



## Vietnam Veterans of America

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*A Not-For-Profit Veterans Service Organization Chartered by the United States Congress*

### **Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors Meeting January 10, 2014 Approved by Board**

President John Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Friday January 10, 2014, at 9:12 am, at the Sheraton Hotel in Silver Spring, MD. National Chaplain Father Phil Salois delivered the opening prayer which was followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The National Secretary conducted the roll call of the National Board of Directors. Present were:

John Rowan, President	Sharon Hobbs *	Jim Pace
Marsha Four, Vice President	Joe Jennings	Felix Peterson
Bill Meeks, Secretary	Joe Kristek	Dick Southern
Wayne Reynolds, Treasurer	Allen Manuel	Dan Stenvold
Bob Barry	John Margowski	Pastor Toro
Linda Blankenship	Sara McVicker	Herb Worthington
Dennis Cohoon	John Miner	Jerry Yamamoto
Richard DeLong	Charlie Montgomery	
Charlie Hobbs	Tom Owen	

*\* AVVA President is a non-voting member of the National Board of Directors*

Also present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO and Mike Swift, Parliamentarian.

#### **Announcements**

President Rowan covered several topics of interest. Mokie Porter had provided a list of all of the VVA National Convention sites from 1983 through present. President Rowan noted how the IRS was hit for slow action in reviewing pulled tax exemptions. President Rowan stated that the FTVA (Freedom Through Vigilance Association) is the alumni association for his old AF unit's command and its later incarnations. He would encourage all of the Board Members to develop similar correspondence to your unit's association acknowledging your title in VVA.

#### **Preliminary Business**

Secretary Meeks restored the order of business by submitting the following motions:

**Motion 1**  
**To accept the BOD meeting agenda as amended.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

**Motion 2**

**To accept the BOD meeting minutes from October 11, 2013 in Silver Spring, MD.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

**National President/J. Rowan**

President Rowan has submitted a written report and gave a verbal report:

On October 24, 2013 I attended a meeting of the NYC Veterans Advisory Board. We discussed new legislation for veteran owned businesses.

November 2-4, 2013 Tom Berger and I attended a craft conference of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), which included a retirees meeting. We presented a seminar on veterans' health issues. Over 100 people attended the seminar. It was a diverse group including Vietnam vets, newer vet, women vets, and family members. They were very appreciative of our presentation and plan to take it back to their membership. Our travel was paid by APWU.

On Friday November 8, 2013 I attended the Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Plaza (NYC) annual luncheon. The honoree was former Governor and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge. Gov. Ridge was an Army grunt in Vietnam. The featured speakers were Ken Fisher from the Fisher Foundation and Col. David Southerland, USA ret., co-founder and Chairman of the Center for Military and Veterans Community Services.

On the evening of November 8<sup>th</sup> I attended a black-tie dinner honoring the Marine Corps Birthday. The Guest of Honor was Lt. Gen. William Faulkner, USMC the Deputy Commandant for Facilities.

November 10-12, 2013 Mariann and I visited Washington, D.C. for Veterans Day festivities. Sunday we hung out at the VVA tent with our dogs greeting veterans along with the other Officers, our Membership Chair Charlie Hobbs and AVVA President Sharon Hobbs and other AVVA leaders. That evening we stopped by the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual DMZ-Delta Dance run by VVA Chap. 227. On Veterans Day Mariann and I attend the White House breakfast and got to say hello to President Obama and Vice President Biden. Our tablemates included the Acting Secretary of the Air Force and the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps. We then joined the VSO leaders at Arlington to observe the President laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. I then joined

my VSO colleagues to hear the President's speech. The next day we went to the office before heading home.

November 15-17 Mariann and I attended the Executive Board meeting of the VVA NYS Council. We discussed the feasibility of local VVA working with the American Federation of Government Employees. While there we attended the Veteran of the Year program at the NYS Military Museum. While there I got to speak with Rep. Chris Gibson and thank him for introducing his AO/Blue Water Navy bill. We discussed how to get it through the Senate.

November 20-22, 2013 I was at the VVA HQ. That Thursday evening Tom Berger and I attended the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's 2013 Build the Center Benefit. VVA was recognized by the VVMF for our service to veterans along with the American Association of Navy Hospital Corpsman, The American Red Cross Overseas Association (Donut Dollies), the DUSTOFF Association, and the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation. Our award is on the wall above the three soldiers' statue at the entrance to our office. Please check it out when you stop by.

The morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Steve Bowers, our Minority Affairs Vice Chair, and his wife Elizabeth, myself, Mokie Porter and Nancy Switzer met with representatives at the American Indian Health Board to discuss veterans' health issues. Both Ms. Carolyn Angus-Hornbuckle, Public Health Communications and Program Manager. And Ms. Caitrin McCarron Shuy, Manager of Congressional Relations. were unaware of some of the issues and promised to work with us both on legislation and outreach within the VA and the Indian Health Services.

Friday December 6<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended the Manhattan Chapter #126's Christmas Party. A good time was had by all.

Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup> Pat Toro and I both served on a committee interviewing candidates for the military academies. This was a wonderful experience that I recommend to you all. After the interviews Pat and I briefed Rep. Crowley on the Puerto Rico issues. He agreed to help us connect with Rep. Jose Serrano to activate the Puerto Rican caucus in Congress on behalf of the veterans of Puerto Rico. He also agreed to help us get a meeting with NYC Mayor-elect Bill DeBlasio to discuss the future of the NYC Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs.

Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup> I was in the headquarters. I had planned to attend a meeting of the Veterans Health Council the next day but went home that night as the snow was closing everything down Tuesday.

Tuesday evening December 10<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended the NYC Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs Holiday Party.

#### **National Vice President/M. Four**

Vice President Four submitted a written report and gave a verbal report:

#### National Office Visits

- October 21 thru October 24
- November 18 thru November 20
- December 11 thru December 13

#### Staff and Department Director Meetings

These meetings are held individually with each National Office visit. I feel information that aids in staff development are essential obligations we have to the staff of VVA. The following were offered at the full staff meetings: Stress Reduction and De-escalation techniques presented by Officer Patel, Montgomery County PD

#### Security and Safety: National Office and Staff

- Officer Patel invited and performed a security evaluation of the facility on Friday December 13, 2013. She also provided thoughts on items for inclusion in our organizational policy. Her official report will be sent to the office.
- Meeting with Byrul Blaney of Douglas Development Property Management on January 8<sup>th</sup> for conversation on several items brought to our attention by Officer Patel that may need internal space redistribution.
- Later this month (January 2014) training has been scheduled for ten volunteer staff to be trained in CPR and AED utilization procedures.
- An additional AED unit will be installed on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the national office. Diagrams of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor layouts will be posted that include the indicators on the locations of fire alarm and AED units.

#### Personnel Policy - Employee Handbook

I am continuing to work on this Policy Handbook. New additions are being inserted for consideration and approval. Some housekeeping and re-structuring of the layout and index based on like items of interest for ease in locating the information. In consideration of the review and approval process I anticipate this Policy/Handbook should be presented to the board of Directors at the April 2014 meeting.

#### In Memory Plaque

- In November 2013, along with Sharon Hobbs, President and several other members of AVVA, I met with National Park Service Representative on site for a brief conversation on our interest and possible re-structuring of the plaque. Senator Testor staff member was also present. Little was accomplished.
- On January 6, 2014, I accompanied AVVA V.P. Kathy Kiester along with, Mokie Porter and Carl Tuvin of VVA to the Headquarters of the National Park Service. NPS attendees included; James Perry, Chief of Resource Management; Steven Lorenzetti; Peter May, Regional Supervisor; and Glen Demar. It was a positive and productive meeting and left us feeling that a forward momentum has finally been attained. It was determined we would have a working group meeting with NPS in the next 3 - 6 months.

#### Veterans Day 2013

- Represented VVA at National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Ceremony in Washington, D.C.
- Represented VVA at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam Women's Veterans Memorial to include the Candle light ceremony.
- Presented comments at the Vietnam Women Veterans Memorial on Veterans Day.
- Assisted at the VVA Informational Tent. Thanks to Charlie Hobbs, Membership Chair for his Women Veterans hats that he presented to us. They were great.

#### Coalition Work

- Dr. Tom Berger and I represented VVA in a coalition formed with the Service Women's Action Network (SWAN) and Iraq Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) in working to assist with the inclusion of an amendment into the National Defense Authorization (NDA) Act of 2013. We were supporting and advocating for the amendment offered by Senator Kirstan Gillibrand (D-NY) to remove certain offenses from the chain of command.
- This partnership began in late August when we attended a meeting at the Capitol at the request of Senator Gillibrand. It was immediately after this that we received a call from SWAN and the first conference call occurred on September 16<sup>th</sup>. These calls continued thru November with strategic planning and action on aggressive advocacy and Hill visits.
- On November Senator Gillibrand held a press conference in the Senate Office Building to officially announce our coalition. I provided the remarks for VVA along with Dr. Tom Berger.
- Ultimately, the Senate decided not to consider any further amendments to the NDA Act. We continue our contact with SWAN and are hopeful that a "stand alone" bill will be offered by Senator Gillibrand this year.

#### Meetings attended

- Rolling Thunder National Conference, November 1 -, 2013
  - Attended with Herb Worthington, Chair of the Agent Orange Committee; Grant Coates, Vice Chair of the Veterans Initiative; Mokie Porter, Director of Communications. Sessions were videotaped by VVA. The Faces of Agent Orange Program was presented with great response.
  - Arranged lunch meeting with President of Rolling Thunder National to discuss partnership with Vietnam Veterans of America and our initiatives
  - Arranged for a VVA Information Table at the event that included the Veterans Initiative.
- Attended the opening of a new U.S. Vets Veteran Service Center in Washington, DC. Had discussions with attendees to include two officers from the Office of the Army Chief of Staff: Colonel Adam Rocke, Special Assistant to the Army Chief of Staff, for the Soldier for Life Program and Lieutenant Colonel Paula Smith, Healthcare Director Soldier for Life Program

#### Future Possible Meetings

- Plans are being discussed with the Special Forces Association to present the issue of Toxic Exposures to its membership at its National Conference being held in June 2014. I would like to include Veterans Initiative on this resource for additional committee resources. We hope to have a VVA information table. I am working with my friends at the Special Forces Charitable Trust Organization to make contact on this opportunity.

### **National Secretary/B. Meeks**

Secretary Meeks stated the VVA BOD Policies Reference Guide had been updated/posted to the VVA web site and relinquished the remainder of his time to the National Treasurer Wayne Reynolds.

### **National Treasurer/W. Reynolds**

Treasurer Wayne Reynolds noted that the National Officers had met on Thursday morning with the Veterans Support Foundation (VSF). The meeting was a reach out by President Rowan to VSF so both organizations would get a better understanding of each other's operation, address any questions or concerns with contractual agreements currently entered into by both and discuss future business endeavors. Treasurer Reynolds introduced VSF President Keith King who spoke briefly on VSF funding received from the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

### **Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America/ S. Hobbs**

President Hobbs submitted a written report:

*HAPPY NEW YEAR!*

Since the October Board meeting, AVVA continues to move in a positive direction. We have communicated through emails, phone calls, and our online teleconferencing network. We began online educational sessions for the Board in December. These sessions are geared to upcoming proceedings (i.e. 2014 state and chapter elections), policy changes, and implementation of new policies. Our intent is to equip the Regional Directors with the tools and knowledge to be of service to our States and Chapters. I am a firm believer that educational/refresher courses about our policies and procedures and other governing documents must be a part of our Board's commitment at the National level.

For the first time since 2005, AVVA awarded Homeless Grants to two organizations: (1) *QSA Foundation*, located in North Carolina, to assist with their Operation Stand Down event; (2) the *Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans* to help with a much-needed upgrade to their website. Over Veteran's Day weekend, the AVVA Officers worked alongside of VVA in the Membership/Information tent in Washington DC. We laid wreaths at The Wall, the *In Memory Plaque*, the Women's Memorial, and in Arlington Cemetery.

AVVA has a new mailing address for membership dues. Our lockbox is now at Monument Bank. By changing banks, our monthly cost for this service has been reduced almost 50%. Membership applications are being printed with the correct address; stationary and envelopes have been updated as well. All applications with the old PO Box

address should be discarded. We will gladly replace them. Our membership reached an all-time high in November.

Beginning in January 2014, thank you gifts will be mailed to all new members joining for 3-years or Life. Gifts will also be sent to all members renewing for 3 years and to those making a Life commitment as well. AVVA has signed MOUs with two vendors for AVVA Collectibles. Beginning in January, Military Best and Proforma will be offering our members clothing, jackets, hat, patches, etc. Our members have waited a long time for products and their wait is finally over. Both vendors will be linked through the AVVA website. [www.avva.org](http://www.avva.org)

The AVVA *IN MEMORY PLAQUE* Taskforce has been working diligently with the National Park Service and other governmental organizations in the raising and redesign of the Plaque. We hope to have an update for you during the January Board meeting.

#### **Conference of State Council Presidents/C. Montgomery**

CSCP President Montgomery stated they had 27 state councils scheduled to go to the 2014 Winter Meeting in Anchorage and noted that the CSCP was Going-to-the-Hill in April.

#### **Household Goods Donation Program/Q. Butcher**

Quentin Butcher noted that HGDP was wrapping up 2013 fiscal year, that mail costs were up 5% with plans for utilization of state council/chapter web sites possible in the future and that there was ongoing expansion into the Raleigh, NC and Huntsville, AL markets.

#### **Veterans Benefits Program Director's Report/J. Vale**

1. Appellate Advocacy Statistics
2. VVA National Claims Statistics & AMC Office Statistics
3. Staff Changes
4. VVA Litigation
5. Service Officer Training
6. VVA Accredited Representatives List
7. VetPro Database
8. VBP Policy Change
9. Service Officer Suspensions/Revocations
10. VVA Grants

##### **1. Appellate Advocacy Statistics**

As of January 7, 2014, we have **261** cases in our inventory. The average date of receipt at the Board for our appeals is April 2013 with a median docket date of May 2011. The Median Docket Date for the Board is **September 2011**. For Q1 FY 2014, VVA improved upon its relative success at the Board. Our approval rate during this quarter for appeals was **30.1%** (up 9.1% from a year ago), our denial rate was **20.5%** (up 3.2% a year ago). These statistics are based on 259 cases completed in FY'14 Q1 (an increase of 45 cases from 219 cases a year ago).

## **2. VVA National Claims Statistics & AMC Office Statistics**

For FY2014 Q1 veterans and dependent with VVA POA received a total of **\$176.7 Million** in compensation, pension, & DIC benefits. For FY2013 veterans and dependent with VVA POA received a total of **\$669.2 Million** in compensation, pension, & DIC benefits. As of 11/27/2013 VVA had **17,056** active POAs.

### **AMC OFFICE STATISTICS**

AMC statistics are not available at this time. Will report FY2013 & FY 2014 Q1 statistics at the April 2014 Board Meeting.

## **3. Staff Changes**

We have had the following changes in the Veterans Benefits Department: **Jaszmine Paige**, our Admin. Assistant at the VVA AMC Office has left VVA. Her position is currently vacant. We are looking for a replacement. Since Fall 2012 we have lost 4 attorneys (Christopher Clements, Patrick Corcoran, Jeremy Bedford, Lauren Kologe). Our high staff turnover is attributed to low salaries in this high cost of living DC metro-area job market.

## **4. VVA Litigation**

### **1) CIA Case**

*Vietnam Veterans of America, et al. v. Central Intelligence Agency, et al.*

Case No. CV-09-0037-CW, U.S.D.C. (N.D. Cal. 2009)

#### **UPDATE:**

This case remains in dispute despite and order and attempt by the Court to have the parties come to an agreement. In this case, the Department of the Army (the main party in the action) was sued in a class action (certified in August 2013) of which VVA is a party in respect to the testing of up to 400 unknown chemical agents on soldiers at Ft. Detrick, the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, the Ridgewood Arsenal and other locations from the years 1952 –1975. On August 7, 2013 the Court ordered the parties to submit a joint proposed injunction and judgment that complies with the terms of the Order within 14 days. As a result of the partial grant, the Dept. of the Army was ordered to let the class members know what chemical agents they were exposed to, the dosages, health effects, and if any new information on medical effects becomes available. Basically, the case is currently in a holding pattern. The parties were not able to come to an agreement despite the Court Order and VVA anticipates that the Government attorneys representing the Defendant's (CIA, Dept. of Army etc.) are going to appeal the decision.

Copy of August 2013 Opinion and Order:

<http://www.edgewoodtestvets.org/court-filed-documents/pdfs/20130724-MSJ-Order.pdf>

### **2) FOIA Case**

*Vietnam Veterans of America Connecticut and Vietnam Veterans of America v. US Dept of Defense, Dept of Homeland Security and Veteran's Affairs*

#### **UPDATE:**

The Plaintiffs argue that the Department of Defense has violated the law by failing to release records showing that it has wrongfully discharged nearly 26,000 service members on the basis of so-called "Personality Disorder," preventing disabled veterans from receiving the disability compensation and other benefits they have earned. In October

2013, we reported that the case is currently before the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut awaiting a ruling. The same holds true as of today, however, one branch of service has decided to negotiate. The Coast Guard has formally offered to negotiate in the case and has sent data to Yale University for analysis. More information will become available on this case at the next meeting.

### **3) “Hamster Wheel” Case (Amicus Brief)**

*DeLoach v. Shinseki & Greene v. Shinseki*

#### **UPDATE:**

There are no updates to report at this time.

### **4) Case challenging VA’s definition of “Spouse” (Amicus Brief)**

*Cardona v. Shinseki*

#### **UPDATE:**

VA is still working on implementing the Court Order and there is currently no update on the case. We believe that the VA has yet to draft and publish new regulations that comply with the Court Order. As of today, there has been no ruling on this case. Carmen Cardona is a disabled Navy veteran who served her country honorably for eighteen years. Ms. Cardona is married to another woman under the laws of the State of Connecticut. The VA denied Ms. Cardona’s application for dependency benefits because she is married to a woman, and the case is before the CAVC. In a December 18, 2012 order, the Court stayed the proceedings until the resolution of *United States v. Windsor* and the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act. The Supreme Court has since held DOMA unconstitutional. While the case has not been resolved, the President has accepted the Attorney General’s recommendation that the Executive Branch cease enforcement of the definition of “spouse” and “surviving spouse” in Title 38 to the extent that they limit Veterans’ benefits to couples of the opposite sex.

Copy of Order:

<https://efiling.uscourts.cavc.gov/cmecf/servlet/TransportRoom?servlet=ShowDoc/01202260593>

### **5) Discharge Upgrade Case**

*Shepard v. McHugh, Case No. 3:11-cv-00641(AWT) U.S.D.C. (Conn. 2011)*

#### **UPDATE:**

Mr. Shepard filed a federal lawsuit to review the administrative denial of his application to upgrade his discharge status. The Secretary of the Army moved for summary judgment dismissing the case, but after reviewing the evidence submitted by Mr. Shepherd in opposition to the motion, the Secretary agreed instead to remand the case for further consideration by the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR). Following remand, the ABCMR again denied Mr. Shepherd’s application. Mr. Shepherd subsequently re-filed his action in U.S. District Court, this time brought as a nation-wide class action on behalf of Vietnam veterans with PTSD and an other-than-honorable discharge. In December 2012, Vietnam Veterans of America sought leave to join the suit with Mr. Shepherd and filed a second amended complaint as a party. The main update on this case to report is that the case was settled on October 4, 2014. As part of the settlement agreement, the Plaintiff’s DD Form 214 is reissued, and reflects an upgraded

discharge status, with a characterization of “Under Honorable Conditions). Also, the Secretary of the Army to pay veteran 25K in attorney fees and costs.

Copy of Settlement Agreement

[http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/Shepherd\\_Agreement\\_10-4-13.pdf](http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/Shepherd_Agreement_10-4-13.pdf)

### **5. Service Officer Training**

The VBP is planning on hosting advanced service officer training at this year’s VVA Leadership Conference in Wichita, KS. We intend to record this session and post it on our training website. If you have requests for topics you would like presented, please contact Jamie Rudert or Jim Vale.

### **6. VVA Accredited Representatives List**

Currently there are **908** VVA accredited representatives nationwide. We are continuing to update our list.

### **7. VETPRO Database**

We have **104** service officers on VetPro, and are continuing webinar training so we can add more service officers. VetPro continues to be in ongoing meetings with VA on the technical design phase of this project.

### **8. Proposed VBP Policy Changes**

The VBP Policy was updated April 2013. The VBP committee is reviewing additional proposed changes. A revision with these changes will be submitted to the VVA Board of Directors for approval later this year.

### **9. Service Officer Suspensions/Revocations**

None at this time.

### **10. VVA GRANTS**

We are pleased to report all grantees were timely in their submission of the mandatory 12-Month report that was due Oct. 15, 2013. All these 12-Month reports are in compliance with the MOU and no penalties were assessed. A new grant application form is being developed by the Veterans Benefits Committee to help streamline the grant application process. This will be for the grant application due March 31, 2014. The 6-month report from the current grantees is due April 15, 2014. Those who fail to comply with the terms of the MOU will be subject to loss of grant funding. All grant recipients have been warned.

### **Government Affairs R. Weidman**

Executive Director Rick Weidman spoke about the CSCP’s Going-to-the-Hill in April and the budget cuts will cost the military retirees. Director Weidman noted going to the Hill yesterday with Frank Barry and Pete Peterson. Director Weidman introduced Kevin Secor who spoke briefly on his past work with VVA and about moving to his new job.

### **VVA Videos T. Burke**

Tom Burke presented 2 VVA public service announcement videos which were produced in-house by VVA staffer Kit Reiner of the Communications Department.

**Meeting recesses: 10:50 am**

**Saturday, January 11, 2014**

The meeting of VVA National Board of Directors reconvened at 9:14 am on Saturday, January 11, 2014. National Chaplain Father Phil Salois officiated the opening prayer followed by a Moment of Silence.

The National Secretary conducted the roll call of the National Board of Directors. Present were:

John Rowan, President	Sharon Hobbs *	Jim Pace
Marsha Four, Vice President	Joe Jennings	Felix Peterson
Bill Meeks, Secretary	Joe Kristek	Dick Southern
Wayne Reynolds, Treasurer	Allen Manuel	Dan Stenvold
Bob Barry	John Margowski	Pastor Toro
Linda Blankenship	Sara McVicker	Herb Worthington
Dennis Cohoon	John Miner	Jerry Yamamoto
Richard DeLong	Charlie Montgomery	
Charlie Hobbs	Tom Owen	

*\* AVVA President is a non-voting member of the National Board of Directors*

Also present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO and Mike Swift, Parliamentarian.

**National Chaplain Report P. Salois**

Father Phil announced that since last May 2013 to date I recorded 427 VVA and AVVA deaths and we have several months yet to go before May 2014 when we end the annual count for the Memorial issue of The VVA Veteran magazine. He announced that the United Veterans Council in his hometown of Woonsocket, Rhode Island named him "Veteran-of-the-Year" and will be having a banquet in his honor on 22 March. President Rowan would like to attend. He will be the Grand Marshall of the Memorial Day Parade in Woonsocket.

**Finance Committee Report**

Committee Chair Ned Foote presented a budget preparation workshop for board members, committee chairs and department directors.

**Veterans Health Council/Dr. T. Berger**

-President Rowan and I attended the Postal Workers' Union annual conference in Las Vegas in November where we presented VHC information

-President Rowan, Sharon Hodge and I had a luncheon meeting with the Masonic Grand Master of Washington, DC and his aide re: VHC partnership. I've been invited to give a presentation at their January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting

-other new VHC partners include the American Academy of Nursing (military history) and Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (bladder cancer)

-attended the first annual Veterans for Justice conference where VVA member Jack O'Connor received the first Hank Pirowski (deceased VVA member) Mentor Award. Eighty-nine individuals attended the two-day Vets Court mentoring training conducted by VVA members Dr. Pat Welch and Jack O'Connor

-attended breakfast meeting with APA leadership re: mental health/substance abuse treatment programs in the VA

-attended meeting at the Center for New American Security re: service board corrections for mental health "bad paper" discharges

-lung cancer screening event in November

-receipt of \$25k over the past week

### **National Meetings and Special Events/W. Guidry**

Wes Guidry noted the limo service list and gave the lunch menu.

### **Membership Affairs M. Stout**

Corrections to member's information need to be sent via e-mail to [membership@vva.org](mailto:membership@vva.org). There will be a Special Project to decrease number of paper rosters being sent. The cost of paper rosters is about \$1,000.00/mo. Letter sent out with paper rosters to Chapters offering electronic rosters. Hand out shows how State Councils and Chapters receive rosters. We will ask the SC Presidents and Regional Directors to support moving to electronic roster distribution.

### **Open Discussion/National BOD & CSCPs**

Several National Board Members discussed various topics:

- Director Miner passed out talking points for 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr FY 14 for DC and there was further discussion.
- President Rowan challenged everyone to develop a working relationship with unions, fraternal organizations and civic groups by the April BOD meeting.
- Vice President Four discussed the security issues at the National office and the measures necessary were recommended by a professional security company.

### **Committee – MOTIONS ONLY**

Constitution – L. DeLong – No motions

Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – No motions

Minority Affairs – J. Yamamoto – No motions

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons – No motions

POW/MIA – R. DeLong

### **Motion 3**

**To add Tom Corey to the Committee at no cost to National.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**  
**Not Present: 0**

Membership Affairs – C. Hobbs

**Motion 4**  
**Move to replace the existing VVA Membership Policy on Honorary Life Membership 8/10/10 with the proposed VVA Membership Policy on Honorary Life Membership 1/11/14.**

**VVA Membership Policy on Honorary Life Membership  
(1-11-14)**

Pursuant to Article I, Section 3 – Membership, paragraph B. of the VVA Constitution, the VVA National Board of Directors hereby designates Honorary Life Membership (HLM) as a class of membership within the Corporation. This membership policy describes the eligibility requirements, dues, entitlements, and available services pertaining to such membership. An honorary life membership is authorized in the following two situations: 1) honorary life membership awarded by the VVA National President and 2) honorary life membership requested by a VVA Chapter or State Council for an individual or for a DoD-designated MIA veteran who previously resided in the Chapter's community or area served or in the State Council's state.

The VVA Membership Department shall maintain a listing of Honorary Life Memberships which is available upon request by chapters or state councils. Honorary Life Members may speak at any VVA meeting or event upon submitting a written request to a chapter or state council ten (10) days prior to the meeting or event.

Since the policy waives dues for a current or future DoD-designated MIA veteran, a chapter or a state council requesting a new honorary life membership for such a MIA veteran would not need to show that it had previously paid IND dues for the MIA veteran. IND dues that were previously paid for such a member are not eligible for a refund.

<u>Type of HLM</u>	<u>Eligibility</u>	<u>Dues/Dues Rebate</u>	<u>Entitlements (delegate representation/voting )</u>	<u>Available Services</u>	<u>Database/ Roster</u>
VVA National Board of Directors	Request by President or request by a Chapter or State Council	Dues waived. No dues rebate.	No office. No vote. Not counted for delegate representation.	No VVA Veteran. No member services.	HLM entry. No roster.
DoD Designated MIA	Written request to Corporation.	Dues waived. No dues rebate.	No office. No vote. Not counted for delegate representation.	No VVA Veteran. No member services.	HLM entry. Yes roster.

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

**Motion 5**

**The Membership Affairs Committee moves to amend the March 1990, Motion # 6 to: The flagging of members in the database shall include suspension, revoked membership, BOD approved transfers of problem members to at-large status, monetary sanctions due to disciplinary action, disciplinary sanctions which restrict members from holding elected office, or disciplinary sanctions which restrict a member from starting a chapter in another area.**

**March 1990**

Motion #6 .....to maintain a database flagging individuals such as Mr. Mullen from starting a new chapter in another area.

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

**Motion 6**

**The Membership Affairs Committee moves to amend the January 1994, Motion # 26 to: The Membership Committee, in conjunction with the Veterans Incarcerated Committee, recommends that membership dues for incarcerated members (IVI) shall be waived in Vietnam Veterans of America. The exception will be in states that require a membership fee; in these states, the membership dues shall be \$1.00 per member per year.**

**January 1994**

Motion #26 – That the Membership Committee, in conjunction with the Veterans Incarcerated Committee, recommend that the dues for incarcerated veterans shall be uniform for all, whether individual or associate, members in Vietnam Veterans of America. That those dues shall be \$1.00 per member per year. That the effective date of this motion shall be March 1, 1994.

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

Public Affairs – T. Burke – No motions

Veterans Incarcerated – T. Hubert

**Motion 7**

**To add Virgie Hibbler as a member of the Committee and change Richard DeLong to a Special Advisor.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

Veterans Benefits – J. Margowski

**Motion 8**

**That VVA, at no cost to VVA, join NVLSP and the private law firm Paul Hastings LLP in petitioning the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit to invalidate the part of a VA rule that deprives veterans who are service connected for diseases due to Agent Orange exposure during service in the Korean DMZ from receiving disability benefits for these diseases during the period between the date of claim and February 2011.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

**Motion 9**

**To add Dennis Cohoon as a Committee member at no cost to VVA National.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall – No motions

Women Veterans – K. O’Hare-Palmer – No motions

Homeless Veterans – S. Miller – No motions

Veterans Health Care – P. Bessigano – No motions

Government Affairs – F. Peterson

**Motion 10**

**To approve the final draft of the January 2014 VVA Legislative Agenda.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

**Motion 11**

To add Nancy Switzer as a Special Advisor of the Committee at no cost to VVA National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Agent Orange/Dioxin – H. Worthington – no motions

**USAA Presentation W. Reynolds**

Treasurer Reynolds introduced Robert Warren the Lead Affinity Account Manager at USAA Military Affinity Management and he presented a promotional video which explained what it means to belong to the USAA family.

**Consent Calendar Motions/National Secretary**

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motion:

**Motion 12**

To accept the Consent Calendar Motions:

1. To revoke the charter of Chapter 146 (NE) and Chapter 708 (NY) at the request of the NE State Council and NY State Council. The NE State Council and NY State Council has done all they needed to do to keep the Chapter and the efforts have failed to rejuvenate the members.
2. To approve request from Chapter 669 for an Honorary Life Membership for Mr. James Joseph.
3. Move to retire the ANAC / ANC policy as Motion #7 of 10-7-06 states: “That all committee and taskforce members, special advisors, and AVVA liaisons, other than chairs will serve at no cost to National without specific approval of the BOD” covers our concerns and does it simply.
4. Move to retire Motion # 4 of April 21 & 22, 2006 which reads as follows: “To accept the ANC (At NO Cost) definition policy in lieu of ANAC (At NO Additional Cost).”
5. Move to retire the following motions from the Membership Affairs Committee:

**July 1984**

That the Board President, through ratification by Board, may grant life memberships or associate life memberships to veterans and non-veterans in recognition of their services and contributions to VVA.

**March 1991**

Motion #34 – That VVA National Board adopts a sliding scale for new life membership on the applicant age. The scale is as follows: 49 and under - \$250.00; 50 to 55 - \$225.00; 56 to 60 - \$200.00; 60 to 65 - \$175.00; 66 and over - \$150.00

**April 1997**

Motion #26 – To approve the member benefit package.

**October 1999**

**Motion #20 – To accept the VVA policy on suspended chapters and state councils.**

**January 2002**

**Motion #21 – To approve the proposed Membership Excellence Recruitment Initiative Team (M.E.R.I.T.) Program guidelines. Upon approval and with exposure to the membership by mailing and articles in the Veteran, the program would begin in June 2002.**

**April 2003**

**Motion #35 – To implement the new convention resolution M-4-03 by designating a new class of membership “Permanently Hospitalized Veterans” (PHV) and waive the membership dues for these veterans.**

**October 2006**

**Motion #11 – to approve the Membership Policy on VVA chapters that are suspended but active or suspended but failed.**

- 6. Motion to remove Bob Barry from the Veterans Benefits Committee by his request.**
- 7. Motion to add Bob Barry to the PTSD and Substance Abuse Committee.**
- 8. Move to retire the following motion from the Veterans Incarcerated Committee:**

**November/December 1990**

**Motion #18 – That VVA Board of Directors ratify and adopt the Incarcerated Veterans Handbook as herein and that said handbook be printed and distributed to the incarcerated membership, all Chapters and State Councils prior to January 1, 1991, with future mailings and distribution to be based upon written request and the approval of the Incarcerated Veterans Liaison.**

- 9. Move to retire the following motion from the Election Committee:**

**December 1991**

**Motion #13 – That no member of the VVA National Nominating Committee may be a candidate for a National office or Board position, nor may they serve as a delegate or alternate delegate to the National Convention, nor may they campaign for or against and candidate for a National office or Board position during their tenure on the Nominating Committee.**

- 10. Motion to add Allen Manuel to the Veterans Against Drugs Committee.**
- 11. Move to retire the following motion from the Public Affairs Committee:**

**Motion # 14 - November 1986**

**Public Affairs Committee be charged with responding to negative media portrayal of Vietnam Veterans.**

**Motion #20 - April 1998**

To design and produce a second medal to recognize the accomplishments of VVA members or associates to be called "The VVA Achievement Medal".

**Motion #13 - July 1999**

That the VVA list server be changed from an open list to a closed subscribed list, a 30 day period of transition will allow members desiring to remain active on the list to reapply for the subscribed list. Existing VVA rules of engagement will be posted on the list server monthly.

**Motion # 23 - January 2002**

The VVA National Finance Committee, in consultation with the VVA National Public Affairs Committee, shall determine all applications for use, display, or other exposition of the VVA logo. - Amended by Board Motion #7 of January 2006: remove consultation with the VVA National Public Affairs Committee.

12. Motion to add Paul Washington and Anthony Molina to the Minority Affairs Committee.
13. Move to retire the following motions from the Veterans Benefits Committee:

**February 1989**

Motion #24 - That the section of VVA Service Policies promulgated by this board be amended to allow that the Director of VVALS with the consolation of the State Chairs and with the approval of the Advocacy Committee be given the authority to appoint VVA State Service Representative.

**March 1990**

Motion #25 – That the \$50.00 fee for Canadian Service Reps be waived or paid by National.

**September 1990**

Motion #5 - That the following language be added to paragraph I.B.2. of the Policies for VVA Service Representatives. "State with more than one accredited service representative are encouraged to recommend the appointment of a State Service Representative".

Motion #6 - That the following new paragraph be added to the Policies for Service Representatives: "I.B.2.(a) That a State Council through its Legal Affairs Committee will provide day to day oversight over the state service program. Problems will be resolved locally and if necessary then presented to the National service Representative. The State Council may not deviate from the policies contained herein; however, it may impose more stringent guidelines as approved by the National Service Representative. Each State Council with a service program will produce a written service program plan with job descriptions for the service reps volunteering services employed by the State Council or Chapters within that state. These written documents must be approved by the National Service

**Representative. Decision of the National Service Representative may be reviewed by the Legal Affairs Committee upon the request of an interested party.”**

**Motion #7 - That a certificate bearing the VVA logo and signed by the National President and the National Service Representative be given to accredited service representative recognizing their accreditation.**

**March 1991**

**Motion #38 – To amend the VVA Policies concerning Veterans Service activities by adding a new paragraph at Section VII, which would be paragraph H, as follows: A standardized business card shall be used by VVA Accredited Service Representatives. The format attached to these policies shall be followed: 1) VVA National Logo in upper left corner; 2) Optional State or Chapter logo in upper right corner; 3) Under their name, the title “Accredited Service Representative” will be the ONLY title used (unless the person has been appointed the State Service Representative). NO OTHER WORDING IS AUTHORIZED; 4) Address where the Service Representative will be available to see clients in the lower left hand corner (office hours, if applicable, below it); and 5) Office phone or phone number where the Service Representative can be reached in the lower right hand corner (with optional home phone, if different, below). The Service Representative may not list any other titles, degrees or awards on the card without the permission of VVALSP.**

**Motion #40 – To amend the VVA Service Policies concerning Veterans Service activities by adding to Section II, B, 2, b and paragraph one of the attachment entitled “VVA Claims Policy” as follows: To the extent consistent with resources, VVA accredited Service Representatives may also represent, in order of priority, (a) Vietnam era veterans injured while on active duty during the Persian Gulf conflict and (b) then other veterans of that conflict.**

**September 1991**

**Motion #27 – To clarify policy to allow VVA Service Reps who are members of the National Board of Directors to serve on the Legal Affairs Committee. If this Service Rep should be become the subject of a complaint under Section 6 of the VVA VSO Activity Policies and it is brought to the Legal Affairs Committee the VSR would not be part of the decision making process.**

**Motion #30 – To approve forms for reporting VSR activities. Reporting policy to be implemented by January 1, 1992.**

**December 1991**

**Motion #15 – That the following options be approved for VVA Service Rep to maintain their accreditation process: (1) Attend Service Representative School (2) NVLSP training Sessions that last at least a day in length (3) Retaking and passing the Comprehension Exam required for Service Representatives every two (2) years**

**(4) Recognized Vet Service Organization training for accredited representatives (5) Other training deemed appropriate by VVA National Service Rep**

**Motion #16 – To authorize the Canadian Vietnam Veteran Liaison to approve the applications of Canadian veterans for VVA Service Rep School and to make recommendations for decertification of Canadian Service Reps.**

**March 1992**

**Motion #14 – That a policy letter from the National President to all Service Officers stating that CFR 38 requires reporting of activities. Non response to this reporting system within 45 calendar days, will require that all non responding Service Officers be removed from accreditation. State and County employees are exempt.**

**March 1993**

**Motion #17 – That the President write a letter to the California State Council affirming VVA’s position that at sometime in the future VVA will fund Service Representative in the VA Regional Offices in California.**

**Motion #19 – That any employee of VVA may not function as a Service Representative unless these duties are specifically included in their official job description.**

**June 1993**

**Motion #15 – To amend the policy for Service Representation “Procedures for Failing to File Quarterly Report” by adding #4 – If a Service Rep misses two consecutive quarterly reports within the allotted time limits (45 days), their accreditation will automatically be terminated. The due process section of present policies does not apply.**

**January 1995**

**Motion #26 – To accept the changes in the VVA Veterans Service Activity Policies which deals strictly with housekeeping procedures to the National service Representative.**

**Motion #28 – To accept the additional proposed amendment to VVA Veterans service Activity Policies, on Page 8 to delete the entire sentence beginning with “From his or her staff...” and ending with “...Publications Coordinator.”**

**Motion #30 – To accept the additional proposed amendment to VVA Veterans Service Activity Policies, on Page 22, under Section IX, B, 1, delete “June”. Under Section IX, B, 2, make “trainings” singular. Under Section X, B, delete “effective immediately”. In the same paragraph delete “is automatically revoked” and insert “will be subject to revocation”. Delete the entire sentence beginning with “The due process...” and ending with “...these cases.”**

**April 1995**

**Motion #26 – To amend the VVA Veterans Service Activity Policies, Section VI C.2, which currently reads: “The failure of an accredited VVA Service Representative to reasonably respond to VVA National Service Representative requests for reports shall result in the immediate revocation or accreditation. The due process procedures are not applicable to revocations in such situations.” The proposed amended version would read as follows: “The failure of an accredited VVA Service Representative to reasonably respond to VVA National Service Representative requests for reports may result in the immediate revocation of accreditation. The National Service Representative shall immediately notify the appropriate VVA State Council President (or Chapter President in states with no State Council) of such revocation.”**

**Motion #27 – To amend VVA Veterans Service Activity Policies, Section VII, E of the of the Vietnam Veterans of America Veterans Service Activity Policies, which currently reads: If an accredited VVA Service Representative runs for a contested political office within VVA, he or she must cease to act as a VVA Service Representative during the course of the campaign, assigning his or her caseload to another accredited VVA Service Representative after consultation with his or her clients. He or she may resume service work while holding office only upon unanimous approval of the relevant Board of Directors and the VVA National Service Representative. An accredited VVA Service Representative may run in a contested race to be a delegate to a VVA convention if the ballot for the race is secret.”**

**July 1995**

**Motion #27 – To amend VVA Veterans Service Activity Policies Section VI, D, and E, to read as follows: If applicable, as stated in Section VI 2, the following due process procedures shall be used for revocations of privileges for VVA Service Representatives: 1. Upon being informed of an act or acts justifying revocation of accreditation, the national service representative shall conduct an investigation and, if he/she finds it necessary, shall send a letter by certified mail return receipt requested, to the VVA Service Representative who allegedly committed the act(s), revoking their VVA accreditation.**

**April 1996**

**Motion #27 – To amend the VVA service representatives’ policies.**

**October 1999**

**Motion #35 – To remove from the Veterans Benefits Policy Manual the requirement that the National Board of Directors approve the hiring of the Veterans Benefits Director. That the hiring and firing of that position be turned over to the Executive Director.**

**October 2005**

**Motion #35 – To eliminate the 2-year requirement for advanced training of service representatives in favor of a 1-year requirement. Amend Section IX Continuing Education – Part A) Veterans Benefits Policy Manual.**

**January 2006**

**Motion #28 – To approve the modification of the Veterans Benefits Program and Policy Manual.**

- 14. To approve request from VVA Region 8 Director Tom Owen for an Honorary Life Membership for Mr. Carroll Alden.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

**Unfinished Business**

**Policy on Use of the VVA and AVVA Marks:** Secretary Meeks submitted the following motion:

**Motion 13**

**To approve the revised Policy on Use of the VVA and AVVA Marks.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

**Committee & Task Force Report on Short/Long Term Goals:** Vice President Four stated that there were numerous short/long term goals reports in the BOD packets.

**Proof of Membership Eligibility (DD-214s) & the IRS:** Secretary Meeks discussed the information uncovered during the research on the matter and noted several areas of concern which might require changes in procedure. At the present VVA Chapters should comply with the keeping of the documents and the CSCP will discuss the next steps to be taken with the chapters.

**New Business**

**National Disciplinary Committee Appointments:** Secretary Meeks submitted the following motion from the National Disciplinary Committee Chair Al Huber:

**Motion 14**

**To approve the members of the National Disciplinary Committee: Ned Foote, Richard DeLong, Allen Manuel, Tom Burke, Craig Tonjes, Larry Frazee, Paul Kobeluch, Dan Stenvold and Dave Simmons.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 1**  
**Not Present: 0**

**Relief for Chapters on VVA Suspension Who are IRS Revoked:** Director McVicker submitted the following motion:

**Motion 15**

**To allow Chapters who remain under IRS revocation but who have filed IRS Form 1024 requesting reinstatement and are otherwise in good standing with VVA: 1) to participate in 2014 State Council elections unless prohibited by State Council bylaws, 2) to receive all deferred dues rebates, 3) to begin receiving Household Goods Donation Program funds, and 4) send delegates to the 2015 National Convention.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 1**  
**Not Present: 0**

**VVA Personnel Policy**

Treasurer Reynolds submitted the following motion:

**Motion 16**

**Move to amend the current VVA Personnel Policy, section K. Annual Leave, pages 22 & 23, revised and approved by Board motion # 11 on April 21, 2012. Revised by Board motions # 14, # 15, and # 16 on January 12, 2013 by adding the following as paragraph 6 to wit: If circumstances have precluded you from taking your accrued annual leave by the end of each calendar year, VVA will reimburse you 25% of the actual pay value (number of leave hours times the hourly rate) of your accrued leave time in excess of that leave time permitted to be carried over (see subparagraph 3 above).**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 1**  
**Not Present: 0**

**Committee Reports Only**

Constitution – L. DeLong – verbal report  
Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – verbal report  
Minority Affairs – J. Yamamoto – verbal report  
Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons – verbal report  
POW/MIA – R. DeLong – written & verbal report  
Membership Affairs – C. Hobbs – written & verbal report  
Public Affairs – T. Burke – verbal report  
Veterans Incarcerated – T. Hubert – written & verbal report  
Veterans Benefits – J. Margowski – written & verbal reports  
PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall – verbal report

Women Veterans – K. O’Hare-Palmer – verbal report  
Homeless Veterans – Dr. Tom Hall – verbal report  
Veterans Healthcare – T. Berger – verbal report  
Government Affairs – F. Peterson – verbal reports  
Agent Orange/Dioxin – H. Worthington – verbal report

Director Toro submitted the following motion:

**Motion 17**

**To change name of the National Leadership Conference to the National Leadership  
& Education Conference.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 23**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 0**

The meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Meeks, Jr.  
National Secretary  
Approved April 11, 2014