



Vietnam Veterans of America

8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100, Silver Spring, MD 20910 •
Telephone (301) 585-4000
Main Fax (301) 585-0519 • Advocacy (301) 585-3180 • Communications
(301) 585-2691 • Finance (301) 585-5542

www.vva.org

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

Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors Meeting October 10, 2014 Approved by Board

President John Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Friday October 10, 2014, at 9:16 am, at the Sheraton Hotel in Silver Spring, MD. Frank Barry 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	Ken Holybee	Tom Owen
Marsha Four, Vice President	Joe Jennings	Jim Pace
Bill Meeks, Secretary	Joe Kristek	Felix Peterson
Wayne Reynolds, Treasurer	Allen Manuel	Dick Southern
Linda Blankenship	John Margowski	Dan Stenvold
Dennis Cohoon	Sara McVicker	Herb Worthington
Richard DeLong	John Miner	Jerry Yamamoto
Charlie Hobbs	Charlie Montgomery	
Sharon Hobbs *	Rex Moody	

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

Absent: Bob Barry (excused)

Also present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO, Mike Swift, Parliamentarian and Alternate Region 4 Director Rex Moody.

Secretary Meeks conducted roll call of the State Council Presidents. Present were:

Alabama	Present	Montana	Present
Alaska	Absent	Nebraska	Present
Arizona	Present	Nevada	Present
Arkansas	Present	New Hampshire	Absent
California	Present	New Jersey	Present
Colorado	Present	New Mexico	Present
Connecticut	Present	New York	Present

Delaware	Absent		North Carolina	Present
Florida	Present		North Dakota	Present
Georgia	Present		Ohio	Present
Idaho	Present		Oklahoma	Present
Illinois	Present		Oregon	Present
Indiana	Present		Pennsylvania	Present
Iowa	Absent		Puerto Rico	Present
Kansas	Present		Rhode Island	Present
Kentucky	Absent		South Carolina	Present
Louisiana	Present		South Dakota	Present
Maine	Absent		Tennessee	Present
Maryland	Present		Texas	Present
Massachusetts	Present		Vermont	Absent
Michigan	Present		Virginia	Present
Minnesota	Present		Washington	Absent
Mississippi	Present		West Virginia	Present
Missouri	Present		Wisconsin	Present

Preliminary Business

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motions:

Motion 1

**To accept the amended BOD meeting agenda with two changes: 1) delete 1st item under New Business; and 2) add VVA Membership Directory to New Business.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 2

**To accept the BOD meeting minutes from August 5, 2014 in Wichita, KS.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

National President/J. Rowan

President Rowan gave a verbal report:

I attended the mandated Town Hall at the West LA VAMC. The turnout was so heavy they extended the hearing from two hours to 3 1/2 hours to insure that everyone had a chance to speak. VVA sued the WLAVAMC because of improper leases. Interestingly, they announced that all leases will now be run out of the VA central office.

There was testimony from several women veterans, who complained that the staff was treating them as second class veterans. While they were very satisfied with the Women's Clinic they stated that male veterans are given preference in the general medical programs. I have sent a letter to VA Secretary McDonald about issues that were raised at this event. How he replies will give us an idea of where we stand with the new administration.

National Vice President/M. Four

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

National Office Visits: August 28-29, September 22-24 and October 6-8

Security and Safety: National Office and Staff

- Evaluating security and construction costs.

Personnel Policy - Employee Handbook

- Continue edits with officers, Director of Administrative and Personnel Services, and CFO.
- Draft sent to board of Directors and staff. Suggested edits being reviewed and addressed.

Strategic Plan Working Group

- Meeting with working group
- Addressing the Council of State Council Presidents on intention of the working group.

In Memory Plaque (IMP)

- Conference call with VVA/AVVA IMP group.
- Meeting of AVVA and VVA Officers held with J. C. Cummings to obtain information on the project plan, costs, contract, etc. .

Meetings and Conference Calls

Vietnam-USA Society Delegation: August 29

- Upon their request to meet, the delegation of ten was led by former Vietnam Ambassador Nguyen Tam Chien who is now Vice President of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization (VUFO) and President of the Vietnam-USA Society. V VA hosted the delegation in the Harbison Room for a formal meeting.
- These two organizations work closely with the VVA Veterans Initiative (VI) committee. Ambassador Chien spoke of the partnership through the VI program. VI Chairman, Richard DeLong, and Vice-Chair, Grant Coates discussed the continued work of the committee

Philadelphia VA Medical Center: September

- Invited by VA to attend a small group meeting with Secretary Bob McDonald
- Open discussion period provided an opportunity for the Secretary to address some of the challenges that lie ahead and his intention to hold regular VSA and town hall meetings at all medical centers.

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) : September 23

- VSO meeting at AFGE offices with leadership from around the country
- Initiated a discussion on the need for a day-long meeting with a smaller select group of VSO's and AFGE representatives to identify problematic areas within the VA, develop a list of priorities, and set achievable goals with a plan to address the need.

The Annual Sergeant Sullivan Center Awards Ceremony for Excellence in Deployment Health Science: September 23

- Attended ceremony honoring Dr. Steven S. Coughlin

AFGE Planning meeting: October 6, 2014

- Met with Marilyn Parks, AFGE Legislative Representative to strategize and plan for the future meeting first discussed on September 23, 2014.

Senator Toomey: October 7

- Rick Weidman and I met with Dan Adelstein in Russell Senate Office Building to discuss several legislative items to include the Senate Toxic Exposure Bill.

Department of Veterans Affairs, Central Office: October 7

- Attended meeting Chaired by Dr. James Tuchsmidt to discuss the options under consideration by the VA for supplying medications to the estimated 319,000 veterans who reside outside the 40 mile radius of a VA. There are also an estimated 600,000 Veterans who are waiting over 30 days for appointments or procedures.

National Secretary/B. Meeks

Secretary Meeks submitted a written report:

- There are no disciplinary cases underway at this time.
- There are twenty (20) chapters and one state council on VVA suspension for not submitting the required VVA reporting and that is for either the election or financial report.
- There are twenty-two (22) chapters on VVA suspension for not submitting the required VVA reporting and in these cases both reports are past due.
- There are two (2) chapters on VVA suspension for not submitting the required VVA reporting for the previous years' reports.

National Treasurer/W. Reynolds

Treasurer gave a verbal report to the Board.

Special Recognition Awards

President Rowan presented plaques for longevity as VVA employees to Mokie Porter and Rick Weidman.

President Rowan presented the VVA Achievement Medal to Robert Pace of VVA Chapter 617 for his continuous volunteer work at the VVA Information Center on The Mall during the Memorial Day and Veterans Day events.

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America/ S. Hobbs

Since returning home from the Leadership and Education Conference, the Board has conducted business and communication through the Internet. The minutes from the Annual Business meeting have been approved and can be read on the AVVA website. (www.avva.org).

Donations to our 2014 Project Friendship continued to arrive for two weeks after the Conference had ended. Another \$700 has been donated to *Shalom Homes of Wichita*, which brings the total to over \$7,400. Thanks to everyone for making this a record contribution year.

Representatives and Presidents elected this year are the Delegates of Record to the AVVA National Convention in 2015. The AVVA Election Committee reports that to-date there are 170+ possible delegates. Once again, AVVA may set another record.

Our membership continues to grow; I want to personally thank the VVA Officers, Board Members, and State Council Presidents who have given us encouragement and approval by joining AVVA as a supporting member.

Since signing MOUs with our vendors, AVVA continues to work with them on adding new products. Our latest is the Agent Orange Teardrop Patch. It should be available to our membership in October.

AVVA has a new billboard that brings awareness to Agent Orange and other dioxins. The billboard is located on I-40 East bound at mile maker # 68, between Memphis and Nashville, TN. The space was donated to AVVA by a sign company in Tennessee; we are anticipating more to come. Beverly Pounds, AVVA Region 3 Director, was responsible for this donation.

AVVA had the opportunity to attend the huge Vet Rally in Kokomo, IN, alongside VVA in September. A membership and information booth was setup; spousal benefits brochures and Paper Safes were available to visitors. Cathy Keister (Nat'l VP) and Bobbie Morris (PA State Association President) represented AVVA during the 3-day event. AVVA walked away with twenty-one (21) new members; and, over 200 membership applications were given out to prospective new members. The estimated crowd was over 80,000 people.

Did you know that AVVA awards Homeless Grants? If your region, state, local chapter, or community is planning a Homeless event, our application can be found on the AVVA website. Please help us pass the word. The AVVA Board meeting will be held on Thursday, October 9th. I will report all pertinent results verbally during the VVA Board meeting.

Sharon

Sharon Hobbs, AVVA President

Conference of State Council Presidents/C. Montgomery

CSCP Chair Montgomery stated the CSCP had a good meeting with forty (40) out of forty-eight (48) state councils present. The Winter Meeting in San Diego, CA was discussed; there was a change in the CSCP bylaws, the policy/procedures for travel and appointment of new committee chairs. The new officers for the CSCP were sworn in by President Rowan: Chair Charlie Montgomery, 1st Vice Chair Dottie Barickman, 2nd Vice Chair Richard Lindbeck and Secretary Steve Mackey.

Household Goods Donation Program/Q. Butcher

Quentin Butcher noted that HGDP 2014 revenue was down. There are donation centers in North Carolina, Maryland and Minnesota markets being worked. The buyers are purchasing defunct banks and turning them into drop-off centers. Quentin Butcher has started dialog with the BBB to try and change their standards for veterans service organizations.

Veterans Benefits Program Director's Report/J. Vale

1. Appellate Advocacy Statistics
2. VVA National Claims 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 October 6, 2014 we have 172 cases in our inventory. The average date of receipt at the Board for our appeals is August 2014 with a median docket date of February 2013. The Median Docket Date for the Board is January 2013. For Q4 FY 2014, VVA maintained its relative success at the Board. Our approval rate during this quarter for appeals is 28.9% (up 4.9% from a year ago), our denial rate is 18.8% (down 1.1% from a year ago). These statistics are based on 239 cases completed in FY'14 Q4- a decrease of 19 cases from 258 cases 1 yr ago.

2. VVA National Claims Statistics

For FY2014 veterans and dependent with VVA POA received a total of **\$728.8 Million** in compensation, pension, & DIC benefits, of which **\$447.5 Million** was from states with VVA Service Programs who are receiving VVA grant funding.

3. Staff Changes

Romain Sewchand served as a Service Officer at our AMC office. He is no longer employed by VVA. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

The VVA Veterans Benefits Department welcomes the following new staff:

Dee Wallace was promoted to Admin. Assistant and supports our AMC Office. Dee has been the receptionist for VVA at the National HQ for the past 5 years.

Kelsey Hye Sun March is our new attorney at the Board of Veterans' Appeals. She is a graduate of American University Washington College of Law and has a Master's degree in Sociology from the University of Washington. She previously worked at the Korean Public Interest Lawyers' Group, Gong-Gam in Seoul, Korea and is committed to public service.

Stephanie Vang recently joined VVA as a Service Officer at our AMC office. She is a licensed attorney from AR and brings with her a solid public interest background, including experience with both drug courts and veterans' courts.

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:

Case continues to proceed with the assistance of the law firm, Morrison & Foster. Issue still under contention is whether to provide health care benefits to veterans exposed to chemical agents, but not eligible for health care through VA. Eventually, the issue may extend to involving the VBA (benefits).

BACKGROUND:

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.

Trial has been vacated.

Copy of August 2013 Opinion and Order:

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

2) FOIA Case (regarding access to service records of individuals discharged due to personality disorders)

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

UPDATE:

Yale Law School (YLS) received and analyzed discharge FOIA information from the Coast Guard. Coast Guard is only branch of service that has provided information. Negotiations continue with the other branches of service. DOD does not want personal information (under guise of HIPPA) to be disclosed in any FOIA release of info.

BACKGROUND:

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 Court has since ruled, in part in favor of the agencies, and in part in favor of the plaintiffs.

LAST COURT ORDER:

In favor of the agencies:

- Court ruled that the Plaintiff's original request to provide all individual service members' separation packets who were discharged with personality disorder diagnosis imposes an unreasonable burden on the agencies

- Court ruled that Defendant’s redactions of rank, dates of service, and place of last assignment were appropriate, as well as redaction of individual DoD employee’s names, contact information, and other identifying information.

In favor of Plaintiffs:

- Court ruled that Defendants did not provide declarations that demonstrated that their search of records was adequate. Plaintiffs are permitted limited discover concerning the adequacy of the agency’s searches. (Court ruled however that VHA and VBA’s searches were adequate).

Link:

http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/vlsc_VietnamVetsAmerica_66_Order_Motion_Summ_Judg_14-0331.pdf

3) Case challenging VA’s definition of “Spouse” (Amicus Brief)

Cardona v. Shinseki, U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, No. 11-3083

UPDATE:

CAVC dismissed the claim as moot:

After the Supreme Court’s decision striking down DOMA, the appellant was paid full benefits, including full back pay. CAVC therefore dismissed the claim as there was no issue in contention anymore.

BACKGROUND:

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. 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 CAVC dismissal:

http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/vlsc_Cardona_Decision_on_Mootness_14-0311.pdf

4) Monk v. Mabus, Case No. 3:14-cv-00260 U.S.D.C. (Conn. 2014).

UPDATE:

Parties have entered their appearances; motions for extensions of time have been filed. The Defendants (6/11/14) filed a motion requesting that the case be “remanded to agency.” In other words, the Defense is arguing that the Connecticut District Court does not have jurisdiction. On 9/24/14, VVA/YLS filed a response (see link below). The response (see WashPost link) discusses a 9/3/14 policy directive by Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, where he personally issued policy guidance to these Boards regarding consideration of discharge upgrade applications brought by veterans suffering from PTSD.

Other information: there has been an increase in the number of soldiers discharged for conduct. A lot of veterans are now seeking assistance in getting discharge upgrades, but are having a difficult time finding representation.

BACKGROUND:

On March 3, 2014, five combat Veterans and three VSOs filed a class action lawsuit in Federal District Court seeking relief for Vietnam Veterans who developed PTSD during their military service and subsequently received an other than honorable discharge. For more than 40 years, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records, the Board for Correction of Naval Records, and the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records, have virtually ignored the claims of Plaintiffs and tens of thousands of similarly situated veterans by categorically refusing to recognize undiagnosed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (“PTSD”) as the underlying cause of behavior that led to their other-than-honorable discharges.

The Secretary of the Navy (Mabus); Army (McHugh); and Air Force (James) were listed as defendants in the lawsuit. Complaint requests the following:

Vietnam veterans who suffer from PTSD and received other than honorable discharges are now elderly, disabled, and indigent. They seek the implementation of medically appropriate standards for consideration of their PTSD in the discharge upgrade review process. They also seek upgrades in their discharge statuses that will allow them, in their final years, to receive the respect, recognition, and assistance that their service long ago earned. Washington Post Article: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2014/09/04/long-road-still-ahead-for-vietnam-veterans-seeking-ptsd-related-discharge-upgrades/>

Copy of Complaint:

http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/VVA_PTSD_3.3.14_complaint.pdf

Docket Entries in Case:

<http://www.plainsite.org/dockets/2c9xupjyf/connecticut-district-court/monk-et-al-v-mabus-et-al/>

Copy of Plaintiff’s Memorandum in Partial Opposition to Defendant’s Second Motion for Remand

<http://www.plainsite.org/dockets/download.html?id=184865311&z=339ce203>

5) SWAN & VVA, Petition to initiate rulemaking (2013).**BACKGROUND**

VVA and Yale Law School (YLS) submitted a petition for rule-making to the VA seeking to reform regulations regarding disability claims filed each year by thousands of veterans suffering from PTSD related to rape, sexual harassment, or sexual assault (collectively “military sexual trauma” or “MST”). Filed in June 2013, the petition requested that VA adopt evidentiary accommodations for MST claims, as VA has done for numerous other disabilities that are difficult to prove and that disproportionately affect male service members. When VA ignored the rulemaking petition, the clinic filed suit in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit to compel the agency to respond to the petition. In July 2014, VA denied the rulemaking petition. VVA and YLS filed a second suit in the Federal Circuit challenging VA’s rejection of the petition and its refusal to end discrimination against MST survivors.

LITIGATION DOCUMENTS:

Petition for Rulemaking:

http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/vlsc_SWAN_petitionRuleMaking.pdf

Petition for Review:

http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/vlsc_SWAN_PetitionReview_April_29_2014.pdf

VA Denial of petition for rulemaking:

http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/VLSC_VA_Denial_of_Petition.pdf

Second petition for review:

http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Clinics/vlsc_SWAN_SecondPetitionReview_July_29_2014.pdf

5. Service Officer Training

The VBP hosted advanced service officer training at this year's VVA Leadership Conference in Wichita, KS. Topics included the Stakeholder's Enterprise Portal (SEP), best appeals practices, CFC, and a review of cases from the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. This all-day training session was recorded and will be posted soon on our training website.

6. VVA Accredited Representatives List

Currently there are **956** VVA accredited representatives nationwide listed on the "VA OGC Accreditation Search" database. We are continuing to update our list.

7. VETPRO Database

We have **102** service officers on VetPro, and are continuing webinar training so we can add more service officers. The VA D2D launch date is now January 2015.

8. Proposed VBP Policy Changes

The VBP committee is still reviewing additional proposed changes. A revision with these changes will be submitted to the VVA Board of Directors for approval in January 2015.

9. Service Officer Suspensions/Revocations

None at this time.

10. VVA GRANTS

The 12-Month Report is due Oct. 15, 2014. As of Oct. 9, 2014, we have received complete 12-Month Reports from **CT & NY**. The VBC is still waiting for reports from the remaining 13 grantees. 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

The new administration seems to be listening. The major VSOs are working on court cases against the VA. Agent Orange is the primary focus for VVA legislative efforts.

Veterans Health Council/Dr. T. Berger

-attended several meetings at the White House with members of the WH Domestic Policy staff re: veteran suicides, calling attention to the high rate of suicide among vets aged 50 and older;

- attended the meeting and luncheon with the ambassador and members of the Vietnamese trade delegation, spending time with Dr. David Ho, President of HeMemics Biotechnologies;
- attended joint VSO meeting with VA Deputy Secretary Gibson re: implementation of the new VA Accountability and Management Act;
- presented “The Legacy of Agent Orange” at the session entitled “Environmental Aspects of War” at the Federal Bar Association meetings in Providence, RI;
- attended meetings, participated in teleconference calls and attended the Hepatitis Disparities Conference on Kent Island, MD to plan a national Hep-C awareness campaign;
- attended the IDEA Healthcare Summit;
- attended the DoD “Suicide Risk and Prevention Summit”;
- OTH discharges: working with Yale clinic re: Sec Def Hagel’s September 3 directive;
- several donation proposals out and one grant proposal with a Harvard colleague;
- peer support “Seeking Safety” project; and
- since my report in Wichita, the VHC has received another \$50,000.00 donation from the Fisher Foundation, making a total of \$107,000.00 since March.

Membership Department/M. Stout

Within the next month the Membership Department will begin field testing the on-line roster distribution system. Following successful testing we will start with State Councils and Chapters that are currently receiving their roster by e-mail in IQA format. The list of currently suspended State Councils and Chapters was given to State Council Presidents at their meeting yesterday. The list includes 15 chapters that have been suspended for multiple years.

Treasurer Reynolds made a motion with a second from Vice President Four:

Motion 4

To authorize VVA to reestablish and reengage the relationship with the Chapel of the Four Chaplains.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

National Committee Chair Appointments

President Rowan made the following motions:

Motion 4

To appoint Dan Stenvold Chair of the VVA Convention Planning Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 5

To appoint Pete Peterson, Dennis Cohoon and Butch Huber to the

**VVA Convention Planning Committee.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 6

**To appoint Joe Jennings Chair of the VVA Rules Committee.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 7

**To appoint Allen Manuel and Dominick Yezzo as Co-Chairs of the
VVA Veterans Incarcerated Committee.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Meeting recesses: 10:50 AM

Saturday, October 11, 2014

Guest

President Rowan called upon Government Affairs Director Rick Weidman who introduced the Interim Under Secretary for Health for the Department of Veterans Affairs Carolyn M. Clancy. Dr. Clancy oversees the health care needs of millions of Veterans enrolled in VHA. Dr. Clancy discussed her role involving hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities and Readjustment Counseling Centers. Dr. Clancy took notes and answered questions from attendees.

President John Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Saturday October 11, 2014, at 9:35 am, at the Sheraton Hotel in Silver Spring, MD.

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

John Rowan, President

Marsha Four, Vice President

Bill Meeks, Secretary

Wayne Reynolds, Treasurer

Linda Blankenship

Dennis Cohoon

Richard DeLong

Charlie Hobbs

Sharon Hobbs *

Ken Holybee

Joe Jennings

Joe Kristek

Allen Manuel
 John Margowski
 Sara McVicker
 John Miner
 Charlie Montgomery

Rex Moody
 Tom Owen
 Jim Pace
 Felix Peterson
 Dick Southern

Dan Stenvold
 Herb Worthington
 Jerry Yamamoto

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

Absent: Bob Barry (excused)

Also present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO, Mike Swift, Parliamentarian and Alternate Region 4 Director
 Rex Moody.

Secretary Meeks conducted roll call of the State Council Presidents. Present were:

Alabama	Present	Montana	Present
Alaska	Absent	Nebraska	Present
Arizona	Present	Nevada	Present
Arkansas	Present	New Hampshire	Absent
California	Present	New Jersey	Present
Colorado	Present	New Mexico	Present
Connecticut	Present	New York	Present
Delaware	Absent	North Carolina	Present
Florida	Present	North Dakota	Present
Georgia	Present	Ohio	Present
Idaho	Present	Oklahoma	Present
Illinois	Present	Oregon	Present
Indiana	Present	Pennsylvania	Present
Iowa	Absent	Puerto Rico	Present
Kansas	Present	Rhode Island	Present
Kentucky	Absent	South Carolina	Present
Louisiana	Present	South Dakota	Present
Maine	Absent	Tennessee	Present
Maryland	Present	Texas	Present
Massachusetts	Present	Vermont	Absent
Michigan	Present	Virginia	Present
Minnesota	Present	Washington	Absent
Mississippi	Present	West Virginia	Present
Missouri	Present	Wisconsin	Present

Finance Committee Report/N. Foote

Chairman Foote made the following motions:

Motion 8

**To retire the Contingency Fund Policy.
 Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 0

Motion 9

To approve the Disaster Relief Fund Policy as amended and to retire the Disaster Relief Fund Committee.

DISASTER RELIEF FUND POLICY
Amended 10-11-2014

BACKGROUND

Hurricane Katrina in September, 2005 devastated the southeastern United States. In addition to the federal government, many organizations jumped in to help the victims of this disaster. VVA initially established the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund to provide much needed relief supplies to those in desperate need. Then Hurricane Rita hit and a new set of disaster relief efforts had to be dealt with to help members of VVA and AVVA affected by these disasters.

On September 23, 2005, the name, "Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund", was changed to the VVA Disaster Relief Fund (VVADRF) in order for VVA to assist in relief operations due to any disaster rather than just a specific one. IRS rules state that the funds raised for a specific purpose must be spent on that purpose. Thus, funds raised for the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund could be spent only for efforts dealing strictly with Hurricane Katrina and could not be used to assist the victims of Hurricane Rita. The change allowed VVA to address relief efforts for any disaster in any location.

A Disaster Relief Fund Committee was formed, and the committee disbursed funds to select individuals based on need and the processes in place at the time. However, although it is felt that the committee has performed admirably, limited funds were donated, limited funds (\$5,819) remain-available, and it is time to phase out the Disaster Relief Fund.

ACTION

The VVADRF has been accounted for as a separate Cost Center under the Finance Department. This Cost Center will be moved to the VVA President's Cost Center, and disbursement may be authorized by the President only to recognized relief agencies to provide assistance in the US.

Only donations from external sources will be credited to the DRF. No VVA operational funding will be used for this purpose.

Finally, this fund / policy will be closed / retired when all funds have been disbursed.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0
Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 0

Motion 10

To approve the expenditure by the Agent Orange Committee of \$8,000 in current year donations for posters and temporary help. Funds to be taken from current year donations..

Without objection motion passed.

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

Motion 11

To approve request from the Agent Orange Committee for additional funds in the amount of \$20,656 for photocopying (\$8899), office supplies (\$2757), shipping (\$5000), and travel (\$4000).

Funds to be taken from unexpended funds in other budget lines.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Motion 12

To approve the request of the POW/MIA Committee for additional funds in the amount of \$30,000 to fund 3 people to travel to Vietnam. If the trip cannot be arranged prior to the end of FYE 2015, funds will be considered designated revenue and carried over to FYE 2016. Funds not used for this trip will be returned to the general fund. Funds to be taken from unexpended funds in other budget lines.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Suicide Risk and Prevention Program

Dr. Tom Hall and Dr. Tom Berger made presentation on the warning signs of suicide and what individuals and families can do to learn the signs and symptoms of suicide.

National Meetings and Special Events

Wes Guidry spoke on the move in January 2015 to the Double Tree, making room reservations and checking out of the Sheraton Hotel this trip. Mr. Guidry noted that his search for a site for the 2018 VVA Leadership & Education Conference was completed and the VVA Planning Committee Chair Dan Stenvold submitted the following motion:

Motion 13

To select the Rio Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV as the site for the

**2018 VVA Leadership & Education Conference.
Without objection motion passed.**

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

President Rowan noted there was a request for the Board of Directors to go into Executive Session and the meeting was recessed until 1:30 pm. The Board of Directors completed the Executive Session and recessed for lunch.

President Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors at 1:38 pm.

POW/MIA Committee Proposed Vietnam Trip

POW/MIA Committee Chair DeLong spoke about the proposed plan for the trip and made the following motion:

Motion 14

To approve international travel to Vietnam in 2015 for Richard DeLong, Grant Coates, Marsha Four and Mokie Pratt-Porter to be in compliance with amended motion # 38 of October 11, 2013 of the VVA Travel Policy.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Guest

Government Affairs Director Rick Weidman introduced Matthew Stiner who is the Special Assistant to the Secretary, Veterans Service Organizations Liaison at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Stiner noted he was a Marine veteran who served in Iraq and looked forward to working with VVA.

Committee – MOTIONS ONLY

Minority Affairs – J. Yamamoto

Motion 15

To appoint Gumersindo Gomez as Vice Chair for Hispanic Affairs at no cost to National and delete the title/position of Vice Chair for Puerto Rico for Pat Toro.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons – No motions
POW/MIA – R. DeLong

Motion 16

**To add Ray Autenrieb as a member of the POW/MIA 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 17

**To amend Motion 49 of the October 11, 2013 BOD meeting as,
To phase out the Membership Time Payment Plan on all VVA applications. All
Time Payment Applications will not be accepted after 2/28/15.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Public Affairs – H. Worthington – No motions
Veterans Incarcerated – A. Manuel

Motion 18

**To designate Dominick Yezzo as Chair and Allen Manuel as Vice Chair of the Veterans
Incarcerated Committee.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Veterans Benefits – J. Margowski

Motion 19

**That VVA join as a plaintiff in a class-action suit, at NO COST to VVA, to be filed by the
National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and Morrison & Foerster LLP, to the
U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia, against the Army Board of Corrections of
Military Records (ACBMR) challenging several practices of the ABCMR that are highly
unfair to veterans who apply to that Board to correct errors or injustices that occurred
during their military service. VVA attorneys will have the opportunity to review the
amicus brief before it is filed with the court.**

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 20

That VVA join as a plaintiff in a class-action suit, at NO COST to VVA, to be filed by the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and a private law firm (TBA), to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (CAFC) against the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA), challenging the agency's final rule to RIN 2900—AO81—Standard Claims and Appeals Forms.

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 21

VVA strongly favors directing the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs to replace any Government issued headstone in unreadable or damaged condition with a new headstone as requested by Veterans Service Officers, Cemetery Officers, Funeral Directors and others, with their signature as requester.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 22

That President Rowan in association with the Economic Opportunity Committee, other Officers and the Government Affairs Committee write a letter of support endorsing S-2834 introduced by Senator Pat Toomey.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 23

That the VVA support the creation of a 4th Division of the Veterans Administration – Economic Opportunity Division.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 24

That the VVA support the expansion of sole source contacting opportunities for service disabled veteran owned small businesses and Women owned small businesses.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Agent Orange/Dioxin – H. Worthington

Motion 25

To authorize the President in consultation with the other Officers, Agent Orange/Dioxin and Government Affairs Committee Chairs to formally participate in the Toxic Wounds Task Force at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 26

To authorize the President in consultation with the other Officers, Agent Orange/Dioxin and Government Affairs Committee Chairs to formally endorse other Toxic Wounds legislation as appropriate at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 27

To authorize the President in consultation with the other Officers, Agent Orange/Dioxin and Government Affairs Committee Chairs to endorse and push legislation that would restore the Gulf War RAC integrity at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 28

To add Paul Bucha as a member, add Bobbie Morris, Sandie Morgan and Jack McManus as special advisors of the Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 0

Constitution – L. DeLong – No motions

Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – Motions presented by the Government Affairs Committee

Resolutions – D. Southern – No motions

Consent Calendar Motions/National Secretary

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motion:

Motion 29

To accept the Consent Calendar Motions:

1. To approve Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell as the independent certified public accounting firm to perform the VVA audit for FYE 2-28-15 in accordance with the VVA Constitution, Article IV, General Provisions, Section 1 – Finance, paragraph D.
2. To add Francisco Ivarra, Lou Nunez and Horace Brown as members of the VVA Minority Affairs Committee at no cost to VVA.
3. Move to approve the Cash Reserve Fund Policy as amended from the VVA Finance Committee.
4. To rescind Motion 9 from the August 7, 2012 BOD meeting, an MOA between Vietnam Veterans of America and Blinded Veterans Association as amended.
5. Move to retire the following Finance related motions as having been completed, amended or addressed in subsequent motions or policies.

October 11, 2013

Motion #29 (Consent Calendar #17) To approve Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell as the independent certified public accounting firm to perform the VVA audit for FYE 2-28-14 in accordance with the VVA Constitution, Article IV, General Provisions, Section 1 – Finance, paragraph D.

Motion # 33 To approve the VVA Women Veterans Committee overspending their approved budget by \$680 authorizing them to design and print 500 posters in support of the 20th anniversary of the Vietnam Women’s Memorial.

August 13, 2013

Motion # 4 To rescind Motion 3A of January 11, 2013 adopting the Ruth Mathews Special Projects Fund Policies and Procedures.

Motion # 5 Direct the Finance Committee to develop a policy for the distribution of funds or property bequeathed to VVA.

Motion # 7 To approve payments for registering the Veterans Health Council Marks.

April 20, 2013

Motion # 4 To approve the proposed budget for FYE 2014.

Motion # 5 To approve the FYE 2-28-14 Veterans Health Council budget as presented, subject to receiving donations in excess of Carry Over Revenue, to meet or exceed Proposed Expenses.

Motion # 6 To approve the 2014 VVA National Leadership Conference as presented.

Motion # 7 To amend the approved FYE 2-28-14 VVA Budget for the POW/MIA Committee by adding \$5,000 to the budget line for Travel & Related Expenses. Funds to support this expense will be taken from the Carry Over Revenue of \$7,119.

Motion # 17 To approve the Finance Committee Policy as amended.

October 7, 2011

Motion # 30 To amend the Budget Oversight Policy by adding the following to the end of the “Purpose” paragraph to wit:

In 2008, the VVA Board of Directors directed that all consultant monthly reports would be reviewed by the Finance Committee’s Budget Oversight Sub-Committee and reported out as part of the Finance Committee’s quarterly report to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors further directed that consultants who do not submit monthly reports to the Finance Committee’s Budget Oversight Sub-Committee will have their payments suspended until the reports have been submitted.

January 2011

Motion # 3 To amend the VVA Annual Financial Report instructions to comply with the current IRS requirements.

January 9 & 10, 2009

Motion # 3 To amend the VVA Travel Policy approved 1-21/22-06 by adding the following under the third section – “Exceptions”:

For all VVA functions for which there is a “Master List” of individuals to be paid for by VVA, reimbursement of hotel and possible subsequent taxi expenses will not exceed one half of room cost of the VVA designated hotel should someone choose to move to another hotel for their own convenience.

October 17 & 18, 2008

Motion # 8 That consultants that monthly reports have not been submitted to the Finance Committee Budget Oversight Subcommittee as requested will have their payments suspended until the reports have been submitted to the Budget Oversight Subcommittee. (Consent Calendar)

April 11 & 12, 2008

Motion # 26 That all consultant license agreements monthly reports between VVA and consultant will be reviewed by Finance Committee's Budget Oversight Sub-Committee and reported out as part of the Finance Committee's quarterly report to the Board of Directors.

6. Move to approve the Officers Salary and Benefits Policy as amended from the VVA Finance Committee.
7. Move to approve the Deceased Member Protocol Policy as amended from the VVA Finance Committee.
8. To approve the Licensing Agreement between Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. and Red Carpet Studios, LTD from Treasurer Reynolds/President Rowan.
9. Move to approve the Use of Restricted /Designated Revenue (RR/DR) Policy from the VVA Finance Committee.
10. Move to retire the Use of Restricted Donations Policy from the VVA Finance Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Unfinished Business

Proposed Honorary Membership Criteria

Membership Affairs Committee Chair C. Hobbs has referred the policy back to the committee for further revisions.

After Action Report 2014 Leadership & Education Conference

Director P. Peterson noted the event came off rather well, the seminars were well attended and there were quite a few new attendees.

Next Course of Action "In Memory Plaque"

The VVA National Officers and AVVA National Officers met with J.C. Cummings to discuss in more detail on his firm's proposed work on the "In Memory Plaque." Mr. Cummings explained the work would be in three phases and the initial proposed contract could be revised or replaced as needed. AVVA will sign the contract for the work and VVA will provide support after there is an acceptable contract to all parties.

New Business

VVA Personnel Policy (revised)

Vice President Four thanked everyone who submitted comments on the draft policy and will work further to incorporate the necessary revisions or additional items to the draft.

Honorary Life Membership Nominations

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motion:

Motion 30

To approve J. Robert Gillette, Allan Nadeau, Col. Hemant K. Thakur and Kevin Yoder as Honorary Life Members (HLM).

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Strategic Working Group

Vice President Four gave a summary of the work scope expected from the group, they will review past reports in 2005 and 2011 while working on the current report.

VVA Medals Policy & Procedure

Director D. Stenvold presented the proposed policy, there was discussion and President Rowan recommended changes. Director Stenvold presented the following motion:

Motion 31

To approve the Policy & Procedures for VVA Medals.

POLICY & PROCEDURES FOR VVA MEDALS

(10/11/2014)

CRITERIA

The VVA Commendation Medal is the Corporation's highest award; it is awarded for outstanding, exemplary service to veterans, and the community. The purpose of the award is to recognize those members of VVA and AVVA who have demonstrated a sincere commitment to ideals, mission, and goals of the Corporation through their work.

PROCESS

Upon nomination of a Chapter President, State Council President, or their Executive Board, any member of the National Board of Directors, the VVA Awards Committee may authorize the awarding of the Medal.

The nominee submitted must include a detailed narrative describing the reasons and circumstances why said submission should be considered. The attached form is the only form recognized for each recommendation.

Except for the parties submitting an individual for recognition, the committee members and the staff liaison will be the only individuals in possession of the information, including the

name submitted. Prior to the actual award ceremony, only the committee and the President of the Corporation will know the identity of the award recipient. The presentation of the VVA Commendation Medal will be made at a convenient time and place, preferably among the recipients' peers. Under no circumstances will the Corporation authorize any travel, lodging, or per diem expenses for an individual to attend the meeting the Medal is to be awarded.

PROCEEDURE

Upon receipt of the nomination for the medal, the Awards Committee shall meet and discuss its merit. The committee has 2 options:

1. Approve award of the Medal
2. Disapprove award of the medal

If the nomination is disapproved, a nomination for the Achievement medal can be submitted for the same person.

The awards committee's decision is final, and they do not bring their decision to the Public Affairs committee for approval. The committee does not have to justify its final decision.

ETIQUETTE

The VVA Commendation Medal shall be worn around the neck, on the provided ribbon. The Medal shall be worn by recipient only. Recipients are encouraged to wear their medal, at appropriate VVA functions.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Director J. Miner with second from Director McVicker submitted the following motion:

Motion 32

To have our National President write a letter to Secretary McDonald in concert with the NASVH.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Committee Reports Only

Minority Affairs – J. Yamamoto – verbal report

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons – verbal report

POW/MIA – R. DeLong – verbal report
Membership Affairs – C. Hobbs – written & verbal reports
Public Affairs – H. Worthington – verbal report
Veterans Incarcerated – D. Yezzo – verbal report
Veterans Benefits – J. Margowski – verbal report
PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall – verbal report
Women Veterans – K. O’Hare-Palmer – written & verbal reports
Homeless Veterans – S. Miller – verbal report
Veterans Healthcare – P. Bessigano – verbal report
Government Affairs – F. Peterson – written & verbal reports
Agent Orange/Dioxin – H. Worthington – verbal report
Constitution – L. DeLong – written & verbal reports
Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – verbal report
Resolutions – D. Southern – verbal report

Open Discussion

W. Guidry noted he is available to assist state councils or regional meetings.

MO State Council President Charles Stapleton stated the dates of VVA meetings on the VVA web site or other postings need to be checked for accuracy.

The meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Meeks, Jr.
National Secretary
Approved on January 9, 2015