



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 11, 2019 Approved by Board

President John Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Friday October 11, 2019, at 9:07 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.

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

John Rowan, President	Bob Grabinski	John Riling
Tom Burke, Vice President	Joanna Henshaw*	Dave Simmons
Bill Meeks, Secretary	Skip Hochreich	Dick Southern
Jack McManus Treasurer	Dennis Howland	Dan Stenvold
Dennis Andras	John Margowski	Kerwin Stone
Spence Davis	Sara McVicker	Ted Wilkinson
Richard DeLong	Rex Moody	Sandie Wilson
Gumersindo Gomez	Felix Peterson	

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

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO

Absent: Dottie Barickman & Francisco Ivarra

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

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

Georgia	Present	Oklahoma	Present
Idaho	Present	Oregon	Present
Illinois	Present	Pennsylvania	Present
Indiana	Absent	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	Present
Minnesota	Present	Virginia	Excused
Mississippi	Present	Washington	Excused
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 July 31, 2019, the National Board of Directors was presented with the following motions: 1) To approve the following individuals as members of the 2019-2020 VVA Finance Committee: Sara McVicker, Vice Chair and Chair of Budget Oversight sub-committee, Dan Stenvold, Dottie Barickman, Barry Rice, Kerwin Stone & Robert Grabinski and Jack McManus, Special Advisor; and 2) To appoint Ken Rose, VAVS National Chair. The Board of Directors was asked to submit their vote by e-mail to Samala Parker (SParker@vva.org) and to Secretary Meeks (bmeeksjr@aol.com) within a 48 hour period. The motions are as follow:

Motion 1:

To approve the following individuals as members of the 2019-2020 VVA Finance Committee: Sara McVicker, Vice Chair and Chair of Budget Oversight sub-

committee, Dan Stenvold, Dottie Barickman, Barry Rice, Kerwin Stone & Robert Grabinski and Jack McManus, Special Advisor.

Motion 2:

To appoint Ken Rose, VAVS National Chair.

3. On August 2, 2019, the National Secretary notified me that the vote of each Board member who voted on the motions was as follows:

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Motion #1</u>
John Rowan	Non Vote
Tom Burke	Yes
Bill Meeks, Jr.	Yes
Jack McManus	Yes
Dennis Andras	Yes
Dottie Barickman	Yes
Spence Davis	Yes
Richard DeLong	Yes
Gumersindo Gomez	Yes
Bob Grabinski	Yes
Skip Hochreich	Yes
Dennis Howland	Yes
Francisco Ivarra	Yes
John Margowski	Yes
Sara McVicker	Yes
Rex Moody	Yes
Felix "Pete" Peterson, Jr.	Yes
John Riling	Yes
Dave Simmons	Yes
Dick Southern	Yes
Dan Stenvold	Yes
Kerwin Stone	Yes
Ted Wilkinson	Yes
Sandie Wilson	Yes

<u>Results</u>	
Yes	23
No	
Abstention	
Non Vote	1
No Response	

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Motion #2</u>
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John Rowan	Non Vote
Tom Burke	Yes
Bill Meeks, Jr.	Yes
Jack McManus	Yes
Dennis Andras	Yes
Dottie Barickman	Yes
Spence Davis	Yes
Richard DeLong	Non Vote
Gumersindo Gomez	Yes
Bob Grabinski	Yes
Skip Hochreich	Yes
Dennis Howland	Yes
Francisco Ivarra	Yes
John Margowski	Yes
Sara McVicker	Yes
Rex Moody	Yes
Felix "Pete" Peterson, Jr.	Yes
John Riling	Yes
Dave Simmons	Yes
Dick Southern	Yes
Dan Stenvold	Yes
Kerwin Stone	Yes
Ted Wilkinson	Yes
Sandie Wilson	Yes

<u>Results</u>	
Yes	22
No	
Abstention	
Non Vote	2
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

***Recorded as Motion 1 and Motion 2 in the October BOD Meeting Minutes**



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 21, 2019, the National Board of Directors was presented with the following motions: 1) For approval of international travel for the Veterans Health Council staff Dr. Artie Shelton, Maureen Elias and Rebecca Patterson to attend the Canadian Institute for Military and Veterans Health Research (CIMVHR) Forum 10 in Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada on October 21-23, 2019; and 2) Upon the request from the Iowa State Council, the VVA Board of Directors is asked to relieve VVA Chapter 798 (IA) from submitting missing financial reports for 2016 and 2017 which is shown on the current VVA Suspension list as per conditions shown in the VVA Constitution, Article IV General Provisions, Section 1 - Finance, Paragraph B. item 2 and this would remove Chapter 798 (IA) from VVA suspension. The Board of Directors was asked to submit their vote by e-mail to Samala Parker (SParker@vva.org) and to Secretary Meeks (bmeeksjr@aol.com) within a 48 hour period. The motions are as follow:

Motion 1:

For approval of international travel for the Veterans Health Council staff Dr. Artie Shelton, Maureen Elias and Rebecca Patterson to attend the Canadian Institute for Military and Veterans Health Research (CIMVHR) Forum 10 in Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada on October 21-23, 2019.

Motion 2:

Upon the request from the Iowa State Council, the VVA Board of Directors is asked to relieve VVA Chapter 798 (IA) from submitting missing financial reports for 2016 and 2017 which is shown on the current VVA Suspension list as per conditions shown in the VVA Constitution, Article IV General Provisions, Section 1 - Finance, Paragraph B. item 2 and this would remove Chapter 798 (IA) from VVA suspension.

3. On August 25, 2019, the National Secretary notified me that the vote of each Board member who voted on the motions was as follows:

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Motion #1</u>
John Rowan	Non Vote
Tom Burke	Yes
Bill Meeks, Jr.	Yes
Jack McManus	Yes
Dennis Andras	Yes
Dottie Barickman	Yes
Spence Davis	Yes
Richard DeLong	Yes
Gumersindo Gomez	Yes
Bob Grabinski	Yes
Skip Hochreich	Yes
Dennis Howland	Abstention
Francisco Ivarra	Yes
John Margowski	Yes
Sara McVicker	Yes
Rex Moody	Yes
Felix "Pete" Peterson, Jr.	Yes
John Riling	Yes
Dave Simmons	Yes
Dick Southern	Yes
Dan Stenvold	Yes
Kerwin Stone	Yes
Ted Wilkinson	Yes
Sandie Wilson	Yes

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

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Motion #2</u>
John Rowan	Non Vote
Tom Burke	Yes
Bill Meeks, Jr.	Yes
Jack McManus	Yes
Dennis Andras	Yes
Dottie Barickman	Yes
Spence Davis	No

Richard DeLong	Non Vote
Gumersindo Gomez	Yes
Bob Grabinski	Yes
Skip Hochreich	Yes
Dennis Howland	Yes
Francisco Ivarra	Yes
John Margowski	Yes
Sara McVicker	Yes
Rex Moody	Yes
Felix "Pete" Peterson, Jr.	Yes
John Riling	Yes
Dave Simmons	No
Dick Southern	Yes
Dan Stenvold	Yes
Kerwin Stone	Yes
Ted Wilkinson	Yes
Sandie Wilson	Yes

<u>Results</u>	
Yes	21
No	2
Abstention	
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

***Recorded as Motion 3 and Motion 4 in the October BOD Meeting Minutes**

Preliminary Business

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motions with a second from Director Southern:

Motion 5

To accept the 2019 October BOD meeting tentative agenda:

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 6

To approve the 2019 July BOD Meeting Minutes 7/16/19.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 7

To approve the 2019 July BOD Meeting Minutes 7/20/19.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 8

To approve the 2019 VVA National Convention Minutes 7/17-20/19.

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.

On August 6th I attended a gathering of the members of the NYC Veterans Advisory Board.

On August 7-9th I joined former VP Four and the other three National Officers (VP Burke, Treas. McManus and Scty. Meeks) at VVA HQ to deal with several staff issues and make plans for future operations of the office. Each of the officers will have a role to play in overseeing staff.

On August 27th I traveled to Indianapolis, IN to attend and speak at the American Legion National Convention and sat on the dais at their black-tie dinner.

On September 4th I attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the “Troops To Teachers” Resource Lounge at St. Francis College in Downtown Brooklyn. This is a national program that has been around since 1995 but this is the only program in NYS. It helps veterans’ transition into education employment at various levels, including assistance with certifications.

On September 8th Mariann and I met at Dominic Yezzo’s apartment for breakfast with Jared Lyon, the President and CEO of Student Veterans of America. His organization is very

successful in organizing the new veterans on campus and getting involved in numerous veterans' issues both locally and in Washington, DC. He is a very engaging leader who is very knowledgeable about the veterans' community and the various organizations.

On September 9th Mariann and I attended the funeral of Chapter 32 member Andrew G. Sich. Andy and I have been friends since we started Chapter 32 in 1981. He served in the Air Force as a crewmember on an aircraft out of Thailand that dropped flares lighting up the battlefield in South Vietnam. He is one of the few enlisted Airman who received a Distinguished Flying Cross for saving lives and the aircraft when flares accidentally dislodged. Despite being burned on his hand and arm, when a flare began to ignite, he was able to get them out of the plane before they exploded.

On September 12th I was in the Headquarters for a meeting with the other three Officers to discuss various staff issues and office operations.

On September 13th I attended and spoke at a session of the Prostate Health Education Network, Inc. (PHEN), as part of the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference. I met with one of the sponsors Rep. Gregory Meeks, a Congressman from my area who covers the St. Albans VA OPC that I use and helped save it years ago. I was joined by Col. Dr. Artie Shelton, USA (Ret.), the Director of our Veterans Health Council. Dr. Artie is a 15-year prostate cancer survivor and has been active with PHEN. This was the first time PHEN had a session on veterans' health issues. Prostate cancer is a big problem for both African Americans and Vietnam Veterans. I wonder if it is even worse for Black Vietnam Veterans.

On September 17th Mariann and I attended a hearing of the NYC Council's Committee on Veterans Affairs oversight hearing on VetsConnectNYC.

September 19-21 Mariann and I attended the Vietnam Veterans Annual Reunion in Kokomo, IN.

On September 24th I attended a NYS Health Foundation program of an interview with Col. James McDonough, USA (ret.), the Commissioner of the NYS Department of Veterans Services.

On September 25th I attended a meeting of the NYC Veterans Advisory Board in Staten Island.

September 27-28 Mariann and I attended a NYSC meeting in Tioga Downs, NY.

I flew to DC on September 30th and attended a meeting of the Veterans Health Council, which was well attended.

On October 4th I participated in a Town Hall meeting in Brooklyn run by Rep. Max Rose and the National Nurses United regarding staffing issues at the Brooklyn VAMC.

National Vice President/Tom Burke

August 1-2 Began transition from former Vice President Four by having discussions with her about her duties, staff, projects under way, personnel, personnel concerns, Directors Meetings, Membership, Chair of Chairs, AVVA, and others.

August 7- 9

- (A) Traveled to Headquarters, for Officers meeting
- (B) Discussions were held concerning each officers duties.
- (C) Began the efforts to bring together topics of importance for Board of Directors orientation and training for the October Board Meeting. The Officers thought it important that we should include the Board, Chairs, Directors and State Council Presidents for this training.
- (D) Staff provided to us a listing of phone numbers, phone use, staff positions, computer access and other items that would be needed in the performance of our duties.
- (E) The current organizational chart was provided. It was noted that the chart would need some changing and updating. Also possible positions changes and changes in reporting procedures.
- (F) Began planning to meet with different departments and personnel to better learn what they do and how they operate.

September 9 - 13

Returned to National Headquarters for various tasks during the week.

- A. Meet to discuss issues with Imis computer system used by finance and membership.
- B - Convened a meeting of all Department Directors to discuss many topics of interest to all. Orientation schedule for October, Staff Issues, phone system to name a few.
- C. Meet with Veteran Staff for current status of this department and its plans for the near future. Also meet with Nex- Gen our fund raising organization. This was to map out the efforts to be brought forward for VVA during the coming year.
- D. Met with the membership Director and all staff of this department.
- E - Officers also met during this time to discuss various issues.

September 23

Drove to Newark, Ohio to meet with a group of young veterans, that Gary Jones former VI Chair had been in contact with. These veterans, both men and women, belong to small pockets of veterans within the state of Ohio. To some extent they are basically lost. They are trying to set their course. It appears they want to find someone or group to hook up too or expand their own. All except one were combat vets. I believe they may be looking to join a larger organization. I explained to them our current situation with respect to VVA and our near future. They seemed to be interested in what we had to say. I have set up another meeting in November to discuss further and to give them a chance to discuss with their individual groups.

September 24 - 25

Traveled to National Headquarters to address business that needed to be taken care of for Building Security. Also on the evening of the 24th attended a gala event for the PVA Annual Award Banquet at the MGM National Harbor.

September 26-29

Robin and I traveled to the Illinois State Council at the invitation of the Illinois State Council President to Carlyle, Illinois. This was a special occasion for this Council as this annual event will no longer take place. The last event of its kind that will be held in this location after years of annual meetings. This location as one of their annual events and State Council Meetings in the

southern part of the state has simply become too expensive. They held an annual Golf Outing as a fundraiser and the State Council meeting on Saturday.

National Secretary/B. Meeks

Secretary Meeks gave a brief verbal report which noted a reminder to chapters and state councils about submitting financial/election reports to stay off the VVA suspension list.

National Treasurer/J. McManus

Treasurer McManus provided a written report.

July 29-31, 2019

- To begin transition to the new position I traveled to National Office, met with various staff members. I also met with employees in the Finance Department individually to get an understanding of specific duties as well as the relationship of each position to the overall financial operating system, understanding of specific strengths and weaknesses of processes and systems, relationships between departments, and we discussed potential efficiencies and process improvement opportunities.
- Hosted a Finance Department meet and great luncheon, to build comradery among the team and myself. Reviewed position descriptions with HR Director and CFO, assessed technical and professional capabilities of finance staff against current needs of department. Scheduled meetings to discuss the CRM IMIS software issuers with a cross functional staff team.
- Reviewed current relationship with outside fundraising consultant, “Next Generation” and scheduled an onsite meeting for following month to include Officers, Next Generation Representatives and pertinent VVA staff.

August 7-9, 2019

- Back to National Office for series of meetings and business activities. Discussed and planned for orientation meeting for BOD and CSCP prior to Oct. 10, board meetings.
- Met with all officers to determine individual areas of responsibility and restructuring of the organization chart and reporting relationships.
- Continued my meetings with department directors to access inter departmental relationships, reviewing staffing assignments and determine business needs.
- Participated in Department Directors meeting with Officers and discussed contention highlights and future direction of VVA. Reassured everyone that VVA was not going away as affirmed overwhelmingly by convention delegates.
- The officers met with NextGen, reps and pertinent VVA staff members to review potential future fundraising opportunities.
- Staff members and officers met to discuss strengths and weaknesses of current CRM program (IMIS) utilized by the membership and finance departments. Future meetings were scheduled with individuals who utilize the system.

September 23-25, 2019

- Traveled back to the National Office to formulize finance department restructure into two (2) distinct business units Finance and Development both reporting to the CFO.
- Met with Quentin Butcher to review HGSP operations.
- Worked on addressing National Office security issues with VP Burke, and several organizational issues and personnel actions.

President Rowan presented Wayne Reynolds with the VVA Commendation Medal.

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America/ J. Henshaw

OCTOBER 2019

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with the VVA Board of Directors. This is quite a challenge for me, but I have every intention of doing the best I can, to do a good job for AVVA. Sharon Hobbs is a hard act to follow, as I know from having followed her as AVVA Secretary. But I hope everyone knows that I am committed to this job, and to the future of AVVA.

- We have updated and revised the AVVA Paper Safe to include a more 21st century approach to the information needed by a family when they suffer a loss. The final copy will be discussed and approved at our October 10th meeting. We will be ordering the new Paper Safes shortly after this meeting, so they should be available soon. We are also providing a printable and a fillable (printable once filled out) version of the Paper Safe on our website.
- We are redesigning our Life Membership cards, which is a project that was left over from the last term. We will hopefully have an answer on that at the October Meeting.
- We have 6 new members to our Board of Directors and will be having an intense training session Saturday the 12th.
- I have been spending much of my time learning some of the details that I will need to have, and the staff in the national office have been wonderful to me, and extremely helpful.
- The final total for the 2019 Project Friendship was \$17,561.00. I have to thank our previous board and VVA for all of their work to make this program a total success once again.
- We have two new Incorporated Chapters formed in the last couple of months: Chapters 523 in SC and 1087 in MT.
- We added a donation button, connected to a PayPal account early this year. In the past quarter we did receive \$243.00 in donations. We need to promote the web donation page more, so that hopefully that does well in the future. However, we are actively looking for ways in which we can do some serious fund raising now

that we are a 501 C3, and donors can deduct donations to us from their taxes. I believe this will give us some new avenues.

- Two Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings were held in July – August in Florida, hosted by AVVA Toxic Exposure Committee Chair Nancy Switzer.

Our new Region 4 Director, and current Georgia State President, Susan Henthorn had spearheaded a project on behalf of one of our families, and a decorated Vietnam Veteran. Susan and her volunteers, some VVA and some AVVA, spent over 10 months fighting with various people in the Philippines, trying to get (E6) Vietnam Veteran Willie Clark's remains sent back to the U.S. for burial in his home state. A lot of money was involved, and hours and hours of phone calls and emails, sometimes in the middle of the night. A U.S. Department of State Foreign Officer, Lola Barrow, was finally contacted, and she was instrumental in finally getting Willie Home. To her, she was merely doing her job. To us, she made all the difference in the world! We are honoring her at the VVA Board meeting, with permission from Mr. John Rowan, for her service to us, to Veterans, and to her country.

Joanna Henshaw

AVVA National President

Rick Weidman introduced James M. Byrne, Deputy Secretary of the VA and he spoke about the outstanding issues involving veterans' affairs being addressed by the VA.

Conference of State Council Presidents/R. Moody

CSCP Chair Moody noted that there were forty-four (44) presidents in attendance and the CSCP met for 3 ½ hours discussing business.

HGDP Report/Q. Butcher

Quentin Butcher noted that no 2020 revenues for Rochester, NY. And Chicago, IL.

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

VETERANS BENEFITS REPORT

October 2019

Felicia Mullaney

Director, Veterans Benefits Program

CONTENT

1. Director's Note
2. VBP Activities
3. Notable Achievements
4. People & Staff Changes

APPENDIX

- Blue Water Navy Letter to Veterans

1. Director's Note

This quarter, in collaboration with allies in the American Legion and the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the VBP achieved one of its longstanding goals: official recognition from the Department of Education that VVA is a qualifying employer for purposes of Public Service Loan Forgiveness! Now **all** VVA National employees may count their years working for our organization towards the ten years required for qualifying student loans to be forgiven. We are hopeful that this development will help us retain our talented and dedicated staff.

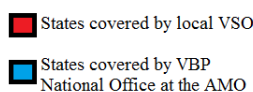
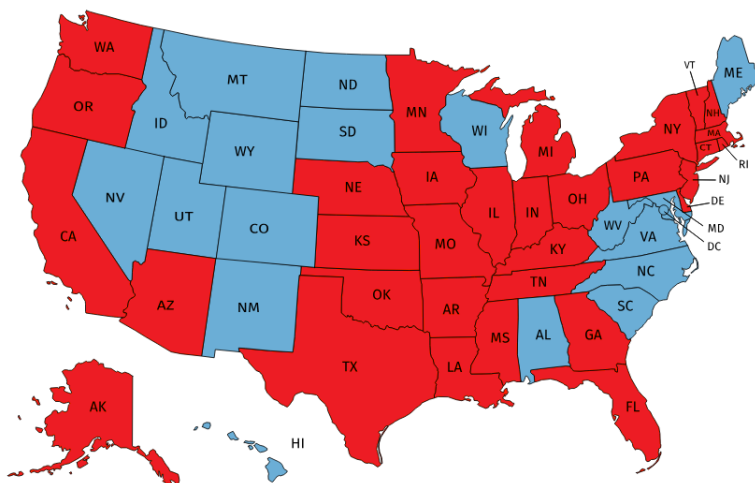
The VBP also set and achieved its first Labor Day challenge: over a 2.5 week period in August, the VBP completed all the 39 cases pending at the time for Veterans over the age of 74, or who suffered from severe financial or medical hardship! Their hard work earned our team a day off, on August 30.

In Addition, thanks to the Finance Committee, the VBP created a new Scanning Grant and will be allocating \$50,000 to the State programs that applied for funds. This money will be used to scan, store, and shred all Veteran paper files in their possession. This will greatly enhance the security of our Veterans' personal information.

Thanks in large part to VVA's Government Affairs Department, Congress enacted the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 (Blue Water Navy Act) which significantly expanded the law presuming Agent Orange exposure. The Under Secretary for Benefits, Paul Lawrence, M.D., has informed us that decisions made under the new law will be issued promptly at 12:00 on January 1st, 2020, Manila time. In preparation for this, the VBP obtained a list of **893** VVA represented Veterans that filed a claim for benefits in the past, who may now qualify for service-connection under the new law. Letters will be sent out to these individuals informing them of the change in law and inviting them to contact their local VSOs for assistance.

Finally, in a September 18 meeting, the Chairman of the Board confirmed that IHP deadlines will be enforced starting October 1. The VBP was assured that cases would not be taken from us until: 1) we had been notified by e-mail; 2) given five days to submit an IHP; and 3) given an opportunity to request an extension of time. While the VBP continues to consider the imposed deadlines unlawful, we are still making every effort to work down our appeals backlog as quickly as possible. If BVA starts adjudicating Veterans' cases without giving the VSO an opportunity to provide representation, the VBP will have a contingency in place to

ensure that the rights of all the Veterans we represent are protected.

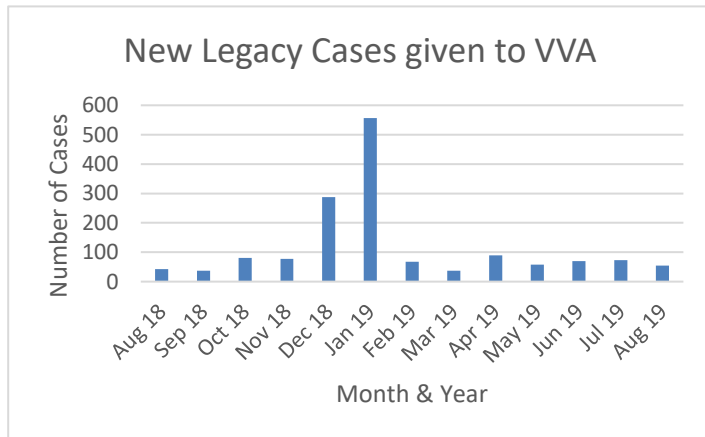


2. VBP Activities

The VBP represents more than 77,000 Veterans and family members of all eras. Thanks to the VBP's advocacy, \$79,686,919 in benefits are paid every

month.¹ Claimants in 30 States and Puerto Rico are represented by local VVA VSOs. Claimants residing in the 20 remaining states and the Philippines are represented by the VBP national office at the AMO.

The VBP continues to achieve a “win rate” at the BVA of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) of nearly 80%. From July until August 2019, 28.96% of VVA cases were granted and 44.4% were remanded.² Since the last report in June 2019, and not including hearing request cases, we have received 197 additional new cases. In addition, VBP has received 38 AMA cases; 14 of which have been completed. Due to the large influx of cases, unfortunately, VVA cases are still being held up by our office, not VA.



VBP continues to provide excellent advocacy to Veterans before BVA while taking steps to improve efficiency. For example, this quarter saw a significant increase in submissions to BVA, with all employees participating by writing arguments. VBP staff at the **AMO has increased BVA submissions by over 800% (from 3 to 25) in an effort to assist Veterans waiting at BVA.**

TOTAL APPEALS BACKLOG AT BVA OF VETERANS APPEALS

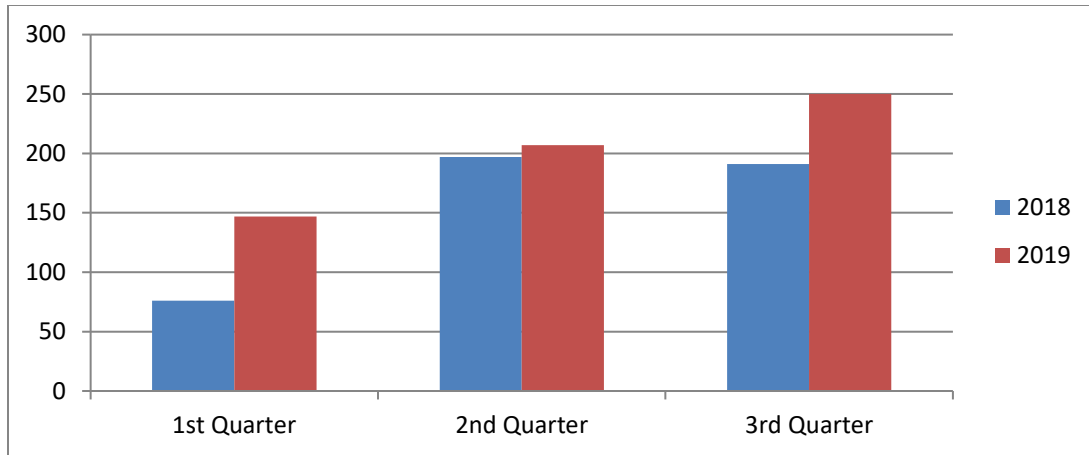
LOCATION	Number of Cases (Oct' 18)	Number of Cases (Dec' 18)	Number of Cases (Jan' 19)	Number of Cases (Apr '19)	Number of Cases (Jun '19)	Number of Cases (Sept. '19)
Pending Attorney Review	1044	1107	1751	1753	1788	1829
Pending Travel BVA Hearing	185	458	211	218	224	240
Pending Video Hearing	662	631	654	572	538	513
Pending Central Office Hearings	12	9	18	20	18	13
TOTAL VVA BACKLOG AT BVA	1,903	1,905	2,634	2,561	2,568	2,595

Source: VACOLS; BVA of Veterans’ Appeals

Thanks to its ongoing training and development program, VBP continues to improve the quantity and quality of its legal work. 255 cases before the Board were processed by our offices this quarter, compared to 191 over the same period last year; a 34% increase!

¹ Data obtained from VA.

² VVA recorded a denial rate of 17.76% and 8.88% of the cases recorded a disposition of “other”.



VVA national VSOs reviewed **138 rating decisions** this quarter. As part of this review, our VSOs check the accuracy of the decision and effective date, review the Veteran's C&P exam, review service records, and speak with the Veteran to craft a compelling argument disputing the rating decision. They complete all of this within the VA's 16 business hour deadline.

Our VBP team places priority on communication with the Veterans we represent. During this quarter, we logged **over 565 emails** and **over 890 calls** with our clients.

The VBP is committed to helping all Veterans obtain benefits and resources, even if we don't formally represent them. During this quarter, we responded to hundreds of inquiries for benefits and resources by email, phone, and in person for Veterans we do not yet represent. We responded by providing referrals to local resources, including to our VSOs in the field.

In addition to serving our Veterans, the VBP exists to support our VSOs in the field. This quarter, we sent notices to our Chief VSOs about **95 upcoming hearings** and **over 250 upcoming appeal deadlines**. This service helps our VSOs better serve Veterans across the country.

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 Alexandra Rigby submitted an IHP for **an increased rating for Veteran's PTSD**, BVA awarded an initial rating of **70%** and granted **individual unemployability** effective September 2011. This resulted in a retroactive payment of **\$113,317**.

National Appeals Attorney Fatmata Conteh successfully persuaded the Board that the Veteran's service-connected disabilities render him unable to secure or follow gainful employment which resulted in an **award of TDIU** and a retroactive payment of **\$218,000.33**.

Administrative Assistant Yolonda Harris received praise from Veterans and their families for her referrals to local service officers and other relevant resources. One Veteran said, “***This is the first time I have been given such information.*** No one in my state was able to give me this information. Again, thank you.”

National Appeals Attorney Claire Corsey successfully persuaded the Board that a Veteran’s service-connected wrist brace did cause wear and tear to his clothes, and therefore, he was **granted his annual clothing allowance** from 2015.

National Appeals Attorney Malkia Saunders successfully persuaded the Board that a Veteran **received an inadequate PTSD exam** and was therefore entitled to a new exam.

National Appeals Attorney Priya Mehta successfully submitted her first Informal Hearing Presentation after starting work at VVA in mid-August.

Contract Attorney Joshua Leach *argued that a Veteran’s sleep apnea is due to his service-connected PTSD and diabetes.* The BVA agreed; resulting in a retroactive award of **\$68,615.71**.

Assistant to the Director Alec Ghezzi submitted an IHP requesting *an earlier effective date for erectile dysfunction.* This was granted, resulting in a retroactive award of **\$27,741.84**.

VSO Counsel Joe Scott *disputed an inadequate contract examination* for a homeless and impoverished veteran living abroad. VA agreed and provided a proper exam. This prevented another appeal, led to over **\$103,000 in retroactive payments**, and more than doubled the veteran’s monthly payment. The case is still ongoing and could result in even more benefits.

Veteran Service Officer Ken Bouy *filed a rating dispute* and the Veteran was awarded an increase in rating from 30% to 70%, before the rating decision was sent to the Veteran, resulting in **\$9,840.60 in retroactive payments**.

Benefits Administrator Elaine Chaney mailed *over 388 letters* to Veterans, canceled and accredited *over 65 Veteran Service officers*, and assisted the Director with organizing and updated VSO accreditation processes and tracking.

4. People & Staff Changes

New Arrivals

We are excited to welcome two new Veteran Service Officers to the AMO.

Dani Fischer graduated from the George Washington University with a B.A. in Political Science earlier this year. She is originally from Ventura, California, where she co-founded a non-profit dedicated to providing performing arts scholarships to local youth called the “Lights Up Foundation,” with whom she directed a benefit showcase. Dani is passionate about veteran



issues and is very excited to begin her career in service to others with VVA. Dani loves history, musicals, and politics, and spending time with her husband and two goofy dogs.



fellow Veterans.

Paula Tuero was born and raised in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. She came to the U.S. in 2009 and has spent most of her time in the state of VA. While finishing her second year of college in 2017, she decided to join the Army Reserves and has recently graduated from James Madison University with Double Major in International Affairs and a triple minor. Paula is first in her family to attend a 4-year university and to join the Military. She is a firm believer in the American Dream and how hard work can lead to opportunities and success. She is proud to be part of the VVA where she can help and learn from

Departures

In July, Dee Wallace left VVA to continue her career advocating for Veterans. She will be working on discharge upgrades and we wish her well!

- Attachments are in the Appendix.

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

Rick Weidman spoke about our legislative efforts with Congress on the Blue Water Navy Bill.

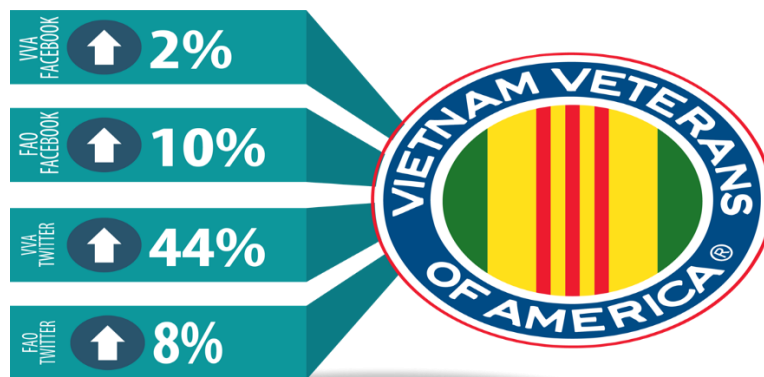
Communication Department/M. Porter

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

COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS

October 11, 2019

SOCAL MEDIA



Our VVA Facebook pages continue to gain followers, as measured by “Likes.”

VVA Facebook FY 2019-2020

The VVA Facebook had a **2%** increase in followers in a 12-month period (October 1, 2018- October 1, 2019).

On October 1, 2019, VVA had **135,901 likes**; on October 1, 2018, VVA’s Facebook page had **133,234** likes;

We have gained nearly **2,700** additional followers since October 1, 2018.

Faces of Agent Orange Facebook FY 2020

The Faces of Agent Orange Facebook page had a **10%** increase in followers in FY 2020 (October 1, 2018- October 1, 2019).

On October 1, 2019, FAO Facebook has **20,504** likes, an increase from **18,638** on October 1, 2018.

VVA Twitter

VVA’s Twitter account, on October 1, 2019, had **15,300** followers, up **44%** from October 1, 2018, when it had **10,600** followers). VVA has issued over **9,000** tweets. 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 **1,000,000** million impressions (or viewers).

Faces of Agent Orange Twitter

VVA’s FAO twitter account, on October 1, 2019, had **1,307** followers: This is an **8%** increase from October 1, 2018, when it had **1,205** followers) .

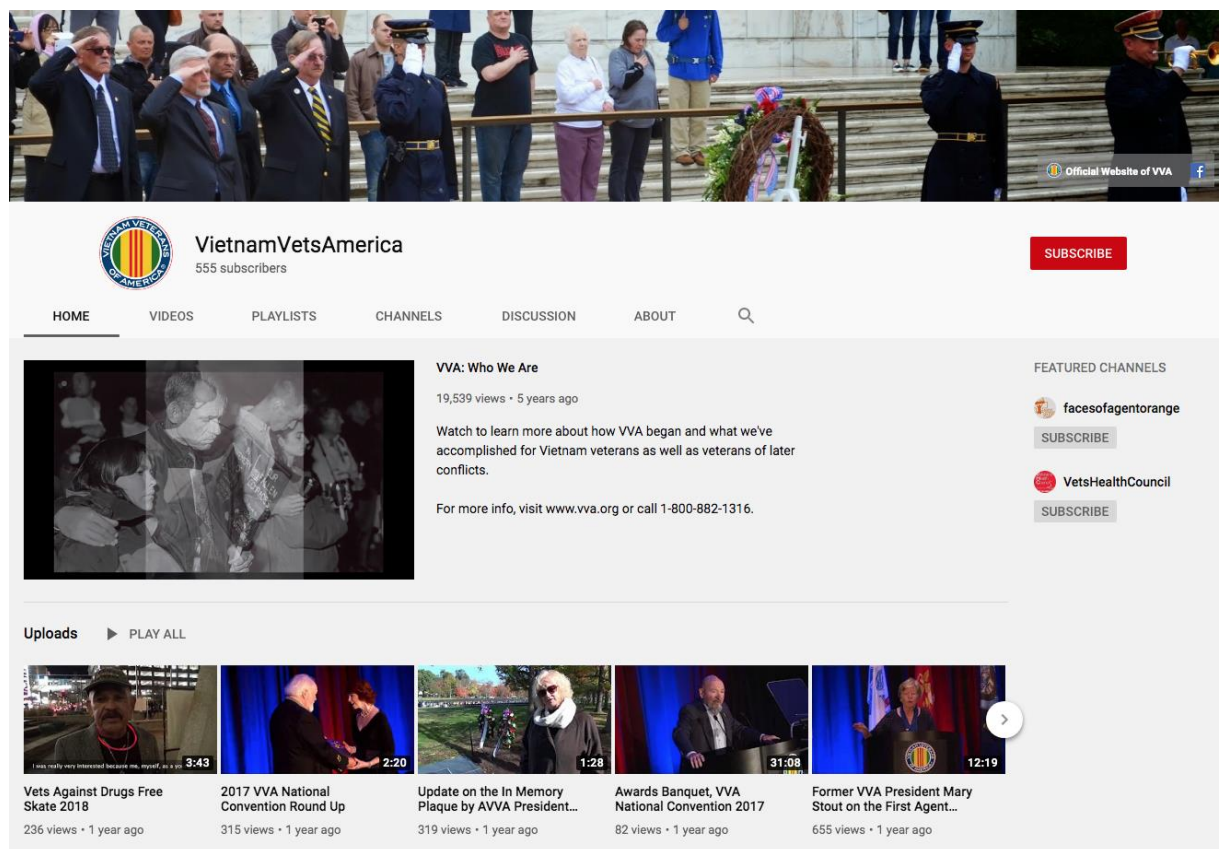
VVA FAO has issued over **4,700 tweets**. Followers often “retweet” our messages to their followers, many of whom have thousands of followers. This expands VVA’s visibility exponentially, which has reached heights of over **10,000** impressions (or viewers)!



YouTube

Our Vietnam Veterans of America YouTube channel had **105,791** views and **555** subscribers as of October 1, 2019.

Our Faces of Agent Orange YouTube had **100,020** views and **503** subscribers as of October 1, 2019.



VietnamVetsAmerica
555 subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

HOME VIDEOS PLAYLISTS CHANNELS DISCUSSION ABOUT

VVA: Who We Are
19,539 views • 5 years ago

Watch to learn more about how VVA began and what we've accomplished for Vietnam veterans as well as veterans of later conflicts.

For more info, visit www.vva.org or call 1-800-882-1316.

FEATURED CHANNELS

- facesofagentorange**
SUBSCRIBE
- VetsHealthCouncil**
SUBSCRIBE

Uploads ▶ **PLAY ALL**

- Vets Against Drugs Free Skate 2018**
236 views • 1 year ago
- 2017 VVA National Convention Round Up**
315 views • 1 year ago
- Update on the In Memory Plaque by AVVA President...**
319 views • 1 year ago
- Awards Banquet, VVA National Convention 2017**
82 views • 1 year ago
- Former VVA President Mary Stout on the First Agent...**
655 views • 1 year ago

NEWS

Press Releases

Thus far, in FY20, (March 1-October 1), VVA's Communications Department issued **16** press releases on topics of import to VVA policy and government affairs. Follow-up outreach was conducted, providing journalists with VVA spokespersons on relevant topics to our veterans, including the *Procopio* decision relating to Blue Water Navy veterans, Foreign Entities Targeting Veterans Online, VVA's National Convention coverage.

Web Weekly

Thus far, in FY20, we produced and distributed **29** editions of VVA's Web Weekly to our **30,000** + VVA members, supporters, and members of the media. The open rate for the Web Weekly at **30.4 %** remains well above the industry average for non-profits, which is 20%.

Trouble Viewing? [View this email in your browser](#)



In This Issue: September 27, 2019

[Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange, Burn Pits Need Help Now, Congress Tells VA and DoD](#)

[Veterans Plead with Trump to Lift Delay on Blue Water Veterans Claims](#)

[New Eligibility Rules for Arlington Cemetery Would Exclude Most Non-combat Veterans](#)

[Alarming VA Report Totals Decade of Veteran Suicides](#)

[Many Female Veterans Troubled by History of Sexual Assault](#)

[Veteran Exposed to Contaminated Water at Camp Lejeune Suffers Skin Lesions, Loses Teeth and Legs](#)

[New Plan Would Dramatically Expand GI Bill Family Transfer Rules for Troops, Veterans](#)

[U.S. House Approves Bill to Recognize Merchant Mariners of WWII](#)

[Deported Army Vet Allowed Back Into U.S. to Apply for Citizenship](#)

[Former Top Enlisted Marine Warns Leaders to Watch Social Media Misbehavior](#)



[\[CLICK FOR A LISTING OF THE WEEKEND ACTIVITIES IN WASHINGTON D.C.\]](#)

Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange, Burn Pits Need Help Now, Congress Tells VA and DoD



AGENT ORANGE TOWN HALLS



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

**IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

October 3, 2019

**No. 19-20
Contact:
Mokie Porter
301-996-0901**

VVA and DoD Settle on Lawsuit Challenging DoD's Leaking of Personal Information Belonging to Active Duty and Veterans

(Buffalo, New York)— Today, in federal court in Buffalo, New York, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) filed a signed [settlement agreement](#) in a lawsuit challenging DoD's leaking of personal information belonging to active duty and veterans to identify thieves and companies who sell data for unauthorized commercial purposes.

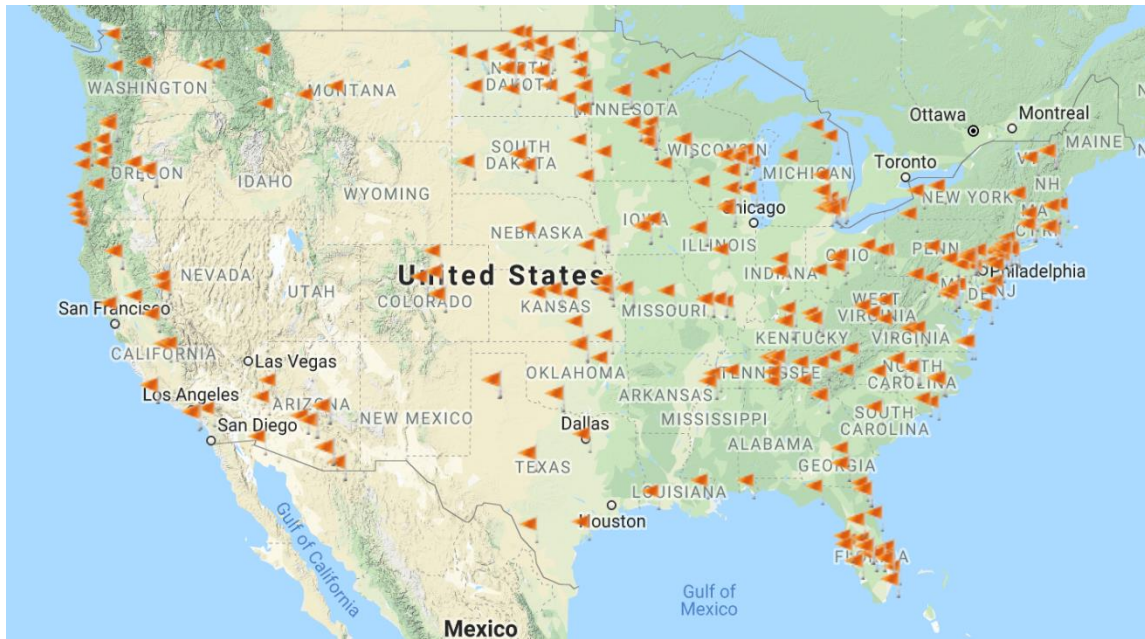
Filed July 31, 2017, by Vietnam Veterans of America, the VVA New York State Council, VVA Chapter 77, and VVA member Thomas Barden, the lawsuit seeks to end the systematic violation of veterans' and service members' privacy rights.

Since 1985, DoD has been operating a website/database for the sole purpose of allowing those engaged in financial and legal transactions to verify a servicemembers' eligibility for the benefits and forbearance provided by the *Servicemembers Civil Relief Act* (SCRA), the federal law designed to protect our service members from financial burdens during deployment.

"When VVA discovered that the SCRA site allowed personal and private information, including details pertaining to the military service of millions of veterans and service members, to be easily accessible on the internet, to anybody at all, anonymously, for any purpose, we brought it to DoD's attention," said John Rowan, VVA National President. "As DoD refused to properly secure this military data, we asked the courts to order them to do so."

"Today, we settled in court as DoD has agreed to implement significant changes to the SCRA website designed to better protect the personal information of servicemembers, while restricting access to those individuals and entities using the website for its intended purpose under federal law," said Rowan.

"The government has a duty to veterans and service members to safeguard their privacy and to



334 Faces of Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings have been convened since the first on August 1, 2009. Thus far, in **FY 2020, 25 town hall meetings were held; there are 4** upcoming town hall meetings currently scheduled for **FY20**.

Agent Orange Folders Sent

31,948 Agent Orange folders have been sent in past 7 years--began tracking in 2012
FY20-1,772 | **FY19-2,325** | **FY18-3,240** | **FY17-5,283** | **FY16- 6,762** | **FY15-7,310** |
FY14-3,206 | **FY13-2,050**

Cases of Agent Orange Booklets Sent

131,973 Agent Orange Self-help Guides distributed over past 5 years--began tracking in 2014
FY20-12,872 | **FY19-9,103** | **FY 18-17,640** | **FY17-18,583** | **FY16- 29,887** | **FY15-36,810**

AWARDS

FY20 March 1-October 1, 2019

Achievement - 66

Commendation— 8

Plaques 29



JROTC 129 Medals in FY20

Eagle Scout: 58 Medals in FY20



Veterans Health Council/Dr. A. Shelton

My background:

Maureen Elias Retired Army veteran, military duty...Counter Intelligence/Korean language translator, Assistant Director, Veterans Health Council. Master Degree, Mental Health/Suicide/ and Substance Abuse Consultant:

Rebecca Patterson, Retired Navy Veteran, Navy duty Farsi translator, Master Public Health, environmental and occupational scientist, Consultant as Toxic Exposure and burn pits issues.

VETERANS HEALTH COUNCIL MISSION

- 1. Inform veterans and their families, caregivers about health issues/risks associated with their military service and benefits available to them;***
- 2. Educate healthcare communities about the multiple health issues associated with military service (Agent Orange/Burn pit illnesses)***
- 3. Develop veteran-centric educational materials for medical schools, nursing schools, teaching hospitals, and related educational outlets***
- 4. Advocate on behalf of veterans healthcare initiatives.***

Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project approved a grant to the Veterans Health Council of America to collaborate with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors to continue the Toxic Exposure program for 90K.

In April, Maureen and Rebecca attended the 2019 National Student Nurses' Convention in Utah. With more than 3000 attendees. Neither VSO nor the Department of Veterans Affairs organizations were in attendance.

In two days, they distributed:

300 Toxic Exposure brochures

250 Leave no Veteran Behind buttons

125 Military Health History pocket cards

65 Environmental Exposure Programs and Services VA info sheets

Collected 150 email addresses, 22 veterans and 138 family members of veterans.

Conferences

Veterans Health Council is scheduled to attend over 22 conferences this year.

AND WILL host selected town hall meetings during these conferences TO CUT COST.

Syneos grant

\$3500 grant from Syneos Health to share educational information regarding veterans about Upper Limb Spasticity Study.

Veterans Health Council Partnership Meeting

Veterans Health Council meeting will be hosting our first VHC Partnership meeting on 13 June at the Kennedy Center. The meeting will consist of over 50 organizations. VSO'S, Medical organizations, pharmaceuticals, Nursing organizations, military organizations, government agencies.

Veterans Health Council Initiatives

We will Develop and plan to get veteran centric continuing medical education curriculum into VA, medical schools, civilian teaching institutions and healthcare organizations, C&P examiners: To educate healthcare providers about veterans' health care regarding toxic exposure, mental health issues. Show Military Health History Cards.

Rick Weidman

Veterans Health Council Targets of Opportunity

Department of Veterans Affairs

Association of American Colleges

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

Visit twenty medical schools and selected law schools.

Membership Department/T. Houston

Secretary Meeks and Vice President Burke spoke with the Membership Department Staff about delays in answering phones messages or e-mails and Tracie Houston's report is in the Appendix.

Human Resources and Administration/S. Parker

VAVS Report/K. Rose

Ken Rose spoke about volunteer activities and his report is in the Appendix.

1st Consent Calendar/B. Meeks

Secretary Meeks presented the following motion with a second from Director Southern.

Motion 9

To approve the 1st Consent Calendar as presented.



2019 October National BOD Meeting “1st Consent Calendar”

- 1. To appoint Adolph Gardner, Terry Nolan, Jill Mishkel and Ben Humphries as members of the Election Committee.**
- 2. To appoint the following members to VAD Committee at no cost to VVA National – Patty Dumin as Co-Chair, Dennis Andras, Ted Wilkinson, Richard DeLong, Herb Worthington, Ray Bates, Carton Rhodes, Adolph Gardner, Billie Cullin, Terry Courville, Charlie Montgomery, John Weiss, JD Soileau, Allen Manual & Rod Farley. The following as AVVA Advisors Kathy Andras, Margaret Wojciechowicz, Kaye Gardner, Elaine Simmons, Diane Nicholson, John Birch, Betty Pike, Patsy Chin & Felicea Catapano. AVVA Special Advisor is Don Jones. Special Advisors are Jay Pinsky, Mara Boggs, US Senator Joe Manchin and VVA Staff Liaison Deborah Williams.**
- 3. To appoint the following Dennis Andras as Vice Chair, Larry Carter, Mark Goldschmitt, Pete Peterson, Dave Smith & Victor Klingelhofer as members. AVVA Special Advisors Susan Henthorn & Terri Rangel. VVA Staff Liaison Rick Weidman & Special Advisor Joe Wynn to the Economic Opportunities Committee.**
- 4. Move to add the following members to the Constitution Committee at no cost to National: Barry Rice, Ken Holybee, Beverly Stewart, Shelby Pinkerton & Grant Coates. AVVA Advisor Kaye Gardner and VVA Staff Liaison Tracie Houston.**
- 5. Move to appoint Dr. Wayne Reynolds Ph.D. to the Finance Committee as a member.**
- 6. Move to add the following members to the Membership Affairs Committee at no cost to National: Richard DeLong, Richard Lindbeck, John Margowski, Rex Moody, Andy LeDuc, Bob Pace, Ted Wilkinson, Leonard Smith and Sam Brick. Special Advisor Bill Meeks, AVVA Advisor Cecilia Essenmacher and VVA Staff Liaison Tracie Houston.**
- 7. To appoint the following members to the Veterans Benefits Committee at no cost to National: Joe Jennings, Ned Foote, Gene Crego, Chuck Byers, Perry Melvin, Felix Peterson, John Margowski, John Weiss, John McGinty, Marc McCabe, Gary Estermyer, Phil Smith, Gerald Corrigan, Greg Pauline, Bob Grabinski, Gumersindo Gomez, Rex Moody and Dick Southern. The AVVA Special Advisors Joanna Henshaw and Kaye Gardner.**
- 8. To appoint the following members to the Homeless Veterans Committee at no cost to National: Tom Hall as Vice Chair, Kate O'Hare Palmer, Steve Mackey and Jerry Blum. VVA Staff Liaison Sharon Hodge, AVVA Advisors Joanna Henshaw & Joanne Blum.**

9. To appoint the following members to the Minority Affairs Committee at no cost to National: Joe Jennings, Jorge Pedroza, Pete Peterson, Williams Garcia, Kerwin Stone, Francisco Ivarra, Gerald Ney, Dave Simmons, Melvin M. Murrel & Kim Kee Jung. VVA Staff Liaison Bernie Edelman, AVVA Advisors John Birch and Nina Schloffel.
10. To appoint the following members to the POW/MIA Committee at no cost to National: Ray Autenrieb, Terry Courville, Richard DeLong, Pattie Dumin, Skip Hochreich, Dennis Howland, Steve Mackey, Larry Matika and Ted Wilkinson. VVA Staff Liaison Sharon Hodge, AVVA Special Advisors Kaye Gardner & Tim Von Bon. Special Advisors Susie Stephens, Gary Jones, Bill Duker and VVA Staff Advisor Mokie Porter.
11. To appoint the following members to the PTSD/SA Committee at no cost to National: Dan Stenvold, Kate O'Hare Palmer, Sandy Miller, Tom Brown, Dr. Artie Shelton, Donald Webb and John Margowski. AVVA Special Advisor Nina Schloffel.
12. To appoint the following members to the Veterans Health Care Committee at no cost to National: Gene Crego, Dr. Tom Hall, Kate O'Hare Palmer, Bill Garcia and John McGinty. Special Advisor Dr. Linda Schwartz.
13. To appoint the following members to the Women Veterans Committee at no cost to National: Sandy Miller as Vice Chair, Dr. Tom Hall, Gene Crego, Frank Arminio, Sandie Wilson, Dottie Barickman, Chuck Byers, and Lee Jackson. Special Advisors Beverly Stewart, Dr. Linda Schwartz, Linda Blankenship, Patricia Ehline, Jennifer Wilson, Cheryl Van Syckle & Billee Culin. VVA Staff Liaison Sharon Hodge.
14. To appoint the following members to the VVA National Disciplinary Committee: Leslie DeLong, Wayne Reynolds, Allen Manual, Grant Coates, Richard DeLong, Joe Kristic, Sara McVicker, John Margowski, Joe Jennings, John Miner, Nate Washington, Beverly Stewart and Fred Barks.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

BOD Meeting recessed until Saturday morning: 9:00 am

President Rowan reconvened the meeting on Saturday October 12, 2019, at 9:07 am. Roll Call by Secretary Meeks of the National Board of Directors & State Council Presidents and other preliminary business.

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

John Rowan, President

Tom Burke, Vice President

Bill Meeks, Secretary

Jack McManus Treasurer

Dennis Andras

Spence Davis

Richard DeLong

Gumersindo Gomez

Bob Grabinski

Joanna Henshaw*

Skip Hochreich

Dennis Howland

John Margowski
Sara McVicker
Rex Moody
Felix Peterson

John Riling
Dave Simmons
Dick Southern
Dan Stenvold

Kerwin Stone
Ted Wilkinson
Sandie Wilson

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

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO

Absent: Dottie Barickman & Francisco Ivarra

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

Alabama	Present	Nebraska	Present
Alaska	Present	Nevada	Present
Arizona	Present	New Hampshire	Absent
Arkansas	Present	New Jersey	Present
California	Present	New Mexico	Present
Colorado	Present	New York	Present
Connecticut	Present	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	Present
Louisiana	Present	Tennessee	Present
Maryland	Present	Texas	Present
Massachusetts	Present	Utah	Present
Michigan	Present	Vermont	Present
Minnesota	Present	Virginia	Excused
Mississippi	Present	Washington	Excused
Missouri	Present	West Virginia	Present
Montana	Present	Wisconsin	Present

Finance Committee Report

Chair Ned Foote made the following motion out of committee.

Motion 10

Move to approve the VVA Cash Reserve Policy as amended.

CASH RESERVE FUND POLICY

(Approved Motion #9, April 29, 2000)

(Amended – Consent Calendar #3 – 10-11-14)

(Move to continue as written – Motion # 5 CC # 4, 1-9-16)

BACKGROUND

Motion 18 of the January 21 and 22, 2000 Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Board of Directors (BOD) meeting approved the VVA FY '01 budget. Within that budget was the establishment of a VVA Cash – Reserve Fund. It should be noted that this Cash – Reserve Fund is in **addition** to the Household Goods Donation Program (HGDP) Cash – Reserve Fund. The following procedures apply to the VVA Cash – Reserve Fund only.

PURPOSE

The VVA Cash – Reserve Fund is intended to be a fund equal to a minimum of 270 days' worth of VVA operating cash expenditures. This fund is intended to provide a cash security blanket to cover unexpected and unbudgeted items such as upgrading of the computer system at the national office, special and unique time-limited projects, unforeseen shortfall in annual revenue, etc.

This fund will be a separate fund, not part of any other cash equivalent, and carried separately on the Statement of Financial Position. Responsibility of this fund will fall under the Finance Committee and the Investment sub – committee, with ultimate responsibility in the hands of the VVA Board of Directors.

FUNDING

This fund was initially funded through the VVA budget process and will continue to be funded [through](#) the budget process as herein directed. During the annual budget process, if Proposed Revenue exceeds Proposed Expenses, then a proposed contribution to the Cash Reserve Fund will be made in the amount of the excess. Funds budgeted for the Cash Reserve Fund will be transferred to the Cash Reserve Fund in the following fiscal year after ensuring that excess funds remain available to be transferred.

Should there be no proposed budgeted excess and yet there is an excess at the end of the fiscal year, then 25% of the excess will be transferred to the Cash Reserve Fund.

Transfers will continue until reaching the minimum goal and continue no further.

If there is a proposed use of the monies in the Cash Reserve Fund, the proposed use of the funds must also include a plan to bring the Cash Reserve Fund back to its designated level.

Earnings generated on this fund will remain with the fund and will not be considered as part of Revenue during the budget process. This fund will comply with the VVA Investment policy and guidelines.

EMERGENCY

At any time, should negative events impact the value of the Cash Reserve Fund as deemed by either the VVA Board of Directors, VVA Officers, or VVA Finance Committee, the

VVA Finance Committee is hereby directed to present a “plan for resolution” of this dilemma to the Board of Directors.

USE

This fund is to be used only in unique circumstances and use of the fund must be approved by a majority vote of the VVA Board of Directors.

ADDITIONAL FUNDS

Funds in addition to those budgeted through this directive may be deposited at any time with the approval of the VVA BOD.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

2nd Consent Calendar/B. Meeks

Motion 11



2019 October National BOD Meeting “2nd Consent Calendar”

1. Move to retire the following motions because the actions proposed by these motions have been completed or overcome by subsequent events.

October 2018

Consent Calendar (item # 2) - **Move to amend Motion 1 of October 2017 by deleting Deborah Williams and inserting Joy Diggs. Motion 1 - To approve the Finance Committee Members: Sara McVicker Vice Chair, Chair of Budget Oversight subcommittee, 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~~ Joy Diggs as staff liaisons.**

Motion # 5 - To accept the unaudited Finance Report as presented.

Motion 24 - To amend the previous motion funding the Future of VVA Work Groups to allow expenditure of the allocated funding until expended past 2-28-19.

April 2018

Motion 4 - Move to approve the Veterans Health Council Proposed FYE 2-28-19 Budget as presented.

Motion 5 - Move to approve the VVA National Convention (July, 2019) Proposed FYE 2-28-20 Budget as presented.

Motion 6 - Move to approve the VVA Proposed FYE 2-28-19 Budget as presented.

Motion 10 - To direct the National Treasurer to obtain an actuarial analysis of the life membership fund projecting various scenarios regarding revenue projection and payments, at a cost not to exceed \$10,000.00 with funding to be taken from current year bequests.

January 2018

Motion #4 - To approve allocation of \$30,000 to 40th Anniversary from Bequests Funds.

October 2017

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 14 - Move to approve signing the Membership Directory agreement.

January 2017

Motion # 9 - To fund Panel A & B for operations until February 28, 2019 for \$200,000 from funds donated in FY 2017.

Motion # 15 - To accept the Consent Calendar Motions:

2. Move to approve the changes to the VVA Annual Financial Report Form and Instructions as recommended by the VVA Finance Committee;

Motion # 19 - To request to VVA National for \$5,000 financial contribution for 2017 National Women Veterans Summit March 17-18 in Dallas, TX.

July 2016

Motion # 8 - To approve the renewal of the VVA/AVVA MOU.

October 2015

Motion 31- That: 1) within two weeks following the October 2015 VVA Board of Directors meeting, all current motions and policies be assigned as determined by the VVA Secretary to a VVA committee or department for review, updating/amendment , or retirement as appropriate; 2) that the responsible parties as assigned above will present a report at the January 2016 VVA Board of Directors meeting for each motion and policy with either a

motion to retire, a motion continue as written, or recommendation for revision; 3) Drafts of all revised motions or policies will be submitted to the BoD for review no later than 3 weeks prior to the April 2016 BoD meeting.

April 2015

Motion #18 - To accept the Consent Calendar Motions: Motion #2 - Move to increase the per diem for VVA staff to forty-five (\$45) per day effective April 15, 2015.

October 2013

Motion # 34 To approve Tom Berger as a full time employee of Vietnam Veterans of America which will be funded under the dedicated funds received for the VHC. This will take effect as of 10-13-13 at which time his contract with VVA will be terminated by mutual consent.

Motion #37

Move to approve the VVA Finance Committee Policy as presented.

April 2013

Motion # 8 To approve Requesting Opinions or Advice from VVA General Counsel Policy as presented.

October 2012

Motion #7 – To approve the Budget Oversight Policy as amended.

April 2012

Motion #13 – To accept the revised VVA Contracting Policy.

April 2010

Motion # 4 To approve the VVA Investment Policy as amended.

Motion # 10 To approve the amended MOU between VVA and AVVA.

October 2008

Motion #17 – To authorize the execution of a lease agreement of the 8719 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD, office space utilizing scenario “A” in the information packet distributed to the National BOD contingent upon approval of using funds from the CR fund. See motion 18.

August 2001

Motion #1 - That all senior staff, executive director, chief financial officer, contractors (e.g. Wes Guidry) general counsel and others that may be deemed appropriate by the executive officer shall file a Conflict of Interest Policy statement immediately.

April 1998

Motion # 21 – To aggressively pursue electronic transfer of funds to chapters and state councils. Wthe current \$100 threshold to the lowest feasible amount. It is requested an update on progress toward this change via the Membership Committee and the National Board of Directors at the next quarterly meeting and each meeting as necessary thereafter until implemented.

2. Move to designate the VVA National Treasurer additional duty as the VVA Compliance Officer with duties to include:

- 1) **tracking and oversight of all contracts, MOUs, MOAs, and other such documents (herein after referred to as contracts) to ensure compliance with the requirements therein;**
- 2) **providing an annual report to the VVA BOD listing all contracts, MOUs, MOAs, and other such documents: purpose of each; termination dates/conditions; annual cost; staff member who is primarily responsible for ensuring day-to-day performance under the contract; and whether the work done under the contract has been satisfactory.**

3. Move to approve the VVA Bequeathed Funds Policy as amended.

BEQUEATHED FUNDS POLICY

(Approved Motion # 36 – 10-12-13)

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

BACKGROUND

VVA is frequently the recipient of wills and bequests of varying amounts of money. In the past, funds would have been considered additional donations, and “operating funds”. However, the VVA Board of Directors felt that additional consideration should take place when receiving bequests. Thus, Motion 5 of the August 13, 2013 VVA National Board of Directors Meeting directed “the Finance Committee to develop a policy for the distribution of funds or property bequeathed to VVA”. This policy is in response to that motion.

IMPLEMENTATION

Upon receipt of funds under this policy, the funds will be deposited in the VVA Operational Funding (general funds) bank account. When the next of kin is known, an acknowledgement, signed by the VVA President, will be sent. The funds will be credited to a specific accounting account number and be able to be accounted for at any time. Bequests of \$25,000 or greater will be reported to the Finance Committee Chair upon receipt and a total report of bequests received during the year will be provided to the Finance Committee along with other revenue reports.

If unbudgeted funds are needed during the VVA fiscal year, the VVA Finance Committee will determine whether this need can be funded by bequests received during the then current fiscal year. Expenditures that are ongoing or recurrent beyond the current fiscal year will not be funded by one time bequests. Bequest revenue received during the fiscal year will be reflected in

the final fiscal year reports as revenue received for the fiscal year and will not be carried forward beyond the year received unless restricted to a specific activity/purpose/committee/program. (See policy on the Use of Restricted Revenue / Designated Revenue {RR/DR}).

Bequeathed funds received will not be carried as a separate “fund” and will not be carried over from year to year.

4. Move to approve the VVA Budget Oversight Policy as amended.

BUDGET OVERSIGHT POLICY

(Approved – 1-10-15, Consent Calendar Motion #7, CC # 1)

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

BACKGROUND

Concerns about cost overruns in the past led the VVA National Finance Committee, with the approval of the VVA Board of Directors, to create a Budget Oversight Sub-Committee, which is responsible for monitoring, and, when necessary, taking action concerning actual or potential cost overruns or other financial anomalies revealed in the Budget to Actual reports for Cost Centers.

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

BUDGET OVERSIGHT SUB-COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Budget Oversight Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of the Finance Committee; will consist of three voting persons, the VVA Treasurer and two members of the Finance Committee; and will have the VVA Chief Financial Officer (CFO) as a non-voting ex-officio member.

BUDGET to ACTUAL REPORT

The Budget to Actual report will be the primary financial report used in this oversight process. The Budget to Actual Report, produced by the Finance Department, compares the actual expenses of a Cost Center with its budget as of any point in time but usually at the end of each month. This report consists of the approved budget, expenditures to date by line item description, and two percentages:

- * the percentage of the fiscal year to date (i.e. # of months divided by 12); and
- * the actual expenses to date compared to the total budget (i.e. \$x spent divided by \$yy allocated in the budget for the year).

In a perfect world, these two percentages would be equal. For example, in the sixth month (50% of the fiscal year) a Cost Center would be expected to have expended 50% of its yearly budget. Less than 50% would be under-budget and more than 50% would be over-budget. However, many cost center expenses, especially those of Directors, do not occur on a regular basis of 1/12th of budget per month and thus timing must be taken into consideration when analyzing a Budget to Actual Report.

PROCEDURE

On a monthly basis, the Budget Oversight Sub-Committee will be provided with the Budget to Actual reports for all Cost Centers. Each Cost Center Manager will also receive a copy of their report.

The Sub-Committee will review the Budget to Actual report for each cost center to determine if there is a cost overrun or other anomaly. The Budget Oversight Process may be implemented when total Cost Center expenditures are more than 1% over-budget in any given reporting period. The Budget Oversight Process may also be implemented when the current rate of expenditures plus future obligations (salaries/benefits and contractual obligations) place the Cost Center at risk of exceeding the approved budget.

When the Sub-Committee members have each completed their reviews, they will confer and produce an Oversight Report. This Report will then be forwarded to the Finance Committee Chair, the CFO, and the Director, Finance for their review and input. If appropriate, the Oversight Report will be revised based on the input provided by the CFO and Director, Finance.

The Sub-committee may:

- a. Accept the Budget to Actual report for the Cost Center and take no action.
- b. Alert the Cost Center manager via copy of the monthly Sub-Committee report when expenditures exceed the year-to-date expected percentage. If the excess expenditure(s) are not likely to affect overall budget compliance by the end of the fiscal year (e.g., a large one-time expenditure which was specified in the Cost Center budget request) no action is needed. The Cost Center Manager should continue to monitor future Cost Center expenditures to ensure the center's costs remain within budget.
- c. Suspend or curtail all or part of the spending authorization of the Cost Center (other than critical expenses such as payroll, rent, etc.) pending development of an acceptable Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

The final Oversight Report will be distributed to the Finance Committee, the National Officers, and to the appropriate Cost Center Manager(s) when a cost overrun or other anomaly has been noted. This report:

- a) documents that the Sub-Committee has performed due diligence in performing its assigned reviews, and

b) provides explanations, when known, for significant differences from the expected year-to-date percentage, and

c) alerts the Finance Committee, the President and Cost Center Managers to unbudgeted expenses and potential budget overages if spending continues at the current rate.

Any action taken by the Budget Oversight Sub-Committee may be appealed to the full VVA Finance Committee at its next meeting.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

A Corrective Action Plan is simply a written explanation submitted to the CFO and the Finance Committee by the Cost Center manager detailing what action the manager will take through the remainder of the fiscal year to bring the Cost Center spending in line with the approved budget, i.e., how expenses will be curtailed. The CAP may also include a request for additional funds. Such requests **MUST** specify:

- 1) the reasons for excess expenditures to date, and
 - 2) why expenditures cannot be modified to remain within the authorized budget,
- and
- 3) how much additional funding is being requested, and
 - 4) how any additional funds will be used.

Absence of the above required information will automatically deem the CAP unsatisfactory and further expenditure of funds may be restricted or suspended until a satisfactory CAP has been presented.

NOTE: a request for additional funds via a CAP does not mean that additional funding has been approved. Any request for additional funding must go to the VVA BoD for approval or disapproval.

RESPONSIBILITY OF COST CENTER MANAGERS

Only Cost Center Managers may authorize expenditures to be charged to their accounts. Should there be disagreement between Cost Center Managers as to what Cost Center should be charged; the VVA Treasurer shall determine what Cost Center should be charged. There shall be no appeal on this decision.

Cost Center Managers are responsible for monitoring their expenditures on a monthly basis and are expected to reconcile their records with those of the Budget to Actual Report produced by the Finance Committee. While the CFO and Director, Finance regularly review all

Cost Centers, the ultimate responsibility for your Cost Center lies with you, the Cost Center Manager.

Any reconciliation of your Cost Center expenditures must occur in the month following the month that the expenditures were first posted. The VVA Accounting function should not be expected to go back several months to address any questions a Cost Center manager may have and is hereby directed to not go back any more than one month to respond to questions.

Appendix: SAMPLE NOTIFICATION OF SUSPENSION OR CURTAILMENT OF SPENDING AUTHORIZATION

As you will see from the attached Budget to Actual report for XXXXX, your Cost Center has significantly exceeded expected year-to-date expenditures. *[Note if this Cost Center has previously been notified of excess expenditures.]*

Therefore, your spending authority is hereby suspended for all expenditures other than *[specify critical expenses such as payroll, required expenses to attend BOD meetings, etc]* until such time as you have submitted a Corrective Action Plan and it has been deemed acceptable by the Finance Committee.

Please provide a written Corrective Action Plan to the Chair, VVA Finance Committee and the VVA CFO no later than close of business XXXXX.

This action taken by the Budget Oversight Subcommittee may be appealed to the full VVA Finance Committee at its next meeting.

We trust you understand that we do not take this action lightly and ask your cooperation in this process since we all share in maintaining the fiscal integrity of Vietnam Veterans of America.

5. Move to approve the VVA Finance Committee Policy as amended.

FINANCE COMMITTEE POLICY
(Approved Motion # 25 November 15, 2003)
(Amended October 9-10, 2009)
(Amended Motion #25, January 14, 2012)
(Amended Motion #8, October 6, 2012)
(Amended Motion #17, April 20, 2013)
(Amended Motion # 37, October 12, 2013)
(Move to continue as written – Motion # 5 CC # 7, 1-9-16)

PURPOSE

The VVA Finance Committee shall provide oversight of the financial activities of the Corporation, the state Council, or chapter and shall recommend policies on financial matters to include, but not limited to, assisting and consulting with the Treasurer on all financial planning,

budgeting, reporting and other related matters. (Appendix II to the VVA Constitution – paragraph I.)

The Finance Committee shall serve to advise the President and the Board of Directors as to financial matters and to perform such other duties as the President and Board of Directors shall from time to time assign to it. (VVA Constitution, Article 1, Section 7 – Committees, para B.)

The duties of the Finance Committee, as defined above, do NOT include oversight of the national staff, personnel policy matters, staff evaluations, etc. These functions fall under the duties of the VVA President who “...shall be the principal executive officer of the Corporation and shall, in general, supervise and control all the business and affairs of the Corporation.” (VVA Constitution, Article 1, Section 5 – Officers, para D.)

While it is agreed that the Finance Committee shall advise and recommend policies relative to financial matters that may affect the other VVA committees, this “advice and recommendation” does not extend to policy issues, which are “germane to (the committee) their areas of subject matter jurisdiction.”

The responsibilities of the VVA Finance Committee are to provide oversight of the financial activities of the Corporation including review of quarterly financial statements; advise the Officers and the Board of Directors; review Cost Center requests for additional funding during the fiscal year and make recommendations to the Board of Directors; propose policies on financial matters and conduct financial analyses of proposed actions as appropriate; and review financial policies and finance-related Board motions on a regular basis to ensure currency, and propose policy amendments or retirement of financial motions when appropriate.

The committee shall not direct activities or set policies for anyone other than itself.

FORMATION

The VVA President with the approval of the Board of Directors appoints the Chair of the Finance Committee. The Chair, in turn, shall appoint members to the committee, again with the approval of the Board of Directors. Members are normally appointed “ANC” (at no cost) to national and will not be reimbursed for their meeting expenses. The only exception to ANC is the annual two-day budget meeting when all appropriate expenses are reimbursed.

STRUCTURE

The Finance Committee generally operates as a “body of the whole”. However, within the committee are two sub-committees. The sub-committees currently within the Finance Committee are:

- Budget Oversight Sub-Committee
- Investment Sub-Committee

For further information on these sub-committees, consult the VVA policies for these sub-committees.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Finance Committee regularly meets on the evening preceding the VVA Board of Director meetings. In addition, the committee meets “on call” as necessary.

In addition to the above, the annual budget meeting is by far the longest if not most important meeting of the committee. This is a two-day meeting, generally held in March preceding the April VVA Board of Directors meeting in which the annual budget will be proposed for acceptance.

The goal of the annual budget meeting is to review budget submissions from Cost Center (CC) managers, analyze budget expense justifications and to present a proposed budget that is fiscally responsible and allows for accomplishing the goals and objectives of VVA. To this end, if the Finance Committee feels that the requested budgets exceeds available funds, the Finance Committee will make reductions to achieve those goals. CC Managers may appeal any reductions made to their requests during the Finance Committee meeting held the evening before the April Board of Directors meeting by presenting a detailed justification for the funds being requested.

Final adjustments as recommended by the Finance Committee will be incorporated into the proposed budget presented to the Board of Directors for their approval.

Once the annual VVA budget is approved, budget managers do not need additional approval to expend their funds as allocated among accounts. Funds will not be moved from among accounts during the fiscal year.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

National Meetings and Special Events/W. Guidry

Wes Guidry gave an update on several items and Director Stenvold made the following motion.

Motion 12

To attend Orlando, FL Rosen Center in 2023.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Committee – MOTIONS ONLY

Minority Affairs – G. Gomez made the following motion.

Motion 13

To remove Dave Simmons as a member of the Minority Affairs Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

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

Motion 14

To add Lou Broughton to VAD at no cost to VVA National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

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

Motion 15

Recommendation for the following named individual (J.D. Soileau) to be a member of the VVA National POW/MIA Committee at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Membership Affairs – D. Southern made the following motion.

Motion 16

To add the following to the Membership Affairs Committee: Jerry Corrigan, Larry Frazee, Carlton Rhodes, John Riling, Michael Quilty and John Weiss at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – No motions.

Public Affairs – D. Howland made the following motions.

Motion 17

To appoint at no cost to VVA National the following to the Public Affairs Committee: Dave Simmons, Ken Ragge, Patti Dumin, Tom Brown, Dan Stenvold, Grant Coates, Leslie DeLong, Chuck Renevier, Bob Grabinski, Richard DeLong, and Advisors from AVVA Tim Von Bon, Fran Davis and Staff Advisors Mokie Porter, Michael Keating, Marc Leepson and Wes Guidry.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 18

To appoint to the Awards Committee as a sub-committee to the Public Affairs Committee: Dan Stenvold, Grant Coates and Richard DeLong.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

2020 National Leadership & Education Conference Planning Committee – D. Stenvold – No motions.
PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall made the following motion.

Motion 19

To add Dave Simmons as a member of the PTSD/SA Committee at no cost to VVA National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Veterans Benefits – J. Riling made the following motions.

Motion 20

To approve the attached MOU between VVA and the VA's Board of Appeals.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board)

And

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) , a Co-Located Veterans Service Organization

Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 5902, the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) may furnish office space and facilities, if available in its occupied building, for the use of paid full-time representatives of nationally recognized Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), and may do so under 38 C.F.R. § 14.635 for employees of recognized State or Tribal organizations who are accredited to VSOs, to assist appellants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits.

The Board occupies office space at 425 I Street NW, Washington, DC 20001. A limited amount of this office space is available for use by VSOs to facilitate representation of appellants in pursuit of VA benefits.

The Board and VSO VVA hereby agree:

1. VSO VVA will occupy 2 offices, 3 cubicles, and 0 carrels in the Board's space at 425 I Street NW, Washington, DC 20001. Additionally, All are reserved for the exclusive use of VSO. In determining space allocation, the Board has considered the number of informal hearing presentations (IHP) produced by this VSO relative to all other VSOs in the previous fiscal year. The space allocations are as follows:
 - a. Offices: 2W.220C, 2W.220D, 2W.220E, 2W.220F, and 2W.240F
 - b. Cubicles: 2W.220A, 2W.220B, 2W.220G
 - c. Carrels: (N/A) and
 - d. Rooms: 2W.220
2. The Board will provide:
 - a. Available and appropriate facilities for purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits, to include:
 - i. necessary furniture and space; and
 - ii. access to facilities, such as restrooms and workrooms, adjacent to assigned work areas and in those common areas where the VSO is permitted access. Use is subject to those restrictions placed on the Board by the building management, to include availability of HVAC and cleaning services on weekends.
 - b. If VA has them available, computers fully compliant with VA protocols and security requirements, with the software necessary for access to Board and VA networks for purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits.

- i. VA shall provide needed IT support for VA-issued computers and information systems.
 - ii. VA shall not be responsible for loss of access to such computers and information systems due to a user's noncompliance with VA protocols and security requirements.
 - c. Appropriate support to permit the VSO to obtain necessary identification, clearances, and certifications to utilize Board and VA networks and systems. This includes limited access to the following systems:
 - i. Veterans Appeals Control and Locator System (VACOLS);
 - ii. Caseflow; and
 - iii. Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS).
 - d. Appropriate support to make available for review those paper case files requiring representative input or action, based on Board priorities and governing regulations.
3. VSO VVA will:
- a. Ensure that all VSO employees with access to VA information systems complete in a timely manner required privacy and information security awareness training, sign the appropriate Rules of Behavior, and comply with VA Handbook 6500.
 - b. Comply with VA Handbook 6510.2 to report any incidents involving sensitive personal information (SPI). In particular, notify within one (1) hour of discovering the loss, potential loss, security incident, or breach, the Board Privacy Officer or designated Information Security Officer (ISO). If the VSO is unable to speak with the Board's Privacy Officer and ISO within one (1) hour or if such contact is not practicable (e.g., outside of normal business hours), then the VSO will provide notification to the VA Network Security Operations Center by phone at 1-800-877-4328 or e-mail to vanet@va.gov. The VSO is responsible for the response and remediation of any breach of VA SPI when the SPI is transferred to any VSO information system.
 - c. Cooperate with VA Office of Security and Preparedness to ensure all VSO employees with access to VA information systems complete necessary background investigations and obtain valid Personal Identify Verification (PIV) cards prior to accessing VA information systems.
 - d. Assure that all service officers are properly accredited.
 - e. Timely perform tasks necessary for preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits.
 - f. Supply all office supplies and equipment (paper, writing instruments, copiers, printers, etc.) necessary to discharge of their duties.
 - g. Contact between VSO and Board personnel regarding cases and claims shall be restricted to those avenues approved by management of the organizations; business contact outside the designated points of contact is not permitted. Limit the use of VA information systems to the representation of claimants or appellants. Use of VA e-mail systems is to be limited to interaction with VA employees, VSO personnel, and currently represented claimants or appellants. All communication via VA e-mail systems will clearly identify the user as a VSO employee. VSO personnel must not use VA e-mail

system to communicate with non-VA personnel in matters outside the scope of their current representation. VSO understands and accepts that VSO communications sent through the VA e-mail system will be retained in accordance with the Capstone Email Records Retention Schedule (GRS 6.1) for seven years.

4. Certain areas will be made available to the VSO for use in conjunction with preparation, presentation, and review of claims for VA benefits, but shall be considered common areas, with preference for use by the Board, unless otherwise specified herein. These shall include:
 - a. Conference Rooms
 - b. Hearing Preparation Rooms
 - c. Work Rooms
5. RESOURCES:
 - a. VA Handbook 6500
 - b. VA Handbook 6500.2
 - c. The Board's Purplebook
6. TERMS OF MOU:
 - a. This agreement will be effective as of the date of the last signature.
 - b. Requests for modification of this agreement will be submitted in writing from one party to the other, not less than 30-days prior to the desired effective date of such modification.
 - c. The Board's point of contact for this agreement is its Stakeholder Liaison.
 - d. Electronic access and co-located status will be revoked if responsibilities and requirements are not followed.
 - e. This agreement is valid until September 30, 2020.

By: _____

Date: _____

Cheryl L. Mason
Chairman
Board of Veterans' Appeals

By: _____

Date: _____

Joseph Sternberg
Chief Financial Officer
Vietnam Veterans of America

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 2

Motion 22

**To appoint the following members to the Veterans Benefits Committee at no cost to National:
Joe Jennings, Ned Foote, Gene Crego, Chuck Byers, Gumersindo Gomez, Perry Melvin, Felix
Peterson, John Margowski, John Weiss, John McGinty, Marc McCabe, Phil Smith,
Gary Estermyer, Dick Southern, Gerald Corrigan, Greg Pauline and Bob
Grabinski. Special Advisors AVVA Joanna Henshaw and Kaye Gardner (Alt).
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 21
No: 0
Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 2

Women Veterans – K. O'Hare-Palmer made the following motion.

Motion 23

**To add Members: Marsha Four; Special Advisor Michelle Wilcox; Advisor AVVA Fran
Guevremont to the Women Veterans Committee at no cost to National.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 21
No: 0
Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 2

Veterans' Health Care – C. Byers made the following motion.

Motion 24

**The following members that I would like to serve on the Health Care Committee at no cost to
National: Gene Crego – Vice Chair, Michael Patercio Quilty, Bill Garcia, Kerwin
Stone, John McGinty, Sandie Wilson, Sandy Miller, Marsha Four, Linda Schwartz
(Special Advisor), Roland Mayhew, Maynard Kaderlik, Greg Pauline, Kate
O'Hare Palmer, Thomas Brown and Thomas Hall. AVVA Advisors Teresa Rangel
and Fran Davis.**

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21
No: 0
Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 2

Government Affairs – P. Peterson made the following motion.

Motion 25

To appoint the following individuals as members: Sandy Miller, Dennis Howland, John Riling, III, Kate O'Hare Palmer, Dominick Yezzo Gumersindo Gomez, Rex Moody, Frank Barry, Gene Crego, Grant Coates, Maynard Kaderlik, Chuck Byers, Dick Southern and Dr. Tom Hall. AVVA Advisor Joanna Henshaw and VVA Staff Advisors Rick Weidman, Bernie Edelman, Sharon Hodge, Dr. Artie Shelton, Kris Goldsmith, Joe Wynn, Jim Kuhn, Rebecca Patterson and Maureen Elias.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

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

Motion 26

Members to the Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee: Mike Demske (Vice Chair), Jack McManus (Vice Chair), John Hargens, John Weiss, Sandi Wilson, Roland Mayhew, Marc McCabe, Dennis Andras, Bruce Dobson, Steve Bowrus, Rossie Nance and Gerry Ney. VVA Staff Advisors Mokie Porter, Rick Weidman and Bernie Edleman.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 27

To add to Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee as Special Advisors Mike Beuster, Fran Guerremont and Bobbie Morris. Also Gerry Wright and Steve House as members at no cost to VVA National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 28

To add Rebecca Patterson and Ron Brown as VVA Staff Advisors to the Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Constitution – L. DeLong made the following motion.

Motion 29

To add Cliff Riley to the Constitution Committee at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Economic Opportunities – D. Andras – No motions.

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

Motion 30

To add the following list of persons to the Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System Committee at no cost to National: Larry Frazee, Tom Haberhorn, Lee Jackson, Joseph Jennings, Don Jones, John McGinty, Wayne Reynolds and Barry Schloffel. Special Advisor AVVA Hope Summers and VVA Staff Advisor Bernie Edelman.

To remove Dave Simmons from the Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Honorary Life Membership – Secretary Meeks made the following motion:

Motion 31

To approve the honorary life membership requests.

Jason Smith	Chapter 805 (OR)
Petra Smith	Chapter 805 (OR)
Sharon Cummings	Chapter 355 (CA)

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Disciplinary Action – Secretary Meeks made the following motion upon the recommendation of the Chair of the National Disciplinary Committee Butch Huber:

Motion 32

Upon receipt of the charges filed by the California State Council against Chapter 441 (CA). The charges are in compliance the National Disciplinary Policy Section VIII; therefore the National Board of Directors should move them forward to revoke the chapter charters.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

President Rowan with a second from Secretary Meeks made the following motion:

Motion 33

To appoint Marsha Four as Special Advisor to the President.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 20

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 3

Committee Reports Only

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 – D. Southern – verbal and written report

Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – verbal report

Public Affairs – D. Howland – verbal report

2020 National Leadership & Education Planning Committee – D. Stenvold – verbal report

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

Veterans Benefits – John Riling – verbal report

Women Veterans – K. O’Hare-Palmer - verbal report

Veterans Health Care – C. Byers – verbal report

Government Affairs – P. Peterson - verbal and written report

Agent Orange/Dioxin – M. Kaderlik – verbal report

Constitution – L. DeLong - verbal and written report

Economic Opportunities – D. Andras – verbal report

Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System – D. Yezzo – verbal report

The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Meeks, Jr.
National Secretary
Approved 1/17/2020

Constitution Committee Report October 12, 2019

The amended VVA National Constitution allows chapters to combine several officer positions including the secretary-treasurer, vice president-secretary, and vice president-treasurer. The Constitution Committee is revising the chapter template and sample bylaws to reflect these changes and will post them online and distribute them by the end of October.

Chapter and state council officers and regional directors should be aware of the following:

- The chapter must check with their state law to make sure it allows them to combine the positions they want to combine.
- Chapter bylaws must be amended before the chapter can elect someone to one of these new positions.
- If the office of president becomes vacant and a VP-secretary or VP-treasurer is designated to fill the position, the chapter board must fill the vacated VP-secretary or VP-treasurer with the same. The chapter cannot split the position without amending the bylaws again.

Constitution Committee meeting 10-11-2019

The committee passed a motion to draft a proposed constitutional amendment to allow electronic meetings at the state council and chapter levels.

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



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

- **To Date: Missing** – 1,587
- 1,587 Americans are listed by DOD as missing and unaccounted.
Defense Prisoner of War/ Missing in Action Agency (DPAA) has made the following identification announcements:
Col. Roy A. Knight, USAF, identified on June 6, 2019. Date of Loss: May 19, 1967.
Location: Sam Neua Province, Laos. Recovered: Feb 15, 2019
Major Neal C. Ward, USAF, identified July 19, 2019. Date of loss: June 13, 1969.
Location: Ban Phathang, Laos, Recovered: 2017.
Loss Locations: Vietnam – (South- 794, North – 452) 1,247, Laos – 290, Cambodia – 48, and the PRC – 7.
- Accounted: 993 since 1975.
 - a. Recovery Locations: Vietnam – 727, Laos – 287 Cambodia – 42, PRC – 3
 - b. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975. Total 1,059
 - c. For various reasons, including wishes of the family, DOD announcements are often delayed far beyond the ID dates and sometimes not even made.
- 2) In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) accounted for 218 formerly missing persons from past conflicts, the highest yearly total reached by the agency or its predecessor organizations. Of the 218 newly accounted-for, 140 were from World War II, 73 from the Korean War, and 5 from the Vietnam War, including two civilians who flew for Air America.

DPAA and its many partners remain committed to the research, investigation, recovery, and identification of nearly 39,000 unaccounted-for Americans who are assessed to be possibly recoverable from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and other designated past conflicts.

- 3) POW-MIA Bracelet program “Remembering Our Missing Warriors” continues with committee members in schools.
- 4) Veterans Initiative mission planned for October 2019 postponed until January-February time frame due to scheduling conflicts.

Report filed with National Secretary

Minority Affairs Committee Report
October Meeting 2019

We had our first MAC meeting of the commencement of the next two years. After passing our two resolutions at the convention; my plan is to join the leaders of the Korean veterans' community in presenting their resolution to the Congressmen/woman that will take up the job to get it introduced to Congress in hope that it will be adopted where our Korean counterpart can get help in their issues of Agent Orange and PTSD.

Our second resolution has to do with Puerto Rico self-determination. Puerto Rico at present is going through their worse economic disaster ever. The outmigration continues to increase, following Hurricane Maria, both the population and poverty rate declined in the Island. Migration from Puerto Rico to the mainland United States increased by 36.9% between 2017 and 2018. Poverty in Puerto Rico decreased by 1.3 % points. This migration and poverty findings released come from the 2017 and 2018 American Community Surveys (ACS) and Puerto Rico Community Surveys (PRCS). This is why is so important for us to continue to advocate for Puerto Rico Self-determination.

The VA had their first National Summit for Minority Veterans in Dallas TX in September 27th and through the 28th, 2019. Over 750 veterans attended the event, Chief of Staff, for the Under Secretary of VHA, James Connell, state during his presentation that now, minority veterans make up about 23 % of the veteran's population and that the VA was expecting this number to grow to 36% by 2043, with the biggest increase among the Hispanic Veterans population. One recent study indicated that African-American men are twice as likely to die from prostate cancer as their white counterparts. However, this isn't the case with the VA; the survival rates here are equal. What this means is VA provides African-American Veterans better access to health care.

The summit was led by Center Executive Director, Stephen Dillard and Deputy Director Dennis May. The Centers goal was to honor the services of minority veterans, and to offer them and the organizations that serve them with information about VA benefits and services. Lastly, to serve as a platform for VA leaders to hear directly from minority veterans.

Another event that is to happen is the upcoming “Arizona Statewide Tribal Veterans Symposium” on November 1, 2019 at Twin Arrows Casino Resort. This gathering is an opportunity to bring the Tribal Veterans, Military Service Members, Family Members, and Service Providers together from all 22 Tribal Arizona. This will be an opportunity for all in attendance to learn how to provide services in a culturally appropriate way, work toward building and strengthening partnerships/relationships with Tribal Veterans agencies, and to create a space where Tribal Veterans can learn of the resources they may have access to. Mr. Williams (Bill) Garcia, SC President for New Mexico will represent us at this event.

Gumersindo Gomez
MAC Chair

State Council Presidents- Chairs

If you receive this letter, and you are no longer State Council President, please pass it on to your successor.

If you have been the President, you might have heard about this before. I have put articles in "The Veteran" and in your packets at the National Board Meeting.

I am asking you as a State Council President, to appoint someone in your state to be a VAVS Chair (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service) as part of your State Council.

This Chair would be a great help to myself and the National Office, to track Volunteer activities at the VA's and Clinics in your State.

Each VMC should have a VVA Representative on their VAVS Committee. The State Chair could coordinate the VA volunteers in your state.

The larger state councils would find a state chair very useful. With multiple Chapters and several VA Medical Centers, this person could maintain contact and follow up on their needs.

In the May/ June edition of The Veteran, I was asked to appoint VAVS Chairs in those states that don't already have a State Chair.

As State Council Presidents you are, the best judge of who should fill these positions. All who have not appointed a State VAVS Chair, please begin to look for that individual.

Qualifications to become a State VAVS Chair consist of: 1./ Be a current Representative at a VA Medical Center or Clinic, this would be your best candidate..

2./ Be an active volunteer at a VAMC.

3./Be able to communicate with Representatives or Deputies within your state.

4./Attend State Council meeting and report on VAVS activities in your state and encourage volunteering.

If you already have a State Chair, please have that person contact me by e-mail or phone.

If you do not have a Chair, when you select one, please give that person my contact information. I will be at the B.O.D. meeting, and will be glad to give out cards. I have spoken to a few of you, and look forward to meeting more. Ken Rose

Kenneth Rose

VAVS National Representative

678 Laurel Lane

North Wales, Pa. 19454

Phone: 215-527-3494

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Vietnam Veterans of America

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

October 9, 2018

Director
Regulation Policy and Management (00REG)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Room 1063B
Washington DC, 20420

Re: Response to RIN 2900-A026-VA Claims and Appeals Modernization

Dear Director:

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) would like to submit the attached comments to the proposed regulations on the Appeals Modernization Act. VVA appreciates all opportunities to collaborate with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to ensure that our nation's Veterans are receiving the care and benefits they deserve. VVA acknowledges that several proposed regulations were amended after our preliminary comments were submitted in November 2017 and are now aligned with our recommendations. While VVA appreciates these changes, there are several additional areas that VA can improve.

Although VVA applauds the Secretary's efforts to ensure that claims and appeals are processed in a timelier manner, it remains concerned that certain provisions of the new proposed regulations, if left unaltered, will deprive Veterans and their families of several important rights. There exists a discrepancy between the mandate enacted by Congress in the Appeals Modernization Act and VA's proposed rules. Therefore, VVA urges the Secretary to address the areas of concern identified in the enclosed comments. Failing to do so will inevitably lead to costly litigation, which will place a burden on the VA, the courts, the taxpayer and, ultimately, the Veteran and his or her family.

Sincerely,

/s/ Felicia L. Mullaney

/s/ Alec U. Cherzi

/s/ Alexandra R. Rigby

for Vietnam Veterans of America

Encl: Detailed Comments

World Wide Web: <http://www.vva.org>



Vietnam Veterans of America
Detailed Comments on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
Regarding VA Claims and Appeal Modernization
83 Fed. Reg. 155
(Aug. 10, 2018)

A. § 3.2400 Applicability of Modernized Review System

The proposed changes to § 3.2400 are confusing because they suggest that the availability of review under CUE will be significantly limited. The proposed regulatory language should specify that requests for revision under CUE will be adjudicated pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 5109A. Congress, in enacting the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, only sought to make a minor procedural change regarding CUE claims. See 163 Cong. Rec. H4457-01, 163 Cong. Rec. H4459. If VA distinguishes these requests from the ordinary claims process, then it can create a separate form for this specific purpose.

B. § 3.2601 Higher-Level Review

Higher-level reviews should be treated similarly to the current DRO review process and presided over by a higher-level, more experienced, adjudicator. The term "higher-level" insinuates that there will be a more experienced adjudicator reviewing the claim. If the higher-level review is conducted by the same level adjudicator that initially decided the claim, then the name is inherently misleading to veterans. Additionally, this review lane will not correct initial errors if the higher level reviewer is not more experienced than the initial adjudicator.

Furthermore, the definition of "maximum benefit" provided in § 3.2601 is too narrow. Specifically, it does not consider the possibility of entitlement to special monthly compensation (SMC). SMCs are part of a claim for increased rating, which can entitle a veteran to a monetary award in excess of "the maximum scheduler evaluation for the issue." Thus, the definition should be expanded to include ancillary benefits.

C. § 20.202 Notice of Disagreement

The notice of disagreement (NOD) should be less restrictive. The proposed regulations suggest VA will ignore NODs that are not submitted on the VA specified form. This strict treatment of pleadings adversely affects elderly veterans, given the complexity and length of VA forms. It would be more veteran friendly for VA to treat such submissions as a NOD in need of clarification, provide the proper form, and offer assistance in completing it.

Furthermore, rating decisions should not only identify the elements deemed missing for entitlement to the benefit sought, but also provide examples as to what types of evidence might substantiate the missing element. For example, if a claim is denied for lack of an in-service event, VA can suggest that the veteran provide a statement explaining what happened during service.

Additionally, a veteran should not be barred from altering his or her NOD once new evidence is submitted. Given the long delays in the VA claims and appeals system, a veteran's flexibility to litigating his or her appeal should not be diminished simply because additional evidence has come to light. As written, the regulations punish veterans who proactively and continuously advocate for themselves.

D. § 3.2501 Supplemental Claims

Under the proposed regulations in § 3.2501(a), "the new and relevant standard will not impose a higher evidentiary threshold than the previous new and material evidence standard under § 3.156(a)." This language should be changed to explain that the "new and relevant" standard is lower than the previous "new and material" standard. Congress intended that this standard is less burdensome than "new and material." Congress' intent should be clearly articulated in the definition.

Additionally, during RAMP, the veteran did not need to cite to new and relevant evidence for VA to readjudicate the claim. VA presumed that there was new and relevant evidence in this initial supplemental claim election. This practice should be continued and clarified in the regulations. Veterans should be given this presumption because pro-se veterans may not know what evidence to cite, or what would be considered new and relevant evidence.

E. § 20.205(b)(1) Withdrawal of Appeal

In representing thousands of veterans across the country, VVA has found a troublingly large number of cases where an appeal was inadvertently withdrawn, with no mechanism for correction. Often this involves instances where a veteran intends to withdraw a single appeal but, due to a lack of understanding of the process, submits a broad writing that VA construes as a withdrawal of all appeals. To avoid this circumstance, VA should include language clarifying that an appeal consisting of multiple issues cannot be withdrawn unless all issues are specifically identified. Additionally, if only some issues are identified, then withdrawal should only be valid to the specified issues.

F. § 20.104 Jurisdiction of the Board

The new regulation deletes the following language: "[i]n its decisions, the Board is bound by applicable statutes, the regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs and precedent opinions of the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs." This removal suggests that the Board does not wish to be bound by precedential opinions of the General Counsel. Therefore, this language should remain in the regulation. There should also be language added that specifies the Board is bound by precedential opinions by the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

G. § 20.600(b) Applicability

The proposed regulations do not clearly identify rules pertaining to legacy appeals. To avoid confusion to veterans and their representatives, VA should provide more clarity in this area.

H. § 20.705(b)(7) Functions of the Presiding Member

The new provision allowing veteran law judges to reject evidence presented during a hearing on the basis of irrelevance contradicts the pro-veteran nature of veterans law. This provision should be removed, allowing veterans and their representatives to submit whatever they wish during a hearing. As always, the Board will then be free to assess the probative value of each submission as part of its deliberations.

I. § 20.715(a)(2) Loss of Hearing Recordings or Transcripts — motion for new hearing

A veteran would be unfairly disadvantaged in the event that a recording is lost, through no fault of his or her own. A more equitable solution would be to afford the opportunity to submit arguments and evidence within 60 days.

J. §20.800(e) Order of Consideration of Appeals

A veteran should not lose his or her docket date simply because VA made an error that needs to be corrected. The current system affords veterans the right to a timelier resolution to their appeal by preserving the pre-remand docket date. Removing this right contradicts the spirit of the Appeals Modernization Act and would result in more delay.

K. §20.801(b)(3) The Decision

The Board should specify exactly which evidence was not considered because it was not received during a time when the record was “open.” The Board should give the veteran a precise inventory of the unconsidered evidence, enabling the veteran to point to the unconsidered evidence when filing a supplemental claim.



Vietnam Veterans of America

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

October 10, 2018

Christina A. Shriber
Deputy Chief Counsel
Office of General Counsel
810 Vermont Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20571

Re: Response to Request for Training Materials 022D-76311

Dear Ms. Shriber:

Please see the attached response to your request for Vietnam Veterans of America's training materials. I have added a detail response to the information that you have requested. I have also attached, in separate attachments, materials referenced in the response. If you have any additional questions or would like clarification on any of the information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Felicia Mullaney
Deputy Director, Veterans Benefits Program
Vietnam Veterans of America
8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100, Silver Spring, MD 20910
Fmullaney@vva.org (email) / (240) 485-1625 (office)4002

World Wide Web: <http://www.vva.org>



Vietnam Veterans of America
Response to OGC Request for Training Materials
Reference Number 022D-7631

1. A statement of the skills, training, and other qualifications your organization requires of current and prospective representatives handling Veterans' claims

New applicants are required to provide the following before we process their accreditation through OGC:

- ❖ Complete VVA Application *See attachment "New VSO Application and Training"*
 - ❖ State Council President reviews the application, interviews the applicant, and writes a recommendation.
 - ❖ Complete VVA training videos
 - ❖ Complete and pass the NVLSP Online Service Officer Basic Training Course
 - ❖ Pass the VVA Service Officer Exam
 - ❖ Complete VA Form 21
- We check to make sure the person is either a paid employee of VVA working not less than 1000 hours annually, is a member, or is working with an organization that we have an MOU with. We also confirm all of the information is correct and all of the records match and are consistent.*
- ❖ Once the applicant is accredited they will be trained and supervised by a Chief Service Officer or an experienced Service Officer. In the application the State Council President must specify who will be responsible for the new VSOs training and supervision.

Recertification is required every 5 years:

- ❖ VSOs are required to read the recertification packet. *See attachment "Recertification Materials"*
- ❖ Applicants are required to fill out the video log. *See attachment "Recertification Materials"*

Quarterly Reports:

- ❖ VSOs are required to submit Quarterly Reports to the Veterans Benefits Program Director. A VSO's Quarterly Report will include information on the VSO's new claims, claims activity, appeals activity, and continuing education. *See attachment "VSO Quarterly Report"*

2. All the organization's materials used in training representatives.

- ❖ ***Veterans Benefits Manual***
- ❖ ***VSO Counsel***
We have a full-time attorney on staff to help VSOs with their claims work. VSO Counsel can provide assistance to VSOs by giving advice on interpreting law,

Reference Number: 022D-76311

looking up court cases, and giving claim specific advice. *See* attachment "VSO Counsel Job Description"

❖ **Guidance Memos**

When a new topic comes out or VVA notices that certain areas need clarification, VVA will issue a guidance memo to VSOs on the topic. Guidance memos clarify the law on an issue, give guidance about new benefits, and give general guidance to VSOs. *See* attachments "Guidance Memos"

Topics include:

- Brown Water Navy Claims
- Camp Lejeune Claims
- Ch. 18 Children and Grandchildren
- Using Obesity to Establish Secondary Service Connection
- Decision Reviews in VBMS
- Filing a Notice of Disagreement and Motion for Reconsideration
- RAMP

❖ **Training Videos**

Topics listed below in question 3. If you would like to watch the videos, please email me at fmullaney@vva.org so that I can set you up with the link, a username, and a password. *See* attachment "New VSO Application and Training"

❖ **Handout with questions referencing information in the videos.**

See attachment "New VSO Application and Training"

❖ **Basic VSO Exam.**

See attachment "New VSO Application and Training"

❖ **NVLSP Online Service Officer Basic Training Course**

❖ **Advanced Service Officer Training (in person classroom training).**

See attachments "Advanced VSO Training July 2016" and "Advanced VSO Training July 2018."

3. A statement of the number of hours of formal classroom instruction, subjects taught, the period of on-the-job training, and any related information.

We have in-person formal classroom instruction biannually at the Leadership Conference. We will also be providing a 3-day in-person formal classroom training on the Appeals Modernization Act in January 2019. *(Materials are not prepared yet)*. As new topics come up or we notice a need for training in certain areas, we will create trainings and make sure that the trainings are recorded for VSOs who are not able to travel and future VSOs.

We had a **full day** of Advanced Service Officer training in July 2018. *(Materials attached)*. Topic included:

- ❖ RAMP
- ❖ VVA Policy Updates
- ❖ Rating Decision Reviews
- ❖ Filing claims for agent orange Children and Grandchildren
- ❖ Recent Precedential Cases from the Federal Circuit and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

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- ❖ Rating Mental Health Disorders
- ❖ Obtaining an outside Medical Opinion
- ❖ Chronicity
- ❖ Decision Ready Claims

We also had a **full day** of Advanced Service Officer training in July 2016. (*materials attached*). Topics included:

- ❖ PIV Card
- ❖ VBMS
- ❖ National Work Que
- ❖ SEP
- ❖ CAVC Cases
 - Judicial oversight of VA
 - Cases that are Remanded by the courts
 - Important recent cases
 - Practical Issues
- ❖ Service Officer Best Practices
 - Time saving tips
 - Preventing appeals
 - VA forms

Below is a list of our current online videos with topics and times. New video topics are added regularly:

Veterans Benefits

Introduction to VA Benefits with Vale (25:35)
Service Connected Compensation with Houppert (38:38)
Introduction to VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) with Weletz (37:30)
Characterizations of Discharge with Bedford, Weidman, and McCabe (28:09)
Presumptive Conditions: Making your job easier with Decker (15:37)
Military Toxic Exposures Claims: Southwest Asia with Garza and Sullivan (45:08)
Advanced Introduction to VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities with Radke (1:11:45)
The Ethics of Veterans Law with Spataro (39:51)
Proving Agent Orange Exposure with Spataro (1/2) (1:00:32)
Proving Agent Orange Exposure with Spataro (2/2) (25:23)
Camp Lejeune Presumptive Conditions with Spataro (20:18)

VA Claims Process

Developing Initial Claims with Williams (34:39)
Obtaining Military Records with Boylan (9:29)
Reserve & National Guard Claims with Bedford (7:00)
The Office of Tribal Government Relations with Woodard (23:07)
Running a VSO Office by McCabe (2014) (59:58)
Introduction to Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP) with Bryceland (37:08)
Navigating the New VA Regulations Regarding Standard Claims and Appeals Forms with Spataro (1:30:28)

Reference Number: 022D-76311

Best Practices at the Regional Office with Yoon (36:02)
VBA Briefing by Rodriguez and McNulty (14:44)
Rating Reduction & Severance of Service Connection with Spinnicchia (1:05:49)
VA Death Benefits & Substitution: DIC with Ivory (1 of 2) (19:56)
VA Death Benefits & Substitution: Accrued Benefits with Ivory (2 of 2) (20:24)

Mock Interviews & Hearings

VSO-Client Mock Interview with Williams and Edelman (36:36)
Board of Veterans Appeals Mock Hearing with Bedford, Decker, Garza, and Pesin (15:09)

Special Cases

VA Health Care: Eligibility, Enrollment, and Billing with Cunningham (21:33)
Burial Benefits and the National Cemetery Administration with Muro (43:31)
PTSD with Dr. Berger (43:40)
PTSD Claims with Williams (44:53)
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) with Dr. Berger (18:59)
MST Claims with Dr. Berger and Four (32:32)
Caregivers of Veterans with Berger, Hodge, and Edelman (31:14)
Children of Vietnam Veterans: Exposure to Toxic Substances (1 of 2) with McCabe (14:23)
Children of Vietnam Veterans: Exposure to Toxic Substances (2 of 2) with McCabe (14:49)

Appeals

Medical Opinions: Good, Bad, and Ugly with Pesin (31:02)
Veterans Law to Know and Cite with Kolage (24:21)
Board of Veterans Appeals Overview with Garza (21:24)
Development Issues: How to Avoid an Appeal by Meeting the Legal Standards with Koeppen (33:49)
Judicial Appeals with Garza (2016) (47:24)

Advanced Topics

NEHMER Claims with Stichman (52:51)
SMCt - New Special Monthly Compensation Benefits (37:38)
PTSD & Heart Problems with George (1:05:39)
Introduction to Concurrent Receipt Programs with Ostrom (38:38)
Evaluation of Traumatic Injuries of the Musculoskeletal System with George (1:11:54)
CUE Claims - Clear and Unmistakable Error with Spinnicchai (56:54)

Archived Training (optional)

VBA Overview with Walcoff (52:04)
VA Survivors Benefits with Kolage (21:10)
VA Disability Claims and Appeals Process with Weisbroth (25:30)
Running a VSO Office with McCabe (2012) (27:33)
Compensation for Injuries at VA facilities and Negligence (Section 1151 claims) with Scott (28:58)
How to Review a VA Rating Decision with McCabe (31:58)
Judicial Appeals with Garza (2014) (47:25)