



Vietnam Veterans of America

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

Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors Meeting January 11, 2019 Approved by Board

President John Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Friday January 11, 2019, at 9:01 am, at the Double Tree by Hilton in Silver Spring, MD. After consultation with the Constitution Committee Chair Leslie DeLong, President Rowan stated that Vice President Marsha Four would serve as Secretary Pro Tem as the Secretary was excused from the meeting. Director Gumersindo Gomez delivered the opening prayer which was followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

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

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO

Excused: Bill Meeks, Wayne Reynolds and Father Philip Salois

Secretary Pro Tem Four conducted roll call of the State Council Presidents. Present were:

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

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

Preliminary Business

Secretary Pro Tem Four submitted the following motions with a second from Director Southern:

Motion 1

**To accept the 2019 January BOD meeting tentative agenda.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 2

**To approve the 2018 October BOD Meeting Minutes 10/12/18.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

National President/J. Rowan

President Rowan gave a brief verbal report with a copy passed out. He also explained that Treasurer Wayne Reynolds is back in the hospital.

National Vice President/M. Four

Vice President Four gave a brief verbal report with a copy in the packets. Activities for this period included the following:

- The Committee Chairs requested a return of Jeff Greulich for the October 2018 lunch meeting to continue discussions on IT matters
- Attended Veterans Day activities in Washington DC. This included the VVA Women Veterans Committee event held at the Daughters of the American Revolution. It was here VVA recognized the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Women Veterans' Memorial. Represented VVA on the dais for the ceremony at the Wall and also at the Women's Memorial in Arlington.
- Represented VVA at the Delaware County, PA, Veterans Freedom Award Presentation dinner
- Represented VVA and presented at the Chester County, PA Professional Business Association in recognition of Veterans Day. The presentation included past VVA accomplishments and our current agenda along with the work we are doing with the newer veterans. They made a donation to veterans in need.
- President Rowan and I continue conversations with Dr. Jeff Lang regarding contacts he has that might be of value to VVA in advancing our projects and issues through financial donations and material distribution creating an information initiative that veterans could utilize in meeting with their individual community doctors.
- Continue working with Dr. Schwartz on the design of a pocket card for veterans allowing them to control the health information they provide to their community care provider. The design is taking shape.
- Plan to set a date for a meeting with the Park Service on the location of our VVA tent over the Memorial Day and Veterans Day Holidays.
- I will be attending and representing VVA at the 51st Annual Four Chaplains Day Banquet on February 7th.

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America/ S. Hobbs

The AVVA Board continues to conduct business and communicate through our online conferencing platform. However, we took a two-week vacation in December to celebrate the holidays with our families and friends.

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. An enclosure provided by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) with information about the *In Memory* registry is included with each sympathy card.

MILITARY HOLIDAY IN DC: In November, AVVA attended the ceremonies in Washington DC and worked in the Membership/Information tent. Sharon Hodge (AVVA Governmental Affairs Chair) laid the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; Cecilia Essenmacher (Region 5 Director) laid a wreath at The Wall and at the In Memory Plaque.

IN MEMORY PLAQUE: AVVA continues to work with Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) on the rededication of the *In Memory Plaque*. Plans for the ceremony are currently scheduled for Memorial Day weekend. Expect an official announcement as the time draws nearer.

CONVENTION: AVVA is gearing up for the 2019 Convention. Award nominations, bylaw proposals, candidate declarations, and delegate registrations are now being accepted. All

information and forms are posted to our website. We will announce our Project Friendship during the April Board meeting.

IN DECEMBER: AVVA Board grieved along with Region 2 Deputy Director, Bobbie Morris (PA), in the death of her husband, Philip. AVVA donated \$2,000 to the Birth Registry.

20th ANNIVERSARY: 2019 is AVVA's 20th anniversary. We will endeavor to celebrate our birthday in Spokane; we invite you to make merry with us.

AVVA Board will not meet again until April 2019. On Thursday, January 10th, our Finance Committee will meet to begin the budget process for the 2020 fiscal year. All budget proposals were due to the Finance Committee by December 1st. The proposed budget will be presented to the Board for approval in April.

Any updates or additions to this report will be given orally during my allotted time at the VVA Board meeting on Friday.

Sharon Hobbs, AVVA President

Conference of State Council Presidents/R. Moody

CSCP President Moody noted that there were forty-three (43) presidents in attendance. Dr. Tom Hall discussed the Vet Center Questionnaire and there was an update on the Welcome Guide.

HGDP Report/Q. Butcher

Quentin Butcher noted that revenues are stable and that the UPS Program is expanding.

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

Rick Weidman spoke about where VVA was on our legislative efforts with Congress on the Blue Water Navy Bill and that the Legislative Agenda is on schedule to be ready.

Veterans Health Council

President Rowan announced that Col. Artie Sheldon, MD USA ret as the new Director of the Veterans Health Council since Cathleen Wiblemo and her family are having to move to Florida.

Communication Department/M. Porter

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

**COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS
SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS**

January 11, 2018

SOCAL MEDIA _____

VVA Facebook 2018

The VVA Facebook page continues to gain followers, as measured by “Likes.”

The VVA Facebook has had a **7%** increase in followers in a 12-month period (January 1, 2018- January 1, 2019);

On January 1, 2019, VVA Facebook had **133,631** likes, an increase from **124,645** likes recorded on January 1, 2018

We have gained nearly **9,000** additional followers since January 1, 2018.

Faces of Agent Orange Facebook 2018

The Faces of Agent Orange Facebook page had a **10%** increase in followers for the same 12-month period (January 1, 2018- January 1, 2019);

On January 1, 2019, FAO Facebook had **19,274** likes, an increase from **17,473** on January 1, 2018.

VVA Twitter

VVA’s twitter account as of January 1, 2019, has **10,800** followers, up **155%** from January 1, 2018 (**4,222 Followers**).

Faces of Agent Orange Twitter

VVA’s FAO twitter account, as of January 1, 2019, had **1,217** followers, up 7% from January 1, 2018 (**1,130 Followers**).

Followers often “retweet” our messages to their followers, some of whom have thousands of followers. This expands VVA’s visibility exponentially, which has reached heights of over 10,000 impressions.

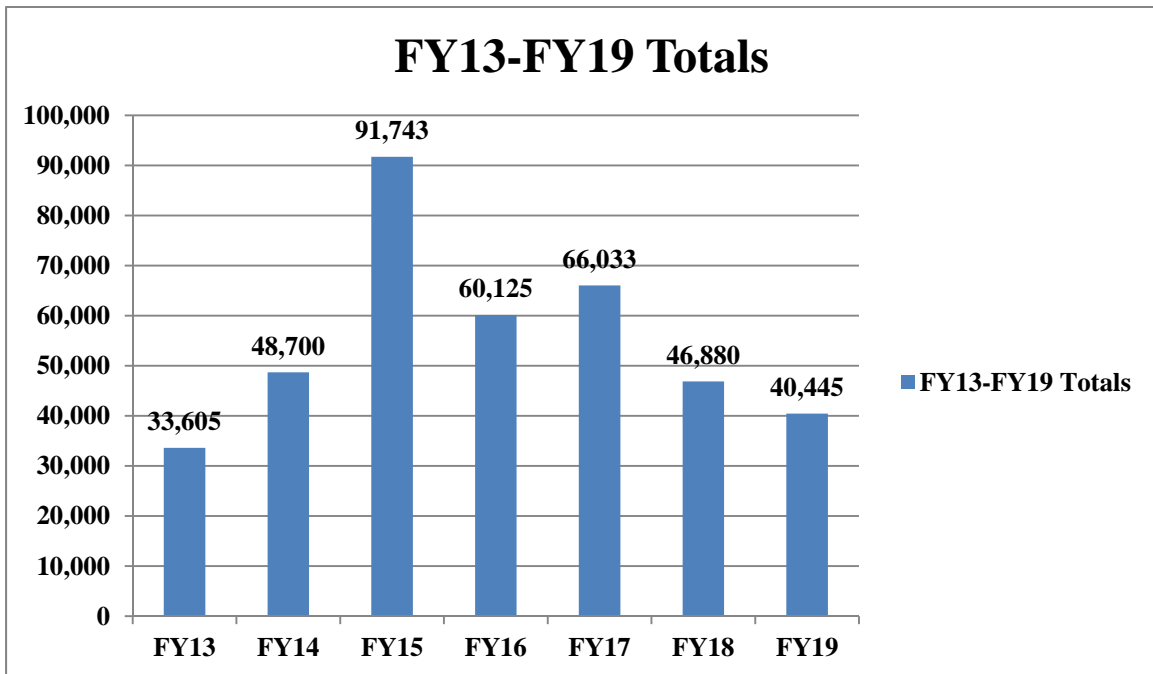
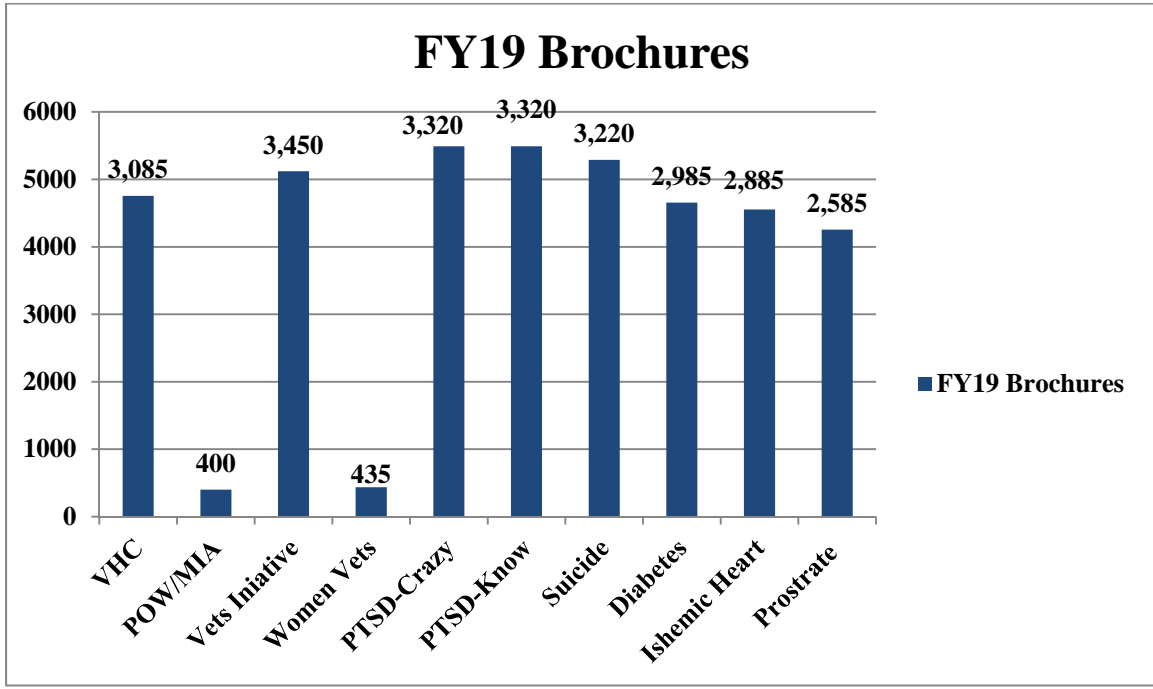
YouTube

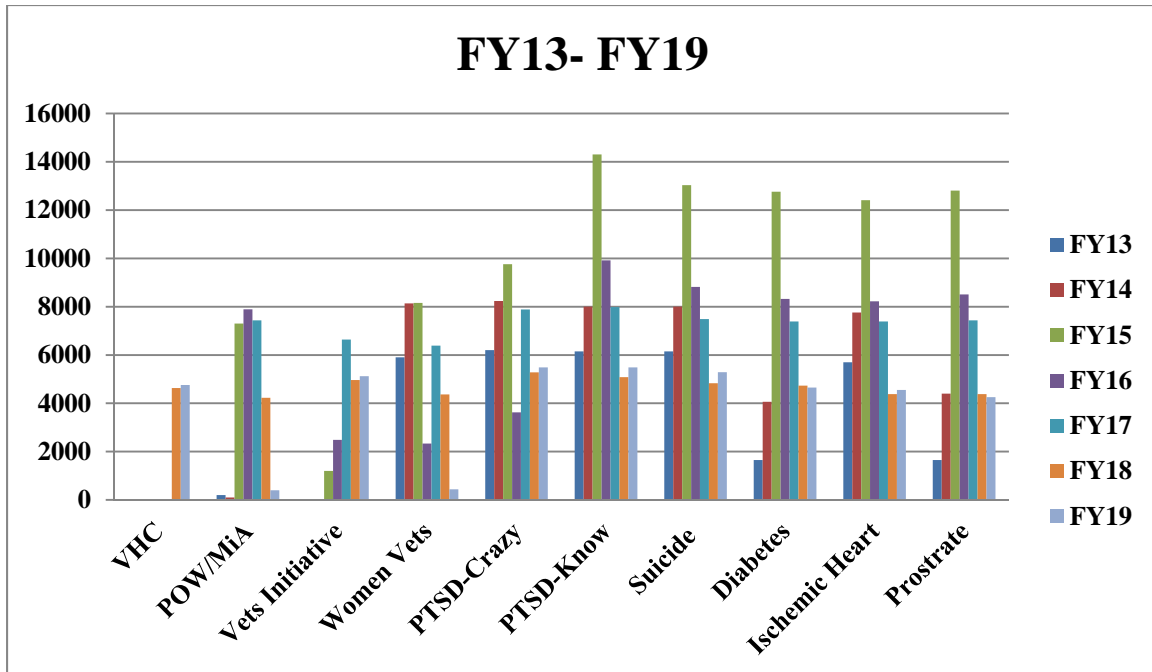
Our Vietnam Veterans of America YouTube channel has **99288** views and **516** subscribers as of January 1, 2019.

Our Faces of Agent Orange YouTube has **97,809** views and **494** subscribers as of January 1, 2019.



FY19- 40, 455
January 2019





387,531 Brochures

NEWS

VVA's **Web Weekly** is distributed to our **30,000 +** VVA members, supporters, and members of the media.

Web Weekly is **15.63 % OVER** non-profit industry average for percentage opened.

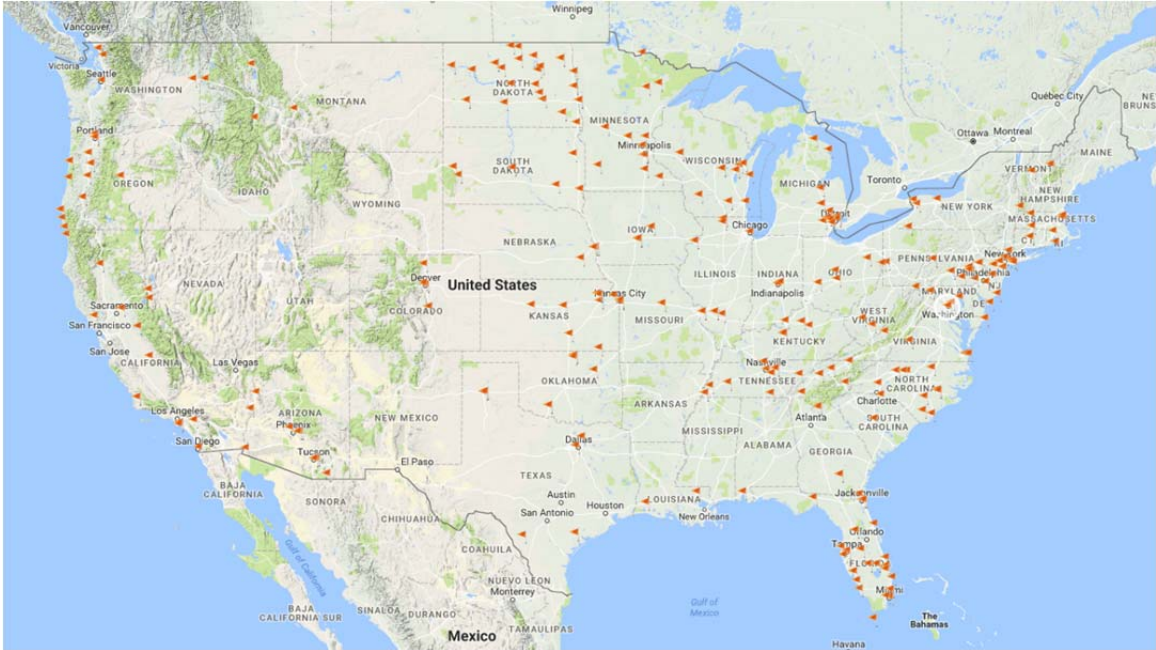
Agent Orange Folders Sent

29,954 Agent Orange folders have been sent in past 7 years--began tracking in 2012
 FY19-2,103 | FY18-3,240 | FY17-5,283 | FY16- 6,762 | FY15-7,310 | FY14-3,206 |
 FY13-2,050

Cases of Agent Orange Booklets Sent

117,279 Agent Orange Self-help Guides distributed over past 5 years--began tracking in 2014
 FY19-9,103 | FY 18-17,640 | FY17-18,583 | FY16- 29,887 | FY15-36,810

Google Map of Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings to date



Veterans Benefits Program Director’s Report/Felicia Mullaney, Esq.

VETERANS BENEFITS REPORT

JANUARY 2019

Felicia Mullaney

Interim Director, Veterans Benefits Program

CONTENT

1. Interim Director’s Note
 - a. BVA VSO Written Brief Deadlines
 - b. Appeals Modernization Training
2. VBP Activities
3. Notable Achievements

APPENDIX

1. Letter to BVA Chairman on VSO Written Brief Deadlines

1. Interim Director’s Note

a. Written Brief Deadlines at BVA

The Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) has proposed implementing deadlines to VSO’s written briefs. VSO written briefs are where we make legal arguments and submit additional evidence on behalf of VVA represented veterans. BVA wants to implement deadlines for, not only appeals under the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA), but also appeals that remain in the legacy system. If VVA is unable to meet the deadlines, a BVA judge will decide an appeal without a written brief from the Veteran’s VSO. Applying

deadlines for written briefs this early in the new appeals process would be impractical and unreasonable.

VVA as well as the other VSOs co-located at BVA have had regular meetings with BVA to discuss deadlines and timelines requirements under the AMA. VVA strongly opposes any deadlines for VSO written briefs. VVA has prepared a letter to the BVA Chairman articulating the reasons VSO written briefs deadlines are unreasonable and our proposal on how to approach timeliness under the AMA. *See Letter to BVA Chairman on VSO Written Brief Deadlines.*

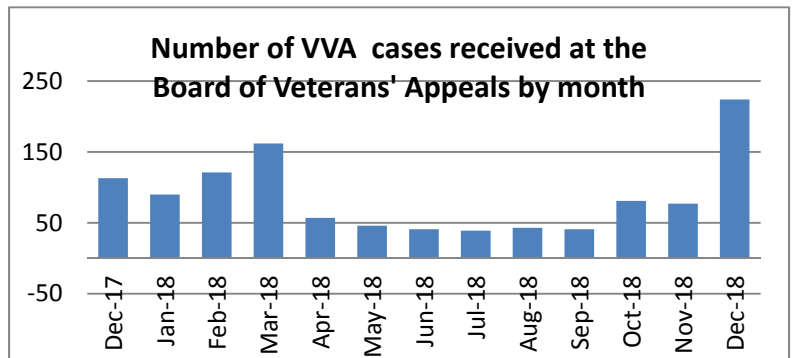
b. Appeals Modernization Training

Appeals Modernization Act training is on schedule to take place Sunday-Tuesday immediately following the BOD Meeting. The VBP is excited for the opportunity to train many of our VSOs in-person for the upcoming changes under the AMA. We have a full schedule planned to make sure we cover areas VSO will need to know under the AMA, but also updates on other areas that have changed fairly recently.

Again, we would like to thank VVA’s BOD and Finance Committee for supporting this critical training. As of right now, VA is still schedule to fully transition to the new appeals system in February 2019. Having this in-person training will prepare our VSOs to represent our veterans under the AMA and enable them to provide educating advice for veterans trying to navigate the new process.

2. VBP Activities

The VBP continues to achieve a “win rate” at BVA at around 80%. From January 2018 until December 2018, 37.4% of VVA cases were granted and 42.1% of its cases remanded.¹ Since the last report, in October 2018, and not including hearing request cases, we have received 197 additional new cases. Due to the large influx of cases, unfortunately, VVA cases are still being held up by our office, not VA.



TOTAL APPEALS BACKLOG AT BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

| LOCATION | Number of Cases (July '17) | Number of Cases (Oct '17) | Number of Cases (Jan '18) | Number of Cases (Apr '18) | Number of Cases (July'18) | Number of Cases (Oct' 18) | Number of Cases (Dec' 18) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pending Attorney Review | 895 | 886 | 1014 | 1273 | 1048 | 1044 | 1256 |
| Pending Travel Board Hearing | 211 | 196 | 205 | 207 | 203 | 185 | 158 |
| Pending Videoconference Hearing | 654 | 659 | 687 | 725 | 715 | 662 | 624 |
| Pending Central Office Hearings | 18 | 16 | 19 | 12 | 15 | 12 | 10 |
| TOTAL VVA BACKLOG AT BOARD | 1,778 | 1,757 | 1,925 | 2,217 | 1,981 | 1,903 | 2,048 |

Source: VACOLS; Board of Veterans' Appeals

¹ VVA recorded a denial rate of 12.5% and 8% of the cases recorded a disposition of “other”.

As shown in the table below, VVA continues to file over 100 NODs and almost 100 Form 9s each month. Most of these claims will eventually make their way up to the BVA. The below data indicates that VVA's benefits program continues to remain highly active at all levels.

| VVA Appeals Filed Nationwide (November 2017-November 2018) | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| | NODs Filed | Form 9s Filed |
| Nov | 114 | 119 |
| Dec | Data Unavailable | Data Unavailable |
| Jan | 120 | 137 |
| Feb | 123 | 105 |
| Mar | 143 | 95 |
| Apr | 130 | 109 |
| May | 136 | 94 |
| Jun | 108 | 96 |
| Jul | 116 | 104 |
| Aug | 111 | 95 |
| Sep | 122 | 91 |
| Oct | 127 | 92 |
| Nov | 117 | 91 |

Source: Veterans Benefits Administration (12/2018)

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

| Correspondence & Visitors Report (2017-2018) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov |
| Phone Calls | 205 | 218 | 177 | 227 | 264 | 284 | 232 | 208 | 263 | 167 | 182 | 196 |
| Voice Messages | 55 | 49 | 65 | 91 | 75 | 61 | 130 | 86 | 122 | 103 | 74 | 59 |
| Emails | 263 | 291 | 327 | 308 | 262 | 231 | 308 | 240 | 262 | 268 | 294 | 264 |
| Appointment/Walk-In | 11 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Mail/Faxes | 87 | 139 | 113 | 92 | 86 | 131 | 106 | 122 | 134 | 77 | 105 | 106 |

Source: VetPro (12/11/2018)

| Number of Tracked Appealed Claims by E-VSO | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov |
| 127 | 157 | 158 | 134 | 111 | 93 | 147 | 110 | 132 | 116 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 67 |

We continue to methodically track substantive appeals nation-wide. From October 2017-November 2018, our AMO office tracked, on average, over 122 appeals each month. We had a drop in August 2018 and September 2018 due to an update in our Chief

Veteran Service Officer Notification process, which helped our state programs better manage appeals for their own veterans.

| Rating Decisions Reviewed (VSO Queue) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov |
| 15 | 51 | 30 | 29 | 16 | 28 | 39 | 46 | 54 | 41 | 50 | 37 | 60 | 57 |

Fortunately, the number of rating decision reviews our office conducted this year continue to stay low due to the VBMS update of the “Station of Origin” search feature. Now, our service officers in the field can track, monitor, and check *their* claims, regardless of where they are adjudicated.

3. 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:

Senior Managing Attorney Alec Ghezzi submitted an IHP in support of a veteran’s *request for a new tractor so that he could continue to live independently despite his 100% PTSD* (which requires complete isolation on his farm). BVA granted this request at a value of approximately *\$47,432*; without accessories.

Appellate Attorney Alexandra Rigby submitted an IHP arguing for *an increased rating for a mental health condition*, which BVA granted resulting in a retroactive award of *\$72,738.67*, which made the Veteran and his wife extremely happy as he has recently suffered another medical setback.

Appellate Attorney Alexandra Rigby successfully persuaded BVA that a veteran’s diabetes was managed by regulation of activities which resulted in an *increased rating effective July 2010*, and a retroactive award of *\$45,230.51*.

Appellate Attorney Aviana Cooper submitted an IHP *arguing that a Veteran was unemployable due to his service-connected disabilities*. Subsequently, this was granted resulting in a retroactive award of *\$115,973.36*.

Appellate Attorney Fatmata Conteh submitted an IHP in support of a claim for *service-connection for hearing loss*, which BVA *granted*, resulting in a retroactive award of *\$7,621.37*.

Appellate Attorney Heather Olson submitted an IHP in support of a claim for *service-connection for hearing loss a Veteran over the age of 75*. BVA *granted* entitlement to benefits with a retroactive payment of *\$30,288.51*.

Contract Attorney Joshua Leach submitted an IHP in support of *entitlement to compensation for neuropathy*. BVA granted the claim and a retroactive payment of *\$15,000* was awarded.

Appellate Attorney Mylee Sabarre successfully argued that *a Veteran should be granted benefits for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma* even though he was not listed as present in the Korean DMZ in his personnel record. The BVA was persuaded that the Veteran was, in fact, at the DMZ during service based upon the camps that he visited, his MOS, specific responsibilities, and the dictionary definition of "near" and *granted* the claim, resulting in a retroactive award of *\$76,502*.

EVSO Kenny Bouy assisted a research psychologist at Little Rock, Arkansas' Veterans Healthcare System with information to *assist a family member discharged with an "other than honorable" discharge obtain emergent care treatment for his PTSD*. The psychologist had heard of possible assistance on an NPR program that referenced VVA's Rick Weidman. The psychologist said she "asked everyone and everywhere about this program, but [could not] find out any information." Kenny encouraged the psychologist to have her nephew contact the VVA VSO responsible for his area to facilitate the process. The psychologist said the information will not only help her nephew, but other veterans that she works with daily.

Legal Administrative Assistant Brenaé Fletcher receives many calls throughout the day from veterans who are represented by VVA and by VVA members. Bre *explains the difference between membership and POA*, and assists these veterans to get the various benefits they are seeking through VVA or the VA.

VSO Counsel Joe Scott advocated for a veteran who did not receive payment for a VA grant or special monthly compensation. *VA did not properly account for her payment history and retroactive benefits*. Joe prepared an account of the Veteran's payment history, as well as VA payment criteria, and presented it to multiple VA employees. Eventually, *VA conceded its error and paid the Veteran \$7,139.16*.

Membership Department/T. Houston

Tracie Houston stated that converting the 3 year members to life membership requires a lot of time working in the database, thanks to volunteers working on the life membership packets during this meeting they have finished 4,000 members packets and they have 3,000 more members still to do.

National Meetings and Special Events/W. Guidry

Wes Guidry stated that the 2022 VVA Leadership Conference will be held in Greenville, SC. He asked that board members/committee chairs wait until after the 2019 April BOD meeting to submit their convention registration.

Human Resources and Administration/S. Parker

Most of you know that I am Samala Parker the somewhat new Director of Human Resources and Administration:

For you all who don't know what I do, I align my vision and strategic goals with the vision and strategic goals of the organization. I work under the direct direction of President John Rowan and Vice President Marsha Four. I work with the Department Directors to find the right fit for open positions as well as I work with the directors to align the duties and responsibilities of their people with the current position in which they serve.

If you ask me what my passion is I will tell you every time it's training and developing individuals to be the best in which they can be in life.

Things that were done in 2018: Along with my other HR daily functions, I have also:

- I've done a situational leadership training utilizing the Hersey and Blanchard leadership model with the Veterans Benefits newly promoted Senior Attorney Managers and the Veterans Benefits Department Managers.
- My team and I have been working on getting the organization in compliance with DLLR concerning our lift in the office and fire code certificate updated which will prevent hefty fines.
- The Finance Department and I are working on getting a new HRIS system in place for the organization. We will be able to record our time electronically and do other things electronically such as request time off from home, see our paychecks and W2's online etc.
- Our holiday party was such a success, it was requested that we do the same thing this year. We held it across the street at Dave and Busters.
- We are currently still working on the employee handbook, to ensure we are in legal compliance with all federal and state employment regulations we are seeking assistance from an individual who's expertise is in employment law.

Things that are looking to be done in 2019:

- Establish a monthly Director's meeting.
- Develop team building events; we need more collaboration and synergy in our organization. Many of the people only know the individuals who they work side by side with on a daily basis; we need to get to know each other.
- We are also looking to start having a Company Family Day of Fun during the summer.
- Training on Diversity and Inclusion many of us get the diversity peace but we don't get the inclusion peace we need to have an organization that embraces both.
- We are planning to schedule a representative from AFLAC to come in to speak to our employees about the benefits of having extra protection coverages for not only themselves but their families as well for a very affordable price.
- We are now also a part of the Montgomery County Volunteer Center, where we can volunteer our services and be recognized as an organization as well as we can allow the various high school students come to us and volunteer, they are able to learn the purpose we serve and help us carry out our strategic goals all while.

VAVS Report/K. Rose

Ken Rose spoke to the CSCP about getting help on the VAVS Program so there would be contacts at the chapter level.

BOD Meeting recessed until Saturday morning: 9:00 am

President Rowan reconvened the meeting on Saturday January 12, 2019, at 9:06 am. Roll Call by Secretary Pro Tem Four of the National Board of Directors & State Council Presidents and other preliminary business.

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

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| John Rowan, President | Skip Hochreich | Felix Peterson |
| Marsha Four, Vice President | Sharon Hobbs * | Dave Simmons |
| Dottie Barickman | Francisco Ivarra | Dick Southern |
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| Spence Davis | John Margowski | Kerwin Stone |
| Richard DeLong | Sara McVicker | Ted Wilkinson |
| Gumersindo Gomez | Charlie Montgomery | Sandie Wilson |
| Bob Grabinski | Rex Moody | |

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Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO

Excused: Bill Meeks, Wayne Reynolds and Father Philip Salois

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| | | | |
|-------------|-----------|----------------|---------|
| Alabama | Absent | Nebraska | Present |
| Alaska | Present | Nevada | Present |
| Arizona | Present | New Hampshire | Present |
| Arkansas | Present | New Jersey | Present |
| California | Present | New Mexico | Present |
| Colorado | Present | New York | Present |
| Connecticut | Absent | North Carolina | Present |
| Delaware | Present | North Dakota | Present |
| Florida | Present | Ohio | Present |
| Georgia | Present | Oklahoma | Present |
| Idaho | Present | Oregon | Present |
| Illinois | Absent | Pennsylvania | Present |
| Indiana | Suspended | Puerto Rico | Present |
| Iowa | Present | Rhode Island | Present |
| Kansas | Present | South Carolina | Present |
| Kentucky | Present | South Dakota | Present |
| Louisiana | Present | Tennessee | Present |
| Maryland | Present | Texas | Present |

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------|--|---------------|---------|
| Massachusetts | Present | | Utah | Present |
| Michigan | Present | | Vermont | Absent |
| Minnesota | Present | | Virginia | Present |
| Mississippi | Present | | Washington | Present |
| Missouri | Present | | West Virginia | Present |
| Montana | Present | | Wisconsin | Present |

Finance Committee Report

Chair Ned Foote made the following motions out of committee.

Motion 3

Move that all unbudgeted financial issues that will have an impact on the VVA Board of Directors approved budget must be presented to the VVA Finance Committee for review and recommendation prior to being presented to the VVA Board of Directors.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 4

Move to approve the Amended Contracting Policy per the attached.

CONTRACTING POLICY

(Approved Motion # 5, April 22, 2006)

(Amended Motion 13, April 21, 2012)

(Move to continue as written – Motion # 5 CC # 5, 1-9-16)

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the approval, management and administration of contracts (defined as any agreements whereby VVA commits funds for the exchange of services, Memos of Understanding (MOU), Memos of Agreement, etc.). For purposes of this policy, all of the aforementioned will be referred to as “contracts”. This policy is necessary because contracts may be the source of substantial economic obligations for VVA; contracts need to be monitored; and contracts need to be enforced if goods or services are not being provided in accordance with contractual terms.

Contracts/agreements that do not require funding by VVA (e.g., Household Goods Donation Program, Car Donation Program, etc.) are excluded from this policy.

CONTRACTING POLICY

A. Contracts may be executed only after necessary funding has been identified and approved by the VVA Board of Directors through the annual budget process or other Board

action.

B. Renewals of existing contracts will be reviewed by the General Counsel when requested by the President or Treasurer/Compliance Officer. No new contracts may be signed without review by the General Counsel. The General Counsel will provide a written statement verifying the review and specifying any concerns about the contract.

C. Both the President and the Treasurer/Compliance Officer must provide written approval before any contract, including renewals of existing agreements, can be executed.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

A. If the President determines that a contract is necessary but funding has not been identified and approved, the President will consult with the Finance Committee to determine if funds are available for the contract. If the Finance Committee determines that funds for the contract are available, the issue will then be brought to the VVA Board of Directors for approval of funding after review by the General Counsel has been completed.

B. All proposed contracts for new services will be provided to the VVA Board of Directors for review prior to any vote on funding.

C. Contracts, including routine administrative/maintenance contracts for such items as telephone maintenance; copy machine maintenance; accounting software support; delivery service, VVA Veteran writers; etc. are to be reviewed by the Compliance Officer prior to renewal or if the vendor changes.

D. Existing contracts without end dates will be reviewed by the Compliance Officer at least annually on or near the anniversary date.

STAFF – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Contracting Officer

1. The Chief Financial Officer is designated as the Contracting Officer for VVA. The Contracting Officer is directly responsible to the President and to the Treasurer/Compliance Officer to assure that this policy is followed.

2. The Contracting Officer:

- a. Prepares proposed contracts for approval.
- b. Manages the contract approval process and ensures that the General Counsel reviews proposed contracts
- c. Must receive the written consent of the President and Treasurer before proceeding with any contract execution activity.
- d. Signs and executes contracts for VVA, when authorized by the President and Treasurer/Compliance Officer. The President may also sign and execute contracts for VVA after receiving written concurrence from the

Treasurer.

- e. Maintains and secures the original copy, with all signatures, of all contracts; maintains and updates a list of all contracts; and periodically provides the list of contracts to the President, the Treasurer/ Compliance Officer, office staff as appropriate, the Finance Committee, the General Counsel, and the VVA Board of Directors.
- f. Maintains current, accurate records/notebooks of all contracts and related documents including the approval of funding and annual expenses.
- g. Coordinates with the Compliance Officer to facilitate review of all active contracts at least annually.
- h. Manages the Request For Proposal (RFP) process for VVA when the Board of Directors decides that use of a RFP is appropriate.

B. The National Secretary will ensure all current contracts are posted to the VVA Board discussion site.

C. Cost Center Manager Responsible for Managing the Contract

3. Acts as the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) and provides oversight of the vendor delivering the service.

4. Establishes a schedule and reporting format for monitoring performance criteria and standards as contained in the contract, the vendor's compliance with the contract, and expenditures for the contract. Notifies the VVA Compliance Officer of any issues that arise regarding compliance with the contract.

5. Maintains the contract records and, when appropriate, works with the Contracting Officer to establish adequate supporting schedules which will be kept in the financial records of VVA. These schedules must track with each and every entry in the financial records and be auditable by independent auditors.

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS OR CAPABILITY TO RESPOND

A. VVA may periodically want to conduct new work, or to change a vendor, or to seek information from the field as to capabilities and costs of various vendors to provide goods and services to VVA. When appropriate, this may be accomplished through a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a Request for Capability to Respond.

B. The General Counsel must review any proposed RFP before it is sent to potential contractors.

C. Request for Proposals (RFP).

The Contracting Officer establishes a format to seek proposals from various vendors to provide goods and services. If time permits, it may be appropriate to advertise the

existence of the RFP process in *The VVA Veteran* and to invite interested firms or individuals to compete through the RFP process. An RFP from VVA to a vendor will include:

1. A cover letter to a prospective vendor seeking their Response to Proposal.
2. A Statement of Work to be performed, usually written by the VVA Department or VVA Committee seeking the proposal and approved by the Contracting Officer. When appropriate, the Statement of Work should address tasks, deliverables, and deadlines.
3. A statement that proposals are to be written in the following format:
 - a. Cover letter. This transmits the proposal to VVA.
 - b. Annex A: Technical Proposal. This is the technical response to the Statement of Work.
 - c. Annex B: Corporate Qualifications or Capability of Vendor. This describes the vendor's capabilities, resumes, other clients, any "sales pitch" which vendor wishes to use.
 - d. Annex C: Price Proposal. This describes all the costs associated with the anticipated contract.
4. Proposals are evaluated by an approval team consisting of the VVA Contracting Officer, the VVA Department Director or Committee Chair involved, and one other management level person designated by the President. Proposals will be evaluated using a criteria mutually agreed upon. One of the criteria will be compliance with the letter mailed as the RFP. The Department or Committee accepting a specific proposal will do so in writing to the Contracting Officer. This letter, and the evaluation ratings of all proposals will become part of the permanent record of the final approved contract. The Contracting Officer will prepare a proposed contract that includes tasks, deliverables, and deadlines.
5. Contract approval will be conducted in accordance with the above policy.

D. Request for Capabilities

The Contracting Officer establishes a format to seek information from various vendors as to their capability to provide goods and services to VVA at some future time. At this time, a complete Statement of Work may not be clear to the VVA Department or Committee and there may be no intention to conduct a formal Request for Proposal process in the future. A Request for Capability to Respond only establishes a file from which further Requests for Proposals may begin.

A Request for Capability to Respond will include a discussion of the work to be performed, a request for resumes and client list, and other information deemed appropriate at the time.

Motion 5

Move to approve the Policy on Requesting Legal Opinions or Advice.

Requesting Opinions or Advice from VVA General Counsel
Approved Motion # 8 April 20, 2013

Amended Motion # 5 January 12, 2019

Background:

Legal fees for opinions or advice are paid from the professional fees account under the President’s cost center when authorized by the President. This policy is being instituted in order to provide financial control over legal fees.

Policy:

1. Before legal advice is sought on any contract, policy, memoranda of understanding or other document, or any other matter requiring approval by the Board of Directors, a draft will be circulated to the Board of Directors (BOD) for input. All major questions raised by the BOD regarding the direction VVA wishes to take will be resolved prior to submitting anything to legal counsel.
2. The Chief Financial Officer will submit proposed contracts and MOUs as required by the contracting policy.
3. All other requests for legal advice must be authorized in advance by the National President.
4. Anyone who fails to obtain advance authorization from the President will be responsible for payment of all legal fees incurred as a result of their request.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Consent Calendar – There were no items on the consent calendar.

President Rowan asked the Secretary Pro Tem Four to handle the motions that were under New Business because of impending weather concerns so business could be completed. Secretary Pro Tem Four presented the following motions with a second from Director Southern.

Motion 6

To approve the Honorary Life Membership requests.

| Name | Requested By |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Brian Sandoval | NV State Council |
| Tammy Ramos | Chapter 805 (OR) |
| Diahn Escalante | Chapter 805 (OR) |
| Karen Hostetter | Chapter 805 (OR) |
| Anthony Evedes | Chapter 887 (PI) |
| Vilma Epil-Evedes | Chapter 887 (PI) |
| William Gibbs | Chapter 1091 (MD) |
| Mary McPhillips | Chapter 140 (NY) |

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Ben Upton | Chapter 240 (TN) |
| Allen W. Ericson, Sr. | Chapter 1087 (MT) |
| Jaime L. Wilson | Chapter 343 (TX) |

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 7

To revoke the charter of Chapter 556 (PR) as the PR State Council has done everything they can to rejuvenate the chapter without success.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Committee – MOTIONS ONLY

Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – No motions.

Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System – D. Yezzo – No motions.

Minority Affairs – G. Gomez – No motions.

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons – No motions.

POW/MIA – G. Coates – No motions.

Membership Affairs – C. Hobbs made the following motion after answering several questions about the new application from board members.

Motion 8

To print new application cards for Vietnam Veterans of America, with borders removed, add VVA logo to front and do away with tri-fold.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – No motions.

Public Affairs – D. Howland - No motions.

2019 National Convention Planning Committee – D. Stenvold – No motions.

PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall made the following motion.

Motion 9

To add Terry Yates as a member to PTSD and Substance Abuse Committee at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Veterans Benefits – T. Burke made the following motions.

Motion 10

Approval to file an amicus brief with National Organization of Veterans Advocates (NOVA) and other VSO's in support of Vietnam Veteran Marine James L. Kisor in Supreme Court case Kisor vs Wilke.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 11

To appoint Edward Uzumeckis and Dominick Yezzo to the VBC Committee at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

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

Veterans' Health Care – C. Baker – No motions.

Government Affairs – P. Peterson – No motions.

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

Motion 12

VVA National to donate \$100,000.00 to the Birth Defect Research for Children, Inc. Executive Director Betty Mekdeci address 976 Lake Baldwin Lane, Orlando, FL 32814.

Due to request from Director McVicker, President Rowan called for roll call vote by Secretary Pro Tem Four.

| Board Members | Vote |
|---------------|----------|
| John Rowan | Non-vote |
| Marsha Four | Yes |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Bill Meeks, Jr. | Not present |
| Wayne Reynolds | Not present |
| Dottie Barickman | No |
| Tom Burke | No |
| Spence Davis | No |
| Richard DeLong | No |
| Gumersindo Gomez | No |
| Robert Grabinski | Yes |
| Herman Hochreich | Yes |
| Francisco Ivarra | Yes |
| Allen Manuel | No |
| John Margowski | Yes |
| Sara McVicker | No |
| Charles Montgomery, Jr. | Yes |
| Rex Moody | No |
| Felix Peterson, Jr. | No |
| Dave Simmons | No |
| Richard Southern | No |
| Dan Stenvold | No |
| Kerwin Stone | Yes |
| Ted Wilkinson | No |
| Sandie Wilson | Yes |

Motion failed.

Yes: 8

No: 13

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Constitution – L. DeLong – No Motions.
Resolutions – D. Southern – No Motions

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

There was no new business since agenda items had already been handled.

Korean American Vietnam War Veterans

President Rowan introduced the Korean American Vietnam War Veterans, Kee Jung Kim spoke about problems the Korean Veterans were having and because Mr. Kim also served in the U.S. Armed Forces after the Republic of Korea (ROK), President Rowan has given him a life membership in VVA.

Committee Reports Only

Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – verbal report

Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System – D. Yezzo – reported the committee was doing well*

Minority Affairs – G. Gomez – verbal and written report

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons – verbal report
POW/MIA – G. Coates – verbal and written report
Membership Affairs – C. Hobbs – verbal and written report
Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – verbal and written report
Public Affairs – D. Howland – verbal report
2019 National Convention Planning Committee – D. Stenvold – verbal report
PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall – verbal report
Veterans Benefits – T. Burke – **verbal and written report**
Women Veterans – K. O’Hare-Palmer - verbal report
Veterans Health Care – C. Baker – verbal report
Government Affairs – P. Peterson - verbal and written report
Constitution – L. DeLong - verbal report
Resolutions – D. Southern – verbal report

President Rowan presented the VVA Achievement Medal to Tom Brown.

Agent Orange/Dioxin – M. Kaderlik – verbal and written report

***D. Yezzo was not at the committee meeting because he attended the Veterans Benefits’ tour of the downtown offices.**

Director Stenvold stated the Awards Committee had rescinded the VVA Commendation Medal that had been presented to Tom Berger and no motion was required.

Director Gomez gave a brief prayer for Rick Weidman who had taken sick on Saturday evening.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marsha Four
Secretary Pro Tem
National Vice President



Bill Meeks, Jr.
National Secretary

Minority Affairs Committee Report
January 12, 2019

The Committee met and discuss the issues found in Puerto Rico by the Chair when he visits the Island in November 2018 (report you have received), you will find in the report how the VA will engage the veterans' community after Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, they started by hosting the meeting of November 8th, 2018 and putting together a job fair hosted by U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Also The Transition Assistance Program administered by TED, will deliver briefings about a variety of benefits at U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Sector San Juan for USCG Service members on the Island. The Warrior Training Advancement Course/Warta-dove-pilot-program-trains-transitioning-warriors to process-VA-disability claims, will be offered at Fort Buchanan in FY 19. Among the pool of graduates, 25 Veterans service representatives will be hired, The Puerto Rico National Call Center will expand through the hiring of 15 agents and five full-time employees will be hired to work at the San Juan Regional Office. These are some of the first steps taken to commence to put veterans and their families in the work force, state, federal and in the private sector of Puerto Rico. We believed that the Corporation should send a letter to the VA Secretary in support of this Transitional and Economic Development movements engaging the Veterans' Community in Puerto Rico.

The issue discussed with Mr. Rick Weidman at the Board at yesterday meeting concerning Bilingual literature was discussed, we will be putting together a package that will have a copy of an updated report of the visit to PR this pass November, a copy of our resolution MA-1 that was adopted in 1987 and revised thru the convention years to date asking for Language Translated DVA Benefits Material; this package will also include the recommendations from the VA Minority Veterans Advisory Committee 2017 Report, asking for Spanish language versions of the instructions for applications for VA benefits and services be readily available, especially in areas of high Latino/Hispanic populations.

We will like to put this package on Mr. Rick Weidman hands so he can present it to the VA Secretary on the next meeting he has with him.

Gumersindo Gomez
MAC Chair

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

12 January 2019
Report to the Board
VVA National Board of Directors Meeting

- **To Date: Missing** – 1,592 (No change since September 2019)
 - 1,592 Americans are listed by DOD as missing and unaccounted.
 - a. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975.
 - b. Loss Locations: Vietnam – (South- 795, North – 452) 1,247, Laos – 297, Cambodia – 48, and the PRC – 7.
 - Accounted: 991 since 1975
 - a. Recovery Locations: Vietnam – 671, Laos – 275 Cambodia – 42, PRC - 3
- 2) Chair, along with Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs and Mokie Porter, Director of Communications, attended VFW reception honoring U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW/MIA's November 29.
- 3) Information received from the quarterly meeting of October 31, 2018 with Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Agency (DPAA):
 - Increasing partnerships realizing savings of \$10.4 mil.
 - 4th quarter – 11 field operations
 - 19 active volunteers/21 in development
 - Field Operations Overview
 - Laos
 - Year round DIA Stoney Beach operations permitted in Laos
 - JFA size to increase from 65 to 85
 - Vietnam
 - Team size increase from 100-125
 - Employment of 7-9 teams per JFA
 - Longer JFA based on case by case basis
 - Minor excavation permitted during Investigations
 - Teams permitted to augment with partner personnel
 - Increase of partnerships within Vietnam to improve Vietnamese led teams
 - Gained direct access to Vietnamese National Archives catalogues

Report filed with National Secretary

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

Homeless Veterans Committee

M E E T I N G R E P O R T

January 10, 2019

Called to order at 1705

October minutes were reviewed and approved via internet

Review Legislative Priorities for inclusion in VVA priorities

GPD Program Office has been reassigned to the VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. New rates for reimbursement have been announced. \$47.36 per day for transitional housing; \$5.92 per hour for Service Centers; \$71.04 for Transition In Place (TIP) programs. This is the first increase in GPD in over 2 years.

The HVRP Eligibility has been changed and signed into law. PL 115-407 sets new and updated eligibility criteria. This is something this committee has been working on for at least 6 years. We will move to have Resolution HVC-12 retired at the convention.

Notice of Funding Availability: SSVF Grant Applications Due Feb. 22

HUD-VASH funding will not be affected by the government shutdown. HUD funding is mandatory.

HUD Released 2018 AHAR Part 2 with Updated Homelessness Veteran Data

One-Night Estimates

40,020 veterans were experiencing homelessness, representing 9.1 percent of all adults experiencing homelessness.

61.7 percent of veterans experienced homelessness in sheltered locations (24,690 veterans), and 38.3 percent were in unsheltered locations (15,330 veterans).

The number of veterans experiencing homelessness dropped 45.5 percent between 2009 and 2017. The number of homeless veterans increased for the first time between 2016 and 2017

The number of sheltered veterans declined by 6.5 percent between 2016 and 2017, offsetting some of the increases in the unsheltered population.

One-Year Estimates

An estimated 118,380 veterans used an emergency shelter or transitional housing program between Oct. 1, 2016 and Sept. 30, 2017.

Between 2009 and 2017, the number has declined 20.9 percent (31,255 fewer veterans).

Veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness were older in 2017 than they were in 2009. The share of veterans who were elderly more than doubled between 2009 and 2017, from 8.7 percent to 19.2 percent. Elderly veterans are the only group with an increase in the number experiencing homelessness between 2009 and 2017 (9,677 more veterans). more than twice as likely to have a disability (59.4% versus 28.8%). Between 2016 and 2017, the number of veterans experiencing declined 8.2 percent (7,634 fewer veterans), while the number in suburban and rural areas grew by 4.1 percent.

National Convention

Need to review and/or amend any resolutions necessary

Government Affairs Committee Report 01112019

January 11, 2019

The committee met at its scheduled place and time. I encourage all committee chairs and State Council Presidents to get to know their newly elected members of congress and to encourage their chapter presidents and members to do the same. If they are not veterans volunteer to assist them with veteran's issues. Take the time to gather the data on the number of veterans in their district and the amount of federal dollars that are coming into their district. This data lets them know the size of the veteran's constituency in their district. Find out where they stand on veterans issues and you take the time to educate them on those issues. It is too late to visit them after they have voted against veteran's issues. Be proactive and educate them so that they can make educated decisions.

Bernie Edelman gave an update on the legislative issues that he is currently working on to include the Blue Water Navy legislation. He expressed his concern that the Toxic Exposure and the Mission Act are not fully funded. The rest of the Government Affairs team also briefed the committee on projects that they were working on. Bernie also reminded the chairs that updates to the Legislative Agenda and Policy Initiatives for 116th and 117th Congress is due to him if there any changes.

Kris Goldsmith gave an update on the digital intrusions and the lack of concern from many of the law enforcement officials. He believes that more agencies are beginning to be aware that this is a major problem.

Membership (MAC) Report

January 2019

This past October, a motion was passed leaving only one-class of paid membership. This transition resulted in an unforeseen issue in the iMIS system. There were over 800 3- year members without a DD-214 on file with the National office. When transitioning them to LIFE, iMIS placed them in "pending status", resulting in temporarily dropping them from the rosters. The Membership Department is well aware of this problem and working on it.

Although much is being speculated on the announced Workgroups that will be deciding VVA's future, we still have years left to be productive and our numbers are still growing. Our MAC 2019 goal of 85,000 members is well within our reach.

Our Fifth Annual Membership Growth Awards numbers are almost complete. March 1, 2018 - February 28, 2019, is the timeframe for growth to be considered for awards. The recipients will be announced at the National Convention in Spokane, WA. Growth awards are determined by percentages; there are nine categories.

We are making plans for our annual Memorial Day event at the Vietnam Veteran Memorial in DC. If you plan on being in the area, makes plans to come by and say hello.

Charlie Hobbs, Chair

MAC



REGION 9 DIRECTOR'S REPORT
DICK SOUTHERN
January 11, 2019

Since the last VVA National Board of Directors meeting in Silver Spring, MD.

October 26-28 - Attended the California State Council meeting in Fresno, CA.

November 6 – Attended the Chapter 887 Board of Directors and General meeting held at American Legion Post 123 in Angeles City, PI.

November 8 – Attended the Veterans Advisory Board meeting and conference call at the Manila VA Regional Office and Outpatient clinic.

November 9- 12 – Attended the Chapter 688 General meeting and Veterans Day ceremonies in Tamuning, Guam.

November 15 – Attended the Chapter 887 Social meeting in Angeles City, PI.

November 24 – Attended the Chapter 887 sponsored Christmas party for the Porac Home at American Legion Post 123 in Angeles City, PI.

November 30 –December 2 - Attended the New Mexico State Council meeting in San Antonio, NM.

December 7-9 - Attended the Colorado State Council meeting in Castle Rock, CO.

January 10-13 – Attending the VVA National BOD meeting in Silver Spring, MD.

January 18-20 – Attending the Arizona State Council meeting in Phoenix, AZ.

October 25-27 - Attending the California State Council meeting in Fresno, CA.

I continue to be in contact with Chapters and State Councils in Region 9 by E-mail and telephone.

I write columns for *The Veteran*.

I continue to moderate 3 VVA Talk Lists and 1 AVVA Talk List.

Serving as Combined Federal Campaign Coordinator for VVA.

Serving as VVA National Resolutions Committee chairman.

Serving on two VVA National committees - Veterans Benefits and Membership Affairs.


Submitted by
Dick Southern

Bill

Report to VVA BOD

Agent Orange Strategy Meeting on December 4th & 5th, 2018 at VVA National Office in Silver Springs, MD

- Those in Attendance:
Cathy Wiblemo, Linda Schwartz, Nancy Switzer, Maynard Kaderlik, Sharon Hodge, Rick Wiedman, Bernie Edelman, Mokie Porter and Jack McManus.
- The goal is as follows:
4 letters to address Agent Orange and toxic issues
 1. Letter to VA secretary regarding the five different health conditions of Vietnam Veterans and to address them and report out those that will be presumptive. The five are hyper-thyroidism, bladder cancer, Parkinson like conditions, hypertension, and Glioblastoma (added by NASEM on glioblastoma). Also, to ask the secretary how many Vietnam Veterans have this in the last 30 years.
 2. Letter to VA secretary regarding birth defects and the VA to fund the more needed research. Also, to put together a press release on this issue. In addition, to set up a panel of experts to reinforce VVA's position on research for the descendants. Suggested names include, Christine Casper, Linda Birnbaum, George Knafl, and Richard Albanese. This panel to monitor and address progress on all issues of Law #114-315.
 3. Letter to the Secretary of Defense or DOD regarding the Ranch Hand Study that is not done until analysis is completed. This study has roughly 86,000 samples. This should be done by using new technologies, diagnostic process regarding generational effects, and access to all original data. The storage site of these samples are in Randolph, Texas and Wright Patterson, Ohio which are both Air Force bases. Perhaps ask Senators Blumenthal and Moran to help us with this issue. When asked who would do the analysis, suggestions were of this committee Linda Birnbaum, Director of National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences. She could guide VVA on suggestions such as an independent. Linda Schwartz could take the lead on this issue.

4. Letter to the Secretary of Defense or DOD and press release on GAO (Government Accountability Office) in November 2018 and a report to the Congressional Addresses (Agent Orange). Action is needed to improve accuracy and communication of information on testing and storage locations, along with a letter of the action plan to proceed.

Other items that were discussed by the committee:

- Discussed holding an information session (with a box lunch) for the legislative aides who have veterans' affairs/issues in their portfolio of responsibilities of, initially, new members of the House, and all members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. This would be done sometime in February when the 116th Congress gets more organized.
- Blue Water Navy legislation, VVA to work with Congress to get the issue to the floor in the 116th Congress for a vote to pass the legislation.
- Discussed the future direction of town hall meetings. (T/H) Suggestions by VVA National that we direct them to be more general to Veterans health and benefit issues. Maynard Kaderlik to discuss more on this issue in detail at the January BOD meeting.
- VA form # 21-0304 – Maynard Kaderlik will discuss this more at the January BOD meeting.
- Birth Defect Registry in Florida – Maynard Kaderlik will discuss this more at the January BOD meeting.

Vietnam Veterans of America
Draft Minutes
Veterans Benefits Committee Minutes

Chairman Burke called the meeting to order at 1900 hours on January 10, 2019 in the Harbison room VVA National Office.

1. Roll Call

Vice Chair Joe Jennings did not arrive until later in the meeting. A sign-up sheet was passed around for all to sign.

2. Approval of the Agenda. - Approved with no objections

3. Approval of the last minutes - Approved with no objections

4. Director Mullaney reported:

A. New policy Approvals: Approved with no objections

B. Mail Policy - Approved with no objections

C IHP deadlines discussed

D. AMA training - Scheduled to begin this coming Sunday at the Double Tree.

E. Update on the closing of AVVA's Service Officer Program.

F. A Service Officer Training schedule was discussed and is being planned for 2019.

G Plans are also being discussed on an effort to update current on line VSO training video's

5. A tour of VVA's downtown offices has been scheduled for tomorrow at the time that the committee would normally meet on Friday. Members of the VBC toured VVA's downtown offices of the BVA and the AMO. Explanations of the functions of each office was provided to the Committee by the two Senior Managing Attorney's, Alec and Homer. The committee members were able to meet and chat with the staff Attorney's from both offices. Much was learned during this discussion on both sides by those in attendance. We appreciated the downtown staff taking time to talk with us so all could learn a bit more about what our attorney's do to assist our veterans on a daily basis. All felt that his was a very worthwhile endeavor.

6. Report of Sub-Committee Chairs:

Grant Sub-Committee:

The Chair of the Grant Committee Joe Kristek called me last month requesting that he be replaced as the Chair of the Grant Sub-Committee. I accepted Joe's resignation with regret. He in my opinion has done a fine job at this post and I am sorry to see him go. I was fortunate to have John Weiss step up and agree to be the new Chair for this Sub Committee. John has been around VVA for many years. I am glad to have him. John takes the reins of this committee effective immediately. Members Foote and Peterson

remain. Grant cycle reports are due March 31st.

Minutes of the Veterans Benefits Committee - January 10, 2019 Continued - page 2

Report of the Grievance Sub- Committee:

Chairman Joe Jennings had arrived at the meeting shortly after its beginning. He reported there had been no activity that he would see the need to report to the full committee at this time.

7. Situations:

A, Re-certifications of Service Officers -

Director Mullaney has been extremely lenient in helping to get all Service Officers under VVA's jurisdiction re-certified as required by VA every five years. At the conclusion of the training over the upcoming weekend, any service officer who has not yet re-certified will be cancelled.

B. Scanning updates -

We still have states that are continuing to scan to Vet-pro or VBMS. The committee will request funds to hopefully complete this project over the next two years through Director Mullaney budget. Same to be provided next month to the finance committee.

C. Changes in Staff in the Field:

Michigan - The R.O Staff in this state has changed. Phil Smith long time Chief Service Officer for the State of Michigan has decided to retire as of January 11, 2019. On behalf of the entire Committee, we wish Phil a long, happy and prosperous retirement. He has certainly earned it John Riling has temporarily taken over the office in the RO for the time being while a search begins for a new Chief. Gary Estermeier who is a service officer has been appointed as Office Manager. Lee Brunner remains in the office as additional staff.

Ohio - We also report that Chief Service Officer Joe Jennings has also decided to retire. Again we wish Joe a long, happy and prosperous retirement. I know that Joe has certainly earned it. Joe is one of the best. With Joe's retirement, Tom Jones will become the Chief Service Officer for Ohio's program. Tom has been training to take this position for over two years, so we know he will do well. Best of luck and Congratulations to Tom. The D.C. staff stand ready to assist if you need it.

8. The budget process was briefly discussed for the upcoming term.

9. Amicus Briefs filed in conjunction with NVLSP

(A) Blue Water Navy Bill

(B) Amicus Brief for the Kisor case was approved.

Minutes of the Veterans Benefits Committee - continued - January 10, 2019 - Page 3

(C) Request for an endorsement letter from us, to support a case with NVLSP for the Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act was denied.

The way the letter to us was written (very strange wording in their letter - made no sense) and we had one day to respond. The committee declined.

10. Strategic Planning Committee:

Chairman McCabe reported that the committee is continuing to work on changes to the policy manual. He hopeful that their work will be complete by the end of January.

End of Report

Respectfully submitted:

Thomas Burke
National Chair - Veterans Benefits Committee

