



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL

State Council Meeting
December 6, 2014
Comfort Suites - Foxfire
Waupaca, Wisconsin 54981

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Agent Orange Committee



The Committee was Called to Order by Co-Chairperson Demske at 9:00 A.M.

Attendance: Michael Demske, Richard Lindbeck, James Mullarkey, John Margowski, Pat Furno, and Robert Piaro

The September 27th AO Townhall Meeting held in Manitowoc was well attended with between 45 and 50 people. Mike Demske, Richard Lindbeck, John Margowski, and Nancy Switzer (TEAM WISCONSIN) led the meeting. The best part of the meeting was the discussion and the overall information shared. Overall, this was Townhall Meeting was a true success.

October 23rd Mike Demske, Richard Lindbeck, and John Margowski did a Townhall Meeting in Richland Center.

Mike plans to visit the Shawano Chapter to share some information on the Agent Orange Townhall Meeting format.

A discussion on developing an Agent Orange Townhall Meeting Handbook based on TEAM WISCONSIN'S format for developing and running AO townhall meetings. This will be discussed further at the March 2015, VVA WSC Meeting.

An AO Townhall Meeting is being planned for April 18, 2015, at Fox Valley Technical College located next to the VA Clinic. Mike shared that success of the Townhall Meeting is more than a newspaper article, but for VVA WSC Directors, VVA Chapter Presidents, and VVA members to spread the word in the immediate and surrounding communities as well as other Veteran organizations in the geographical area.

Information was shared on the Children of Vietnam Veterans Alliance (www.covvha.net) and the contact person Heather A Bowser (hbowser@covvha.net).

Motion to adjourn the Committee Meeting was made by Margowski and seconded by Piaro. The motion was carried without objection.

Wisconsin State Council Meeting

President Lindbeck Called to Order the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 P.M. on December 6, 2014. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and A Moment of Silence was offered to our POWs/MIAs and active duty service. The Secretary completed Roll Call of Officers, Directors and Chapters. The President confirmed a quorum.

Of special note the following officers were present: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Directors from Region 1 and 4. The Chapters represented included: 005, 101, 206, 221, 224, 236, 324, 331, 351, 425, 437, 448, 479, 529, 618, 635, 731, 767, and At-Large. VVA Region 6 Director, John Margowski, was also present.

There was no reinstatement of suspended Chapters.

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

The Agenda approved without objection.

The Minutes of the September 13, 2014, were corrected to show starting time as 10:00 A.M. after which, the Minutes were approved without objection.

President Richard Lindbeck presented the President's Report reflected that the President attended the BOD/CSCP in October during which he was elected 2nd Vice-President of the CSCP. A major focus of the meeting was present changes to and needed revisions in the handbook for State Council/Chapter President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

The National Board Meeting focused on S5484 and HR 4816 – bills to study the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2014. Both bills have been presented and VVA President John Rowan has testified in their support. It is believed that with Congress in a *Lame Duck Session* these bills have fairly good chance of passage.

November was filled with opportunities to represent VVA throughout Wisconsin:

- November 3rd I attended the *Salute to Veterans* in West Bend. The West Bend City Council sponsors this program each year in honor of Veterans.
- November 6th Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School in Jackson, WI, I represented VVA WSC at their Veterans Day Program.
- November 7th Mike Demske and I along with 10 other Wisconsin representatives attended the VVA Region 6 Conference held in Clinton, IA, led by Region 6 Director John Margowski.
- November 11th, as President, I represented VVA WSC at Veterans Day programs:
 - Chapter 448 in Newburg dedicated several more memory stones at the Veterans Park;
 - Attended an excellent program with inmates and the Warden at Fox Lake Corrections; and
 - The Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School presented *The Colors* with Chapter 448 at the Milwaukee Children's Choir Program.

Following the President's Report, Lindbeck responded to and encouraged further discussion on AO Townhall Meetings as well as the Toxic Exposure Research Study bills in Congress.

Pat Furno stepped in for Patrick Craney (excused) to provide the VVA WSC Treasurer's Report. Following the Treasurer's Report John Margowski moved that any funds (i.e., budgeted (\$1500.00 and all donations) in line item 605 Agent Orange Committee be carried-over each year. Mike Demske seconded this motion, which was approved without objection.

The Secretary Mullarkey reported the AO letter signed by the officers and Committee Chairs was mailed to AVVA President Hobbs. Additionally, Mullarkey shared the two letters copied to the WSC from VA regarding funds for King.

Following Mullarkey's report Mike Weaver indicated the ongoing need for drivers to take homeless vets residing at King to job interviews.

John Margowski, VVA Region 6 Director, indicated the more than 880 files in his possession, which he believes 33 percent are still active and need to be forwarded to VVA. Following a discussion with National, John will approach Janesville to have the files scanned to an appropriate medium and forwarded to National. The remaining hard copies will be destroyed.

The Region 6 Convention held in Clinton Iowa was successful with 128 attendees between morning and afternoon sessions. This Conference truly was filled with discussions on a number of topics.

Margowski shared the latest information on the Region 6 Conference being planned for May 16th in Janesville, Wisconsin. Tentatively room rates at the Ramada Inn – Janesville starts at \$99 for a king or two double beds. Margowski along with other WSC officers and representatives working on this Conference are looking at a pre-Conference event on May 15th, the Conference on May 16th, and a post-Conference event May 16th.

The Conference will focus is threefold:

1. Resolutions to be acted on at the National Convention in Springfield, IL.
2. Proposed Constitutional Amendments to the VVA Constitution impacting National, State, and VVA Chapters.
3. Potential candidates running for National office as well as Region 6.

Margowski sought support that the Region 6 Conference be held in Wisconsin and VVA WSC support this Conference. This was moved and approved without objection by President Lindbeck.

Mike Demske provided an overview of the Agent Orange Committee (please see above).

Pat Furno, Wisconsin's AVVA State Representative, share two important issues:

1. The *In Memory Memorial Plaque Project*, specifically in January architectural plans will be presented as a repair resulting in a movement of the plaque and restructure. The repair plan is a VVA/AVVA joint project with AVVA taking the lead. The cost for the plan presentation is \$12,000. With an estimated total cost \$180,000. Visiting Treasurer Wayne Reynolds recommitted VVA to 50 percent of this project's cost during VVA WSC December 2014 Meeting.

2. AVVA is discussing changing governing documents to align with VVA; however, these changes will not be available for the National Convention being held in Springfield, July 2015.

WSC Region Reports

Tom Hoffman, Region 3 Director, reported his unique experience speaking at the Manitowoc's Elks Lodge Veterans Banquet. What made this event so special were those Veterans in attendance from WWII to present! My part was history and memories. My reward was a letter from a Junior High School student who wrote me about how my talk and how it helped her understand the experiences of her *Grandpa* and her Uncle.

I know it is hard to share our histories, but we must keep the stories alive! It is hard to do this, to start try writing a Journal of your Military experience(s), the memories you have and those that pop in as you are sharing with others. As we get older these stories are going to fade. Get them down on paper. *It is important to keep the memories of Vietnam alive for the sake of HISTORY.*

Chapter Reports

Chapter 101 reported how their Color Guard participated in Veterans Day ceremonies at various locations during the Quarter, including Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony and the *Rekindle the Spirit* parade in Wisconsin Rapids and the Christmas Parade in Nekoosa.

The Chapter's community activities included their ongoing highway cleanup in October and a display of Vietnam memorabilia at the Wisconsin Rapids Library in November. In December Tom Sachs and *Sully* Sullivan collected non-perishable goods, donated \$150 to South Wood County Emergency Food Pantry, and \$300 to the Veterans Assistance Project at King and another \$300 to the PTSD Unit at the VA Hospital in Tomah. Also, the Chapter donated \$150 to the Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army, Ranger/Rambler Baseball, Opportunity Development Center, and American Legion Riders for Wreaths Across America. The Chapter's Holiday Program at the Riverview Hospital resulted in proceeds allocated to the UW Cancer Center Riverview and UW Cancer Center Tomo Therapy radiation unit – all in memory of thirteen deceased Chapter 101members.

Chapter 101's website is www.cwvva101.com check it out!

Chapter 206, Shawano, conduct several fund raising activities during the last quarter of the year. The proceeds of these activities are used in response to community charitable requests and supporting local veterans in need of financial support.

The Chapter's members participated in a number of funerals, parades, and numerous Veterans Day ceremonies. This Veterans Day two of our Chapter members placed wreath during the ceremony.

Members provide informational sessions on Vietnam at the schools in our area – we must keep the story alive.

Through our CVSO, Chapter members transport veterans to the clinics in Appleton, Green Bay, and Milwaukee.

Chapter 236, Janesville, reported on all four quarters highlighted by plans for Vietnam Veteran and GWOT Memorials, including Battlefield Cross, at Traxler Park to the dedication of the Memorial in the Fall 2014. Education activities included participating in eight panel discussions at area high schools and selecting 17 scholarship winners each receiving \$300.00.

The Chapter was pleased placing flags on city streets and graves at local cemeteries. Our members also participated in a number of ceremonies from Memorial Day, July 4th, and several summer ceremonies at fairs and other events.

A few of our fundraising activities included: the Nickel Toss in Edgerton, parking cars over Labor Day weekend, and Orange Blossom sales which netted \$3,685 for the scholarship program. And our members donated their time, 64 hours over two weekends, to ring the bell for the Salvation Army.

Chapter 437, Oshkosh, reported during their fourth quarter that they held the POW/MIA Ceremony at the South Park War Memorial with Steve House (Waupaca) as the guest speaker. Following that activity the Chapter along with other Veteran organizations did a Rifle Salute and played Taps which was our local television station recorded and aired later.

Our annual Orange Blossom sales in October were not as successful as in the past, but will be a welcomed addition to our fund for Christmas projects.

Duane Canon, President of Chapter 437, was nominated by his oldest granddaughter, Morgan, for Home Town Hero from WFRV-TV Channel 5 in Green Bay. The interview/taping was done by Terry Kovarik October 23rd and was aired October 24th [Congratulations Duane!].

On Veterans Day the Chapter participated at the program at the Oshkosh County Courthouse. A professor from UW-Oshkosh was the speaker and talked about WWI. On the same day President Canon was the guest speaker at the Winneconne Middle School's Veterans Day activities.

December is busy for the Chapter for needs are many and we try to serve as many as we can including Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Agency, Bella Medical Clinic, Omro Food Pantry, Winneconne Food Pantry, King Homeless Veterans, Day by Day Warming Shelter in Oshkosh, the Salvation Army, and other deserving charities.

Chapter 448, Newburg, reported on the last few months of their calendar with hardy successful BRAT FRIES season. Our members around Washington County responded to parades and ceremonies. However, making a donation to and participating in the Veterans Fish Outing was most memorable – this program take veterans from C. Zablocki VA Hospital in Milwaukee out on Lake Michigan salmon fishing for the day! All boats and equipment are donated for the day.

The Chapter also made donations to the Food Pantries in Washington and Ozaukee Counties.

In November our Chapter participated in the Veterans Day Program at Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School and presented Colors at the Milwaukee Children's Choir at the school that evening. We also dedicated legacy stones for the Veterans Park Memorial.

And in closing our annual scholarship raffle was once again a success!

Chapter 731, Manitowoc, in our final report to the WSC for 2014 we are pleased to report making \$5,000 with our Fair Stand (we have The Ant Hill Mob) and \$7,000 at our Veterans Dance.

November 8th we provided the Color Guard at Felician Village for the Sunrise Rotary, two of us fired with a joint Honor Guard at our Veterans Memorial, and later the Color Guard participated at an Art Exhibit at Silver Lake College – the artist had numerous portraits including one of her cousin that was killed in Afghanistan.

November 26th the Chapter participated in the Holiday Parade.

December 13th we plan to be ringing bells for the Salvation Army. We pray for good giving for we usually collect \$1,200 - \$1,300.

Chapter 618, Sheboygan, reported they will be celebrating the fifth year for their website www.vva618.org.

The Chapter was pleased to be able to assist in the financial aspects of the Traveling Wall visit as well as having several members assist the Sheboygan County Veterans Memorial Committee with the Traveling Wall's set-up and takedown in August.

The Honor Guard participated in several community and county events including Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Pearl Harbor Day, and POW/MIA Recognition Day. Chapter members "Shared the Vietnam Experience" with students at Horace Mann Middle School. Chapter members placed flags on Veterans graves at Sheboygan Hebrew Cemetery.

Our Chapter partnered with DAV Chapter 18 for Flag Day and Veterans Day Ceremonies.

A motion for Adjournment was seconded and accepted without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Mullarkey

James E. Mullarkey
Secretary