

Wisconsin State Council Meeting

President Lindbeck called the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. on March 22, 2014. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and A Moment of Silence was offered to our POWs/MIAs and active duty service.

James Mullarkey, Secretary, called the Roll Call Of Officers and Region Directors. With the exception of the Treasurer and Legislative Chair, who were excused, Wisconsin State Council Officers were present as were Directors from Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4. The At-Large Director was absent.

There was a Roll Call of Chapters by Mullarkey and the following Chapters were present: 005, 092, 115, 206, 236, 324, 351, 425, 437, 448, 479, 529, 618, 635, 731, 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 one change to the Agenda, which was further moved, seconded, and approved without objection.

The Minutes of the December 7, 2013, Wisconsin State Council Meeting, were moved, seconded, and approved without objection.

President Lindbeck provided the President's Report, which included his attendance at the Conference of State Council Presidents (CSCP) held in Anchorage, Alaska February 27 thru March 2, 2014, with twenty-eight state presidents in attendance.

During the conference four significant presentations and issues were covered. First, the "Oath Keepers" (<http://oathkeepers.org/oath/about/>) a non-partisan association of current and formerly serving military, police, and first responders who stand for the oath to defend Constitution gave and excellent presentation.

Second, a discussion on VVA member's DD Form 214 resulted in the following:

1. Each Chapter needs to verify that all members have a DD Form 214 on file – further the DD Form 214 should be sent to National along with the potential member's application. In turn, National will scan the form and either return it to the applicant or destroy the form submitted.
2. If you have a member that does not have a DD Form 214 on file they must be contacted so #1, above, can be completed.
3. If the member or applicant does not have access to their DD Form 214 he or she must complete an SF 180 (available on <http://www.VVAWI.org/forms> or

go online to <http://www.archives.gov/research/order/standard-form-180.pdf>). Upon receipt of the DD 214 the member or applicant must follow step #1, above.

4. If the member has not verified their **Certificate or Release or Discharge from Active Service** vis á vis Form DD 214 they may be removed from the Chapter's roll until verification is provided.

Third, there is an **Honorary Life Membership** (HLM) form available (on <http://VVAWI.org/forms> or through National at <http://www.vva.org/Forms/HONORARYLIFEMEMBERSHIPFORM.pdf>). Honorary Life Membership is reserved for those that are honored by the Chapter for their service. The MIA/POW can have **Honorary Life Membership**, but it is suggested that the family be contacted (directly) before **Honorary Life Membership** is provided. Those provided **Honorary Life Membership** are ex officio members without voting rights within the Chapter.

Fourth, new Public Service Announcements or PSA's on *Who We Are* a brief history of VVA has recently been added to the VVA collection – available at vva.org or YouTube: (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bIS3vuH1zw&feature=em-share_video_user&noredirect=1). Additional audio PSA's are available through National at <http://www.vva.org/psa.html>.

On Saturday March 1st was the start of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race and it was a great time witness the start of the race. The temperature was in the mid- to upper 40's and snow was brought in by **truck** so the race could be run from Anchorage. Wisconsin had minus wind chills and temperatures.

March 13 – 17, 2014, Mike Demske (Co-Chair of the AO Committee), John Margowski (Region 6 Director), and I traveled to Kansas (KS) to present information at three (3) Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings. The first in Hays, KS had a fantastic turnout with over 150 attendees. The second, held in Salina, KS, was outstanding with more than 160 attending. Our third and final AO Town Hall Meeting was held outside of Topeka, KS in the Prairie Band Potawatomi Casino and Resort had in excess of 200 people seeking information,

In Kansas we had over 500 individuals attending three sessions on AO. These sessions were at best moving and those who attended were very pleased with the information and many expressed, "... they had no idea of the effects of Agent Orange or Dioxin exposure or how it affects others (i.e., spouses, their children, and their grandchildren)."

As President, I extend my thanks to Mike Demske and John Margowski for making the Kansas Agent Orange experience a true success. As a team, we were able to work together and answer many questions from those who attended the Town Hall Meetings. Also, I want to express my appreciation to VVA Kansas State Council for

all they did to make the Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings so successful. A special thank you is addressed to Ron Zink – State Council President, Larry MacIntire in Hays, KS, VVA Chapter 809 in Salina, and Blas and Linda Ortiz at the Prairie Band Potawatomi Casino and Resort.

At the National Board Meeting scheduled for April 10, 2014, we will be going to The Hill to speak with our representatives in Congress. This year we will also be holding Agent Orange educational briefings at Cannon House Office Building to inform Congressional Representatives on the *Faces of Agent Orange*.

Our Canadian Vietnam Veterans are being told by the Canadian Government to turn in their license plates. National Board members will be contacting representatives of the Canadian Government to stop this action and restore those plates to Canadian

Vietnam Veterans – several hundred Canadians served with American Forces and are still fighting for benefits.

Texas Tech University will archive records and information related to Vietnam. If any Chapter has records or data they want archived or retained a Chapter representative should contact The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University:

1. Via computer go to Texas Tech at: <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/>
2. The Chapter representative can contact the Archive at 806-742-9010.
3. The address for the Archive is:

The Vietnam Archive
Texas Tech University
P.O. Box 41041
Lubbock, TX 79409-1041

The Leadership Conference application is now on the VVA website (http://www.vva.org/leadership_conf.html). Reservations need to be submitted **NLT** July 5, 2014 or you have to register on site – registering on site is a real hassle and time consuming. The Leadership Conference is being held in Wichita, Kansas August 5-9, 2014. The VVA Kansas State Council has advised that they have a nice program set for those in attendance. Check the VVA National website (http://www.vva.org/leadership_conf.html) for the complete set of conference packets/folders.

Clif Sorenson submitted 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.

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.

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 testified, petitioned, called, written, and visited our legislators and aides to do the right thing for our Veterans throughout 2013 and March 2014.

Agent Orange continues to be an issue for those Veterans with boots-on-the-ground in Vietnam. We still are working to resolve the **Blue Water Navy** issue(s).

Camp Lejeune Veterans have to be aware of the time periods when the water at that military facility was contaminated.

Get involved in the **Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War** activities at www.vietnamwar50th.com.

John Margowski, Region 6 Director, provided a Status Report on two congressional bills:

H.R. 543 – Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013 sponsored by Congressman Christopher (R-NY) needs additional co-sponsors. This Act deals with presumptive diseases associated with exposure by veterans to certain herbicide agents while in Vietnam. At the time of notice of this Act the latest action was that it was referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. As of the date of these Minutes the co-sponsors has risen from two (2) to **207!**

S.1602 – Toxic Exposure Research and Military Family Support Act sponsored by Senator Blumenthal (D-CT) desperately needs co-sponsors. This Act directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to: (1) select a medical center in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to serve as the national center for the diagnosis, treatment, and research of health conditions of descendants (i.e., a biological child, grandchild, or great-grandchild) of individuals exposed to toxic substances while serving as members of the

Armed Forces that are related to that exposure; (2) establish an advisory board to advise the center to determine which health conditions result from exposure to toxic substances and to study and evaluate cases of exposure of current and former members of the Armed Forces to toxic substances; and (3) establish an Office of Extramural Research to conduct research on wounds, illnesses, injuries, and other conditions suffered by active members of the Armed Forces resulting from exposure to toxic substances and to assist the Advisory Board in considering claims of exposure to toxic substances.

Extends eligibility for medical care and caregiver assistance to descendants of a veteran who was exposed to toxic substances while serving as a member of the Armed Forces if: (1) the descendent has a health condition resulting from exposure to toxic substances and is homebound due to such condition, and (2) the veteran has or had the same health condition.

Authorizes the Secretary of Defense (DOD) to declassify documents (other than documents that would materially and immediately threaten national security) related to any known incident in which not less than 100 member of the Armed Forces were exposed to a toxic substance that resulted in at least one case of disability.

Directs the VA Secretary, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the DOD Secretary to jointly conduct a national outreach and education campaign directed at members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their family members to communicate information on incidents of exposure to toxic substances, health conditions resulting from such exposure, and the potential long-term effects of such exposure.

As of the date of these Minutes this Act was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veteran's Affairs. Moreover, this Act is in desperate need of co-sponsors with only Senator Begich (D-AK) as a co-sponsor.

Pat Furno addressed the Treasurer's Report including addressing changes of line items to the impending budget. There were three motions for change to line items and limits to the pending budget. The first motion of removing line item 540-04 was moved without objection. The second motion of adding \$500 to line item 600-07 was moved by Margowski, seconded by Witt, and passed without objection. The final motion to add \$250 to line item 554-05 was moved by Witt, seconded by Margowski, and passed without objection. Changes to the proposed budget will be presented at the June 2014 State Council Meeting.

Pat Furno also gave an AVVA Report, which she shared that there were four (4) Wisconsin AVVA Chapter representatives at the National meeting. State level elections run between January 1st and June 30th of this year. Election forms are available on the website at www.avva.org. Pat also indicated Chapter elections are

held on even numbered years and must be submitted by **April**. Election forms are available on the website at www.avva.org.

Additionally, the AVVA website now includes the latest information on National Officers, Board of Directors, election information, online classes and presentations, and more. All can be found at www.avva.org.

Virginia Nuske submitted the Scholarship Committee Report – 2014. This year only two (2) scholarship applications were received. Despite the fact that information and applications were sent to the Wisconsin Counselors Association a group I joined specifically for this purpose. Additionally, I received at least eight (8) telephone calls regarding the application and emailed the forms to another four (4) guidance counselors. The scholarship applications were also sent to my higher education contacts at the colleges and universities in Wisconsin.

The scholarship applicants are:

- Andrew Riehl, Fond du lac – outstanding interview – plans to attend Iowa State University as a pre-med student.
- Kasi Samson, Lake Mills – interviewed her uncle by email – it's reflected in her essay because she focuses more on herself and her goal. She plans to attend UW-Oshkosh and major in nursing.

Award these two scholarships?

My questions to the WSC are:

1. Shall we continue the Scholarship Program?
2. Should we change the criteria?
3. Discontinue the program?
4. Come back with recommendations for the program?
5. What are your suggestions?

Let us discuss the issues of low scholarship applicants and there potential award and the above questions I have raised at the next WSC Meeting at The Highground in June 2014.

John Margowski, Region 6 Director and former WSC VSO still awaiting Disposition of Records and POAs of veterans. It was moved by Jim Mullarkey that John a) review the records and POAs still in his position to determine whether to keep or destroy, b) destroy those records and POAs deemed no longer active, and c) forward those few remaining records and POAs to National's VSO. Greg Foye seconded the motion and following, a brief discussion this motion was passed without objection.

Mike Demske moved that the WSC submit an letter of support to the President of AVVA in support of their efforts in Agent Orange activities and seek their continued

support in the Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings in Wisconsin and throughout the country. John Margowski seconded the motion and it was passed without objection.

The Secretary was directed to draft such a letter for the WSC President's and WSC Co-Chair's of the Agent Orange Committee signatures at the next WSC Meeting.

Tom Hoffman submitted WSC Region 3 Report Spring is the time of the year High Schools and Junior Highs or Middle Schools get to that part of history called the Vietnam War. Although well intended, how well the teachers cover the Vietnam War is anybody's guess. Therefore, it is up to us (i.e., Vietnam Veterans) that they don't blow it off, skim over it, or treat it as blip in U.S. history. If we allow less than cursory overview of the Vietnam War students will never understand the impact the war. The thing is, that War is who those students' parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and great-uncles and aunts lived through – regardless if they served or not, were in combat or not, they were a part of history that has shaped today.

So what I am saying to each of us in VVA Wisconsin State Council, veterans and associates, "Let's get out and let all the schools in your Chapter's area know you/we are here to help and that we can bring real *live* history to the students."

As Education Chairman of our Chapter, I have contacted all schools in Manitowoc County and let them know what we can do and it has *paid off*. Last year (i.e., 2013) we were contacted by seven (7) of the nine (9) high schools and junior highs or middle schools. I am working on the remaining two (2) schools – a little harder pair of nuts to crack, but I am not giving up.

As Vietnam Veterans we need to keep the History of Vietnam alive – we are all that are left. Please do not let all those men and women who died in or as a result of the Vietnam War be forgotten. We must keep their memories alive.

Please keep all our men and women who are serving our Country all over the world in your thoughts and prayers, and may God continue to Bless America.

Robert Morzenti, WSC Region 4 Director reported that according to National there are two (2) VVA Household Goods stores or programs operating in Wisconsin. President Lindbeck at the behest of National asked me to explore where these stores are and who is operating them. In turn, I am asking all WSC representatives and their respective Chapters to look into this matter and let me know if there is a Household Goods Store operating in their area under any name containing any or all of either VVA or Vietnam Veterans of America. Any information or assistance you can provide is appreciated. Information can be sent to me directly at bobmorzenti@hotmail.com.

Chapter Reports

Mike Voth Memorial Chapter 005 is sponsoring a Vietnam Veterans Day Program on March 29, 2014, from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. at the Eagles Club in Chippewa Falls.

The Chapter made a \$1,500 donation to Chippewa Falls Wisconsin Veterans Home, specifically for a Korean War plaque in the Home. The next fundraiser is planned for

August 2nd. Fifty percent of all proceeds are earmarked for the Veterans Home. Current membership is 50 with a Chapter goal of 60 by the end of 2014.

Chapter 206 reported that Brat Stands were the Chapter's main fundraising source and has been relatively successful.

Chapter 236, represented by Bob Maves, reported the Chapter did four (4) days of fundraising at Woodman's in Janesville resulting in \$6,400. Chapter 236 gave out 15 scholarships at \$300 per person - \$4,500 in total.

Joe Deloria presented the report for Chapter 425 out of Waukesha that recently approved a \$1,000 Educational Assistance Grant to Bobbi Jo Schauer from Elcho, Wisconsin. Ms. Schauer is interested in becoming a medical doctor. Ms. Schauer is the Salutatorian for senior high school class.

Additionally, Chapter 425 will have a booth at the Waukesha County Fair July 16-20, 2014. The Waukesha County Fair is Wisconsin's oldest and longest running Fair in the state. Checkout the Fair's line-up at <http://www.waukeshacountyfair.com/entertainment/main-stage-lineup> and if you plan on attending be sure to stop by the Chapter 425's booth.

Chapter 437, represented by Duane Canon reported in January the Chapter held its Annual Christmas Party during which he awarded Certificates of Appreciation and Service to four (4) VVA members and one (1) AVVA member. The Chapter, since January, helps once a month at the *Day by Day Warming Shelter* for the homeless – some of whom are veterans. Those served by this shelter are those that other shelters because drug and/or alcohol issues.

The Chapter is presently in the planning and organizational phase for putting on the 4th of July Parade with the theme "*Once Served, Now Honored.*"

Some of the Chapter members attended the Oshkosh Patriotic Council meeting who plan the Memorial Day procession. This year will mark the 150th Anniversary for the coming home of Company E, 2nd Division of Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry from the Civil War. This year the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (G.A.R.), Camp #8 will be in charge of the program. the program will resemble that which had occurred when the soldiers of Wisconsin's Volunteer Infantry returned from the Civil War.

March marked nominations for Chapter elections as well as planning for upcoming fundraisers. Also in March four VVA members and one AVVA member of the Chapter presented a \$500 check to 49-year-old Randy Locke who was a 27-year veteran with a tour in the Middle East who suffered a stroke, but was ineligible for

VA benefits because he had his stroke two days before drill. There is a great outpouring of community support for Randy and his family.

Frank Mueller, President of Chapter 448 reported that 2014 has been rather quiet so far; however, on the up side we have gained several new members. We ended 2013 with our Chapter's Annual Christmas Party – even Santa (Tom Dowing) stopped in for a visit. The Chapter is not sitting back though, Brat Fry Season begins April 26th, a Memorial Day Program is scheduled at Freedom Park in Newburg, and several Orange Blossom drives are scheduled for summer.

Chapter member James Ramage passed away on March 8th, our prayers are with our Brother.

The Chapter continues monthly donations to the local food pantries, the Homeless Veterans Initiative, the Camp American Legion, and other programs.

We look forward to a healthy giving year during our fundraisers so we can continue to help our Brother and Sister Veterans.

Chapter 618's report was submitted online by Jim Riesenberg; which stated, "Like everyone else in the rust belt, we await the arrival of spring - or all the melted snow and ice, which ever occurs first.

Reflecting on 2013, Chapter 618 was able to achieve a degree of success in our fund raising efforts, and accordingly, our benefactors shared in our success. Our Chapter's website (www.vva618.org) is up and running, going into our 4th year. The Sheboygan County Veterans Memorial is observing its' 20th anniversary in August, and they are bringing the traveling *WALL THAT HEALS* to the County memorial site August 19th through 24th.

Several Chapter members will visit Horace Mann Middle School in May to *share The Vietnam Experience*, still other members will spend part of an afternoon at the Sheboygan Hebrew Cemetery placing flags on the grave sites of fallen and departed comrades.

The Chapter's Honor Guard participated in several community wide patriotic events in the City of Sheboygan and Sheboygan County, including Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Pearl Harbor Day and POW/MIA Recognition Day. We also partner with Jensen Van-Thruler Chapter 18, Disabled American Veterans for Flag Day and Veterans Day ceremonies at Sunny Ridge Health and Rehabilitation Center.

Our Chapter's meeting site has been changed to the Military Heritage Museum, 824 S. 8th St. in St. in Sheboygan.

Chapter 731's report submitted by Tom Hoffman reviewed the last two months of 2013 and initial plans for 2014. In November the Chapter Color Guard presented Colors at The Morning Rotary Veterans Breakfast and the Manitowoc County United

Veterans Banquet. During November the Chapter put on a Veterans Day Program at the Lakeshore Technical College and participated in Manitowoc's Christmas Parade.

In December the Education Committee went to Mishicot High School and assisted the Salvation Army in its traditional bell ringing.

In the New Year we held our Chapter's Annual Christmas Party and continued our planning for our Branson Tour in March.

April, May, and June are filling up with school programs, parades, and Color presentations.

Unfinished Business

Frank Mueller and Bob Morzenti discussed the difference between having a "raffle" and a "sweepstakes." Basically the former requires licensure through the State, numbered tickets, reporting, etc. The latter does not require any of those and can be done with a minimum of cost to the WSC.

The steps are fairly straightforward:

1. Frank and Bob will workout the payouts and purchase price for sweepstake tickets.
2. Bob will take care of printing. Bob will contact Jim Mullarkey to develop a direction sheet to be sent with the sweepstake tickets.
3. Bob will get the tickets to Frank. In turn Frank will get the tickets to Jim.
4. Jim will place labels on all packets to be sent out to the WSC Chapters via USPS.
5. Stubs and a corresponding check or money order will be sent to Pat Craney, Treasurer or the stubs and corresponding check or money order will be brought to the June Meeting at The Highground.
6. The drawing will be held at the September Meeting being held in Waupaca.

New Business

President Lindbeck reminded everyone that Elections for WSC Offices would be held at The Highground. Those who are interested in running for a WSC Office should inform Bob Morzenti (bobmorzenti@hotmail.com).

Tom moved for Adjournment, John seconded the motion and without objection the meeting was closed.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey, Secretary