



VIETNAM VETERANS of AMERICA WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL

State Council Meeting
December 5, 2015
Firefox/Comfort Suites
Waupaca, Wisconsin 54981

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Agent Orange Committee Meeting



Mike Demske called the Agent Orange Committee to order at 9:00 A.M.

Committee members present: Mike Demske, John Margowski, Richard Lindbeck, Tom Heitman, Robert Piaro, Bob Morzenti, and Jim Mullarkey. Additionally, in the meeting room were other VVA WSC representatives who were invited to participate in the discussion.

Richard, Mike, and John discussed the upcoming Agent Orange Town Hall meeting scheduled for December 9th in Green Bay. To-date all of the information has been disseminated, location set, with good attendance expectations.

The Appleton area Agent Orange Town Hall discussed briefly, but no time or date has been set.

Richard discussed his discussions with representatives of Wisconsin's Oneida Nation. Richard's goal is to develop an Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting during Indian Summer held in Milwaukee September 9th through 11th. Even following numerous discussions no commitment to dates or times have been made. Both the AO Committee and Team Wisconsin will be kept apprised of any developments.

Pat Ciofani, VVA Chapter 324 WSC Delegate, shared that the Milwaukee Chapter was very interested in hosting an Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting in early Spring 2016. [*Since the December discussion the date has been set for May 4, 2016, 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. at the Milwaukee Elks Lodge located at 5555 West Good Hope Road, Milwaukee, WI 53223*]

Additional discussion was had on the way materials for the Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings are provided, specifically the folders, informational content, forms, etc. It seems as

though VVA and AVVA change their procedures on these important items with little notification. Mike and Richard indicated they would, in their numerous capacities, see if a written plan and procedure for acquiring materials from VVA and AVVA is available.

Members of Team Wisconsin reiterated the need for more VVA and AVVA members to join the Team so the burden of developing and presenting does not fall on the few.

Wisconsin State Council Meeting

President Lindbeck called the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. on December 5, 2015, at the Foxfire/Comfort Suites in Waupaca, Wisconsin. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was offered to our POW/MIAs and our active duty service members. The Secretary was asked to complete the role call of Officers, Directors, Chapter delegates, and guests.

The following Officers were present: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The WSC Region Directors present were from Region 1, Region 3, Region 4, and At Large. VVA Region 6 Director, Michael Demske and Wisconsin's AVVA Representative Pat Furno were present. The Chapters represented¹ included: 005(2), 092 (2), 101(4), 206(4), 236(4), 324(3), 351(3), 425(4), 437(3), 448(4), 479(3), 529(3), 618(2), 635(2), 731(3), 767(2), and At Large(3).

There was no reinstatement of suspended VVA Chapters.

President Lindbeck appointed John Margowski as Parliamentarian and Mike Demske the Timekeeper.

President's Report: President Lindbeck shared that Dr. Thomas Berger reported, at VVA National Board/CSCP Meeting that there will be a random Health Study coming out in 2016. The study will entail some 30,000 Vietnam Veterans around the country. Those selected will receive an envelope with three soldiers on it. A Vietnam Veteran cannot volunteer for the study – it is a random selection process.

The 2015 VVA National Convention held in Springfield, Illinois was the largest convention to date (Guidry, 2015). Again, the VVA National Conventions are held on odd years similar to Springfield. The 2017 VVA National Convention is planned for New Orleans, Louisiana and the 2019 VVA National Convention is planned for Spokane, Washington.

The Toxic Exposure Research Act, which was introduced Congressman Benishek (MI-I) in 2015 as H.R. 1769 and Senator Moran (KS-R) as S. 901 will be continued in as The Toxic

¹ As per letter sent (October 6, 2014) to all VVA WSC Officers, WSC Region Directors, and VVA [WSC] Chapter Presidents and Officers must have representation at half of the State Council's scheduled meetings [during the calendar year]. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action. The () followed by the VVA Chapters # indicates the number of meetings attended in the calendar year. Example for 111(2) reflected as present at the June meeting, the Chapter was present at the March and June meetings.

Research Act of 2016. At present 177 (40 percent) Congressional Representatives have signed onto the Act and 38 Senators (38 percent). Please continue to alert have your VVA Chapters and membership contact Congress to move this Act to the floor. Also, two states, Texas and California, have endorsed this Act.

Membership for VVA is presently at 76,236 and as of September 2015, AVVA membership was 8,401. Wisconsin has 2,108 VVA members with 36 new Life Members and AVVA stands at 276 members.

Maj. General James T. Jackson, U.S. Army (Retired), Commemoration Director – [Vietnam War Commemoration](#) encourages all VVA Chapters to become partners. And while there have been some significant corporate partners who have *come on board*, Jackson is urging local VVA Chapters to reach out to businesses and industries in their area to partner with the [Commemoration](#) in concert with or independent of the VVA Chapter. VVA Chapters are also asked to reach out to other veteran's service organizations (VSOs) in their area to either work with the VVA Chapter or partner with the [Vietnam War Commemoration](#) independently. To learn more about the [Vietnam War Commemoration](#) you can go to the website at <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com>.

VVA Region 6 Director's Report: Mike Demske reminded all of the VVA WSC delegates at the meeting that there is a new [VVA Annual Financial Report](#) (October, 2015) with a required submittal date NLT **July 15th**. The [VVA Annual Financial Report](#) is available online through VVA at <http://www.vva.org/Forms/VVA-Annual-Financial-Report.pdf> or through VVA Wisconsin's [website](#) at www.vvawi.org.

The Director also shared that there has been some processing difficulties at the IRS with Chapters filing using the Form 990N (e-Postcard). The suggestion was made to hold off as long as possible, but be your VVA Chapter submits the Form 990N (e-Postcard) no later than the 15th day of the 5th month of the year i.e., **May 15, 2016**.

After filing the Form 990 or Form 990N (e-Postcard) please recall that in addition to submitting the [VVA Annual Financial Report](#) to VVA National, a copy of the Report with proof of submittal and acceptance of the IRS form, must be submitted to VVA WSC Secretary NLT than July 15th.

VVA National has been working with VVA Chapters to review and in some cases re-write their By Laws to two pages as suggested in the [By Laws example](#) provided by VVA National in PDF format at <http://vva.org/Committees/Constitution/Sample-Chapter-Bylaws.pdf>. This example and a Word-based fill-in document is available on the [VVA WSC website](#) at www.vvawi.org.

The Meeting schedule for the WSC has been set as follows:

2016 VVA WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE	
March 19	Foxfire/Comfort Suites Waupaca, WI
June 18	The HighGround Neillsville, WI

September 17	Foxfire/Comfort Suites Waupaca, WI
December 3	Foxfire/Comfort Suites Waupaca, WI

Note: Room blocks have been made at both Foxfire/Comfort Suites in Waupaca, WI and Super 8 in Neillsville, WI. Even though room blocks are available please register early. Check vvawi.org for lodging info.

VVA WSC Region Directors' Reports: Directors from Region 1, and 4 had nothing to Report. Region 3 Director, Tom Hoffman, reported from the breadth of his view of VVA from the Chapter, state, and national levels *camaraderie*. Regardless of time served, branch of service or location everyone is a Veteran and nothing exemplified that more than the VVA National Convention in Springfield.

As Christmas approaches Hoffman reflected on all the Christmas Eves and Days that have been missed, especially by those who were in Vietnam or supporting the efforts in Southeast Asia as well as the men and women on active duty around the world today.

Knowing how lonely this season can be for our Veterans and our active service men and women. My wish for each is a very Merry Christmas, may God bless you with a great New Year, and may He continue to Bless America and those who serve in it's protection.

Secretary's Report: The Secretary asked if action should be taken relative to WSC Chapter delegate participation through 2015. With corrections made to the September meeting report and those present for the December meeting, following roll call, the chart reflects four (4) WSC VVA Chapters out of attendance compliance per the VVA Constitution and the VVA WSC letter sent out on October 6, 2014.

VVA Wisconsin State Council			
Chapter Representation March through December 2015*			
VVA Chapter	Mtg. Represent.	VVA Chapter	Mtg. Represent.
005	3	425	4
092	2	437	3
101	4	448	4
115	3	479	3
206	4	529	3
220	1	549	0
221	1	618	2
224	2	635	4
236	4	729	2
256	2	731	3
324	3	767	2
331	3	921	1
351	3	At Large	3
409	1		

* As per letter sent (October 6, 2014) to all VVA WSC Officers, WSC Region Directors, and VVA Chapter Presidents and Officers must have representation at half of the State Council's scheduled meetings. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.

The Secretary is asking the VVA WSC to recommend if any action should be taken as per the VVA Constitution and the VVA Disciplinary Procedures, specifically a motion to notify the identified VVA Chapters of their **temporary suspension** and reinstatement is as simple as attending the required number of VVA WSC meetings.

The Secretary restated this motion, John Margowski moved for approval and Mike Demske seconded the motion. The motion was carried on a voice vote.

The Secretary will send letters to the presidents of the respective VVA Chapters with a follow-up Email to an officer with an Email address within the chapter. Additionally, copies will be forwarded to VVA WSC Officers, WSC Region Directors, VVA Region 6 Director, and AVVA Wisconsin's State Representative.

VVA Chapter 549, Marshfield Area, is planning dissolution of their VVA Chapter. The President of VVA Chapter 549 has had discussions with the Wisconsin Rapids VVA Chapter 101 who has offered to absorb, as many members from VVA Chapter 549 want to transfer. Those who elect not to transfer may become At Large VVA members.

The Secretary received a Transfer Form from Donald Buchanan transferring from At Large to VVA Chapter 437 (Oshkosh).

Addendum to President and VVA Region 6 Report: President Lindbeck and VVA Region 6 Director Demske met with some Veterans residing at King. The purpose of the meeting was to learn if there was any interest to start a VVA Chapter at King. There appeared to be some interest, but there were too few at the meeting.

Lindbeck and Demske shared there would be further discussions in March 2016, following an Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting, tentatively planned for the end of March. They believe following the meeting a discussion is possible to learn of the viability of forming a VVA Chapter at King.

Treasurer's Report: In addition to the Treasurer's Report, Patrick Craney reiterated the need to get VVA WSC Budget figures to him no later than February 1, 2016.

Please note as President Lindbeck mentioned, a new VVA Annual Financial Report must be used for 2016. The report is available on [VVA National's website](http://vva.org/forms.html) at <http://vva.org/forms.html> as well as on the [Wisconsin State Council's website](http://vvawi.org/info/forms) at <http://vvawi.org/info/forms>.

AVVA State Representative Report: Wisconsin's AVVA State Representative, Pat Furno, reiterated the Fire Sale AVVA is having will end December 31, 2015.

AVVA will be maintaining the AVVA National Convention calendar concurrent with VVA National Convention i.e., during odd years such as 2015, 2017, 2019, etc. The next AVVA National Convention will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana in 2017.

Recognizing the time frame for the AVVA National Convention, AVVA Representatives ***must*** be elected at the VVA Chapter level no later than April 2016. Representatives will be elected for a two-year period and allowed to vote at the State AVVA Election – this will be concurrent with the VVA WSC Meeting on June 18, 2016, at The HighGround in Neillsville, Wisconsin. AVVA Representatives may also be a delegate to the National AVVA Convention.

As a point of clarification, AVVA members may be on a VVA Chapter Board of Directors serving in an *ex-officio* or non-voting capacity.

VVA Chapter Reports:

VVA Chapter 101 reported closed-out 2015 with a very busy quarter; which included Christmas Parades in Wisconsin Dells in September, a Re-Kindle the Spirit of Christmas Parade in November, and the Nekoosa Parade in December.

Our VVA Chapter was honored to participate in the Woods County Veterans Memorial legacy stone ceremony in November; Veterans' Day Ceremonies in Washington School, Veterans Park in Wisconsin Rapids, River Run Assisted Living Home, Pearl Harbor Day at VFW Post 2534, and the Welcome Home at Central Wisconsin Airport for *Never Forgotten Honor Flight*.

VVA Chapter members worked with Lincoln High School's Wood Working Club – guiding them in making wood flag cases that can be purchased by the public so that deceased Veteran's casket flags can be displayed with honor. This activity had a very strong community response including the local television station.

Our VVA Chapter made several donations at the end of the year to: King and Tomah Veterans Homes, The HighGround, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation, Mobility for Vets Wheelchair Shop, Camp American Legion, Wood County Veterans Memorial Fund, AVVA, American Legion Baseball, YMCA, Salvation Army, Wood County Human Services Department, Stock the Shelves, and Jeremiah's Crossing. The VVA Chapter also donated money for an ad in Assumption High School Athletic Winter Program booklet.

One of our members, William Haack, started the [American Heroes Café](#), check the [VVA WSC website](#) for the write up or the [story](#).

VVA Chapter 206 reported by Marshal Giese, in our VVA Chapter's fourth quarter a most heartfelt opportunity was participating in Shawano's Veterans Day activities. Beginning at Shawano's Middle School our VVA Chapter presented both the Colors and had speakers. Following the program students came to the Commons of the school, shook our hands, and said, "Thank you." This was a very moving experience.

Following the middle school activities our VVA Chapter held a program for the public at the Court House. This program, like the earlier middle school program, was a mutually heart warming program.

VVA Chapter 236 reported by Bob Maves, summarized the VVA Chapter's year of activities with emphasis on the fourth quarter. Like many other VVA Chapters our VVA Chapter was represented in assorted parades throughout the area during 2015. Also, VVA Chapter 236 was honored to represent fellow Veterans in too many funerals throughout the year.

In summary, the first three quarters the VVA Chapter donated in excess of \$500 and awarded \$4,500 in scholarships (i.e., 15 scholarships at \$300 each), authorized payments for a brick in the Veterans Walkway for Brian Hansen soloist for many years at Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies, purchased new rifles for Color Guards and two gun safes, hosted VVA Region 6 Meeting, conducted eight (8) panel discussions in area schools, conducted a program honoring the ninety-nine Janesville men who were prisoners in the *Bataan Death March*, participated in several programs and ceremonies for Memorial Day and Flag Day, and conducted an Annual Golf Outing and Picnic prior to our August VVA Chapter meeting.

Our VVA Chapter in a number of activities in the fourth quarter, including the POW/MIA Ceremony at Veterans Walkway, the Vietnam Veterans appreciation ceremony held at Monroe High School, a Veterans Day Ceremony at Veterans Walkway, and presented Colors at Janesville hockey game. The VVA Chapter also conducted Honor Guard training and successful Orange Blossom sales (scholarship funds), a raffle, and ringing of the Bell for the Salvation Army.

VVA Chapter 425 reported by Tom Wittke, that the VVA Chapter's booth at Waukesha County's Fair was successful.

VVA Chapter 425 was pleased to have six members as delegates at the National Convention held in Springfield, Illinois.

The VVA Chapters Honor Guard was represented at a number of parades in the fourth quarter.

The By Laws Committee of the VVA Chapter is nearly finished re-writing the VVA Chapter's 25-year-old multi-page By Laws.

Our VVA Chapter has mailed many more packages to service men and women overseas.

At the VVA Chapter's October meeting an Advisor from an area high school and three high school students visited the members and shared treats to honor the Vietnam Veterans. President Lindbeck and VVA Region 6 Director Mike Demske attended the VVA Chapters October meeting to provide updates from VVA National.

VVA Chapter 437 reported by Duane Canon, that July was a very busy month with his VVA Chapter working with AMVETS Post 7 during the Sawdust Days event the week

of the 4th of July. Canon also coordinated donations for the *Old Glory Honor Flight*. Canon went to all of the Veteran Service Organizations and Auxiliaries asking for donation's that netted a total \$4,015.

September 19th was our annual POW/MIA Ceremony with K.C. Johnson from DAV as speaker. Paula Steinhardt provided special music and area veterans' organizations formed the rifle squad and played taps.

Our VVA Chapter's Orange Blossom drive at five stores in three days resulted in \$6,000. This drive will go a long way for our Christmas projects, food pantries, warming shelter, abuse shelters, helping veteran families, and so much more.

On Veterans Day our VVA Chapter participated in ceremonies at the Winnebago Courthouse in Oshkosh.

VVA Chapter 529 reported by Bob Morzenti, shared the VVA Chapter participated in Veterans Day activities at numerous schools. The VVA Chapter visited nursing homes and provided flags and pins.

VVA Chapter 448 reported by Frank Mueller, suggests a very successful year in fundraising activities as well as participation in numerous parades.

In November the VVA Chapter attended the Veterans Day program at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School in Jackson, Wisconsin. Our VVA Chapter held its Veterans Day program at our Memorial in Newburg, Wisconsin.

The VVA Chapter continues to donate funds to The Fisher House, Homeless Veterans Initiative, Camp American Legion, and several other organizations. While we are planning our Christmas Part for December 15th, our VVA Chapter is pleased to have gained several new members; the Fire Sale did it, and is in the midst of planning activities for the coming year – 2016.

VVA Chapter 618 reported by Dave Gehr, we beginning with a correction from September "...placing more than 10,000 flags on the graves of fallen and departed comrades in 101 cemeteries throughout Sheboygan County." to "110 cemeteries."

Our VVA Chapter Honor Guard participated in several Veterans Day events, including the City of Sheboygan observance at North High School. Members also participated in presentations at Morning Side Terrace Nursing Home and Sunny Ridge Health and Rehab Center.

The VVA Chapter's Honor Guard participated in the annual Pearl Harbor Day observance at King's Park in Sheboygan.

In keeping with the holiday tradition, VVA Chapter 618 provided \$400 worth of gift cards from area merchants to the Sheboygan County Veteran Service Commission to support Christmas cheer.

VVA Chapter 767 as reported by Tom Niesen, indicated that fundraising activities in the area have been very successful. Tom also want people to check out their website at www.vva767.org.

Tom Hoffman moved to adjourn the VVA WSC Meeting at 11:55 A.M.; which was approved without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey

James E. Mullarkey
Secretary