



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 October 20, 2017 Approved by Board

President John Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Friday October 20, 2017, at 9:11 am, at the Double Tree by Hilton in Silver Spring, MD. National Chaplain Fr. 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	Skip Hochreich	John Riling*
Marsha Four, Vice President	Sharon Hobbs *	Dave Simmons
Bill Meeks, Secretary	Francisco Ivarra	Dick Southern
Wayne Reynolds, Treasurer	Allen Manuel	Dan Stenvold
Dottie Barickman	John Margowski	Kerwin Stone
Spence Davis	Sara McVicker	Ted Wilkinson
Richard DeLong	Charlie Montgomery	Sandie Wilson
Gumersindo Gomez	Rex Moody	
Bob Grabinski	Felix Peterson	

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

** Alternate Region 5 Director designated by Tom Burke*

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO

Excused: Tom Burke

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

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

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



Affidavit of John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

John Rowan, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. I am the National President of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. (VVA). The purpose of this affidavit is to comply with the requirements of Article I, Section 4.G. of the VVA Constitution which authorizes VVA's President to submit a question to the VVA Board of Directors for a vote in between Board meetings when he determines that the matter requires the Board's immediate attention.

2. On August 28, 2017, the National Board of Directors was presented with the following motions regarding appointments to the Finance Committee and the National Disciplinary Committee. The Board of Directors was asked to submit their vote via the Board of Director's website within a 24 hour period. The motions are as follow:

Motion 1: To approve the Finance Committee Members: Sara McVicker Vice Chair, Chair of Budget Oversight sub-committee, Tom Burke, Chair of investment subcommittee, Jake Barsottini, Barry Rice, Dottie Barickman, Allen Manuel, Dan Stenvold and Jacob Barsottini; Wayne Reynolds as special advisor, and Joe Sternburg and Deborah Williams as staff liaisons.

Motion 2: **To approve Al “Butch” Huber as the National Disciplinary Chair.**

3. On August 30, 2017, the National Secretary notified me that the vote of each Board member who voted on the motion was as follows:

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Motion #1</u>
John Rowan	No Vote
Marsha Four	Y
Bill Meeks, Jr.	Y
Wayne Reynolds	Y
Dottie Barickman	Y
Thomas Burke	Y
Spence Davis	Y
Richard DeLong	Y
Gumersindo Gomez	Y
Bob Grabinski	Y
Skip Hochreich	Y
Francisco Ivarra	Y
Allen Manuel	Y
John Margowski	Y
Sara McVicker	Y
Rex Moody	Y
Charlie Montgomery, Jr.	Y
Felix “Pete” Peterson, Jr.	Y
Dave Simmons	Y
Dick Southern	Y
Dan Stenvold	A
Kerwin Stone	Y
Ted Wilkinson	Y
Sandie Wilson	Y

<u>Results</u>	
Yes	22
No	
Abstention	1
Non Vote	1
No Response	

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Motion #2</u>
John Rowan	No Vote
Marsha Four	Y

Bill Meeks, Jr.	Y
Wayne Reynolds	Y
Dottie Barickman	Y
Thomas Burke	Y
Spence Davis	Y
Richard DeLong	Y
Gumersindo Gomez	Y
Bob Grabinski	Y
Skip Hochreich	Y
Francisco Ivarra	Y
Allen Manuel	Y
John Margowski	Y
Sara McVicker	Y
Rex Moody	Y
Charlie Montgomery, Jr.	Y
Felix "Pete" Peterson, Jr.	Y
Dave Simmons	Y
Dick Southern	Y
Dan Stenvold	Y
Kerwin Stone	A
Ted Wilkinson	Y
Sandie Wilson	Y

<u>Results</u>	
Yes	22
No	
Abstention	1
Non Vote	1
No Response	

4. As required by Article I, Section 4.G. of the VVA Constitution, I am filing this Affidavit with the National Secretary within seven (7) days of the Board's vote on the motions.



 John Rowan

Preliminary Business

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motions with a second from Treasurer Reynolds:

Motion 3

To seat the Alternate Region 5 Director John Riling as requested by Region 5 Director Tom Burke.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 4

To accept the 2017 October BOD meeting tentative agenda as amended.

1. Add motion to seat Alternate Region 5 Director;
2. Add motion for Temporary Working Group Chair;
3. Add motion for Temporary Working Group Members;
4. Add Presentation by AVVA President;
5. Add Expedition Agent Orange Ride;
6. Move Homeless Veterans Committee Meeting to Tier I;
7. Move Government Affairs Dept. report to Saturday;
8. Move National Meetings and Special Events report to Saturday;
9. Revoke Charter Chapter 883 (GA) under New Business.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 5

To approve the 2017 August BOD Meeting Minutes 8/8/17.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 6

To approve the 2017 August BOD Meeting Minutes 8/12/17.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 7

To approve the 2017 August VVA National Convention Minutes 8/9/17.

Without objection motion passed.

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

National President/J. Rowan

President Rowan presented a motion with a second from Secretary Meeks.

Motion 8

To appoint Wayne Reynolds as Chair of the Temporary Working Group for the 40th Anniversary Dinner on October 20, 2018.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Treasurer Reynolds presented a motion with a second from Secretary Meeks.

Motion 9

To create a Temporary Working Group to develop a 40th Anniversary Dinner on October 20, 2018. To designate Dan Stenvold, Vice Chair, John Rowan, Dottie Barickman as members and Sharon Hobbs as AVVA Special Advisor and Wes Guidry, Joe Sternburg, Mokie Porter and Michael Keating as VVA Staff Liaisons for this temporary working group.

Without objection motion passed.

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

National Vice President/M. Four

Vice President Four gave a brief verbal report with a copy in the packets.

Activities for this period:

- Committee Chair Meeting: These will resume at noon on Friday of the National Board Meetings.

Activities

- Organize and coordinate the Biennial VVA Board Training Program (scheduled 10/19/2017)
- Travel to National Office September 19-21
 - Interviews with President Rowan for Director of Personnel and Administrative Services

- Discussions with Board Training presenters and folder handouts
- Interviews/Videos related to the up-coming Vietnam War Documentary
 - WHYY, PBS, Philadelphia, August 30, 2017
 - Delaware County Times, Article on Vietnam, VVA, Veterans issues
- Panel Discussions related to Vietnam War Documentary
 - WHYY, PBS, Philadelphia: Moderator: Marty Mascowane, September 12, 2017
 - CBS radio, New York City: Ken Burns, Lynn Novick, September 14, 2017
 - WHYY, PBS, Philadelphia, Lynn Novick, October 12, 2017
- Arranged for the logistics for the up-coming meetings of Working Group 1 and 2
- Working with Samala Parker, Director of Personnel and Administrative Services to identify areas of discussion and Employee Handbook Review.

National Secretary/B. Meeks

Secretary Meeks gave a brief verbal report on e-mail traffic between the BOD meetings.

National Treasurer/W. Reynolds

Treasurer Reynolds gave a written report.

I would like to take the time to thank each one of you for giving me the opportunity to serve a 5th term as your National Treasurer.

The National Officers are dedicated to focusing on increased services to the VVA membership. Effective communication and collaboration amongst the National Officers; has not only allowed us to concentrate on our individual spheres of influence but it has also allowed us to cohesively work together to achieve the greater good for the organization as a whole. The degree of cooperation and effective pursuit of common objectives has been a source of great satisfaction to me.

Serving on the Budget Oversight Subcommittee of the Finance Committee, alongside Sara McVicker and Barry Rice; has not only allowed me to maintain frequent communication with Finance Committee Chair, Ned Foote, but with other members of the committee as well.

Working group 1, with the Chair, Bob Seal, Rev. Bob Lewis as well as myself has diligently been working towards the goals of their mission to “Formulate a strategic plan to transition at a time certain in the future to be determined by the working group; to be communicated to the membership and approved at a National Convention”.

I attended an Illinois State Council meeting in Carlyle, Illinois, after receiving an invitation from Butch Huber. Illinois VVA continues to expand and represent all of VVA well. It is always a pleasure to meet with a State Council.

Michael Keating and I visited with Fox and Associates in Chicago. Our advertising revenue continues to increase. During the meeting we discussed some new ideas about promoting VVA.

Since the Convention we have had some concerns about Chapters and State Council being suspended. We have tried to involve a number of persons to resolve these issues. I am proposing a Board resolution to incentivize Chapter and State Councils to submit their Finance and Election

reports. The reports are due March 1st and delinquent July 15th. We are preparing a revision to the Suspension Letter to make it clear what the penalties are in place for failing to file reports before the July 15th deadline.

Fortunately, VVA has received a significant number of Bequests over the past few years. Amongst the projects the Bequests have provided funding for includes funds for: Chapters, State Councils, Working Groups 1 and 2, and VVA trips to Vietnam. These bequests were made without solicitation from VVA. We are currently proposing a program to solicit Bequests.

All National Officers collectively work together on all issues and we continue to have a collegial relationship. We have experienced some staff changes at the National Office; we will definitely miss our Director, Administration and Personnel, Vonnie Cogdell. Vonnie's replacement Samala Parker is now transitioning in and she's thus far doing a great job.

It's hard to believe but VVA is approaching the 40th Anniversary of our founding. The planning group for our 40th Anniversary celebration includes: Wes Guidry, he has secured a site at the Doubletree for October 20, 2018 and we expect to seat more than 300; John Rowan, Dan Stenvold, Ned Foote, Joe Sternberg, Mokie Porter and Michael Keating are also a part of the planning group. The planning is very fluid and we welcome input from everyone.

Treasurer Reynolds presented the following motions with a second from Director Barickman.

Motion 10

Move that effective July 15, 2017, and annually thereafter, State Councils and Chapters that are on suspension will have until the following July 15 to resolve their issue(s) for suspension. Upon the one year anniversary of their suspension, any funds accrued to them, (dues, household goods payments, et al) will be forfeited and they shall not accrue any more possible funding throughout their time on suspension.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 11

Move to approve the proposed Bequest Program.

PROPOSED BEQUEST PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Over the past few years, Vietnam Veterans of America has received a number of bequests which has highlighted a source of revenue that has not been solicited in any systematic way. The current VVA informational initiative about this type of planned

giving is a brochure, *Preparing Your Will*, which is sent to individuals in response to one of our direct mail solicitations. The purpose of this proposal is to initiate a more formal structure to develop and implement an ongoing campaign to make VVA donors, members and the public aware of their ability to include VVA in their wills and to raise their hands if they are interested in making this type of donation or have already named VVA as a beneficiary.

GOALS

VVA's current bequest program has existed without a proactive initiative to build awareness and ask people to participate. By putting a communications and solicitation plan in place, VVA will be able to:

- Increase bequest revenue with a view towards long-term giving.
- Build awareness of how VVA members, donors and the public can include VVA in their wills.
- Learn who has put VVA in their wills and gather information from them.
- Recognize those who have and are considering legacy gifts to VVA.

LASTING LEGACY

In a previous proposal to VVA, it was recommended that a bequest program be called *The Lasting Legacy (LL)*. This name comes from the "Declaration of Principles" found in VVA's Constitution. (Verbatim: TO HONOR with dignity the sacred memory of the war dead, and so in dignity, ensure that the lasting legacy of the fallen is responsibility toward, not exploitive of, their service.)

This name is appropriate for a planned giving initiative, it reflects VVA values, and would provide branding so that this program can be easily explained to members and donors.

LASTING LEGACY CAMPAIGN

To promote *The Lasting Legacy*, VVA should use all communications channels available that are appropriate and respectful to this type of giving. VVA should look to their website, direct mail/email and publications (The VVA Veteran, etc.) as a means to make members, donors and the public aware of another way they can support VVA.

Website Promotion - VVA.org can be an effective tool to promote the LL. The homepage can be used at designated times during the year to promote the campaign. On the donation page, there could be a section at the bottom with language that provides bequest information and a booklet request form. Suggested text is found in the 'Implementation' section.

The section on bequests on the donation page would include how a bequest works, types of bequests, and the benefits of a bequest to the donor.

Language about bequests could be added to the following pages: VVA History, Officer bio pages, and Our Members in Action

Donors would be able to learn about this giving initiative and easily request more information electronically.

Direct Mail/Email Communications - Annual integrated direct mail/email campaigns should be devoted to promoting the *LL*. The goal of these campaigns would be to encourage people to ask for more information about giving to VVA in their wills or raising their hands if they have already included VVA as a beneficiary. These communications would be informational and would not be tied to generating immediate revenue. Suggested text is found in the ‘Implementation’ section

Social Media - Facebook and Twitter are currently used to request various forms of donations. The use of social media in promoting the bequests program and in recognizing bequests intentions should be utilized. When bequest inquiries are found on social media, attempts should be made to follow up personally, unlike with other donation inquiries.

Staffing - General staff should be trained to answer basic questions on how to obtain more information either on the website or directing the interested parties to the designated staff member who handles the bequest program.

CULTIVATION AND RECOGNITION

Promotional Materials – In addition to the *Preparing Your Will* booklet, VVA should develop more abbreviated materials (see sample, last page) that focus specifically on legacy giving to VVA. The information contained in the abbreviated materials should mirror the content on the website’s bequest section. Suggested text is found in the ‘Implementation’ section

Acknowledgements – When VVA receives a bequest intention from someone, these people should receive a special hand-signed thank you from the VVA President or a designate at VVA, and a small token of appreciation.

Tokens of Appreciation - As a group that proudly displays affiliations in the form of patches, pins, etc., a specially designed lapel pin for donors, members and the public who have made their bequest intentions known and confirmed with VVA may be a powerful way to promote the *LL*. The purpose of the pin for members is to wear them when they attend VVA conferences and events as a point of pride and to start discussion. The idea is for other VVA members to ask questions about the pins and learn more about bequest giving.

A challenge coin can be developed for *LL* participants.

The VVA Veteran – As the primary communication vehicle with VVA members, The VVA Veteran can be used to both promote the *LL* and recognize *LL* members.

On-going Cultivation – A plan should be put in place to send more informational email and mail communications throughout the year to *LL* members reinforcing their special gift to VVA.

LASTING LEGACY INTRODUCTION AND CAMPAIGN TEST

There are arguments for launching the *Lasting Legacy* in December 2017, or in January 2018.

In December, many people begin to finalize their charitable giving for the year. Donations are on the minds of many as they prepare for end-of-the-year giving.

A different recommendation is to launch the *Lasting Legacy* in January. As people think about their New Year's resolutions, we can use this opportunity to introduce members, donors and the public to the *LL* and a new way they can support VVA.

As we have done with direct mail and email, the first campaign would be a series of tests to determine the most effective ways to communicate this form of supporting VVA.

First Month

- ☐ Informational mailing/email with response form requesting more information
- ☐ Website Promotion, landing informational page and online form for sign-ups
- ☐ The VVA Veteran promotion of *LL*
- ☐ Printed materials created to respond to requests

Second/Third Months

- ☐ Respond to inquiries and bequest intentions
- ☐ Review responses to all efforts:
 - ☐ # of requests for information
 - ☐ # of bequest intents
 - ☐ Web traffic, phone calls, other inquiries
 - ☐ \$ raised as a result of communications

Fourth Month

- ☐ Based on results of this initial *LL* Campaign, map out the *LL* communications plan for 2018

COSTS

Pricing for the following should be considered:

- Token of appreciation
- Printing, mailing
- Email distribution

Resources Needed

The resources to carry out the bequest program may include:

- Website page on VVA.org
- Printing, mailing
- Graphic design
- Creation of bequests@vva.org e-mail account

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

At the end of each fiscal year, a report will reveal the amount of bequests established and the promised funds, and the amount of bequests received and the funding received. If desired, the names of donors can accompany the report, or it can remain simply remarked upon and numerated.

IMPLEMENTATION

Many nonprofits not only offer the option to give a donation, but also provide information about what is contained in a will, and why it's important. The donation section would contain sample language to be used in one's will, brief ABC's of preparing a will, benefits of preparing a will, types of bequests, examples of how bequests help VVA, and next steps (request 'Peace of Mind' booklet, contact us, other donation options, etc.)

Suggested Website Text - The language specific to our website's donation page for the bequest section could be:

A charitable bequest is an easy way that you can leave a gift to Vietnam Veterans of America that will make a lasting impact.

WHAT IS A BEQUEST

A bequest is one of the easiest gifts to make. With the help of an attorney, you can include language in your will or trust specifying a gift to be made to family, friends or Vietnam Veterans of America as part of your estate plan, or you can make a bequest using a beneficiary designation form.

HOW A BEQUEST WORKS

- *You include a bequest provision in your will or revocable trust*
- *At your death Vietnam Veterans of America receives the bequest you specified*

A BEQUEST MAY BE MADE IN SEVERAL WAYS

- *Percentage bequest - make a gift of a percentage of your estate*
- *Specific bequest - make a gift of a specific dollar amount or a specific asset*
- *Residual bequest - make a gift from the balance or residue of your estate*

BENEFITS OF A BEQUEST

- *You receive an estate tax charitable deduction*
- *You control the funding property during your lifetime*
- *You help further the work and mission of Vietnam Veterans of America.*

YOUR BEQUEST WILL FURTHER VETERANS SERVICES IN:

- *Veterans Health Care*
- *Counseling and Recovery*
- *Housing Assistance*
- *Community Engagement*

Leave a lasting legacy to VVA with a bequest by contacting bequests@vva.org to receive an information booklet and advice on preparing your will.

Suggested Direct Mail/E-mail Text – The following abbreviated text can be used on flyers sent to members, donors and interested members of the public for generating interest in preparing a bequest to VVA.

Not many of us are very comfortable thinking about what will happen to our loved ones or our property after we're gone. We're even more uncomfortable taking the steps to have our will prepared so these matters are taken care of. In response to requests from our members and supporters, Vietnam Veterans of America developed the Lasting Legacy bequest program. Planning your will need not be complicated or expensive. However, it is important that certain legal requirements are met, and for that reason, it is best to have a lawyer prepare your will.

If while going through the process of planning and preparing your will you decide to remember Vietnam Veterans of America with a bequest, we would be most grateful. Support from patriotic Americans like you is essential for VVA to carry out its programs and services for all veterans who sacrificed much for this great Nation.

What are the Basic Elements of a Valid Will

The following provisions are common to most wills: Your Identity; Where You Live; Revocations; Provision for Debts, Costs and Taxes; Provisions for the Distribution of Your Specific Property; Provisions for Residence or Other Real Estate; Provision for the Residue of Your Estate; Provision for Minor Children; Trusts; and, Appointment of an Executor

How to Proceed

After determining the goals of your estate, you will need to plan for the distribution of your assets.

Take an Inventory of Your Assets

The Estate Planning Checklist in our 'Preparing Your Will...' booklet will help you review just what assets you have and what they are worth.

Meet with Your Lawyer

Invest some time in identifying a lawyer who has experience with estate planning and is right for you. Once you have selected a lawyer, bring your completed Checklist to your first meeting.

Keep Your Will in a Safe Place

If you keep it in a safety deposit box, check with your bank since the box may be sealed upon your death.

Review Your Will

A will is really a living document and it should be reviewed at least every two years to adjust for changes in your family status, residence, priorities, investments and your relationships with people and organizations.

Make Changes as Needed

Simple changes often can be made with a codicil. Take satisfaction in knowing that you have served your loved ones and the organizations you care about.

CONCLUSION

We want to formalize the bequest process so that donors will find a multitude of ways to support the mission of VVA with a lasting legacy.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America/ S. Hobbs

2017 NATIONAL CONVENTION: Although the business meeting of AVVA National Convention began Thursday morning, a delegate briefing was held with our National Parliamentarian, Barbara Miller (PRP), on Wednesday afternoon; those delegates attending were educated to the process and were ready to amend and accept the proposed bylaws. A comprehensive Convention Report and the newly revised bylaws are posted on the AVVA website.

ELECTIONS: The 2017 national elections held during the Convention concluded with only four (4) changes taking place on the AVVA Board. Nina Schloffel was elected as National Secretary and three new Regional Directors joined our Board: Region 1 elected Joanne Blum (CT); Region 3 elected Kaye Gardner (MD); and Region 7 elected Terri Rangel (TX). Six Deputies were also elected: Region 2: Bobbie Morris (PA); Region 3: Hope Summers (SC); Region 4: Susan Henthorn (GA); Region 5: Don Jones (OH); Region 6: Diane Nicholson (KS); and Region 7: Suzie Meeks (TX).

PROJECT FRIENDSHIP: A total of nine members from AVVA and VVA visited **Volunteers of America Greater New Orleans (VOAGNO)** on Monday afternoon. We met with the staff and toured the grounds. Thanks to all of our AVVA and VVA chapters [for another record year. I received confirmation from VOAGNO that a total of \\$15,099 was](#)

presented to them on Saturday at the Closing Ceremonies. Since returning home, we received a check for \$100 to be added to the total. I thank everyone who helped us pass our goal of \$12,000; I want to acknowledge the following twenty (20) states for their participation in the 2017 Project Friendship. The number in parenthesis is the total number of checks/donations received:

AZ (1) CA (3) CT (1) GA (5) IL (1) KY (2) LA (2) MD (1) MI (9) NC (4)
NV (1) NY (1) OH (3) OR (2) PA (7) SC (1) TN (15) TX (6) VA (6) WI (1)

CONDOLENCE PROGRAM: AVVA continues to work with Father Phil in sending sympathy cards to the families of all reported deceased members of VVA and AVVA. Included with the condolence card is information regarding qualifications and adding their loved one to the *In Memory Plaque* Registry. We average 70/month.

FINANCIAL: AVVA's IRS 990 filing is completed for 2016 and posted on the AVVA website.

Since returning home from the National Convention, our Leadership Development Committee has been preparing the Orientation agenda for the October meeting as well as creating and scheduling Board educational sessions for the upcoming year through our online Go-To Meeting program.

On behalf of AVVA, I congratulate all of the VVA Officers and Board on your election (or reelection) and all of the Committee appointments. The AVVA Board looks forward to working with you this term. We are anticipating another productive two years.



Sharon Hobbs, AVVA President

Conference of State Council Presidents/R. Moody

CSCP President Moody noted that they were thirty-seven (37) presidents in attendance and four (4) presidents were in the BOD/Committee Chairs training. Discussions were on Air Force bases or other military bases which may have been contaminated, disaster relief efforts and VVA suspensions.

Veterans Benefits Program Director's Report/K. Yoon

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 2017

Kelsey Yoon, Esq.
Director, Veterans Benefits Program
Vietnam Veterans of America

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1. Director's Note

Vietnam Veterans of America's Veterans Benefits Program (VBP) continues to substantively contribute to veterans benefits issues. Some notable updates include:

- VA has finally included a Station of Origin search feature in VBMS. This addition to VBMS ensures that service officers are able to properly track, review, and advocate for their veterans, irrespective of where the claim is being processed or adjudicated.
- In partnership with VA, VVA held a claims clinic at the VVA National Convention in New Orleans. The Claims Clinic brought in VA employees to provide information and guidance on individual claims as well as offer rate-in-a-day capabilities. The day-long clinic received a total of 68 new submissions in support of new and pending claims.
- In partnership with the Government Affairs Department, the VBP advocated its strong opposition to VA's proposed notice of intent to waive the ethics rules for all VA employees who receive any wages, salary, dividends, profits, gratuities, or services from, or own any interest in, a for-profit educational institution. A copy of our comment is attached at the end of this report to learn more about VVA's advocacy on this issue. Thankfully, VA has withdrawn its notice due to the opposition coming from the veteran community.
- The VBP has secured a new office space at the VA's Appeals Management Office (see below picture). After several months of negotiating and working with VA, we have secured an entire new room that includes three work stations, three computers, and office equipment. We also were able to locate two free cubicles as seen in the below picture. The office space, desks, and computer equipment is provided to VVA for free by VA.



New VVA Office Space at the AMO in Washington, DC
Pictured above: Alec Ghezzi, *National Appeals Attorney* and
Katherine Ebbesson, *Senior National Appeals Attorney*

The VBP continues to achieve a “win rate” above 71%, with 28.4% of its cases granted and 43.1% of its cases remanded this past year at the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (Board).¹ As anticipated, and similar to other organizations, we are still experiencing a substantial increase in cases added to our backlog at the Board. Since my last report in April 2017, and not including hearing request cases, we have received 290 additional new cases.²

In part due to the addition of three new appeals attorneys, we have finally been able to curb the sharp increase of cases in our backlog. For the first time in many months, I am happy to report that the number of cases in our backlog has started to decline. Despite this, unfortunately, we still struggle to keep up with the Board, and VVA cases are still being held up by our office, not VA.

TOTAL APPEALS BACKLOG AT BOARD

LOCATION	Number of cases (Jan '17)	Number of cases (Apr '17)	Number of Cases (July '17)	Number of Cases (Oct '17)
Pending Attorney Review	569	728	895	886
Pending Travel Board Hearing	227	205	211	196
Pending Videoconference Hearing	563	610	654	659
Pending Central Office Hearings	Data N/A	15	18	16
TOTAL VVA BACKLOG AT BOARD	1,359	1,558	1,778	1,757

Source: VACOLS; Board of Veterans’ Appeals

VA estimates still indicate that we have over 9,000 active pending original claims and over 6,000 active pending appeals across the country and in Washington, DC. Additionally, we continue to record over 100 claims pending at the Appeals Management Office (AMO). As shown in the table below, VVA is filing over 100 NODs and over 100

¹ VVA recorded a denial rate of 18.8% and 9.7% of the cases recorded a disposition of “other”.

² 183 originals and 107 post-remands.

Form 9s each month. Most of these claims will eventually make their way up to the Board.

VVA Appeals Filed Nationwide (Jan 2017-Sep 2017)		
	NODs Filed	Form 9s Filed
Jan	120	107
Feb	141	131
Mar	115	129
Apr	130	112
May	142	103
Jun	127	95
Jul	120	107
Aug	141	131
Sep	115	129

Source: Veterans Benefits Administration (9/2017)

The VBP Office at the AMO and Board continues to be a high-volume office as we experience an increased workload on almost all aspects.

Correspondence & Visitors Report (2016-2017)												
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Phone Calls	200	236	258	239	310	325	254	161	246	279	293	233
Voice Messages	116	99	66	109	104	105	79	91	60	73	63	53
Emails	310	319	367	421	433	556	476	450	375	388	412	330
Appointment/Walk-In	7	3	6	3	5	0	7	8	8	4	11	11
Mail/Faxes	59	67	44	38	44	76	71	92	62	74	90	87

Source: VetPro (4/4/2017)

Number of Tracked Appealed Claims by E-VSO											
Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
106	153	169	98	111	131	123	122	172	105	132	147

We continue to methodically track substantive appeals nation-wide. For the months of June, July, August, and September, our E-VSO tracked, on-average, over 100 claims each month. Additionally, thanks to our E-VSO, the VBP ensured that 96, 75, 76, and 55 claims were timely appealed for the months of June, July, August, and September, respectively.

Rating Decisions Reviewed (VSO Queue)											
Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
74	73	134	69	100	92	82	103	93	143	138	110

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Decision reviews continue to generally increase in volume and fluctuate significantly from month to month prior to the addition of the Station of Origin search feature.

However, we anticipate the number of Rating Decision reviews to significantly decline beginning in October, since we are now only covering those states that do not have an active program, including Regional Offices located in (1) Montgomery; (2) Honolulu; (3) Wichita; (4) Togus; (5) Albuquerque; (6) Fargo; (7) Salt Lake City; (8) Cheyenne; (9) Manila; (10) VACO; (11); AMO; (12) Washington, DC; (13) Roanoke; and (14) Baltimore. We also frequently cover stations on an emergency basis if a local service officer is unable to cover his or her station for short periods of time.

Although it is sad to lose two additional staff this month, the VBP is optimistic that we are headed in the right direction. In the coming months, we have several exciting new pilot projects that we will be implementing, as well as administering our recertification exam for all service officers in the field. With the new Appeals Modernization Act of 2017 Pilot Program on the horizon, beginning in November, our office will be busier than ever. I want to thank the Veterans Benefits Committee and the Board of Directors for their support. Although there is a never-ending list of challenges ahead of us, I am confident that we can continue to improve the support we provide veterans, family members, and our service officers across the country.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Yoon, Esq.
Director, Veterans Benefits Program

2. Notable Achievements

The VBP Team is busy zealously advocating for the Veterans we serve. Some notable accomplishments for this quarter of the VBP Team are highlighted below:

After Senior National Appellate Attorney Katherine Ebbesson drafted a brief in support of an increased rating for PTSD and earlier effective date for Individual Unemployability (TDIU), the Board **granted a 70 percent rating for PTSD and granted TDIU, effective April 2008**. As a result, **the Veteran received \$93,185 in retroactive benefits**. Katherine's stellar advocacy helped this Veteran ensure he will have stable income and healthcare benefits for the remainder of his life.

Senior National Service Officer Dee Wallace represented a Veteran seeking an increased rating for **PTSD** in a Decision Review Officer hearing in April 2017. The Veteran originally requested an increase in 2006 and was repeatedly denied. With Dee's assistance, the DRO granted an earlier effective date for the Veteran's increased rating, and further increased the Veteran's rating from **50% to 70%**. The next month, Dee continued assisting the Veteran and he was **granted Individual Unemployability** as a direct result of Dee's advocacy.

In addition to tracking over 350 appeals and nearly 50 hearings across every state in the nation during June, July, and August 2017, EVSO Christina Manning represented a Veteran appealing the denial of service connection for a breast mass and infertility caused by exposure to **contaminated water at Camp Lejeune**. Although the Veteran is not

entitled to service connection based upon the newly-enacted rules, **Christina crafted compelling arguments detailing a case of direct service connection.** The claim is still pending a decision.

In addition to answering hundreds of calls and helping Veterans from across the Nation find representation for their VA claims, Administrative Assistant Janelle Hardy exercised initiative in June 2017 by assisting a Veteran that walked-in to VVA's office at the AMO complaining of feeling forgotten by VA. Although VVA did not hold a power of attorney for this Veteran, Janelle walked him to VA's "Public Contacts" liaison, who quickly identified the issue and **re-opened the Veteran's claim.** Janelle's assistance helped this unrepresented Veteran **save his claim.**

In May 2017, VSO Counsel Homer Richards represented a Veteran during a teleconference with a Decision Review Officer from the Baltimore Regional Office. The Veteran, a Vietnam-era Veteran that served in Thailand, was able to avoid further appeal because of Homer's presentation that required VA to **concede the Veteran's exposure to Agent Orange.** After discussing the facts and law with Mr. Richards, the DRO agreed to grant the Veteran a 20% rating for diabetes going back to 2011 and also agreed to reexamine the Veteran for hypertension. In June 2017, this resulted in **\$18,577.20 in retroactive benefits** being awarded to the Veteran and **an increase of \$275.40 per month in recurring compensation.**

In August 2017, National Appellate Attorney Amanda Bedford won her first case before the Board. Amanda tirelessly advocated for her client, and was able to convince the Board to order a new examination for the Veteran's **hearing loss.** Amanda's diligent advocacy paved the way for this Veteran to obtain the fair examination needed in order for VA to grant his benefits.

In July 2017, National Appellate Attorney Alec Ghezzi submitted a brief to the Board for a Veteran to obtain service connection for **tinnitus and hearing loss.** Less than one month later, the Board granted both claims and awarded a **combined disability rating of 20%.** Alec's expertly-crafted brief helped end the Veteran's decade-long fight against the VA while securing nearly **\$30,000 in retroactive benefits.**

In July 2017, National Appellate Attorney Amy Borgersen represented a Veteran seeking service connection for chronic **tinnitus.** While reviewing the Veteran's claims file, Amy discovered the Veteran had been diagnosed with a related condition that was missed by the C&P Examiner. Amy prepared an Informal Hearing Presentation to the Board arguing this secondary condition should have been considered in the original examination. The Board agreed, and the Veteran obtained a new examination that adequately addressed all of his diagnoses. As a result of Amy's advocacy, **the Veteran's tinnitus claim was granted, and the Veteran may obtain more benefits than originally expected.**

In September 2017, newly-hired National Appellate Attorney Carlie Steiner won her first case at the Board. The case involved a Veteran who had shown **progressive hearing**

loss since he first applied for disability benefits in 2010. After Carlie argued that the Veteran's hearing continued to worsen since he was last afforded an examination, the Board remanded the Veteran's claim so that he could be afforded a **proper examination and receive the rating he deserves.**



Administrative Assistant Elaine Chaney continues to be the primary point person for all accreditation applications and recertification issues for our over 500 service officers in the field. In addition to managing all **accreditation issues**, Elaine also provides invaluable support for our attorneys and service officers downtown by mailing all Board closing letters and reaching out to claimants to **ensure that Veterans are connected with additional legal support** if they wish to continue their appeal to the Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims. From May to

September, Elaine sent out 110 closing letters and 110 Board notification letters.

In August 2017, newly-hired **National Appellate Attorney Whitney Wells** spearheaded a project to revise VVA's Service Officer **Re-Certification Examination**. Whitney reviewed all of VVA's training doctrine and drafted fifty challenging questions that will assist in adequately ensuring all



of VVA's service officers are equipped to successfully represent Veterans for the next five years. Whitney also took the lead in developing a comprehensive guide for **spina bifida claims** that will be distributed for all of our service officers to reference.

3. People & Staff Changes

At the end of October, **National Appellate Attorney Amanda Bedford** and **Deputy Director Jonathan Davis** will leave VVA to pursue other career opportunities. We wish them well in all of their future endeavors.

In April, we welcomed **National Appellate Attorney Alec Ghezzi** (left) to VVA's Office at the Appeals Management Office (AMO). Alec joins our team with over 4 years of veterans law experience as a practicing attorney; he joins VVA with extensive experience representing veterans and family members before VA. As a Native speaker of Spanish and Italian, Alec is a tremendous asset to our growing program.

In May, Carlie Steiner (right) started as a National Appellate Attorney at VVA's Office at the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Prior to working with VVA, Carlie completed a clerkship with the Court of Appeals of Maryland in Baltimore. Carlie joins VVA with extensive experience advocating for health policy issues and she has several years of experience working as a constituent advocate for a U.S. Senator.

In August, we welcomed National Appellate Attorney Whitney Wells (left) to VVA's Office at the AMO. Whitney joins our team with experience working in areas of family law advocacy and criminal law. While interning at a law firm, Whitney also gained experience working on veterans disability claims.

We welcome Alec, Carlie, and Whitney to the VVA Benefits team!

4. Awards

For the months of April, May, June, July, August, and September, VVA assisted claimants received over \$79 million dollars each month in total benefits for compensation, pension, and DIC claims, with a combined total of nearly half a billion dollars over a six month period.³ Over the same six month period, VVA-represented claimants received a combined total of 1,543 new awards, with a total disbursement of more than \$1.4 million dollars. VVA-represented claimants consistently receive over 250 new awards each month. VVA grant recipients are responsible for more than 35% of all new awards issued for the past 6 months. Please see the next six pages for a detailed breakdown of awards issued by state.

Awards For April 2017 Where VVA is the Representative

State	TOTAL AWARDS ISSUED	TOTAL BENEFITS	NEW AWARDS ISSUED	NEW BENEFITS PAID
VVA Total	54,167	79,061,258	262	228,203
AK	385	\$461,822.00	7	\$3,540.00
AL	136	\$231,414.00	1	\$2,916.00
AR	122	\$254,557.00	0	\$0.00
AZ	1,628	\$2,102,429.00	14	\$9,594.00
CA	2,188	\$4,380,105.00	12	\$14,287.00
CO	261	\$434,569.00	0	\$0.00
CT	359	\$494,481.00	5	\$4,655.00
DC	39	\$51,405.00	0	\$0.00
DE	401	\$732,930.00	1	\$2,916.00
FL	1,441	\$2,452,509.00	6	\$4,896.00
GA	201	\$359,991.00	0	\$0.00

³ All data does not include retro awards issued.

State	TOTAL AWARDS ISSUED	TOTAL BENEFITS	NEW AWARDS ISSUED	NEW BENEFITS PAID
HI	106	\$180,819.00	0	\$0.00
IA	3,371	\$3,976,591.00	19	\$16,880.00
ID	222	\$305,515.00	1	\$457.00
IL	2,348	\$3,786,209.00	10	\$11,583.00
IN	1,317	\$1,731,497.00	9	\$5,564.00
KS	275	\$514,776.00	0	\$0.00
KY	341	\$486,131.00	0	\$0.00
LA	221	\$320,313.00	3	\$2,541.00
MA	1,769	\$2,965,607.00	9	\$5,997.00
MD	314	\$515,394.00	0	\$0.00
ME	41	\$74,854.00	0	\$0.00
MI	3,698	\$6,147,879.00	6	\$2,186.00
MN	4,709	\$5,709,794.00	9	\$2,698.00
MO	1,151	\$1,840,559.00	9	\$5,507.00
MS	172	\$306,355.00	0	\$0.00
MT	122	\$178,967.00	0	\$0.00
NC	372	\$621,830.00	1	\$1,415.00
ND	34	\$38,982.00	0	\$0.00
NE	929	\$1,067,888.00	5	\$1,074.00
NH	134	\$226,639.00	0	\$0.00
NJ	1,410	\$2,743,524.00	5	\$6,239.00
NM	44	\$73,750.00	0	\$0.00
NV	199	\$411,091.00	1	\$654.00
NY	3,091	\$4,643,137.00	24	\$22,076.00
OH	1,374	\$1,645,375.00	3	\$4,501.00
OK	182	\$337,173.00	0	\$0.00
OR	283	\$495,953.00	1	\$589.00
PA	4,484	\$5,954,868.00	43	\$49,184.00
RI	435	\$757,063.00	1	\$134.00
SC	59	\$110,239.00	1	\$839.00

State	TOTAL AWARDS ISSUED	TOTAL BENEFITS	NEW AWARDS ISSUED	NEW BENEFITS PAID
SD	29	\$52,444.00	0	\$0.00
TN	778	\$1,389,673.00	1	\$264.00
TX	2,859	\$4,285,109.00	14	\$11,885.00
UT	92	\$127,990.00	1	\$893.00
VA	321	\$508,654.00	0	\$0.00
VT	200	\$341,238.00	0	\$0.00
WA	6,022	\$7,457,710.00	29	\$19,819.00
WI	2,417	\$2,824,863.00	4	\$6,433.00
WV	1,226	\$1,972,125.00	5	\$1,529.00
WY	13	\$20,626.00	0	\$0.00
Puerto Rico	268	\$638,656.00	2	\$4,461.00
Manila	25	\$59,491.00	0	\$0.00
TOTAL	21,091	\$30,968,845.00	89	\$70,577.00

KEY:

States receiving grant funds are highlighted in blue.

Communication Department/M. Porter

Mokie Porter spoke about the web, social media, news and publications.

Veterans Health Council/Dr. T. Berger

Dr. Berger gave a verbal report.

HGDP Report/Q. Butcher

Quentin Butcher noted that all of the Buyers were flush with products and overall the program is doing well.

Membership Department/T. Houston

Tracie Houston gave an update on the department operation.

VVA National VAVS Deputy Representative/Ken Rose

Report to the Board of Directors/State Council Presidents – Oct. 20, 2017

Hopefully everyone knows that VAVS is Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service for the VA. Since August, when I became the National Representative for VAVS for VVA, the VA has been sending me reports from all over the country. Before August, I would get a few reports now and then. Now I receive these reports every week by e-mail.

These reports from the local committees show attendance, needs and programs at VAMC's across the country.

There have been problems with the VA Central Office computer systems, which they say are now corrected. But the numbers and hours are still off. These reports help me check the Central office numbers. I am working on the numbers, they are growing slowly, thanks to the help of Chapters, State Councils and Reps.

If none of the certified members, (either Rep. or Dep.) are in attendance at three consecutive meetings, the organization can be removed from the committee. The VA does its best to keep people on the committee. I will start to notify Reps if they are not attending meetings as I get more reports. I will start with those who have missed 3 of the last 4 quarterly meetings. There are some Deputies which we may be able to move up to Representative, since some of them are attending meetings now.

Tuesday, Wednesday and half of Thursday this week, I attended the VA NAC (National Advisory Committee) in Alexandria, Va. The VA admits the numbers are wrong. Part of the reason for this , is implementing a new system without proper staffing and funding. Until they figure out their problems, the work falls on the National Reps to correct. The quarterly reports from the local VA may be the most accurate. I will start with those VA's that have VVA Reps. Participation by the local reps will be necessary and important. I will be reviewing VA numbers, AJR's (Annual Joint Reviews) completed Yearly, by the Rep and the quarterly meeting minutes. This will take some time and will be on-going.

The holidays are fast approaching. Please encourage your Chapters and their members to contact their nearest VAVS office and arrange a holiday visit or find out what their needs may be. If you can't go to a VA, donate money, at www.pay.gov. Specify your choice of VA and the program you wish to donate Your support.

Veterans week in November and National Salute to Veterans in February will be celebrated at all VAMC's, this is a good opportunity to visit veterans in their wards or at the CLC (Nursing Home).

In your packet , there is a page for VAVS State Chairs, please review it, I'll have cards at the back for my contact information.

Ken Rose, National VAVS Representative

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motions:

Motion 12
1st Consent Calendar

- 1. To appoint Adolph Gardner, Terry Nolan, Jill Mishkel and Ben Humphries for reappointment to the Elections Committee;**
- 2. To appoint Joe Jennings - Vice Chair - Members: Chuck Byers, Gene Crego, Ned Foote, Joe Kristek, John Margowski, Marc McCabe, Perry Melvin, Felix "Pete" Peterson, John Riling, Dick Southern, Phil Smith, John Weiss as**

- committee members and Sharon Hobbs, AVVA Special Advisor to the Veterans Benefits Committee;
3. To appoint Steven Bowers – 1st Vice Chair – Joe McIntyre – 2nd Vice Chair – Francisco Ivarra – Dave Simmons – Gerald Ney – Kerwin Stone – Joe Jennings – Pete Peterson – Jorge Pedroza as committee members and Bernie Edelman, VVA Staff Liaison to the Minority Affairs Committee;
 4. To appoint Steve Mackey, Vice Chair – Ray Autenrieb – Larry Frazee – Richard Lindbeck – Charlie Montgomery – Bob Pace – Dick Southern – John Weiss – Ted Wilkinson – John Margowski – Rex Moody as committee members and Bill Meeks, Special Advisor and Cecilia Essenmacher, AVVA Special Advisor and Tracie Houston, VVA Staff Liaison to the Membership Affairs Committee;
 5. To appoint Patty Dumin, Vice Chair – Ted Wilkinson – Richard DeLong – Herb Worthington – Rodney Farley – Carton Rhodes – Adolph Gardner – Billie Cullin – Ray Bates – Bernard Kenan – Dominick Yezzo – Terry Courville – Charlie Montgomery – Henry Urioste – John Weiss – Allen Manuel as members and Elaine Simmons – Patsy Chin – Felicea Catapano – Betty Pike – Margaret Wojciechowicz – Kaye Gardner and Diane Nicholson as AVVA Advisors and Kathy Andres and John Birch as AVVA Special Advisors and Ms. Mara Boggs and U.S. Senator Joe Manchin as Special Advisors and Deborah Williams as VVA Staff Liaison to the Veterans Against Drugs Committee;
 6. To appoint Jack McManus, Vice Chair – Robert Behrens, Vice Chair – Sandie Wilson – Marc McCabe – Mike Demske – Dennis Andras – Bruce Dobson – Steven Bowers – Nat Washington – Rossie Nance – Luther Newberry – Roland Mayhew as committee members and John Weiss – Tom Owen – Paul Sutton – Jim Doyle – Steve House – John Rossie – Wes Carter – Robert Cummings – Ken Holybee – John Wells – Billie Cullin – Betty Mekdeci – Sandra Morgan – Elizabeth Bowers – Herb Worthington – Robert Grabinski – Carlton Rhodes – Frank Arminio – Joe McIntyre as Special Advisors and Kathy Andras – Priscilla Newberry – Nancy Switzer as AVVA Special Advisors and Mokie Porter – Bernie Edelman – Rick Weidman as VVA Staff Liaisons to the Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee;
 7. To appoint Pete Peterson – Dick Southern – Steve Mackey as committee members and Sharon Hobbs as AVVA Special Advisor and Wes Guidry – Mokie Porter VVA Staff Advisors to the Leadership/Convention Planning Committee. With Grant Coates – Richard DeLong as members and Wes Guidry – Mokie Porter as VVA Staff Liaisons to the Awards Sub-committee;
 8. To appoint Ray Autenrieb – Lawrence Carter – Terry Courville – Richard DeLong – Pattie Dumin – Skip Hochreich – Steve Mackey – Larry Matika – Ted Wilkinson as committee members and Sharon Hodge as VVA Staff Liaison – Mokie Porter as VVA Staff Liaison and Kaye Gardner as AVVA Special Advisor and Susie Stephens-Harvey as POW/MIA Families Liaison and Dan Carr – Bill Duker – Gary Jones as Special Advisors to the POW/MIA Committee;
 9. To appoint Dennis Andras, Vice Chair – Larry Carter – Linda Blankenship – Mark Goldschmitt – Pete Peterson – Victor Klingelhofer as members and Nancy Rekowski as AVVA Special Advisor and Sharon Hobbs – Jeri Wallis – Joe

- Wynn as Special Advisors and Rick Weidman as VVA Staff Liaison for the Economic Opportunities Committee;
10. To appoint Ken Holybee – Beverly Stewart – Barry Rice – Grant Coates – Tom George as members and Nancy Rekowski – Mary Miller as AVVA Special Advisors and Tracie Houston as VVA Staff Liaison to the Constitution Committee;
 11. To appoint Dan Stenvold (Awards Sub-committee Chair) – Grant Coates – Wayne Reynolds – Ken Holybee – Robert Grabinski – Bill Hodges as members and Wes Guidry – Michael Keating – Marc Leepson – Mokie Porter as VVA Staff Liaisons and Terri Rangel – Betty Pike as AVVA Special Advisors to the Public Affairs Committee;
 12. To appoint Sara McVicker, Vice Chair – Dr. Tom Hall – Kerwin Stone – Sandy Miller – Kate O’Hare Palmer – Roland Mayhew as members and Fran Davis – Joanne Blum as AVVA Advisors and Rick Weidman – Dr. Tom Berger as VVA Staff Liaisons to the Veterans Health Care Committee;
 13. To appoint Patti Dumin, Vice Chair – Sandy Miller – John Wallace – Dr. Tom Hall – Sara McVicker – Gene Crego – Frank Arminio – Chuck Beyers – Carol Baker as members and Lee Jackson – Beverly Stewart – Billie Culin – Linda Blankenship – Jennifer Wilson – Dr. Ed Ryan – Marsha Four as Special Advisors and Elayne Mackey as AVVA Special Liaison and Sharon Hodge – Dr. Tom Berger as VVA Staff Liaisons to the Women Veteran Committee;
 14. To appoint Larry Frazee, Vice Chair – Dave Simmons – Gary Estermyer – Ray Pawlicki – Allen Manuel – Mike Bousher – Kate O’Hare Palmer – Ron Morgan – Gary Newman – Ben Humphries – Tony DiLeao as members and Don Jones – Casey Farrell as AVVA Special Advisors and Bernie Edelman as VVA Staff Liaison to the Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System Committee;
 15. To appoint Richard DeLong, Vice Chair – Charlie Hobbs – Fred Barks – Joe Kristek – Craig Tonjes – Leslie DeLong – Grant Coates – Jim Blount – Beverly Stewart – Charlie Montgomery – Wayne Reynolds – Dan Stenvold and Tom Burke as members to the National Disciplinary Committee;
 16. To appoint Dr. Tom Hall – Joe McIntyre – Kate O’Hare Palmer – Dave Johnson as members and Sharon Hobbs – Joanne Blum – Casey Farrell as AVVA Special Advisors and Sharon Hodge as VVA Staff Liaison to the Homeless Veterans Committee;
 17. To appoint Sandy Miller – Dennis Howland – Tom Burke – Kate Ohare-Palmer – Dominick Yezzo – Gumersindo Gomez – Ned Foote – Frank Barry – Maynard Kaderlik – Carol Baker – Dr. Tom Hall – Dave Simmons – Gene Crego – Sandie Wilson – Marsha Four – AVVA Special Advisor – Sharon Hobbs – Special Advisors – Carl Tuvinn – Jim Kuhn – Joe Wynn – VVA Staff Liaisons – Rick Weidman – Bernie Edelman – Sharon Hodge – Dr. Tom Berger to the Government Affairs Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 13

To approve the Honorary Life Membership Requests.

Name	Requested By
Wilbert Vincent Rolves	Chapter 269 (IL)
Jean M. Gilomen	Chapter 269 (IL)
Carl G. Huels	Chapter 269 (IL)
Marvin A. Wiegman	Chapter 269 (IL)
Alfred Murphy	Chapter 154 (MI)
Michael McLendon	Chapter 972 (ID)
Stephanie Davis	KS State Council
Wayne Bollig	KS State Council
Charles "Chuck" Gyurek	WV State Council
LaVonia "Vonnie" Cogdell	National Secretary

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

President Rowan presented LaVonia Cogdell with an VVA Honorary Life Membership.

AVVA President Hobbs presented LaVonia Cogdell with an AVVA Life Membership.

Expedition Agent Orange Ride

Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee Chair Kaderlik introduced Iraq War veteran Colt Romberger and Colt gave an update on the Expedition Agent Orange 3,000 mile horseback ride.

BOD Meeting recesses until Saturday morning: 11:16 am

President Rowan reconvened the meeting on Saturday October 21, 2017, at 9:20 am. National Chaplain Fr. Phil Salois delivered the opening prayer.

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

John Rowan, President	Skip Hochreich	John Riling*
Marsha Four, Vice President	Sharon Hobbs *	Dave Simmons
Bill Meeks, Secretary	Francisco Ivarra	Dick Southern
Wayne Reynolds, Treasurer	Allen Manuel	Dan Stenvold
Dottie Barickman	John Margowski	Kerwin Stone
Spence Davis	Sara McVicker	Ted Wilkinson
Richard DeLong	Charlie Montgomery	Sandie Wilson
Gumersindo Gomez	Rex Moody	
Bob Grabinski	Felix Peterson	

* AVVA President is a non-voting member of the National Board of Directors
 * Alternate Region 5 Director designated by Tom Burke

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO
 Excused: Tom Burke

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

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

Finance Committee Report

Ned Foote presented the following motions.

Motion 14

**Move to approve signing the Membership Directory agreement.
 Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 15

Move to amend the POW/MIA budget by adding \$35,000 to the Travel and Related expense line, funds to be taken from current year Bequests.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

2nd Consent Calendar

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motion:

Motion 16

2nd Consent Calendar

1. To appoint Fr. Phil Salois – Thomas Brown – Charles Stapelton –Barry Schloffel – Charles Montgomery – Randy Casels – Dan Stenvold – Sandy Miller – Carolynn Baker – Kate O’Hare Palmer as members and Nina Schloffel – Jeri Wallis as AVVA Special Advisors and Dr. Tom Berger as VVA Staff Liaison for the PTSD/Substance Abuse Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

National Meetings and Special Events/W. Guidry

Planning Committee Chair Dan Stenvold submitted the following motion.

Motion 17

To allow Wes Guidry to further negotiate with the Sheraton-Greensboro and Rosen Center Orlando and to contract with the best offer for the 2021 National Convention.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

President Rowan presented the VVA Commendation Medal to Ken Holybee, Joe McIntyre and Sara McVicker.

Government Affairs, Executive Director’s Report/R. Weidman

Rick Weidman spoke about mental health issues and the review ratings process.

Committee – MOTIONS ONLY

Veterans Health Care – C. Baker made the following motion.

Motion 18

To add Gene Crego, John McGinty and Chuck Byers as members and Maureen Elias as a Consultant and Linda Schwartz as a Special Advisor to the Veterans Health Care Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Government Affairs – P. Peterson made the following motions.

Motion 19

To add John McGinty as a member to the Government Affairs Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 20

To authorize VVA to support legislation that expands Chapter 18 benefits to all children who have spinabifida or certain enumerated birth defects and are biological descendants of Veterans with qualifying service.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 21

Request the VVA to write a letter to Secretary of VA to review lack of implementation of PL113146 Sec 402 Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 in regards to MST. Care for Active Duty, Reserve, and Guard Troops.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Agent Orange/Dioxin – M. Kaderlik made the following motion.

Motion 22

To add Roland Mayhew as a member and Robert Grabinski, Carlton Rhodes, Frank Arminio, Joe McIntyre, John McGinty and Steve House as Special Advisor to the Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Constitution – L. DeLong made the following motion.

Motion 23

To add Cliff Riley and Nate Washington as members to the Constitution Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Economic Opportunities – F. Barry made the following motion.

Motion 24

That VVA write a letter to the Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration who chairs the Interagency Taskforce on Veterans' Business Development to re-emphasize the guidelines of the Executive Order 13-540 which was intended to increase contract opportunities for service disabled veteran owned business in the Federal market place.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System – D. Yezzo made the following motion.

Motion 25

To add Raymond Pawlicki and Thomas Haberkorn as members to the Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Minority Affairs – G. Gomez made the following motion.

Motion 26

Move to appoint Ms. Nina D. Schloffel and Mr. John Birch as AVVA Special Advisors to the Minority Affairs Committee. At no cost to VVA.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons made the following motion.

Motion 27

To add Dennis Andras as a member to the Veterans Against Drugs Committee. At no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

POW/MIA – G. Coates made the following motions.

Motion 28

For approval of international travel for the Veterans Initiative Program team consisting of Marsha Four, VVA Vice President, Grant Coates, VVA Chair, POW/MIA Committee, and Mokie Porter, VVA Communications Director and Protocol Officer.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Motion 29

To appoint Dennis Howland and John Kost as members and Terry Rangle as AVVA Special Advisor to 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 made the following motion.

Motion 30

To add Richard DeLong, Barry Schloffel, and Jeff White as members to the Membership Affairs Committee for the 2017-2019 term.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – No motions
Public Affairs – D. Howland made the following motions.

Motion 31

To add Mr. Bruce Waxman as a member to the Public Affairs Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Motion 32

For clarification on Item # 11 on the 1st Consent Calendar remove the words within parenthesis (Awards Sub-Committee Chair). Motion would now read: “To appoint Dan Stenvold (Awards Sub-committee Chair) – Grant Coates – Wayne Reynolds – Ken Holybee – Robert Grabinski – Bill Hodges as members and Wes Guidry – Michael Keating – Marc Leepson – Mokie Porter as VVA Staff Liaisons and Terri Rangel – Betty Pike as AVVA Special Advisors to the Public Affairs Committee.”

Without objection motion passed.

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

National Leadership Planning Committee – D. Stenvold – No motions
PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall – No motions
Veterans Benefits – J. Margowski – No motions
Women Veterans – K. O’Hare-Palmer made the following motion.

Motion 33

Add committee members Dottie Barickman, Chuck Byers and Frank Arminio; add AVVA Special Advisor Cathy Wiblemo; move Marsha Four to Special Advisor status; add Special Advisors Maureen Elias and Dr. Linda Schwartz; and remove John Wallace as a member to the Women Veterans Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Unfinished Business

Orderly Transition Reports Update - Secretary Meeks stated there had only been one report submitted so far.

New Business

Approving Litigation – After brief discussion Director McVicker with a second by ??? made the following motion.

Motion 34

To amend Motion # 27, January 1995 to read: Litigation undertaken in VVA's name, whether as a plaintiff or as an amicus must be reviewed and endorsed by the Director, Veterans Benefits Program and Executive Director for the policy and Government Affairs and approved by a majority vote of the National Board of Directors.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

VVA Suspensions – Secretary Meeks has been sending the suspension list out by e-mail frequently.

Chapter # 883 (GA) Revoke Charter – Secretary Meeks with a second by Treasurer Reynolds made the following motion.

Motion 35

To revoke the charter of Chapter 883 (GA) upon a written recommendation for volunteer closure from the GA. State Council as the chapter no longer conducts business.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

Electronic Meeting Rules – Postponed to the afternoon session.

Committee Reports Only:

Written Reports (digital requested) submitted to National Secretary will be in the Appendix of these minutes.

Veterans Health Care – C. Baker – verbal report

Government Affairs – P. Peterson – verbal & written reports

Agent Orange/Dioxin – M. Kaderlik – verbal report

Constitution – L. DeLong – verbal & written reports

Meeting recessed for Lunch 11:30 am

President Rowan reconvened the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Saturday October 21, 2017, at 1:10 pm.

Committee Reports Only (con't):

Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – verbal & written report

Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System – G. Newman – verbal report

Minority Affairs – G. Gomez – verbal & written reports

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons – verbal report

POW/MIA – G. Coates – verbal & written reports

Membership Affairs – C. Hobbs - verbal & written reports

Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – verbal report

Public Affairs – D. Howland – verbal report

National Leadership Planning Committee – D. Stenvold – verbal report

PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall – verbal report

Veterans Benefits – J. Margowski - verbal & written reports

Women Veterans – K. O'Hare-Palmer - verbal & written reports

Electronic Meeting Rules – Director DeLong made the following motion with a second by Director Riling.

Motion 36

To temporarily approve the “Electronic Rules and Requirements” document as written until the January 2018 BOD meeting.

Electronic Meeting Rules and Requirements

Valid until 1-13-2018

Article I, Section 7 - Committees

- C The committees shall meet at such times and places as the chair of the committee or the president or national board shall direct. Committee meetings may be conducted in person or by electronic means as long as each committee member is able to hear and respond simultaneously and can participate, without limitations, in all matters brought before the committee.**

For the purposes of VVA,

The following requirements for conducting an electronic meeting or e-meeting have been agreed upon by the members of the Committee of Committee Chairs. An e-meeting is one in which business will be accomplished, such as; making motions, voting on motions and debating motions. These requirements do not apply to informal communications between committee members during which no business is conducted. These rules should be followed whenever conducting a committee e-meeting between regular National BOD meetings and when conducting a regularly scheduled physical meeting at the national headquarters where there will be one or more committee members attending electronically.

- A. Notice.** Notice of the date, time (remember time zones) and place of the meeting must be delivered to the committee members a minimum of 72 hours prior to the start of the designated meeting. **This requirement applies only to e-meetings held between regularly scheduled committee meetings at the national headquarters.*
- B. Quorum.** A quorum must be present before any business can be validly conducted. Business includes making motions (ex. accepting previous minutes or the proposed agenda), and voting. A quorum is a majority of a committee's members.
- C. Inclusion in quorum.** To be counted towards the quorum a member attending either physically or electronically must be a VVA member approved by the National Board and be able to participate without limitation.
 - Hear discussion and speak to all other participants simultaneously
 - Possess the same written/visual documents and other materials pertaining to the issues being discussed and voted on that those members physically attending possess
- D. Written material.** Prior to the meeting all written material (agenda, discussion topics, previous minutes, etc.) must be made available electronically or in hard copy format to those attending the meeting electronically or in person.
- E. Documentation.** The following documents are required for every committee meeting:
 - Agenda
 - Meeting minutes must
 - be recorded on the approved VVA form for committee minutes
 - contain a roll call of members present
 - report the establishment of a quorum
 - contain a record of motions made and results of voting
- F. Email, chat rooms and other modes of communication that do not allow participants to hear and speak to each other simultaneously are not acceptable for conducting an e-meeting. The following modes of communication are acceptable:**
 - Conference call or video conference

- **Freeconferencecall.com**
 - **Gotomeeting.com**
 - **Others**
- **Skype**

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 23

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 0

WI. State Council President Richard Linbeck presented Dr. Tom Hall and Dr. Tom Berger with the WI Commendation Medal.

The meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Meeks, Jr.
National Secretary
Approved 1/12/2018

Appendix: Committee Reports

Vietnam Veterans of America Women Veterans Committee Report
October 20, 2017 2:15pm-4:10pm. Doubletree Hotel. Silver Springs MD.

The meeting was called to order and all members and guests were introduced. The agenda was reviewed and accepted without objection. The report from the April 7, 2017 committee meeting was reviewed. The complete minutes with committee members names were not available due to chairs distraction with Northern California fires. The minutes will be emailed and accepted electronically. Request for Additional committee members and special advisors was discussed.

Convention resolutions in packets..all were passed at convention..we had the most resolutions presented of any committee. Will need to start working on next level of topics for new solutions.

Sharon Hodge and Kate reported on the center for Women Veterans Summit in Houston last August. The summit was cut short due to hurricane Harvey. We were in attendance for the new screening of the movie, "Journey To Normal." Director Julie De Stefano was in the audience for post movie discussion. The film followed eight women in active duty over a 3 year period with footage before, during, and after deployment. Some of them were married with children, and others with significant others. It showed an in depth view of their lives and emotional effects during this time. One of the women in the film was there for Q and A. These women had many of the same transition issues that we did after serving and then they had the added stressors of deploying and leaving and coming back to their children. This movie can be shown around the country if we want to sponsor it. Go to website "normal.com". Sharon had the added challenge of being in Houston during the hurricane and worked at the astrodome with the evacuees and volunteering with the Red Cross. She was an asset to them and we thank her for her service! The seminars that were unable to be presented will be available on the VA.gov/womenveteran website.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Linda Schwartz: former VVA Women Veteran Committee Chair, Director of VA Connecticut, and former Undersecretary of VA.

Discussion: 1. National Vietnam Veterans Mortality Study- 7-8 members on committee. 2yrs. Data for both men and women, MOS, service connected treatment at VA and private sector, in-country vs. era vs. other geographic areas.

2. Discussion on Veterans Choice and Accountability Title 38..section 402 has not been implemented. Scope was to include survivors of sexual trauma in active duty, guard, and reserves to be treated at VA. This requires VA and DOD to work together. Active duty can go to Vet centers for mental health care with privacy maintained, but any physical issues must be treated at VA centers and DoD must assume cost..which then may breach privacy.

3. SAPRO has started to work with both DOD and VA.

4. Domestic violence..is part of intake VA questionnaire..but VA still only wants to do pilot study to review MST.

5. Head of VA Sexual Trauma Program doesn't even live in DC..she is in Cleveland.

6. Need motion from committee for f/u on HR 3230 section 402..PL 113-146.

SB 833 To amend title 38, US Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Dept. Of VA for military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

We need to review verbiage to make sure that it is consistent throughout. This bill expands coverage for cyber harassment of a sexual nature, expansion of availability for members of the armed forces, broadening the scope of evidence based histories, evaluation of claims, relevant behavior changes, corroborating evidence, and institutes an annual report to Congress on covered claims submitted during the previous fiscal year.

Committee goals: reviewed and will be compiled for minute review and adoption.

Constitution Committee Report October 20, 2017

Report of the Chair, April 2017- October 2017,
Answered questions from members, chapters and state councils related to bylaws, the constitution and parliamentary procedures. Wrote and submitted the report of the Constitution Committee to the delegates for the 2017 convention and helped format the 2017 proposed resolutions. I prepared and presented two sessions of the New Delegates Briefing prior to the convention. The committee amended the constitution as directed by the delegates to the convention and I submitted the amended constitution to National along with an article describing the changes to be published in *The Veteran*. I Provided electronic copies of the amended VVA Constitution and instructions on how to locate the constitution on VVA.org to numerous members and answered questions from several others who reached out to the committee through the “Contact Us” link on the web site.

Constitution Committee meeting, October 20, 2017
The committee was asked to provide an opinion on the following:

Opinion #1

The committee was asked for an opinion regarding the authority of a chapter to refuse to accept a transfer member from another chapter or from at-large status.

The committee studied the available documents and it is our opinion that each member in good standing has an independent right to transfer between chapters or to an at-large status. A chapter is therefore not authorized to refuse a membership transfer from a member in good standing*. A summary of the information considered in forming the opinion is listed below followed by excerpts from the actual documents.

- The constitution alludes to the fact that membership in a chapter is not required.
- Chapter formation requires 25 members
- Choosing a chapter is “Optional” on the Membership Application and a chapter, if selected, is not given the option of refusing the new member nor is it informed of the new member until the member’s name appears on the chapter roster.
- The member transfer form states that “Both the transferring member and membership chair (or other designated official) from the chapter or state council that a member is “transferring to” must sign the completed Member Transfer Form.”
 - This requires someone to sign the form whether they want to or not.
 - The signature on the form does not authorize the transfer it only acknowledges receipt of the form
- RONR states members of an organization cannot be deprived of the basic rights of membership.
- The National BOD does not have the authority to transfer members into or out of chapters nor does the national BOD have the right to transfer a member to at-large

*A member in good standing is one whose rights as a member of VVA are not under suspension as a consequence of disciplinary proceedings or by some specific provision of the VVA constitution and is designated as “Active” under the heading “Status” in the most recent VVA Membership Roster.

From the VVA Constitution

Article I, section 3

A Membership in the Corporation is open to any veteran of the military service of the United States of America, who served on active duty during the dates established by federal law for the Vietnam War, paying in advance annual dues set by the national board, and conforming to, and complying with, this Constitution, bylaws, and rules of the Corporation now or hereinafter in effect. The national board shall have the right to set rules for waiver of dues in situations it deems appropriate. **Members shall file with their chapter, or with the Corporation, if they are not affiliated with a chapter, a DD Form 214, or other proof of qualification for membership.**

Article 3, Section 1 Chapter Formation

Twenty-five members in good standing may petition for a charter.

From the “Member Transfer Form”

Member Transfer Processing Instructions:

1. Member transfers may be initiated by a member or by invitation from a representative from a chapter or state council.
- 2. Two signatures are required. Both the transferring member and membership chair (or other designated official) from the chapter or state council that a member is “transferring to” must sign the completed Member Transfer Form.**
3. The membership chair from the new (transferring to) chapter should forward the New State Council copy of the Member Transfer Form to their state to advise them of the transfer. The National and Former Chapter copies should be sent to the national membership affairs office.
4. The national data base will be updated and a replacement member card will be sent to the member.
5. The National Membership Dept. will forward a copy of the Member Transfer Form to the former chapter to advise them of the transfer.

From the Membership Procedures Guide 2016

Transfers

How does a member transfer between chapters or at-large status? A member can transfer between chapters or from at-large status to a chapter by using the Member Transfer Form. The member needs to sign the form and give it chapter to which the member is transferring. **A chapter officer needs to sign the form and mail, fax or e-mail it to the VVA Membership Department.** Members transferring from chapter to at-large status do not need to use the

Transfer form. Those members need to notify the membership department by mail, fax or e-mail of their desire to become an at-large member.

From the “Membership Application”

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____ Gender: _____

(OPTIONAL) Chapter Number: _____ **Sponsor:** _____

From RONR (11th ed.) p. 3, ll. 1-9

A member of an assembly, in the parliamentary sense, as mentioned above, is a person entitled to full participation in its proceedings, that is, as explained in 3 and 4, the right to *attend meetings*, to *make motions*, to *speak in debate*, and to *vote*. **No member can be individually deprived of these basic rights of membership—or of any basic rights concomitant to them, such as the right to make nominations or to give previous notice of a motion—except through disciplinary proceedings.**

From the Constitution

The Constitution specifically states the powers and responsibility of the National BOD as it pertains to membership in Article I, Section 3, paragraph C

- C The national board shall have the authority to designate classes of members, and the dues, entitlements, eligibility requirements, and available services concerning such members, and shall have the authority to restrict from membership a person or group of persons when, in their judgment, admission of such person or persons would be inconsistent with, or detrimental to, the purposes, principles, objectives, or goals of the Corporation or otherwise.

According to RONR (page 589, line 33) as stated below, when the bylaws, or constitution in this case, authorize specific actions that can be taken such as the list below, then other comparable actions not listed are prohibited.

- Designate classes of members
 - The constitution does not contain any references to “at-large members” rather they are called “members who are not affiliated with a chapter”. Therefore, they are not a separate class.
- Determine dues

- Determine what members are entitled to, what benefits/services they get from membership
- Determine who is eligible Article I section 3, paragraph A above
- Restrict from membership any person or group who is inconsistent or detrimental to the purpose of the organization

RONR page 589 starting on line 33:

4) *If the bylaws authorize certain things specifically, other things of the same class are thereby prohibited.*

The constitution does not give the National BOD the authority to put a member into a chapter nor does it authorize the National BOD to remove a chapter member from a chapter and designate that member as not affiliated with a chapter.

Opinion #2

The committee was asked for an opinion regarding the authority of the National BOD to transfer a chapter member to at-large status at the request of the member's chapter.

It is the opinion of the Constitution Committee that the constitution does not give the National BOD the authority to put a member into a chapter nor does it authorize the National BOD to remove a chapter member from a chapter and designate that member as not affiliated with a chapter without the consent of the member.

Supporting evidence from the VVA Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th ed.) follows.

Article I, section 3

- A Membership in the Corporation **is open to any veteran of the military service of the United States of America, who served on active duty during the dates established by federal law for the Vietnam War, paying in advance annual dues set by the national board, and conforming to, and complying with, this Constitution, bylaws, and rules of the Corporation now or hereinafter in effect.** The national board shall have the right to set rules for waiver of dues in situations it deems appropriate. Members shall file with their chapter, or with the Corporation, if they are not affiliated with a chapter, a DD Form 214, or other proof of qualification for membership.

The Constitution specifically states the powers and responsibility of the National BOD as it pertains to membership in Article I, Section 3, paragraph C

- C The national board shall have the authority to designate classes of members, and the dues, entitlements, eligibility requirements, and available services concerning such members, and shall have the authority to restrict from membership a person or group of persons when, in their judgment, admission of such person or persons would be inconsistent with, or detrimental to, the purposes, principles, objectives, or goals of the Corporation or otherwise.

According to RONR (page 589, line 33) as stated below, when the bylaws, or constitution in this case, authorize specific actions that can be taken such as the list below, then other comparable actions not listed are prohibited.

- Designate classes of members

- The constitution does not contain any references to “at-large members” rather they are called “members who are not affiliated with a chapter”. Therefore, they are not a separate class.
- Determine dues
- Determine what members are entitled to, what benefits/services they get from membership
- Determine who is eligible Article I section 3, paragraph A above
- Restrict from membership any person or group who is inconsistent or detrimental to the purpose of the organization

RONR page 589 starting on line 33:

4) If the bylaws authorize certain things specifically, other things of the same class are thereby prohibited.

Leslie DeLong, Chair
National Constitution Committee

Veterans Benefits Committee Report

The Veterans Benefits Committee met informally on Thursday evening, 10/18/17.

The Veterans Benefits Director’s report was received from Director Yoon. That report was also presented to the Board yesterday.

We received the AVVA Service Officer Report which you have also received.

2016-2017 Grant recipients have all received their grants.

Kelsey is sending notices to all Veteran Service Officers who have missed filing multiple quarterly reports that their accreditation will be revoked.

There was general discussion on other items.

The committee unanimously agreed to have Kelsey draft a motion for the Government Affairs Committee regarding supporting legislation that would expand Chapter 18 benefits to all children who have Spina Bifida or certain enumerated birth defects and are biological descendants of Veterans with qualifying service.

That wording would be sent to the Government Affairs Chair for his verification on wording for a motion to then come out of Government Affairs. This was done.

Meeting of Friday 10/19/17 was held at the scheduled time. Because all of the agenda items had been discussed the previous evening, discussion continued on the following items.

- a. VSO files and software conversion.
- b. Scanners

c. Staffing for scanning of the files.

Director Yoon and Chairman Burke are working on a plan to help support local programs with scanning of their files and recommendations will be coming to the committee at a later date.

Discussion was also held on the missing files at the Denver RO regarding the Agent Orange claims and missing files. VVA will have to follow up with VA staff to locate the missing files. We had hoped to do statistical analysis as to what types of disabilities were being claimed and other analysis of those claims.

This concludes the report, are there any questions?

Respectfully submitted,

John L. Margowski, Acting Chair



Veterans Initiative Program
POW-MIA Committee
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

21 October, 2017
Report to the Board
VVA National Board of Directors Meeting

- **To Date:** **Missing** – 1,602
Accounted: 981 since 1975
 1. 1,602 Americans are listed by DoD as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War: Vietnam – 665, Laos – 271, Cambodia – 42, and the PRC – 3. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975, for a grand total of 1,044.
 2. DPAA most recently accounted for:

- a. Capt. **James. R. Bauder**, USN, of CA, listed as MIA 9/21/66 in North Vietnam, recovered 6/11/17, and ID'd 8-28-17.
 - b. CMSgt **Donald J. Hall**, USAF, listed as MIA 2/6/67 in North Vietnam, recovered 4/3/17, and ID'd 8/18/17.
 - c. Col **Martin R. Scott**, USAF, of OK, listed as MIA 3/15/66 in North Vietnam, recovered 12/12/15 and ID'd 6/15/17.
 - d. 1st Lt **David T. Dinan**, III, USAF, of NJ, listed as KIA/BNR in Laos on 3/17/69, recovered 4/8/14, and ID'd 8/7/17.
- Met with National League of POW/MIA Families on Monday, October 17
 - Met with DPAA Deputy Director Fern Winbush on Tuesday, October 18
 - U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs
 - 20th Plenum is currently scheduled for November 7-9 in Moscow.
 - VVA attended USRJC presentation at the Russian Cultural Center on Wednesday, October 18
 - Veterans Initiative team consisting of VVA Vice President Marsh Four, POW/MIA Chair Grant T. Coates, and Mokie Porter, Director of Communications and Protocol Officer
 - leaving on Vietnam mission mid-January to Early February taking six cases containing information regarding approximately 57 Vietnamese war dead burial locations.

Report filed with National Secretary

VVA National Minority Veterans Committee Report

October 21, 20017

The Committee met for the first time on our new cycle of two years with the new appointed Chair, Gumersindo Gomez. The chairman went on to explained his roll as Chair and his expectations of the members on the Committee for the next two years. He explained that he expected full engagement of every members of the committee in their responsibilities as members, that he was to hold everybody responsible in the committee to their duties as they were delegated out to each member.

Member, Jorge Pedroza, SC President for Puerto Rico, gave an account of the situation in Puerto Rico with the catastrophe they had with hurricane Maria, explaining the situation that our citizens of Puerto Rico are going through and the need that our VVA members and their families have. He went on to give his mailing address in case any chapters/SC wanted to send their donations to our VVA membership of PR. He also explained that Gumersindo Gomez, Mark Mc Cabe and he had met with President John Rowan to discuss how VVA National could assist the membership in PR.

The committee approved the committee's brochure for minority membership, which will go to print on or about the first week of December 2017, to be on hand by January's meeting. But before that, the

committee is to give the membership committee an opportunity to review and recommend changes or additions if need be on the brochure.

Also the committee will commence to work via e-mails or conference calls in preparing a short/long range plan which will guide the committee for the next two years, with goals to be set per calendar dates. Something very important that was discussed was that for the committee to achieved their set goals they needed the support of VVA National leaders in bracing and backing the committee in their endeavors, as without their support it will be difficult to accomplish their mission. They feel that in the past the committee has lack the support from VVA leadership.

Some of these supports include numbers of membership of minority veterans in VVA, number of minorities veterans that have received VA benefits using our VSOs in VVA and how much recovery dollars VVA benefits program has gotten for these veterans. We need to show success stories when we are out in the field doing recruitment. We must show what we have to offer in VVA and what they can expect from us by becoming members of the organization.

Gumersindo Gomez
MC Chair.

October 2017 MAC Report

During the 2017 VVA National Convention in New Orleans, the 2017 National Membership Growth Awards were announced. The winners were: **TN** #0203; 701-800: **NY** #0077; 601-700: **CA** #0391; 501-600: **FL** #1036; 401-500: **AL** #1067; 301-400: **OH** #0649; 201-300: **TN** #1078; 101-200: **VA** #1061; 51-100: **LA** #1058; 25-50. And a special award was given to **MD** #0172 for maintaining the highest membership totals nationally for the last decade.

Now that we have the VVA National Convention behind us, the MAC Team is once again coming together with plans to make a difference in the next two years. With the return of most of all team members and with a few new faces, we will begin right where we left off.

Membership continues to grow despite attrition though non-renewals and deaths. During the first six months of 2017, reported deaths averaged 99/month, up from 73 a year ago. However, we are approaching another milestone this year by reaching the 82,000 mark.

Once again we will be working the membership tent during the Veteran's Day weekend in Washington, D.C. If you are in the area, please stop by and help us greet and recruit new members.

Charlie Hobbs, Chair
MAC

EOC Report from meeting of October 20, 2017

The Economic Opportunities Committee began with a remembrance of committee member Ted Daywalt who passed this year. His company, VetJobs, always kept the committee updated on the latest veteran employment figures. He was passionate about veteran issues and will be missed.

The committee reviewed its goals for the next two years in the areas of promoting jobs, training, and veterans in business. They will be finalized at the January meeting.

A recent California law, SB 410 introduced by Senator Janet Nguyen and signed by Governor Brown, assists newly discharged veterans in accessing state employment by accelerating the veterans' preference application. They can apply before discharge by submitting a letter to their commanding officer to verify their military service. No longer will they have to wait months after discharge to get the necessary documentation for employment.

Over the past year the committee has been following closely the Supreme Court decision in favor of Kingdomware, a Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB). Now it is being challenged- the Federal Circuit may decide whether veterans or Ability One participants receive priority in VA procurements. The committee feels this issue is important enough for us to go to Capitol Hill in April to meet with the Small Business Committee and the House Veterans Affairs Committee to support the Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses. The committee will hold a teleconference in December to lay the groundwork and develop a detailed plan at the January meeting.

As you heard in the motion today, the committee will be writing a letter to the Deputy Administrator for the Small Business Administration who chairs the Interagency Taskforce on Veterans Business Development to reemphasize the purpose of the taskforce which is to increase contract opportunities for SDVOBs in the federal marketplace. It is important that VVA continue to have a representative on this taskforce.

A recent executive order by the White House is expanding apprenticeships to include high demand occupations such as Information Technology. This month a taskforce was created to implement the order which the Secretary of Labor will chair.

Committee members will participate in the revisions to the Code of Federal Regulations dealing with the SBA SDVOB regulations.

Three members of the committee will attend the Veterans Small Business Conference in St. Louis December 5-7.

The committee will reconvene on January 12th, 2018.

Thank you for your support.

