



## Vietnam Veterans of America

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

### **Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors Meeting January 17-18, 2020 Approved by Board**

President John Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Friday January 17, 2020, at 9:03 am, at the Double Tree by Hilton in Silver Spring, MD. AL State Council President Wayne Reynolds 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	Dave Simmons
Tom Burke, Vice President	Kathy Andras*	Dick Southern
Bill Meeks, Secretary	Skip Hochreich	Dan Stenvold
Jack McManus Treasurer	Dennis Howland	Kerwin Stone
Dennis Andras	Sara McVicker	Ted Wilkinson
Spence Davis	Rex Moody	Sandie Wilson
Richard DeLong	Felix Peterson	
Gumersindo Gomez	John Riling	

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

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO

Absent: Joanna Henshaw & John Margowski

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	Absent	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	Absent		Rhode Island	Present
Kansas	Present		South Carolina	Present
Kentucky	Present		South Dakota	Present
Louisiana	Present		Tennessee	Present
Maryland	Present		Texas	Present
Massachusetts	Present		Utah	Present
Michigan	Present		Vermont	Absent
Minnesota	Present		Virginia	Present
Mississippi	Present		Washington	Present
Missouri	Present		West Virginia	Present
Montana	Present		Wisconsin	Present

### **Preliminary Business**

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

#### **Motion 1**

**To accept the 2020 January BOD meeting tentative agenda:**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

#### **Motion 2**

**To approve the 2019 October BOD Meeting Minutes 10/11/19.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

### **National President/J. Rowan**

President Rowan gave a brief verbal report with a copy passed out.

On October 24<sup>th</sup> I joined the other officers, Mokie Porter, Rick Weidman and Kris Goldsmith at a meeting in Facebook's (FB) offices in DC. It began with an overview of how FB operates (I now know how things end up on my FB page) and how ads are determined. We may try to do some advertising on FB.

We then met with FB's staff that deal with security issues to discuss Kris' report on the trolls that looked like VVA. They were impressed with the work Kris did given his limited resources. They explained what FB is doing to eliminate phony sites. They will work with VVA through Kris on his issue. It was a very positive meeting.

October 25<sup>th</sup> The officers met with the staff to discuss our computer operations to determine what changes need to be made and whether we need an updated system.

On October 28<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended the funeral service for Matthew Raible, a Purple Heart, Marine, paraplegic, who was a founding member of VVA, who had been in the Bronx VAMC spinal-cord injury ward with Bobby Muller. He and I went to the same HS, Brooklyn Tech, although different years. While attending an open house at the school in the early 90's, he learned how to use a computer for design that prompted him to go back to school and have a career as a counselor with Social Security. He often joined Chapter 32 in various parades.

On October 30<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended a seminar at the HQs of the NYC Department of Veterans Services on the possible reuse of veterans' halls. The example was in Clarendon, VA where an American Legion Post site was used to develop affordable housing for veterans and others, as well as a new AL Post. They used various government and private programs and the sale of the land to the developers to fund these projects. Given that many of these posts are having problems it might be worth looking into. I know that many VVA chapters meet in similar facilities that may want to try this type of program.

October 31<sup>st</sup> Mariann and I traveled to the NYS Health Foundation's offices in Manhattan to listen to Dr. David Shulkin, the former VA Secretary, who talked about his time at the VA.

On November 5<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I met with John Boerstler, CEO of Combined Arms, who was traveling through NYC to Boston. John is a Post 9/11 veteran, who runs an assistance program for new veterans in Houston that has over 6,000 clients. He was very familiar with VVA and was once on the Veterans Support Foundation's board. He is very interested in working with us on our transition efforts.

On November 6<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended a US Veterans Chamber of Commerce event in a T-Mobile flagship store in Times Square. We helped box up care packages for military families. I met some great contacts.

On November 7<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended the annual luncheon for the Friends of the NYC Vietnam Veteran Memorial.

November 14-15<sup>th</sup> I went to DC and attended a morning meeting of the PREVENTS Task Force to discuss federal efforts to eliminate suicide as outlined in a Presidential initiative. Later that afternoon I attended a veterans' roundtable hosted by Speaker Pelosi and the House Veterans Affairs Committee. There were over 30 representatives from various veterans and family member organizations.

On November 16<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended the dedication of a passive park for the late Sal Mione, former NJ State Council President and active leader in the community of Rahway. We were joined by many VVA members and Margaret Wojciechowitz.

The evening of November 20<sup>th</sup> I participated in a meeting of the NYC Veterans Advisory Board.

December 7-8<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended a VVA NYSC Executive Board meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY. The NYSC has decided to stop taking POAs as their SR money is now limited. They also are eliminating their June meeting leaving only January, April, and September.

On December 20<sup>th</sup> Mariann and I attended the dedication for the Queens Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Elmhurst. The memorial contains the names of all those from Queens County who were killed or are MIA in

the Vietnam War. This was the dream of Past President of Chapter 32, the late Pastor Toro, a former BOD member.

January 2-6, 2020 Mariann and I traveled to Los Angeles to attend the Student Veterans of America Convention (see separate e-mail memo).

### **National Vice President/Tom Burke**

#### **(A) October 7 - 13**

Returned to Silver Springs for National Board Meeting during this week.

Met with all Department Directors for monthly meeting. Discussed various issues, including continuing discussions on "IMIS" and its future. Quentin Butcher and Jeff Greulich continue to co-ordinate project for the future upgrade or replacement. Attended Officers meeting, attended some sessions in the CSCP meeting, and of course Board of Directors meeting. Worked with Administration / Personnel department on situations that needed attention.

#### **(B) October 24 - 25**

Flew into Silver Springs for various scheduled meetings. The officers met with various individuals from "Face book" at their headquarters. We were given a presentation concerning "Face book" Corporate philosophy and a quick overview what they do and how their systems operates. They may be able to work with us through our communications department for possible ad traffic on their system for us for free.

Met with Director Artie Sheldon concerning matters in his department.

Attended Award Dinner in DC Sponsored by the American Academy of Nursing for Dr. Linda Schwartz.

On the night of the 24th. Dr. Schwartz was recognized for dedicating her life to "healing the wounds of War" Dr. Schwartz was awarded the Academies "Living Legends Award". More than well deserved. VVA was well represented at this award ceremony.

Attended a Security Luncheon for the building in which the Silver Spring police department provided us with a presentation concerning safety in the work place. Also attended an update meeting on possible CRM proposal.

#### **(C) November 1-**

Attended a meeting of Ohio Veterans in Columbus. This was information gathering effort of other organizations of younger Veterans within the state.

#### **(D) November 2-3 -**

Drove to the State of West Virginia to attend the West Virginia State Council Meeting at the invitation of State Council President Dave Simmons. The meeting was well attended. Questions concerning the future of VVA were discussed. Much discussion about state council business, committee reports, and the like were presented.

#### **(E) November 5-6**

Attended the First Annual Meeting of the National Veterans Business Development Council matchmaking Conference in Columbus. This organization was founded by Keith King who was also founding member of VVA, as well as the President of Veterans Support Foundation (VSF). The VSF has been supportive of VVA Activities for many years. The goal of the NVBDC is to provide Supplier Diversity Professionals the opportunity to meet with certified Service Disabled and Veteran Owned Businesses to network with them to provide and produce potential Veteran suppliers for major corporations.

#### **(F) November 9-10-11**

Came to DC to attend and represent along with Secretary Meeks VVA at various Veterans Day ceremonies which were taking place around the capital city. I along with National Secretary Meeks sat in at VVA's tent on the National Mall. On November 11th Secretary Meeks attended events at the Wall. Marsha Four former National Vice President was one of the main speakers at the Vietnam Veterans Wall during the day's activities. Yours truly was attending ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery representing National President John Rowan on the dais, with Vice President Pence whom I was able to speak with for a couple of minutes. There were also many dignitaries. The speech's given at these ceremonies to a vast crowd of people were awe-inspiring with all of the military core present.

(G) November 14 - 15

Returned to DC meet with Administration / Personnel concerning matters needing attention. Also met with all Department Directors for updates concerning IMIS and CRM efforts. A broad discussion took place with input by all concerned.

November 20

(H) Came to DC to attend many meetings on the hill - report of those meeting is attached for your review.

(I) December 9 - 10 - 11 -

In HQ Silver Spring to discuss with Administration / Personnel subjects of mutual concern. Also met with various department heads individually and attempted to catch up on e-mail traffic.

(J) January 2 -5, 2020

Robin and I along with John and Marianne, flew out to Los Angeles to attend the Student Veterans of America National Meeting. Three thousand veterans (3000) attended as well as sponsors and National Leaders. We were able to talk with a number of young Veterans including SVA's national leadership. This group is very impressive, as their focus is on education of the troops. Most of the membership has at least a four years degree or working on it, and many with Masters. The discussions that we had with these folks were interesting. Suggestions were made to us about how we could open up the membership and move forward with growing a younger generation into our organization. Suggestions will be considered by the officers and the board.

(K) January 9-12

Traveled to Dayton, Ohio to catch up with Wes and make a site visit of the hotel and facilities of our upcoming Leadership Conference. We also visited the Wright - Patterson Air Force Base to set up a Day at the Air Force Museum. The museum folks have been very co-operative in working with us to make this happen. They are discussing a Vietnam Veterans day for our group, a special Vietnam aircraft display for us and a dinner in the hanger that hold all of the Vietnam aircraft. This museum also holds Patches, the actual aircraft that our National Treasurer flew in during Vietnam. This could be one of our best yet.

#### **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 verbal report.

#### **Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America/ K. Andras for J. Henshaw**

JANUARY 2020

It has been an interesting start. The AVVA Board has completed quite a lot of business over this past three months. I apologize for missing the January meeting, however there was something I simply could not put off, in order that I can be available for April. My hope is that our Vice President, Kaye Gardner will be able to attend in my stead. That being said, the following are the things that we have been working on, and are planning for the near future for AVVA:

- The revisions of the Paper Safe are completed, and the document is in print. It should be available by the time the January Board Meeting is held. The online version should also be available by that time, on our website: [www.avva.org](http://www.avva.org).
- We have completed the redesign of our Life Member cards, and they will begin being issued as soon as the old ones are used up. Probably early this year.
- On certain advice from some staff members we are working on a new look for our website, which should be launched before summer begins.
- We are systematically going through our policies to be sure that they are in line with our new bylaws and with the current needs of our membership. There have been several revisions, both small and significant over the past three months.
- We are still waiting for an answer from the IRS regarding the status of our state and chapter subsidiaries and whether they will be recognized as a group under the new 501(C)3 status. The hope is that this will be decided before the end of January.
- AVVA is working on determining what seminars we will offer at the Leadership Conference. We want to offer fresh subjects that are of interest to our members and will be helpful to them. We hope to have more than two slots.
- We have successfully held two online board meetings, using the GoToMeeting program, and we will be using it in the future to take care of business in a timely manner when or if needed.

Our focus in the very near future is going to be on acquiring funding sources that will be stable and consistent over the next several years. We will be talking to several professionals in the area of grant writing, sponsorships and fundraising in general so that we can begin to set up some kind of organized plan.

Good luck and peace to all in this brand-new year!

**Joanna Henshaw**

AVVA National President

**Conference of State Council Presidents/R. Moody**

CSCP Chair Moody noted that there were forty-three (43) presidents in attendance and the CSCP discussed their budget that will be submitted.

**HGDP Report/Q. Butcher**

Quentin Butcher noted that donations were up, but the amount given down and Kansas store is closing.

**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.

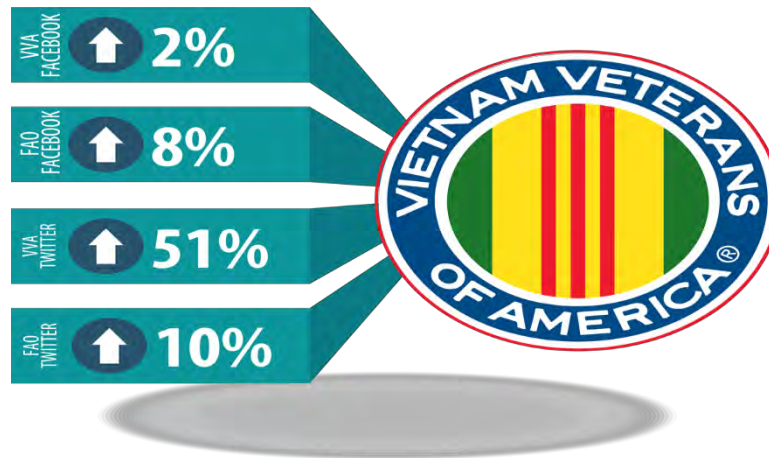
# COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS

## SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS

January 17, 2020

### SOCIAL MEDIA

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

#### VVA Facebook 2019-2020

The VVA Facebook had a **2%** increase in followers in a 12-month period (January 1, 2019- January 1, 2020).

On January 1, 2020, VVA had **136,281** likes; on January 1, 2019, VVA’s Facebook page had **133,631** likes;

We have gained **2,650** additional followers since January 1, 2019.

#### Faces of Agent Orange Facebook FY 2020

The Faces of Agent Orange Facebook page had an **8%** increase in followers in 2020 (January 1, 2019- January 1, 2020).

On January 1, 2020, FAO Facebook had **20,851** likes, an increase from **19,274** on January 1, 2019.

#### VVA Twitter

VVA’s Twitter account, on January 1, 2020, had **16,304** followers, up **51 %** from January 1, 2019, when it had **10,800** followers). VVA has issued over **7,871** 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 views.

#### Faces of Agent Orange Twitter



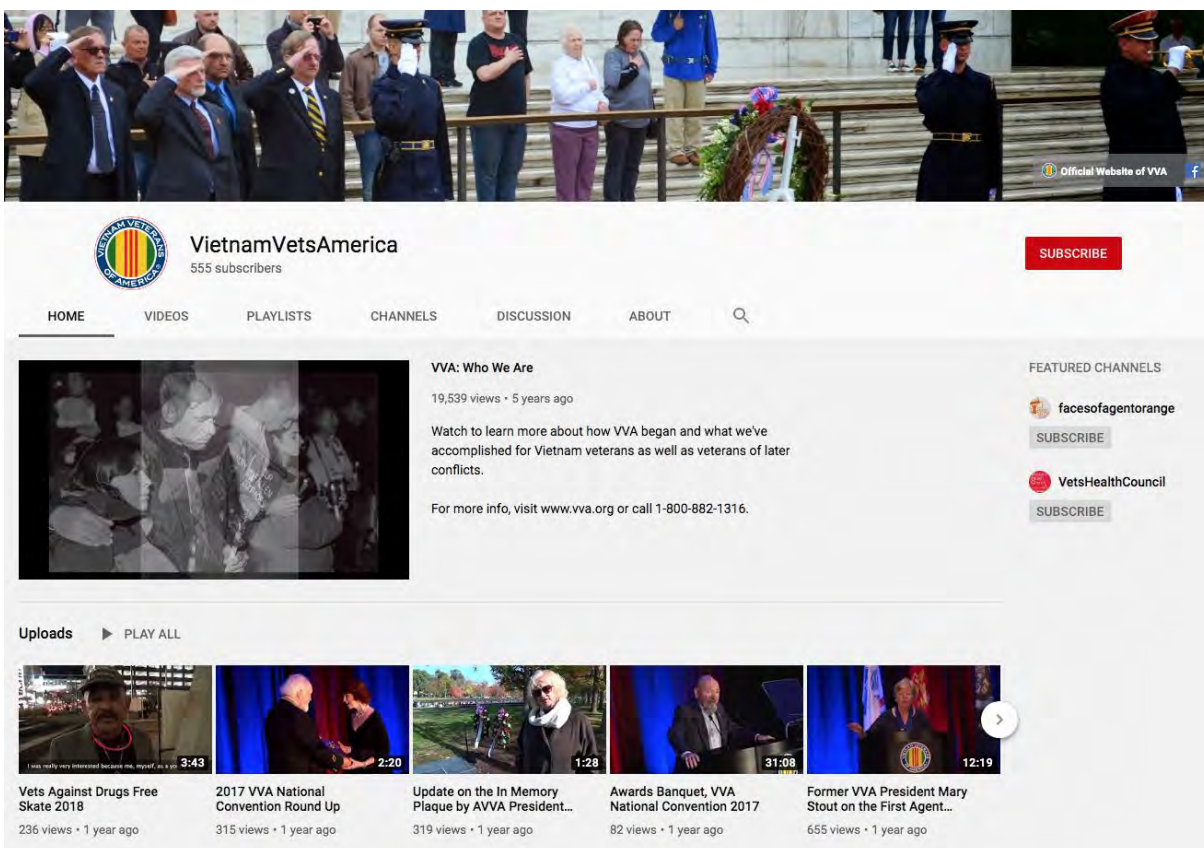
VVA's FAO twitter account, on January 1, 2020, had **1,336** followers: This is a **10%** increase from January 1, 2019, when it had **1,217** followers).

VVA FAO has issued over **4,843 tweets**. Followers often "retweet" our messages to their followers, many of whom have thousands of followers.

## YouTube

Our VietnamVetsAmerica YouTube channel was launched on August 23, 2010. It has had **109,143** views. As of January 1, 2020, it has **576** subscribers.

Our FacesofAgentOrange YouTube channel was launched on May 17, 2011. It has had **101,027** views. As of January 1, 2020, it has **511** subscribers.



## NEWS



## Press Releases

Thus far, in FY20, (March 1-January 1), VVA's Communications Department issued **19** 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 VVA's National Convention coverage, toxic exposures, Agent Orange presumptives, the *Procopio* decision relating to Blue Water Navy veterans, Foreign Entities Targeting Veterans Online, and .

## Web Weekly

Thus far, in FY20, we produced and distributed 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%.

## AGENT ORANGE TOWN HALLS



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.

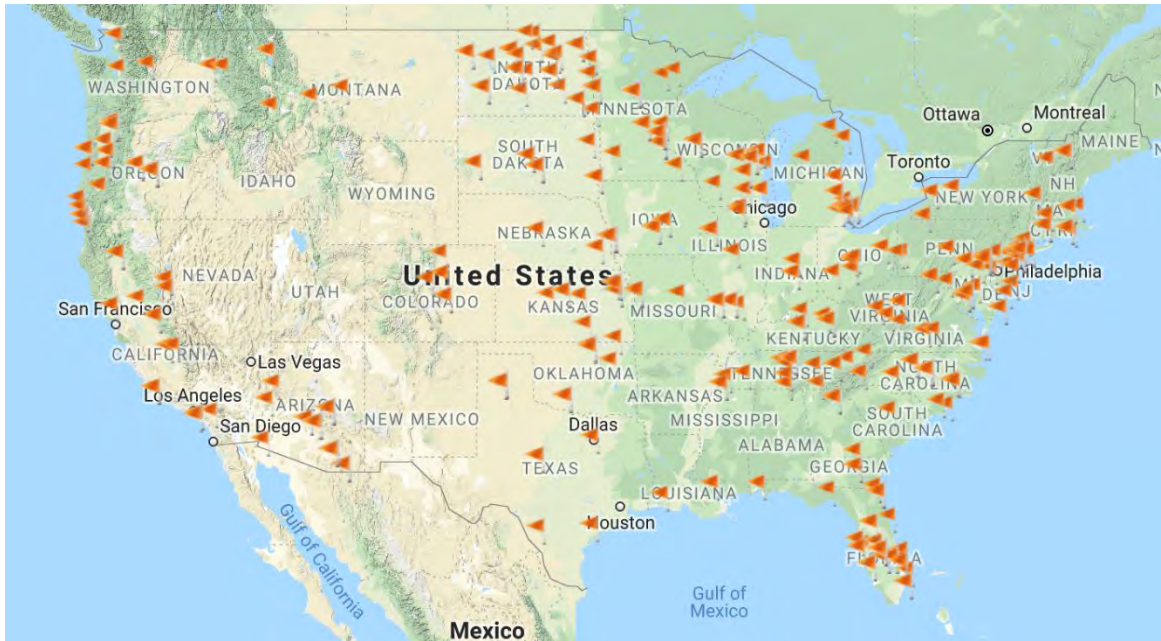
"When VVA discovered that the SCRA site allowed personal and private information, including details pertaining to the military service of millions of veterans and service members, to be easily accessible on the internet, to anybody at all, anonymously, for any purpose, we brought it to DoD's attention," 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

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**339** Faces of Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings have been convened since the first on August 1, 2009. Thus far, in **FY 2020, 17 town hall meetings have been held**; there are **6** upcoming town hall meetings scheduled for **FY20**.

#### Agent Orange Folders Sent

**32,072 Agent Orange folders** have been sent in past 7 years--began tracking in 2012

**FY20-1,896** | **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

**126,295 Agent Orange Self-help Guides** distributed over past 5 years--began tracking in 2014

**FY20-14,272** | **FY19-9,103** | **FY 18-17,640** | **FY17-18,583** | **FY16- 29,887** | **FY15-36,810**

## AWARDS

FY20 March 1-January 1, 2019

**Achievement - 87**

**Commendation– 10**

**Plaques 29**





**JROTC 144 Medals in FY20**

**Eagle Scout: 59 Medals in FY20**



**Veterans Health Council/Dr. A. Shelton**

Dr. Shelton gave a verbal report and additional document in the Appendix.

**Human Resources and Administration/S. Parker**



January 2020 Board of Directors Meeting

## Human Resources Report

### **Promotions:**

Contina Foster - Administrative Assistant to Executive Assistant to the officers  
Joniece Barnes - Temporary Employee in Fundraising to Membership Services Assistant  
Rebecca Patterson - Assistant Director Veterans Health Council to Deputy Director Veterans Health Council  
Sean Webb - Temporary Membership Assistant to Deputy Director Communications  
Priscilla Wiley - Membership Assistant to Membership Administrator  
Jacy Smith - Accounting Specialist III to Senior Accountant

### **Newly Hired:**

Daniel Devora - was with us last Board meeting, Facilities Technician  
Janelle Andrew - Accounting Director  
Brenae Jones - Membership Services Assistant

### **Recent Departures:**

Joy Diggs - Director Finance  
Therese - Membership Assistant  
Maureen Elias – Assist Director, Veterans Health Council

2019 was a very trying year; however we are strategizing ways to improve our ongoing processes. The Vice President, CFO, and I worked on a salary survey recently. We created salary scales to align with job responsibilities and titles. This also included us doing analysis on the various positions and revising job descriptions.

Moving forward every employee will also get an evaluation, which will determine what pay increases are awarded to them annually. The Directors will be given autonomy to make decisions regarding the employee increases pending the approval of the Vice President.

We also realize how important training and development is for our staff therefore we are looking to establish a training and development for staff one day quarterly. We will also use this day for team building as well. This will be discussed further with the officers.

### **VAVS Report/K. Rose**

Ken Rose spoke about volunteer activities and his report is in the Appendix.  
VVA National Board of Directors Meeting Presentation – Jan. 2020

Good Morning, In October, I attended the NAC (V A National Advisory Committee for Voluntary Service in Washington, D. C. These meeting gives VVA a seat on the National Advisory Committee. This is also an opportunity for senior VA staff to report on the status of the VA and its programs. VA wide, there are 153,600 volunteers, giving 2.6 mil. Volunteer hours at the VAMC's and Clinics.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, VVA has 64 VAVS Representative and 47 Deputy Representatives. Of the 153 VAMC's across the country, we have volunteers in 122. There are 501 active VVA volunteers.

Ten of our volunteers have a total of 10,000. Hours each, and 199 of our members have over 1,000. Hours each.

Since more of us are retiring, it's a good time to give a little of that time to your fellow hospitalized Veterans. We helped each other in war, now Vietnam Veteran patients, and our newer veterans need your help. At the VA you will see younger Veterans who need you and appreciate, not only your service then, but your help now.

Our State Councils and Chapters should appreciate those who do volunteer work at the V A. There is little recognition of their time and effort. These folks travel (sometimes) long distances to Volunteer, and many have done this for years.

Every VAMC has two very important committees. These should be attended by VVA. There is the VA, which is for the Representatives and Deputies appointed to serve that VA facility. There is also the Veterans Advisory Committee, if you are serious about learning about the VA, and how it works, and what is needed, this is the place for you. If your Chapter is within an hour of a VA, someone from a VVA Chapter should be attending these meeting. It is open to Service Organizations and local and federal representatives of government also attend. The hospital director attends and also staff, and they will answer your questions.

This is a good opportunity to raise questions and / or problems. And this information should be taken back to your State Councils and Chapters.

Any questions /Thank you. Cards are in the back.

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

# **VETERANS BENEFITS REPORT**

## **January 2020**

### **CONTENT**

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

### **1. Director's Note**

As of January 1, 2020, VA has started to adjudicate claims under the Blue Water Veterans Act. In preparation for this, the VBP obtained a list from VA of all veterans and widows that were denied claims in the past that may now benefit from the expanded presumptive rules. Letters have been sent to these individuals explaining the changes in the law and encouraging them to contact their local VSO if they would like to file a new claim. We are hopeful that this effort will greatly increase the number of veterans and widows that take advantage of the Blue Water Veterans Act.

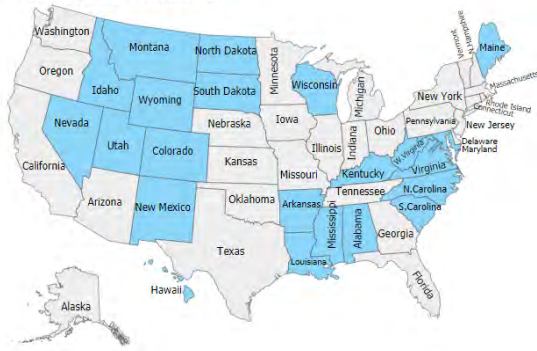
The VBP's National staff interact daily by phone and email with many of our nationwide VSOs. To become an even more cohesive department, the VBP will begin to conduct site visits to various states with a benefits program. The goal will be for us to watch and learn, so we can better identify how National can help all our dedicated VSOs fulfill their missions. It will also be an opportunity to conduct in-person training. VBP National will be visiting our local VSO program in Massachusetts in January and Michigan in February.

To ensure all our VSOs have the best and latest information, the VBP is in the process of obtaining Learning Management Software. This virtual platform will centralize the recertification process and host training videos, webinars, and many other resources to support our VSOs.

At the close of 2019, the VBP was notified by VA's Office of General Counsel that several of our VSOs were past-due on their five-year recertifications, which are required to continue representing veterans before VA. We have updated our training materials with the latest changes in the law, including two excellent new videos (expertly put together by Heather Olson and Joe Scott). The VSOs have been notified and provided the necessary materials to remain accredited as a VVA VSO.

## 2. VBP Activities

### States Represented by VVA National



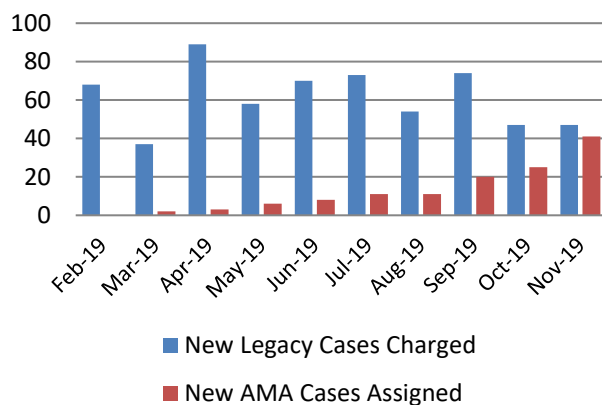
The VBP represents more than 77,000 Veterans and family members of all eras. Thanks to the VBP's advocacy, \$82,060,105 in benefits are paid every month.<sup>1</sup> Claimants in 27 States and Puerto Rico are represented by local VVA VSOs. Claimants residing in the 23 remaining states and the Philippines 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 September until November 2019, 29.5% of

VVA cases were granted and 48.4% were remanded.<sup>2</sup> Since the last report in October 2019, and not including hearing request cases, we have received 120 additional new cases. In addition, VBP has received 71 AMA cases; 13 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.

## New Appels Assigned at BVA



## TOTAL LEGACY APPEALS BACKLOG AT BVA OF VETERANS APPEALS

LOCATION	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)	Number of Cases (Dec. '19)
Pending Attorney Review	1107	1751	1753	1788	1829	1580
Pending Travel BVA Hearing	458	211	218	224	240	245
Pending Video Hearing	631	654	572	538	513	488
Pending Central Office Hearings	9	18	20	18	13	10
<b>TOTAL VVA BACKLOG AT BVA</b>	<b>1,905</b>	<b>2,634</b>	<b>2,561</b>	<b>2,568</b>	<b>2,595</b>	<b>2,323</b>

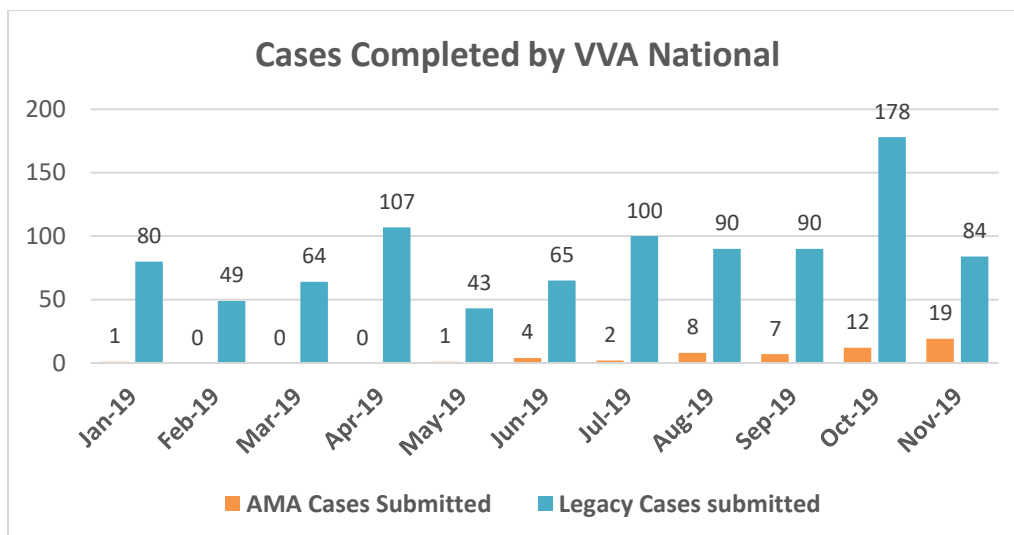
*Source:* VACOLS; BVA of Veterans' Appeals

<sup>1</sup> Data obtained from VA.

<sup>2</sup> VVA recorded a denial rate of 14.7% and 7.4% of the cases recorded a disposition of “other”.



Thanks to its ongoing training and development program, VBP continues to improve the quantity and quality of its legal work. 262 cases before the Board were processed by our offices this quarter, compared to 131 over the same period last year; a 50% increase!



VVA national VSOs reviewed **157 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 500 emails** and **over 845 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 **135 upcoming hearings** and **over 360 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 arguing service connection for **diabetes based on Agent Orange Exposure in Thailand**, the VA awarded a 20% rating from 2011, resulting in retroactive payment of **\$65,944**

Veteran Service Officer Dani Fischer successfully built trust with her clients through open communication and education about the role of a VSO, resulting in extensive claim development for clients that were previously trying to face the VA system alone.

National Appeals Attorney Fatmata Conteh successfully persuaded the Board that the Veteran's *service-connected PTSD* should be granted an earlier effective date, which resulted in a payment of **\$26,750**.

Managing Attorney Heather Olson helped a client obtain service connection for a mental health condition that VA had repeatedly denied, resulting in **\$43,730** in retroactive benefits.

Administrative Assistant Yolonda Harris helped a frustrated Veteran contact his VSO to ensure he had representation and encouraged him to consult with his VSO before taking his case to a judge.

National Appeals Attorney Claire Corsey successfully persuaded the Board that a Veteran's service-connected *hearing loss and tinnitus* should have an earlier effective date, resulting in **\$20,360** in benefits.

National Appeals Attorney Malkia Saunders successfully completed her first BVA hearing advocating for the Veteran to receive an increased rating for PTSD and TDIU and obtained a remand for the Veteran.

Veteran Service Officer Paula Tuero obtained a grant of benefits for hearing loss after writing her first IHP.

National Appeals Attorney Priya Mehta submitted an IHP in support of *TDIU* based on the Veteran's *ischemic heart disease and PTSD*, resulting in a retroactive payment of **\$81,325**.

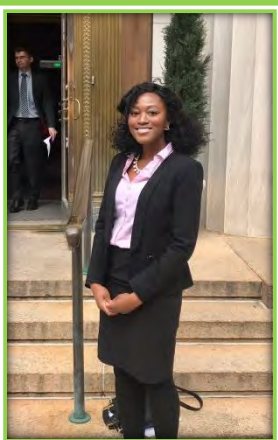
Training Advising Attorney Alec Ghezzi submitted an IHP requesting *entitlement to Individual Unemployability since the Veteran, a Purple Heart recipient, filed his claim in 2009*. This was granted, resulting in a retroactive award of approximately **\$184,825**.

Veteran Service Officer Ken Bouy obtained service connection for a client whose claim dated back to 2015, resulting in a retroactive payment of over **\$50,000**.

VSO Counsel Joe Scott successfully convinced the VA to act quickly and grant a claim for a Veteran's surviving spouse within 20 days of the BVA hearing, resulting in approximately **\$60,000** in retroactive benefits.

Administrator for Veterans' Benefits Elaine Chaney has been very busy this quarter setting up VSOs with accounts to take recertification training and tracking as the VSOs complete each of the requirements for recertification. In addition to tracking VSO requirements, Elaine has mailed out **628 letters** for the Benefit's Department.

#### 4. People & Staff Changes



**Fatmata Conteh** has been promoted to Lead Attorney. As Lead Attorney, Fatmata will manage the BVA Offices Administrative Duties and Hearings. Fatmata will also assist with mentoring her fellow attorneys in the office. Congratulations Fatmata on your well-deserved promotion.



The following chart shows how many new grants of benefits were issued by VA for Veterans represented by VVA from September 2019 to November 2019.

State	TOTAL AWARDS ISSUED	TOTAL BENEFITS	NEW AWARDS ISSUED	NEW BENEFITS PAID
VVA Total	148,438	\$239,512,138	584	\$520,131
AK	2,144	\$3,075,468	27	\$25,948
AL	333	\$609,679	0	\$0
AR	367	\$758,612	3	\$5,942
AZ	5,871	\$8,318,419	47	\$42,293
CA	6,084	\$13,521,621	19	\$19,005
CO	463	\$864,687	1	\$1,768
CT	1,052	\$1,601,268	1	\$879
DC	106	\$165,332	0	\$0
DE	1,327	\$2,602,798	5	\$7,072
FL	4,162	\$7,771,224	12	\$9,360
GA	562	\$1,062,529	2	\$1,544
HI	288	\$552,739	0	\$0
IA	6,225	\$8,432,056	26	\$30,023
ID	484	\$678,755	0	\$0
IL	6,881	\$12,175,571	22	\$21,873
IN	3,826	\$5,494,156	17	\$10,156
KS	967	\$1,957,092	7	\$12,945
KY	793	\$1,277,542	0	\$0
LA	812	\$1,393,685	2	\$1,759
MA	4,719	\$7,983,079	20	\$17,883
MD	880	\$1,679,441	2	\$280
ME	132	\$234,190	0	\$0
MI	10,167	\$18,244,409	45	\$26,826
MN	10,426	\$13,660,664	33	\$31,452
MO	3,723	\$6,191,125	21	\$12,528
MS	475	\$928,015	3	\$2,024
MT	307	\$520,541	0	\$0
NC	1,150	\$2,050,981	4	\$4,597

ND	91	\$115,580	2	\$4,986
NE	2,129	\$2,585,141	2	\$1,459
NH	372	\$651,666	1	\$429
NJ	4,212	\$8,805,302	7	\$6,993
NM	135	\$233,803	0	\$0
NV	550	\$1,114,131	1	\$1,512
NY	10,081	\$16,289,548	25	\$25,991
OH	3,645	\$4,795,054	12	\$13,516
OK	441	\$878,288	3	\$557
OR	947	\$1,754,926	5	\$7,477
PA	10,567	\$16,207,940	46	\$43,344
PH	54	\$141,763	0	\$0
PR	654	\$1,810,421	0	\$0
RI	1,113	\$2,065,279	1	\$1,987
SC	204	\$429,332	0	\$0
SD	72	\$129,480	0	\$0
TN	1,806	\$3,517,607	2	\$280
TX	8,186	\$13,788,229	36	\$25,895
UT	345	\$619,883	0	\$0
VA	920	\$1,615,389	3	\$2,143
VT	567	\$994,043	4	\$5,182
WA	19,218	\$25,505,512	111	\$86,444
WI	3,909	\$5,321,260	1	\$1,182
WV	3,445	\$6,253,426	3	\$4,601
WY	49	\$83,454	0	\$0
TOTAL	55,112	\$89,431,382	241	\$219,999
TOTAL	16,364	\$27,771,701	25	\$30,792

**KEY:**

States receiving grant funds

States covered by VVA National

**BOD Meeting recessed until Saturday morning: 9:00 am.**

President Rowan reconvened the meeting on Saturday January 18, 2020, 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	Bob Grabinski	Dave Simmons
Tom Burke, Vice President	Kathy Andras*	Dick Southern
Bill Meeks, Secretary	Skip Hochreich	Dan Stenvold
Jack McManus Treasurer	Dennis Howland	Kerwin Stone
Dennis Andras	Sara McVicker	Ted Wilkinson
Spence Davis	Rex Moody	Sandie Wilson
Richard DeLong	Felix Peterson	
Gumersindo Gomez	John Riling	

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

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO

Absent: Joanna Henshaw & John Margowski

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

## **Finance Committee Report**

Chair Ned Foote made the following motions out of committee.

### **Motion 3**

**Move to approve the VVA Travel Policy as amended.**

#### **VVA TRAVEL POLICY**

(Approved January 21/22, 2006)  
(Amended Motion # 38, October 12, 2013)  
(Amended Motion #13, January 17, 2017)

#### **BACKGROUND**

A significant percentage of each VVA budget consists of travel-related expenditures. It is imperative that such expenses be as cost effective as possible. Additionally, it is incumbent upon all Cost Center managers to make every effort to ensure that their travel expenses are kept within the parameters of their approved budget lines.

#### **PURPOSE**

The VVA Travel Policy provides a mechanism for an established set of rules and procedures for travel-related expenditures. This policy applies to all personnel traveling on VVA funds.

#### **EXCEPTIONS**

Once the VVA budget has been approved by the VVA Board of Directors, and travel funding within the various Cost Centers has been approved, further approval is not needed with the exception of the following:

- \* All international travel funded by VVA must be approved by the Board of Directors in advance and the trip participants must be identified and approved.
- \* If a Cost Center manager is responsible for more than one Cost Center, the manager is prohibited from expending the resources of one Cost Center for the purpose of fulfilling the responsibilities of another Cost Center.
- \* For all VVA functions for which there is a "Hotel Master List" of individuals to be paid for by VVA, reimbursement of hotel expenses will not exceed the single room cost of the VVA designated hotel should someone choose to move to another hotel for their own convenience.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **A. Transportation**

1. Travel on official VVA business will be reimbursed at the prevailing IRS rate for travel by privately owned vehicle and at the economy airfare rate ONLY for travel by air. In no case will ground travel by privately owned vehicle be reimbursed at more than economy airfare plus other expenses that would be incurred by air travel (baggage fees, mileage or transportation to/from airport, rental car at destination).

2. Airfare travel must be scheduled no later than 21 days in advance of departure. This is to ensure that VVA obtains the best rates for airfare travel. Airfare travel with less than 21 days advance notice must be approved in writing by the Chief Financial Officer.

3. Individuals not adhering to this policy will be responsible for making and paying for their own travel reservations and will be reimbursed to the extent that they would have been had they made their travel reservations prior to the twenty one day cut off.

4. Airline reservations may be made through VVA's travel agent Let's Travel (800-659-4441). Travelers may make their own travel arrangements but will not be reimbursed in excess of what the fare would have been through Let's Travel.

5. When renting an automobile, travelers will be reimbursed only the rate for a full sized car. Any upgrades are the responsibility of the traveler unless prior written approval is obtained from the CFO. Travelers must accept all insurance coverage which the rental company offers.

#### **B. Lodging**

1. VVA will pay for a single room for all individuals traveling on VVA funds.

2. You must use the VVA E-reservation form available on the VVA web site in order to be placed on the VVA Hotel Master List.

3. Room reservations must be made at least thirty (30) days in advance of VVA-approved functions, e.g., BOD meetings, National Convention, Leadership Conference. The 30 day cutoff dates are determined by the first day of the block of rooms covered in the contract and will be determined in advance by the VVA Meeting Planner. The day you arrive has no bearing on the 30 day cutoff date.

4. If you do not make room reservations at least thirty (30) days in advance, you will be responsible for arranging for a room directly with the hotel and you will be responsible for paying the entire bill. You will be reimbursed only the "VVA's negotiated rate" and you will be responsible for the balance of any higher rate.

5. Any person who does not check in on the booked arrival date is considered a "no-show". VVA will be charged Room and Tax for one night. By hotel policy, the remaining days reserved are automatically cancelled. The individual will be responsible for paying VVA for the "no-show" date and, if appropriate, for making new arrangements for any rooms needed. In emergency situations, the traveler should contact the VVA Meeting Planner.

#### **C. Per Diem**

Per diem will be paid at the rate established by the Board of Directors.

#### **D. Unauthorized Expenses**

1. VVA will not reimburse for airline seat upgrades such as economy plus, etc. In addition, VVA will not pay for additional bag fees (over 1), overweight bag fees, oversized bags fees, ticket change fees and seat selection fees.



2. The VVA Chief Financial Officer is hereby directed to bill individuals for or to deduct from any reimbursement charges incurred in changing airline reservations, "no show" on hotel room reservations, or other charges that are not authorized under the VVA Travel Policy.

#### **E. Reimbursement**

1. All travel must be charged to the cost center designated for the related activity and the cost center must have funding designated for travel. Reimbursements will not be made if the person traveling does not have an assigned cost center with approved travel funding or prior written authorization from the cost center manager.

2. Reimbursement of authorized expenses must be requested by submitting a Request for Reimbursement/Advance form within thirty (30) working days after completion of the travel. If an expense voucher is submitted more than 30 working days after the expenses are incurred, the expense will only be paid if approved by the CFO.

3. Receipts are required for:

- a. Air travel not arranged through Let's Travel.
- b. Lodging not billed to a VVA Hotel Master Account
- c. Baggage checking fees
- d. Automobile rentals

4. Receipts are not required for per diem reimbursement.

5. Post-travel Report: Committee chairs, other appointed individuals, and staff traveling out of town on VVA funding that will ultimately be charged to a "Travel & Related Expense" account are required to provide a post-trip narrative describing the necessity and purpose of the trip, the dates of the trip, who traveled, where the traveler went, and how the results of the trip benefits VVA. The narrative form must be attached to the traveler's expense reimbursement request in order for the request for reimbursement to be considered. Travel narratives will be sent to the Finance Committee as they are submitted and to the National BOD of Directors monthly. Note: see attached Travel Narrative Form.

#### **F. Expense Advances.**

You may receive an advance for official VVA travel by completing the **Reimbursement/Advance form** and submitting it to the Finance Department. To allow adequate time for processing, expense advance requests must be received in the Finance Department seven working days prior to commencement of travel.

#### **G. Allocation of BOD travel expenses to Cost Centers**

When individuals who receive funding for BoD travel hold several funded positions, expenses will be allocated to cost centers as follows:

- 1. Officer and Directors will have all BoD travel expenses charged to their Officer or Director cost center regardless of any other positions they may hold.
- 2. State Council Presidents who are not also BoD members will have all BoD travel expenses charged to the CSCP cost center regardless of any other positions they may hold.
- 3. Committee Chairs and other appointed individuals receiving VVA funding who are not also BoD members or State Council Presidents will have all BoD travel expenses charged to the appropriate Committee cost center.

#### **H. Additional Criteria**

1. If a Cost Center Manager, or an authorized alternate, incurs travel expenses while performing duties within another Cost Center's area of responsibility, the expense will be charged to the Cost Center in whose area of responsibility it falls provided that the manager of the responsible Cost Center has approved the expenditure in advance.

2. The expenditure, use, or obligation of VVA budgeted funds by any incumbent VVA officers, board members and committee/task force chairs for the purpose, in whole or in part of running for, campaigning for, or otherwise seeking an elected position within VVA is prohibited.

a. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to travel charged by any incumbent to a VVA Cost Center during any fiscal year with particular emphasis on travel to Regional and State Conferences.

b. This prohibition further eliminates any and all pro rata of expenses by any incumbent between VVA business and political. The two may not be combined in one trip.

c. Honoraria paid to VVA officers, board members or staff as a result of representing VVA, or as a result of using VVA funds to travel, are the property of VVA, Inc. and should be turned in to the Finance Department as soon as paid. Honorees will receive an IRS Form 1099 in January or February of the following year. The Chief Financial Officer will provide advice to honorees as to how to make adjustments to personal income tax returns when asked.

## TRAVEL NARRATIVE FORM

This form must be attached to all travel reimbursement requests which will be charged to a Travel & Related account. All travel must have a designated cost center and budget to be eligible for reimbursement.

Name of traveler: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost Center to be charged: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of travel: \_\_\_\_\_ Destination: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of travel, including sponsor of meeting if other than VVA, and how it relates to the responsibilities of the cost center to which it is being charged:

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Outcome/results of travel including how this travel benefits VVA and with whom and how the outcome/results/information obtained will be shared within VVA:

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**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Motion 4**

**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)**

**(Amended Motion # 5 CC # 7, 1-9-16, January 18, 2020)**

**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: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Motion 5**

**Move to amend the Travel & Related expense line of the newly established special Advisors Cost Center by adding \$25,000 to the budget to allow funding for unfunded previous travel and travel for the rest of the year.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Motion 6**

**Move to amend the Travel & Related expense line of the President's budget by adding \$15,000 to the budget to allow funding for unfunded previous travel and for travel for the rest of the year.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Consent Calendar/B. Meeks**

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

**Motion 7**

***2020 January National BOD Meeting  
Consent Calendar"***

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- 1. Upon the recommendation of the VVA National Disciplinary Committee based on the filing of a Statement of Charges (SOC) the charter of VVA Chapter 1120 (VA) should be revoked.**
- 2. Move to approve the Use of Restricted Revenue/Designated Revenue (RR/DR) Policy as presented (no changes just reformatted).**
- 3. Move to approve Mullins P. C. as auditor for the VVA Fiscal Year ending 2-29-20 per VVA Constitution Article IV, Section 1 – Finance, para E.**

4. Move to amend the Officers salary and Benefits Policy as indicated per attached edited and clean copies. \*See Appendix
5. To remove Ray Autenrieb from the POW/MIA Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 22

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 1

#### **Committee – MOTIONS ONLY**

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons made no motion.

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

#### **Motion 8**

To amend Motion # 11 of the April 2019 BOD meeting: “To authorize international travel for Veterans Initiative Mission to Vietnam, Grant Coates & Mokie Porter, mission date projected for ~~October 2019~~ February 5, 2020 through February 25, 2020 time Frame.”

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 22

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 1

Membership Affairs – D. Southern made the following motion.

#### **Motion 9**

To add James Fleming to the Membership Affairs Committee at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 22

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 1

Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – No motions.

Public Affairs – D. Howland made the following motion.

#### **Motion 10**

The Public Affairs Committee moves that the BOD accept the following as VVA’s official explanation of resolution GA-21: “*Resolution GA-21 simply states that VVA’s officers and board of directors are directed to look into what procedural and legal steps would need to be taken to change the name of the organization and to open membership to include all veterans. This information will be reported to delegates at the 2021 Convention as a resolution for consideration by the delegates.*”

Motion to postpone was called by BOD member.

President Rowan called for a roll call vote.

<b><u>Board Member</u></b>	<b><u>Motion #10</u></b>
John Rowan	No*
Tom Burke	Yes
Bill Meeks, Jr.	No
Jack McManus	Yes
Dennis Andras	Yes
Dottie Barickman	Yes
Spence Davis	No
Richard DeLong	No
Gumersindo Gomez	No
Bob Grabinski	No
Skip Hochreich	No
Dennis Howland	No
Francisco Ivarra	No
John Margowski	NP
Sara McVicker	Yes
Rex Moody	No
Felix “Pete” Peterson, Jr.	No
John Riling	Yes
Dave Simmons	Yes
Dick Southern	Yes
Dan Stenvold	Yes
Kerwin Stone	Yes
Ted Wilkinson	No
Sandie Wilson	Yes

**Yes: 11**

**No: 12**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 1**

**\*President Rowan voted No since there was a tie.**

### **Motion 10**

**The Public Affairs Committee moves that the BOD accept the following as VVA’s official explanation of resolution GA-21: *“Resolution GA-21 simply states that VVA’s officers and board of directors are directed to look into what procedural and legal steps would need to be taken to change the name of the organization and to open membership to include all veterans. This information will be reported to delegates at the 2021 Convention as a resolution for consideration by the delegates.”***

Director Hochreich made a motion with second from Director Howland:

**Motion 10a**

To strike the last sentence of GA-21.

*“Resolution GA-21 simply states that VVA’s officers and board of directors are directed to look into what procedural and legal steps would need to be taken to change the name of the organization and to open membership to include all veterans. ~~This information will be reported to delegates at the 2021 Convention as a resolution for consideration by the delegates.~~”*

Without objection motion passed.

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

Treasurer McManus made a motion with second from Director Wilkenson:

**Motion 10b**

To amend Motion # 11 to change word “all” to “Post Vietnam ERA” in last sentence:

*“Resolution GA-21 simply states that VVA’s officers and board of directors are directed to look into what procedural and legal steps would need to be taken to change the name of the organization and to open membership to include ~~all~~ Post Vietnam ERA veterans.*

Without objection motion passed.

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Motion 10**

The Public Affairs Committee moves that the BOD accept the following as VVA’s official explanation of resolution GA-21: *“Resolution GA-21 simply states that VVA’s officers and board of directors are directed to look into what procedural and legal steps would need to be taken to change the name of the organization and to open membership to include Post Vietnam ERA veterans.*

President Rowan called for a roll call vote.

<b><u>Board Member</u></b>	<b><u>Motion #10</u></b>
John Rowan	Non Vote
Tom Burke	No
Bill Meeks, Jr.	No
Jack McManus	Yes
Dennis Andras	Yes
Dottie Barickman	No

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

**Yes: 15**

**No: 7**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Motion passed.**

2020 National Leadership & Education Conference Planning Committee – D. Stenvold made the following motion.

### **Motion 11**

**The voting members of the Leadership & Education Conference Planning Committee will be Pete Peterson, Wes Guidry, Tom Burke, John Riling and Cliff Riley. Non-voting member Joanna Henshaw (AVVA).**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

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

### **Motion 12**

**For the BOD to review the usability and functionality of the VVA web site in context of current standards of accessibility for veterans and their family.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 1**  
**Not Present: 1**

Veterans Benefits – J. Riling made no motion.  
Women Veterans – K. O’Hare-Palmer made no motion.  
Veterans’ Health Care – C. Byers made no motion.  
Government Affairs – P. Peterson made the following motion.

**Motion 13**

**Request BOD approve motion to allow Clear Connect to use VVA logo along with other VSOs in their advertisements.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 1**  
**Not Present: 1**

Agent Orange/Dioxin – M. Kaderlik made no motion.  
Constitution – L. DeLong made the following motion.

**Motion 14**

**To add Fred Barks & R. Jack Dean to the Constitution Committee at no cost to National.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 1**  
**Not Present: 1**

Economic Opportunities – D. Andras – made no motion.  
Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System – L. Frazee made no motion.  
Minority Affairs – G. Gomez made the following motions.

**Motion 15**

**To request of VVA Board President to send a letter of introduction of the Minority Affairs Committee to VAMC Dayton in their request (MAC) to be supported by a VAMC personel to discuss the perception/mis-preception regarding health care delivery to minority veterans in their region.**

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

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Motion 16**

**To sit Mr. Chuck Odom as a member of the Minority Affairs Committee at no cost to National.  
Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business.

**New Business**

**Honorary Life Membership** – Secretary Meeks made the following motion:

**Motion 17**

**To approve the honorary life membership requests.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Requested By</b>
Catharine Young	Chapter 865 (NY)
Charles DeAngelo	Chapter 865 (NY)
Patrick Testin	Chapter 101 (WI)
Scott Krug	Chapter 101 (WI)
Nancy VanderMeer	Chapter 101 (WI)
Katrina Shankland	Chapter 101 (WI)
Steve Bates	Chapter 271 (OR)
Becky Thomas	Chapter 201 (CA)
Marjorie Connors	Chapter 1014 (MO)
Dale Hartwig	Chapter 391 (CA)

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

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

**Motion 18**

**Upon the recommendation of the National Disciplinary Committee Chair Butch Huber based on the filing of a Statement of Charges (SOC) to revoke the charter of VVA Chapters**



**592, 645 & 822. The OHSC has met the requirements for revocation and this matter should be moved forward to the BOD for a vote.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

**Committee Reports Only**

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 and written report

Minority Affairs – G. Gomez – verbal and written report

President Rowan presented the VVA Achievement Medal to Don Jones

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

Veterans Health Care – C. Byers – verbal report

Government Affairs – P. Peterson - verbal 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 – L. Frazee – no report

**Open Discussion on Future of VVA:** President Rowan spoke about Student Veterans, questions were answered from BOD members and State Council Presidents. VVA's Constitution Committee was charged with the task of looking into those procedural and legal steps to change the name of the organization and to open membership to include newer veterans by President Rowan.

Treasurer McManus made a motion with a second from Director Wilson.

**Motion 19**

**To waive registration fee for Post-Vietnam Veterans to the National Leadership and Education Conference in July 2020 in Dayton, Ohio.**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 1**

**Not Present: 1**

The meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill Meeks, Jr.", written in black ink.

Bill Meeks, Jr.  
National Secretary  
Approved 4/16/2020

## **Appendix Part I: Committee Reports and Other Attachments**

### **Minority Affairs Committee Report**

January 17, 2020

The Minority Affairs committee met and an array of issues were discussed. We had three visitors with us to which Ms. Mookie Potter from the VVA Communications Department, Ms. Fatmata Conteh and Ms. Malkia Saunders, lawyers of our Benefits Department, they were there to observed business conducted by the Committee.

Our first business of discussion was the acceptance of Mr. Chuck Odom as a committee member, Mr. Odom has been charge in representing our Native American Veterans. He has been working with the Choctaw Nation Reservation since 2018 with success with the VA, insuring that the VA provide services to these veterans in their own reservation. I asked that any State Council President that has been working with Native American Veterans in their state to approach Mr. Odom as he will like to work with these State Council President to make himself familiar on what is happening with these veterans in their respective reservations and find out ways that he can help them as he has done with the Choctaw Nation Reservation.

We work on the planning of our minority veteran's seminar for the Leadership, Education Conference. Our plan intel's "Perceptions/miss-perceptions regarding VA health care delivery to Minority Veterans". I have been mandated by the committee in asking our National President, Mr. John Rowan to write a letter of introduction of the Committee to the VAMC Dayton, so we can request a panel of VA representatives to discuss the issues at our seminar. I will also ask of the State Council President of Ohio to assist us in trying to get the word out to his minority membership including women, to come out to the seminar.

Mr. Bill Garcia reported to us on his visit to the Arizona Statewide Tribal Veterans Symposium that happen on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 at Twin Arrows Casino Resort, Mr. Garcia was there representing our Committee. According to his report the participants had many questions for him concerning veterans' issues. Mr. Jorge Pedroza State Council President reported to us on the issues of the VAMC in Puerto Rico and the poor job that they are doing with veterans' health services, especially in the area of PTDS and medical services as a whole. The issue of the earthquakes was briefly touch as all of us are up to date on the news coming out of the Island. As soon as roads become open and safe to drive on he will visit his chapter in Yauco and members at large in that area to find out how we can help our membership in Puerto Rico.

Mr. Lee Kim, representing our Asian veterans and the ROK resolution passed at the Convention on our support for VA health benefits on their issues with PTSD and AO. Congressmen Cisneros D-CA, along with Ms. DelBene, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Kim, Ms. Meng, Mr. Pascrell, and Ms. Judy Chu of California introduced the Bill which was referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs, Bill H.R. 5590. We asked of our membership to call upon your legislators in support of the bill when it comes out of Committee. If you want a copy of the bill please email me and I will send you a copy.

Ms. Potter presented to us the AO card that she presented at the Board meeting and other documents of AO that need to be translated into the Puerto Rican Spanish dialect, we will take the responsibility to translated any document that VVA would like to translated that will be beneficial to our Hispanic Veterans.

Gumersindo Gomez  
MAC Chair

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

18 January 2020

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.
- No identifications have been announced since 18 July 2019.
- Accounted: 996 since 1975.
  - a. 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975
  - b. Total 1,059
  - c. Recovery Locations: Vietnam – 727, Laos – 287 Cambodia – 42, PRC – 3
- 2) Deputy Director of Operations, DPAA Fiscal Year 2020 Operational Update (10 January 2020) reports missions to Southeast Asia will consist of sixty-five (65) personnel making three (3) recovery teams in Laos, twenty (20) personnel making one (1) recovery team in Cambodia and seventeen (17) personnel making one (1) team in Myanmar (Burma).
- 3) Phase Two of the disinterment of unknowns from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific is scheduled to be completed by February of 2020 with the disinterment of sixteen (16) Unknowns. Also, on schedule is the disinterment of fourteen (14) Unknowns from Manila American Cemetery Memorial in the Philippines.
- 4) On 7 November 2019, Senate Resolution 693, titled “National POW/MIA Flag Act” became Public Law 116-67. The bill changes the days on which the POW/MIA flag is required to be displayed at specified locations to all days on which the U.S. flag is displayed.
- 5) Veterans Initiative mission planned for October 2019 is on schedule for 4-24 February 2020.
- 6) Chair of POW/MIA and Director of Communications & Protocol will be attending a reception at the Embassy of Vietnam, Washington, D.C. to launch the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Of Vietnam – U.S. diplomatic relations.

Report filed with National Secretary

## **Membership Affairs Committee Meeting Report January 17, 2020**

The committee had a well attended and spirited meeting with about 20 in attendance. It was reported that E-mails are now included in the Excel roster for Chapters and State Councils.

We mentioned again that the Membership Affairs Department is fully staffed and running smoothly.

Robert Pace was thanked for his work at the Wall on Veterans Day in November. All of the membership paperwork on the Web site was reviewed and found to be up to date.

One typo was discovered in the Chapter start up kit and it will be corrected and the sequence of the paperwork in the kit will rearranged.

One year members (IND1) were at 123 in the December report and will continue going down as we go through 2020. The November report showed 230 one year members. Planning was started for the tent at the Wall for Memorial Day.

There was a discussion at the CSCP meeting on Thursday about the suspension list for Election Reports and Finance Reports for some chapters and the subject was referred to the Membership Affairs committee. There was a long discussion at the committee meeting and it was decided that the best course of action was to enforce the policy that exists and start filing charges on those chapters in violation of the existing policy.

The Committee and the Department will start using the existing VVA and State Council presidents Talk List to communicate with the membership of VVA.

It was confirmed that Incarcerated members did receive the Veteran magazine in the prisons where they were allowed to receive the publication.

Membership Affairs will request a seminar at the VVA National Leadership and Education Conference in Dayton, OH.

The Election report form was discussed and there will be modifications made to make it clearer with the information that is needed by the department for such things as the chapter locator and the correct contact for who gets rosters and who the membership chair is.

Finally I want to thank the committee members for their participation and input at the meeting.

Dick Southern

Chair

Membership Affairs Committee

January 18, 2020

The Economic Opportunities Committee had the honor of the presence of the new Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service, John Lowry. He was appointed January 6<sup>th</sup>. The position had been vacant since 2017. He was here to introduce himself to VVA and encourage continued cooperation in service to our veteran community. Mr. Lowry served 15 years as a regular Marine Corps officer and 10 years in the Marine Corps Reserve. Accompanying Mr. Lowry was Mark Toal, National Veterans' Employment Manager Office of Strategic Outreach.

Our main speaker was Greg Sizemore, Vice President, Health, Safety, Environment and Workforce Development, Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. ABC, Inc. is a national construction industry trade association established in 1950 that represents more than 21,000 members. He oversees a network of 800 education programs and has participated in several national priorities including a prison re-entry hosted by the White House's Office of American Innovation. There is currently 440,000 skilled worker shortage and 1190 contractors reporting a labor shortage. Their apprenticeship training programs are working to fill the shortage of skilled workers.

ABC, Inc. has over 800 chapters throughout the United States. Mr. Sizemore indicates a partnership with VVA can raise awareness of the opportunities for veterans to get into the apprenticeship programs as they have the types of skills to be successful in the construction industry. As we interact with younger veterans, we can refer them to ABC, Inc. chapters throughout the U.S. its goal is to grow the workforce and develop the workforce.

An area of concern for the committee is HR-4920, the Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act. Rick Weidman and Joe Wynn attended a roundtable on the Hill to voice ~~their~~ <sup>our</sup> opposition to this bill which in its present form seeks to turn back the efforts made by so many who for more than 10 years have been trying to get full acceptance and recognition of PL 109-461 that directed the VA to prioritize Veterans First for contracting. There is a need to rally more veteran-owned businesses. VVA and the American Legion have opposed it. The committee will be closely monitoring this bill.

Thank you.



# **Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.**

## **Homeless Veterans Committee**

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

**January 16, 2020**

- Proposed budget received.
- Letter received from a former client, thanking the chair for setting her on the right path 10 years ago.
- Invitation to attend the Orlando Women Leaders' Summit – details will be sent later. If money is not available in the committee budget, John McGinty has offered to take a request to Florida State Council
- Email received from the United Way Suwanee Valley Florida requesting information – information was forwarded to him
- Recent GPD Notice of Funding Available (NOFA) due March 2. Start Date is October 1, 2020.
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grant due January 31. Start date is 30 days after approval
- Need to meet with VP Burke to determine a more appropriate slot for the committee to meet in. Meeting on Thursday evening prohibits committee member from attending other event that always seem to be scheduled during our meeting time.
- Sharon Hodge provided copies of the Four Corners Congressional Briefing that came out of a meeting she attended. Filled with great, usable information.
- Continuing to look at complaint from a GPD provider regarding the relevance of discharge data and the determination of positive vs. negative completions, ie., housing, income, etc.
- Need to look for recipient of AVVA Project Friendship in Dayton for the Leadership and Education Conference.
- Would like to work with VVA National to find a “tiny house” project to work with
- Point in Time Count across the country during January. Count last year dropped from 37,878 to 37,085
- Leadership and Education Conference – need to decide what to focus on. Will provide PIT update and update on other programs. Use the Four Corners Congressional Briefing report for data. Report is full of very good information and graphics.
- Reviewed Resolutions