



**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL**

State Council Meeting  
September 21, 2019  
Ramada Waupaca  
Waupaca, Wisconsin

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**Toxic Exposure Committee Meeting (Formerly Agent Orange Committee)**



Attendance: Open Meeting

The Toxic Exposure meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

Sam Rogers, of Concerned Veterans for America (CVA), spoke to the group. He was deployed 3 times and was a member of Student Veterans of America (SVA) while in college. After graduation, he became a member of CVA and an advisor/mentor to SVA members. SVA is approximately 10 years old and could be considered an “American Legion for college students” since you must be a veteran in order to belong to the organization; there is no actual membership. The advantage to SVA is that it can engage younger veterans earlier in their adult life. The disadvantages are: when a student graduates, they can no longer belong to SVA resulting in a high turnover rate; and, the organization communicates remotely and electronically.

Sam initially contacted VVA while he was a member of Student Veterans of America (SVA). He believes in supporting all veteran advocacy organizations (American Legion, VFW, VVA, DAV, etc.) and is interested in holding joint events to include CVA, SVA and veterans’ advocacy groups. CVA targets groups that can have an impact on CVA’s “current mission”. Sam is also trying to establish a working relationship with UW-Milwaukee in order to use their facilities for CVA events.

We would like to have a Town Hall in Milwaukee by the end of the year. There has also been a request to hold a Town Hall in Madison, Racine/Kenosha and Eau Claire. Initial requests for a Town Hall should be made to Mike Demske then Richard Lindbeck, if necessary. All requests must meet the criteria to hold a Town Hall, including obtaining donations for printing and/or facility use. National sends folders but VVA must pay for what is included in the packets.

The Blue Water Navy bill that Congress passed has been signed by the President; there was a discussion regarding whether or not surviving spouses may be included. VVA is encouraging veterans to sign up for the registry and/or submit claims; the bill indicates the VA must start processing claims by 1/1/20. The radius for eligibility consideration has been reduced from 15

to 12 miles; carriers are included. Service members must also be listed on the ship registry. Three (3) additional conditions are being considered as service connected: bladder cancer, Parkinson-like condition (I didn't catch the actual condition name) and hyperthyroidism.

James Byrne was been confirmed as the new Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs on 9/11.

There is a new concern regarding toxic exposure. Dicamba was developed when Dow/Monsanto added 24D to glyphosate. Residents within 15-20 miles of a cornfield where dicamba was sprayed have been exposed to the new carcinogen. There have been complains of application "drift" destroying crops, plants, etc. Dicamba was also often used under power lines after the vegetation there became resistant to Round-Up. Monsanto has been purchased by Bayer so plaintiffs probably won't see any money for years from the Round-Up suit that is currently being advertised on television.

### **Wisconsin State Council Meeting**



President Lindbeck called the State Council Meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. on September 21, 2019 in Waupaca, Wisconsin. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was offered to our POW/MIA's and active duty service members. The roll call of Officers, Directors and Chapters was completed. A quorum was confirmed with 17 chapters present.

Present: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, (Secretary, excused); Directors from Regions 1, 2 and 4 were present and 3 was excused; Chapters present were: 005 (4/3), 101 (2/3), 115 (3/2), 206 (3/3), 220 (2/2), 224 (3/2), 236 (2/2), 256 (4/2), 324 (1/2), 331 (4/2), 425 (1/3), 448 (1/3), 479 (4/2), 529 (4/2), 635 (1/3), 767 (1/2), 921 (1/2), 1130 (4/3), and At Large (3). VVA Region 6 Director Bob Grabinski and VVA At Large Director John Margowski were also present. Please refer to footnote 1 below.

Tom Heitman was appointed Parliamentarian; John Margowski was appointed Timekeeper.

### **Approval of Agenda:**

A motion was made to eliminate the 12:00 PM end time on the current agenda and all future agendas. Motion by Foye (At Large), 2<sup>nd</sup> by Willman (479), and approved without objection.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

WSC Committee Reports amended to read: "Since this came out of Committee there was a motion, but no 2<sup>nd</sup> required; the By-Laws were accepted without objection." (No notation on who made motion to accept; I think Tom Heitman brought this up so he may have moved to

accept as amended, but I don't know who/if a 2<sup>nd</sup> was made). Minutes were approved as amended.

President Lindbeck recognized past VVA WSC Presidents John Margowski, Bob Piaro, and Bob Morzenti; Region 6 representative Bob Grabinski; and former Army SSgt Sam Rogers of Concerned Veterans of America.

### **Invited Guest:**

Sam Rogers, Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) – Wisconsin

Sam served in the Army for 8 years. He became involved with VVA when Rebecca at VVA National reached out to him. Concerned Veterans for America (CVA) has their own “mission” (I attached the bio he distributed) and is a policy-based advocacy organization. CVA would sponsor “joint events” to provide educational events for the community. The events would include a variety of topics, including toxic exposure, CVA’s foreign political initiative, etc., to allow the organizations to reach a broader audience and share CVA’s message network with other organizations. Sam talked about the process CVA uses to network with students and/or college professionals in order to get their message out the public and a diverse audience. Veteran organizations who participate in the events would be able to share their information at those events, the organizational information could then be spread through word of mouth. The goal of CVA is to empower all veteran organizations to hold the government accountable for their actions, increase visibility and engage younger veterans on current and/or outstanding issues. There are 18 state Student Veterans of America Chapters, 150 active volunteers, 2 full-time staff and several part-time staff in Wisconsin; there are 360,000 members nationally; they “rotate out” when they graduate and try to find a new organization to join.

### **President’s Report:**

- National Convention: 13 registered delegates from Wisconsin; 677 regular delegates (200 less than at New Orleans). The 2021 Convention is in Greensboro, NC and will look at the resolutions regarding where the organization will go--the National Board must decide. There are \$20,000,000 in assets to disburse when VVA eventually disbands. National election results:
  - President – John Rowan
  - Vice President – Tom Burke
  - Secretary – Bill Meeks
  - Treasurer – Jack McManus
  - Board of Directors:
    - Credentials Committee Chair – Richard Lindbeck
    - Resolutions Committee Chair – John Margowski
    - Finance Committee Co-Chair(?) – Bob Grabinski
- The U S Army drill team will perform at West Bend High School at 11:30 AM on 11/1
- John Margowski discussed “ending” VVA:
  - Working Group I provided National with an extensive report that wasn’t officially recognized (it was “accepted” by National) or discussed at the Convention; Working Group II had nothing to discuss; John Rowan challenged the Board to do what many perceived as what WG II was tasked to do. A motion to accept WG I recommendations but was never voted on. There is concern about the lack of focus on how to handle the dissolution situation since this is the 3<sup>rd</sup>

time the issue has been brought up. Concerned Veterans for America (CVA), which has been mentioned as a successor to VVA, has no veterans benefits program. If VVA fails to follow New York law **at any time**, the State of New York can come in and take over the organization. WG I recommendations would apply to the Wisconsin State Council if National is dissolved.

- Richard passed around the Arizona state “report” on the Convention (a bound booklet of about 40 pages)

### **VVA Region 6 Director Report – Bob Grabinski**

- Bob is serving on the National Budget Committee.
- Bob requested input on a potential Region 6 Conference, including: where, when and what topics to cover. Bob requested you send any suggestions to Richard, who will forward them to Bob.
- If you have concerns, Bob requested you copy Richard in on the e-mail you send Bob ([bgrabinski@vva.org](mailto:bgrabinski@vva.org)) so Richard is also aware of them.
- Bob also advised that the articles he submits to The Veteran are edited so what you see may not be exactly what he submitted.

### **VVA At-Large Report:**

- There was no opportunity to discuss, nor vote on, the Working Group I report on the dissolution of VVA at the National Convention.
- Wisconsin AB 888 and SB 116 are veteran property tax credit bills; contact your State representative regarding passage of these bills.
- There is a veteran’s job fair on 10/15
- A multi-million-dollar court decision was on veterans using both the Montgomery GI Bill and Post 9/11 benefits (the Montgomery GI Bill benefits would be used first, then the Post 9/11 benefits). The courts also ruled regarding veterans who were denied emergency care or emergency care reimbursement; this could cost millions, if not billions, of dollars.
- A new Wisconsin national cemetery was discussed. The Northwoods Veterans Cemetery in Harshaw was discussed.
- Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin proposed a bill (which passed) to protect economic security (please check with John for details since my notes are pretty sketchy!).
- Several veteran-related scams were discussed, including fake e-mails.
- A bill for Wisconsin to pay for funding to be used to search for MIA’s wasn’t passed.
- The rule requiring veterans be married 10 years in order for their surviving spouse to collect their disability payment has been changed to a 1-year requirement.

### **Vice-President’s Report – Dan Scuiuti**

- Will be submitted later/electronically.

### **Secretary’s Report:**

- Secretary excused.

### **Treasurer’s Report:**

- The State Council is doing well on their actual vs projected expenses.

### **AVVA State Representative Report:**

- The following officers were elected at the National Convention in Spokane:

President – Joanna Henshaw, Nevada  
 Vice President – Kaye Gardner, Maryland  
 Secretary – Nina Schloffel, California  
 Treasurer – Kathy Andras, Louisiana  
 Region 6 Director – Fran Davis, Missouri  
 Region 6 Deputy Director – Rick Talford, Wisconsin

- Pat has state level issues to discuss with AVVA members (including information on 2021 National Convention delegates) at the December meeting. If there is no Agent Orange/Toxic Exposure meeting, AVVA will meet before the State Council meeting, otherwise it will be after the State Council meeting is completed.
- Chapter Representative elections must be held in April, 2020.

### **VVA WSC Region Director Reports:**

#### **Region 1 Director:**

- No report.

#### **Region 2 Director:**

- No report.

#### **Region 3 Director:**

- Absent.

#### **Region 4 Director:**

- No report.

#### **At Large Director:**

- No report.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Scholarship Committee:**

- 3 scholarships at \$1,500 will be awarded. Students who are graduating from high school or are already in college are eligible to apply. Applications can be found on the website (vva.wi.org) and are due on 2/15/20.

### **VVA Chapter Reports:**

- Verbal reports given by Chapters 5 (Eau Claire), 479 (North Central Wisconsin/Wausau) and 767 (Milwaukee).

### **Old Business:**

- It was asked if the Household Goods money issue was ever resolved; the response was that it had been.

### **New Business:**

- A question was asked regarding why the State Council meets at The HighGround in June. The space limitations in the garage and the distance to travel for a number of delegates were concerns that were expressed. The strong connection between Vietnam veterans and the State Council with The Highground was discussed. A suggestion was made by Jim Ottman (Chapter 331) that the June meeting be moved to The HighGround's newly acquired facility (Camp Victory), about 15 miles north of The

Highground. The facility has a room large enough for the group as well as a full kitchen. The Secretary will contact Jon Weiler (The Highground Executive Director) to see if that would be a possibility.

- Pat Furno distributed the appropriate paperwork Chapters need to complete State tax-exempt forms for potential purchases.
- Tom Heitman requested a section titled “Announcements and Information for the good of the order” (or similar language) be added to the agenda.

Motion by Tom Heitman (Chapter 448) to adjourn; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Second by Joe Heil (Chapter 5). Passed

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy L. Foye

<sup>1</sup> As per VVA WSC letter sent (October 6, 2014) to all VVA WSC Officers, WSC Region Directors, and VVA WSC Chapter Presidents, Officers and their delegates; it was declared that all VVA WSC Chapters must be represented at no less than one-half or 50 percent of the scheduled WSC Meetings – held quarterly during the calendar year. Failure to meet this minimum requirement will result in disciplinary action and VVA WSC suspension – refer to VVA Constitution and National Disciplinary Policy. The parentheses () following the VVA Chapters number (e.g., 007 **(3)**) indicates the number of meetings recorded as attended in the calendar year as of the roll call. The # refers to the VVA Chapters WSC region. An underline of the VVA WSC Chapter number (e.g., 009 (1)) indicates that they have been suspended in the previous calendar year and have as yet attended the minimum meetings for the present calendar year. The number following the # sign indicates the number VVA members represented followed by the number of AVVA members (e.g., 4/2).