

## 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 April 21-22, 2023 Tentative Until Approved by Board**

President Jack McManus to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Friday April 21, 2023, at 9:04 am, at the Double Tree on 8777 Georgia Ave in Silver Spring, MD. Director Gumersindo Gomez 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:

Jack McManus	Gumersindo Gomez	Rossie Nance
Tom Burke	Skip Hochreich	Pete Peterson
Bill Meeks	Sharon Hobbs*	John Riling III
Linda Schwartz	Dennis Howland	Dick Southern
Dottie Barickman	Francisco Ivarra	Ted Wilkinson
Sam Brick, Jr.	Richard Lindbeck	Sandie Wilson
Terry Courville	John Margowski	
Spence Davis	Charlie Montgomery	

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

Absent: Ned Foote (excused) & Dan Stenvold (excused)

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

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

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



**Affidavit of Jack McManus, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.**

Jack McManus, 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 March 28, 2023, the National Board of Directors was presented with the following motion:

**Motion 1: Approval to add VVA's name on an amicus brief with NVLSP to the Supreme Court in support of the veteran Victor Skaar, in Skaar v. McDonough. At no cost to National.**

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Motion 1</b>
Jack McManus	Y
Tom Burke	Y
Bill Meeks	Y
Linda Schwartz	Y
Dottie Barickman	Y
Sam Brick	Y

Spence Davis	Y
Terry Courville	Y
Ned Foote	Y
Gumersindo Gomez	Y
Charlie Hobbs	Y
Skip Hochreich	Y
Dennis Howland	Y
Francisco Ivarra	Y
Richard Lindbeck	Y
John Margowski	Y
Charlie Montgomery	Y
Rossie Nance	Y
Pete Peterson	Y
John Riling	Y
Dick Southern	Y
Dan Stenvold	Y
Sandie Wilson	Y
Ted Wilkinson	Y

Results	Motion 1
Yes	24
No	0
Abstention	
Non Vote	
No Response	
<b>Total</b>	24

***J. McManus***

**Preliminary Business**

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motions with a second from Vice President Burke:

**Motion 2**

**To approve the agenda for the meeting:**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 0**

**Motion 3**

**To accept the BOD Meeting Minutes from January 20, 21, 2023:**

**Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 22  
No: 0  
Non Vote: 0  
Not Present: 2

### **Officer Reports**

President McManus gave a verbal report and spoke about the Special Meeting.

Vice President Burke gave a verbal report.

Secretary Meeks gave a verbal report.

Treasurer Schwartz gave a verbal report.

### **AVVA President**

Our yearly Project Friendship is usually an organization who helps the homeless veteran transition back into society, but this year we decided to focus on our children who have been affected by Agent Orange. In January of 2021, AVVA partnered with the National Birth Defects Registry (BDR). Our Project Friendship in 2023 will be the National Birth Defects Registry located in Orlando, FL. A detailed flyer has been created and will be distributed to all in attendance at the April Board meeting. Please pass along to the chapters in your region.



During the Leadership Conference last year, I was approached by one of dual members with a suggestion to create a “dual member” lapel pin and we have done so. We will introduce the pin at the 2023 convention. One will be available to every dual member of AVVA and will be free for the asking. It is a very nice pin; I hope you will be proud to wear one either on your collar or cap.

There is still time to nominate that special AVVA member for a national award. Member-of-the-Year, Fellowship, and the Cathy Keister *SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE* will be awarded during the AVVA Luncheon in Orlando. Nomination forms and criteria can be found on our website. [www.avva.org](http://www.avva.org)

Our Condolence Committee continues to work with Father Phil in sending sympathy cards to the families of all reported deceased members of VVA and AVVA. An insert with the ***In Memory*** registry information is included in each card.

Due to conflicting meetings in April, AVVA will be meeting on Friday afternoon and continuing on Saturday. We have bylaw review, 2024 budget, policy revisions, and convention assignments on our agenda.

A special “thank you” to all VVA members who support us with your membership. We value each and every one of you.



**CSCP Chairman** - Chairman Brick gave a verbal report.

**HGDP Report** - Las Vegas program back online.

**Veterans Benefits** - Appendix

**Government Affairs** – S. Hodge gave a brief report.

President McManus recessed until Saturday morning at 9am

### **Saturday, April 22, 2023**

Board meeting reconvenes – Cypress Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor - President Jack McManus calls to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors.

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

Jack McManus	Gumersindo Gomez	Charlie Montgomery
Tom Burke	Skip Hochreich	Pete Peterson
Bill Meeks	Sharon Hobbs*	John Riling III
Linda Schwartz	Dennis Howland	Dick Southern
Dottie Barickman	Francisco Ivarra	Ted Wilkinson
Sam Brick, Jr.	Richard Lindbeck	Sandie Wilson
Terry Courville	Gumersindo Gomez	
Spence Davis	John Margowski	

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

Absent: Dan Stenvold (excused) & Ned Foote (excused)

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

Alabama	Excused		Nebraska	Present
Alaska	Present		Nevada	Present
Arizona	Present		New Hampshire	Absent
Arkansas	Excused		New Jersey	Present
California	Present		New Mexico	Present

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

**Communication Department** – M. Porter gave a verbal report and a written report in the Appendix.

**Finance Committee Report** – D. Barickman gave a verbal report and the following motions.

**Motion 4**

**To approve the 2024 Budget as presented:  
Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

**Motion 5**

**Transfer of funds from the Life Membership investment account into the VVA general account to cover the Life Membership rebate payments to the State Councils and Chapters. The amount to transfer will be calculated on the final figures from the Membership Department February 2023 report.:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

**Motion 6**

**To approve the Finance Committee Policy as submitted:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

**National Meetings and Special Events** – Motion submitted by D. Southern with a second from P. Peterson on the 2024 VVA Leadership Conference.

**Motion 7**

**If Wes Guidry receives no offer better than the one offered by Reno within 30 days he is authorized to accept the offer from Reno presented at the April 22, 2023**

**board meeting.:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

**Special Meeting** - Secretary Meeks made a motion with a second from VP Burke.

**Motion 8**

**To approve the April 20, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes as presented:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

**Committee – Motions Only**

Minority Affairs – Motion made:

**Motion 9**

**To sit John McGintry as a member of the Minority Affairs Committee at no cost to National:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

Veterans Against Drugs – motion made:

**Motion 10**

**To put Roseann Nemee on the Veterans Against Drugs Committee at no cost to National:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

POW/MIA – No motions

Membership Affairs – Motion made;

**Motion 11**

**To remove transmittal from all registration forms and membership applications:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

Homeless Veterans – Motion made;

**Motion 12**

**To add Frederick Gasior to Homeless Veterans Committee at cost to National:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

Public Affairs – D. Howland made the following motions;

**Motion 13**

**State Council President & chapters to contact your Congressional & Senate members to support the designation of highway 20 from Oregon to Boston as Medal of Honor Highway:**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**



**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

**Motion 14**

**To further encourage and support research to designate Interstate 80 from the San Francisco Bay to Teaneck New jersey as Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway:  
Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

2023 National Convention Planning Committee – No motions;  
PTSD and Substance Abuse – No motions;  
Veterans Benefits – J. Riling made the following motions;

**Motion 15**

**To accept the changes made by the Veterans Benefits Committee to the Veterans Benefits  
Program Policies:  
Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

**Motion 16**

**Remove from the Committee Tim Susegill due to resignation. Reinstate Joe Jennings and  
John Weiss to the committee at no cost to National:  
Without objection motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

**Motion 17**

**To add Vets VOA President Nadhal Eadeh as a special advisor to the Veterans Benefits  
Committee at no cost to National:  
Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**  
**No: 0**  
**Non Vote: 0**  
**Not Present: 2**

**Motion 18**

**To authorize litigation to compel VA to abide by the Executive order mandating that notices from Federal Agencies be in a language understood by the recipient, if VA does resolve the matter to the National President's satisfaction.:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

**Motion 19**

**To amend motion 34 to strike "oras an amicus" and add the sentence "Requests to join or write an Amicus brief must be approved by the National President.:**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

Women Veterans – No motions;

Veterans Health Care – No motions;

Government Affairs – No motions;

Agent Orange/Dioxin - No motions;

Constitution – No motions;

Resolutions – No motions;

Economic Opportunities – No motions;

Veterans Incarcerated and In The Justice System – No motions.

**Unfinished Business**

None

**New Business**

**Chapter Charter Revocation** – Secretary Meeks submitted a motion with a second from Vice President Burke:

**Motion 20**

**To revoke the charter of Chapter 220 (WI), Chapter 320 (MN) and Chapter 1102 (IA) as voluntary closures:**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

**Without objection, motion passed.**

**Honorary Life Memberships** – Secretary Meeks made a motion with a second from Director Southern:

**Motion 21**

**To approve the HLM requests: Al Wood (MI 310), John Flynn (PA 67), Gary Davis (TN 596), Jake Duos (TN 596), Jerry Neely (TN 596), John Thomasson (TN 596), Mark Behlmann (MO 794) and John Flynn (MO 794).:**

**Yes: 22**

**No: 0**

**Non Vote: 0**

**Not Present: 2**

**Without objection motion passed.**

**Committee Reports Only**

Minority Affairs – no report

Veterans Against Drugs – no report

POW/MIA – G. Coates verbal and written report

Membership Affairs – verbal report

Homeless Veterans – no report

Public Affairs – verbal report

2023 National Convention Planning Committee – no report

PTSD and Substance Abuse – verbal report

Veterans Benefits – J. Riling verbal report

Women Veterans – verbal report

Veterans Health Care – verbal report

Government Affairs – verbal report

Agent Orange/Dioxin – verbal report

Resolutions – J. Margowski verbal report

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

Adjourn 1:20PM

## Appendix

### April 20, 2023, VVA Board Special Meeting Minutes

A director acts as part of the board.<sup>1</sup>

Corporate actions as determined by the board will be carried out by officers, employees, and agents—persons chosen directly or indirectly, by the board of directors. P. 5

Three fiduciary duties.

The duty of care requires that a director be informed and exercise independent judgment. P. 26

The duty of loyalty requires directors to exercise their powers in good faith and in the best interests of the corporation, rather than in their own interests or the interests of another entity or person. P. 43

The duty of obedience imposed on directors of nonprofit corporations requires directors to comply with the applicable state and federal laws that relate to the corporation and the manner in which it conducts business. P. 53

Directors wearing multiple hats.

When a member of the board occupies both the role of director and that of another position the member must act in a manner appropriate to the hat they are wearing at any given time, that is the member must act according to the position they are in at the time. P. 32

NY N-PCL<sup>2</sup>

- 1 The board adopts a plan of dissolution and distribution of assets. P. 3
- 2 The biennial convention adopts the plan of dissolution. P. 3
- 3 The board requests congress repeals the federal charter. P. 4
- 4 The board develops plans for the distribution of assets for charitable purposes. P. 4
- 5 The board develops an agreement concerning assets to be used for legally required purposes. P. 4
- 6 The board prepares a verified petition to NY's attorney general requesting permission to dissolve. P. 4
- 7-A The board submits the verified petition to the Attorney General. P. 5.
- 7-B The board may, in certain cases, submit the petition directly to the court. P. 5.

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<sup>1</sup> "Guidebook for Directors of Nonprofit Corporations" by the ABA business law section

<sup>2</sup> "Voluntary Dissolution of Not-For- Profit Corporations with Assets" by the Office of State of New York Attorney General

The board's calling the special committee "working group 1" did not change the fact that it was a special committee to investigate dissolution of a New York Not for Profit Corporation.

The special committee submitted a report calling it "Strategic Plan for Dissolution."

It is not a "Plan of Dissolution and Distribution of Assets" of this New York Not for Profit Corporation.

The report is a plan of action items designed to achieve a "Plan of Dissolution and Distribution of Assets."

This Corporation's operations and finances are under general New York Not for Profit Corporation Laws and Generally Accepted Accounting Practices.

If this Corporation adopts a "Plan of Dissolution and Distribution of Assets" this Corporation's operations and finances will come under the articles and sections of the New York Not for Profit Corporation Laws applicable to dissolution and distribution of assets of this New York Corporation, and the members will determine the legacy.

If this Corporation does not adopt a "Plan of Dissolution and Distribution of Assets" the operations and finances will come under the New York State Attorney General, and the members of this Corporation will have no say in the dissolution and distribution of assets.

The delegates at the 2019 biennial convention adopted resolution GA-23 which prohibits the Corporation, its officers, and board from: 1) changing the name of the Corporation, and 2) creating a new veterans corporation to replace the current corporation a resolution that compels the board to adopt a "Plan of Dissolution and Distribution of Assets" as its fiduciary duty.

The phrase "last man standing" is an overused phrase that refers to spelling bees, election proceedings, wrestling matches, and boxing matches.

The phrase has nothing to do with the dissolution of this New York Not for Profit Corporation.

This New York Corporation will dissolve.

The question is, "Shall this New York Corporation dissolve voluntarily"?

If yes, the members of this New York Corporation will determine the legacy.

If no, the New York State Attorney General will determine the legacy and the members of this Corporation will have no say in the dissolution.

- Call to order

- 1 Invocation, pledge
- 2 Roll call
- 3 President's Introduction
- 4 Motion to suspend the rules and elect Michael Swift chair pro tem of the special meeting. 19 in the affirmative, 1 negate and 21 present. The motion was adopted
- 5 Adopt special rules of order for the meeting. Without objection

Special Rules of Order

- 1 No one may speak unless recognized by the chair.
- 2 Only directors, committee chairs, staff, and invited guests may speak in debate.
- 3 No member may speak more than 2 times on a motion.

- 4 No member may speak more than 2 minutes each time.
- 5 After 30 minutes, debate on each motion shall be closed.
- 6 A roll-call vote shall be ordered at the request of three members.
- 7 These special rules may be suspended or amended by the vote of two-thirds (16) of the membership (24) by roll call.
- 6 Chair<sup>3</sup> appointed Jacy Smith, and Patricia Harris timekeepers.<sup>7</sup>
- 7 The agenda was adopted without objection.
- 8 Motions related to a strategic plan for the future of the VVA, the state councils, and the chapters.
  - 1 Motion that the officers, staff, and finance committee establish a Dissolution Fund for FY2025, for costs related to dissolution under New York law and that they report at the April 2024 board meeting. Adopted without objection.
  - 2 Motion that the officers, staff, and finance committee establish a Legacy Program Fund for FY2025, to provide resources to transfer selected legacy programs to other organizations and that they report at the April 2024 board meeting. Adopted without objection.
  - 3 Motion that the officers, staff, and finance committee establish a legacy membership fund for FY2025 for possible distribution and that they report at the April 2024 board meeting. Adopted without objection.
  - 4 Motion that the officers, staff, and finance committee list the Corporation's assets and report at each board meeting until dissolution starting at the October 2023 board meeting. 16 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative, and 21 present. Motion adopted.
  - 5 Motion that the legal counsel reviews the escape clauses and related language in existing contracts and MOUs to ensure liabilities to the VVA are identified, and that counsel report the findings at the October 2023, board meeting. Adopted without objection.
  - 6 Motion that a strategic plan for the future of the VVA, the state councils, and the chapters be presented as a resolution at the August 2025, VVA biennial convention. Adopted without objection.
  - 7 Motion that the president presents a plan for the future of the VVA, the state councils, and the chapters in lay terms at the August 2023, VVA biennial convention. Adopted without objection.
  - 8 Motion that the board endorse the attached constitutional amendment at the August 2023 biennial convention. Adopted without objection

Amend Article I National Provisions, §4 National Board, by inserting a new paragraph B indicated in <b><u>bold underlined type</u></b> in the center column below		
Current Constitution wording	Amend by adding words indicated by <b><u>bold underline type</u></b>	Constitution wording if amendment adopted

<sup>3</sup> Chair refers to the chair pro tem.

A Except as otherwise provided by laws or in the Constitution, control and management of the Corporation and its funds and affairs shall be vested in the National Board.	A Except as otherwise provided by laws or in the Constitution, control and management of the Corporation and its funds and affairs shall be vested in the National Board. B <u>The National Board shall have full power and authority to implement the strategic plan for the future of the VVA, the state councils, and the chapters adopted by the delegates.</u>	A Except as otherwise provided by laws or in the Constitution, control and management of the Corporation and its funds and affairs shall be vested in the National Board. B The National Board shall have full power and authority to implement the strategic plan for the future of the VVA, the state councils, and the chapters adopted by the delegates.
Rationale		
This amendment gives the board of directors the authority to carry out the requirements under the strategic plan for the future of the VVA, the state councils, and the chapters as adopted by the delegates at a biennial convention.  The remaining paragraphs will be re-lettered appropriately.		
Recommendations		
The constitution committee a) recommends adoption, b) recommends rejection, c) makes no recommendation.		
The board of directors a) recommends adoption, b) recommends rejection, c) makes no recommendation.		
Convention Voting Results		
There are __ votes in the affirmative __ votes in the negative and this amendment is ____ (adopted, lost).		

- 9 Motion that the staff assist state councils and chapters with preparing articles of dissolution or incorporation and bylaws prior to the dissolution of the New York Corporation.
- 10 Motion that the board propose February 29, 2028, as the date of dissolution of the Corporation to the delegates at the August 2023 VVA biennial convention. Without objection.
- 11 Motion that the Conference of State Council Presidents prepare a resolution to form a organization uniting the state councils and chapter to be presented at the 2025 VVA biennial convention. 0 in the affirmative, 20 in the negative, 21 present. Motion lost.
- 9 Motions related to VVA committees, A through P, transferring programs to other organizations.
- 12 Motion that the VVA [Name of] committee search for a responsible organization willing to assume the function of the committee and a financial organization willing to support for the function, and that the committee report their findings to the board for consideration at the October 2024 board meeting. Adopted without objection
- For motions 12 through 28, insert the name of the current committees as prescribed by Appendix 2 of the Constitution of the VVA.

	Committee	Date
A	Membership Affairs	

B	Public Affairs	
C	Government Affairs	
D	Veterans Affairs	
E	Economic opportunities	
F	Minority Affairs	
G	Constitution	
H	Veterans Benefits	
I	Finance	
J	Women Veterans	
K	POW/MIA	
L	Agent Orange/Dioxin	
M	Veterans incarcerated...	
N	Community Services	
O	Veterans' Health Care	
P	PTSD & Substance Abuse	

- There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.
  - Adjourn
- 

### Minority Affairs Committee Report

April 12, 2019

The committee met, the first order of business was to sit Mr. Kim Kee as a member of the committee. Mr. Kee served with the ROK in Vietnam and then volunteer his service in the U.S. Army where he served after Vietnam.

We worked with two of our resolutions; first we discuss the ROK resolution for the 2, 800 Korean American citizens to which they are seeking health care through the VA for their Agent Orange and PTSD issues, acquire by them as we, through our involvement in the Vietnam War. The resolution was approved by the committee to go forward to the benefits committee for their approval, as these issues concern benefits. The second resolution was the Self-determination for Puerto Rico, we did an amendment to the resolution, in adding the last plebiscite of 2017 in Puerto Rico where the voters voted 97% for Statehood and 98% against the current territorial status, this resolution was first adopted in 2003.

The Minority Affairs Committee award was discussed, which is to be awarded at the Convention. Two minority veterans from Spoken WA who have been doing an outstanding job with veterans in their respective communities', were nominated for the award, approved by the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 3: 40 pm

Gumersindo Gomez  
MAC Chair

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# VETERANS BENEFITS QUARTERLY REPORT April 2023

## CONTENT

1. State of the Department
2. Goals for Next Quarter
3. VBP Activities
4. Notable Achievements
5. People & Staff Changes

## APPENDIX

### 1. State of the Department

This has been a strong opening quarter for the Department. Since January, the IHP backlog has gone down by 285 cases and we remain confident that VVA's Legacy backlog will be effectively eliminated by September 2023. The VBP has also successfully transitioned coverage over Illinois veterans and thanks the VSOs of Michigan for ensuring that our vets and their families were taken care of while we hired and trained new staff to cover the region.

We are also extremely pleased to welcome two new VSOs, and one attorney (see section 5). We are actively hiring an additional attorney and two VSOs and are very much looking forward to being at full strength soon!

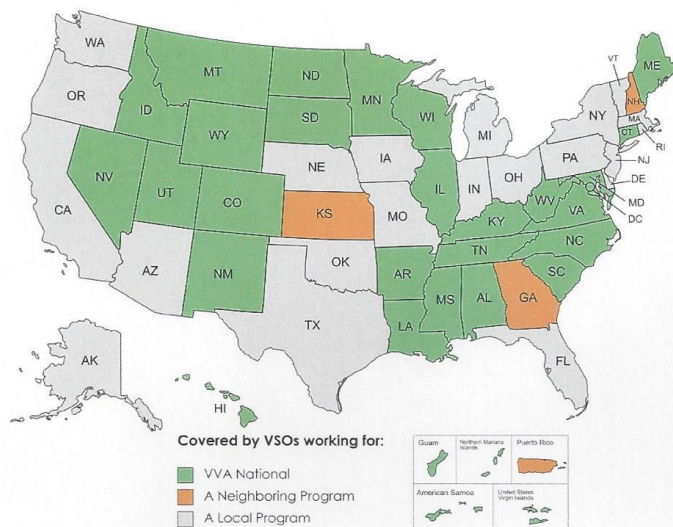
### 2. Goals for Next Quarter

- Develop a plan to transfer POAs of veterans covered by National to VetsVOA as soon as accreditation is granted.
- Finalize Caregiver program notice letter and begin sending it out to States covered by National.
- Submit a grant request to fund obtaining Nexus opinion for VVA claimants.

### 3. VBP Activities

The VBP represents more than 106,257 Veterans and family members of all eras. Thanks to the VBP's advocacy, over 95 million dollars in benefits are paid every month (up from 88 million in March 2022).<sup>1</sup> Claimants in 27 States and Puerto Rico are represented by local VVA VSOs. Claimants residing in the 23 remaining states, other territories, and the Philippines are represented by the VBP national office.

<sup>1</sup> According to data obtained from VBA.



The VBP continues to achieve a “win rate” at the BVA of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) of over 76% for Legacy cases and over 60% for AMA cases.

#### TOTAL LEGACY APPEALS BACKLOG AT BOARD OF VETERANS’ APPEALS

LOCATION	Sep. '19	Feb. '20	Jul '20	Jan. '22	Apr. '22	Aug '22	Nov. '22	Jan '23	Apr '23
Pending Attorney Review	1,829	1,694	1,695	1,521	1463	1431	1394	1366	1,081
Scheduled Travel Hearing	240	222	278	253	223	248	275	7	0*
Scheduled Video Hearing	513	466	570	223	167	127	84	83	35
Scheduled Central Office Hearing	13	11	10	16	15	16	15	-	2
Scheduled Virtual Hearing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	42	23
<b>TOTAL VVA BACKLOG AT BVA</b>	<b>2,595</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>2,553</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>1,868</b>	<b>1,822</b>	<b>1,768</b>	<b>1,498</b>	<b>1,141</b>

*\*Source: VACOLS, Board Tableau Server; BVA of Veterans' Appeals. The data provided by Tableau does not appear to accurately reflect all Travel Board hearings that are scheduled nationwide, and the numbers above do not account for hearings that have not been given a scheduled date of appearance.*

The VSOs at VVA national, who make up the Claims & Development (C&D) team, represent 14,455 POAs across 24 states and overseas. The average rating of POAs represented by the C&D team is 71% with an average monthly compensation rate of \$2,513.70.\* This quarter, the team made 94 submissions to VA. The VBP kicked off the new year by welcoming two new VSOs and is currently in the process of hiring two more. By doubling the number of VSOs in the VBP, the C&D Team will be better equipped to offer quality representation to all VVA National's clients in 2023.

*\*Data includes only POAs in receipt of service-connected compensation.*

### 3. Notable Achievements FY 2022

**"The strength of the Team is each individual member...the strength of each member is the Team."** Phil Jackson

**The VVA VBP Team started 2023 off by continuing to work very diligently and advocating for the Veterans we serve. Some notable accomplishments for this previous Quarter representative of the VBP team are highlighted below:**

The Veterans Benefits Program would like to officially introduce and welcome to our team our newest members: **James Robey** and **Queen Brown** joined our team in January 2023 as VSOs and have already added tremendous value to our team by participating in brainstorming sessions, contributing at team meetings and making good progress in trainings. **Jessica Simmons** joined the VBP team in April 2023 as a National Appeals Attorney and has already hit the ground running with her training.

**Caroline Green and Alec Ghezzi:** **Caroline Green** wrote an IHP that resulted in a grant month on 7 issues, including **TDIU** back to 2006. **Alec Ghezzi** actually filed the claim for the veteran in September 2017. Our team really worked together to obtain benefits for this veteran. Caroline also submitted an IHP for a veteran and was granted **PTSD** by the Board which resulted in a \$102,268.62 award!

**Alec Ghezzi:** In collaboration with Marc McCabe, Alec Ghezzi successfully advocated to the Veterans Benefits Administration for a change in 38 CFR 4.26, the rule governing the bilateral factor. A new exception will prevent application of this special rule when it would result in a lower combined rating. Thanks to VVA, hundreds of veterans that were wrongly rated at 90% will rightfully receive a 100% rating! According to VA, this issue affected over 2,000 veterans, 22 of which are represented by VVA. Correcting this error will result in VA awarding an estimated \$34,789,440, in retroactive payments to those affected.

**Paula Tuero:** submitted her first **burial allowance** claim, assisting the surviving spouse with receiving the maximum allowance of \$2,000. She also successfully helped to increase the veteran from 50% to 80%, netting the veteran a \$5,000 award.

**Claire Corsey:** helped a veteran go from one service-connected issue to **thirteen** service-connected issues, combined with **TDIU** and **special monthly compensation**. The Veteran, who had been fighting this claim for nearly a decade, was awarded a total of **\$222,637.30** in retroactive payments, and is now rated at a 100% rating.



**Dylan Goll:** just obtained a full grant award for a veteran this month on a **clothing allowance**. The award was processed immediately and resulted in a \$3,152 clothing allowance to the veteran. For this same veteran, Dylan obtained a grant on a **TDIU** claim retroactive to 2021.

**Nick Millington:** obtained a grant for a veteran on a **TDIU** claim for **PTSD** dating back to 2012. The grant resulted in a retro payment of \$89,000.

**Chayah Yisrael:** has secured several remands for veterans in which the Board found substantial inadequate medical examinations, and, in some cases, the Board indicated that the VA failed to provide its requisite duty to assist the veterans. Chayah also recently attended a Q2 **PACT Act** workshop with different VA agencies and along with **Claire Corsey** has put together a detailed **PACT Act** brochure to assist our VVA members and VSOs with learning about how the PACT Act applies to them.

**Dani Fischer:** Dani held a Q&A session for the Myositis Association's Military Veterans with Myositis Affinity group, where she discussed the basics of service-connecting disabilities and how to add evidence to strengthen a claim. She navigated them through some of the obstacles to service-connecting IBM and shared information about the VA family caregiver program (PCAFC).

**Malkia Saunders:** successfully obtained a grant for a veteran for **automobile adaptive equipment** totaling \$108,210.64. She also obtained two grants for hypertension under the PACT Act recently.

**Kristin Smith:** successfully advocated for a Veteran who had been seeking service connection for **tinnitus** for years. Thanks to Kristin's legal arguments, the Board granted service connection back to July 2016, resulting in **\$11,217.60** for the Veteran.

**Tara Skar:** secured several remands for clients over the last quarter. Her hard work helps to keep our veterans' claims alive. The remands allow our veterans the ability to continue fighting for well-deserved benefits by pointing out VA errors.

**Kenny Bouy:** went out of his way to help a homeless vet with mental disorders get off the streets and into a shelter. Additionally, Kenny successfully obtained a grant of \$77,029.75, for a widow, which was originally charged the amount as a debt due to an erroneous payment to a prior attorney.

**Elaine Chaney:** A special **congratulations** to Elaine who celebrated her 20th year anniversary with VVA on January 2, 2023. Elaine is a great asset to the VBP. In addition to the many duties that she fills on a daily basis, this past quarter, she continued to learn new skills. She learned to navigate the VA systems such as VBMS, Citrix and VACOLs to assist with providing our veterans accurate and current status updates. She continued to improve her knowledge of the Litmos training software, to the point where she is now able to manage adding new VSOs and assigning them more time to complete trainings.

**Yolonda Harris:** recently assisted a veteran's wife with his claim by referring her to a local VSO in their state. Yolonda sent the veteran and his wife contact information of Veteran Service Officers located at different veteran organizations in Maryland. The wife responded with gratitude for Yolonda pointing her in the right direction.

## 5. People and Staff Changes

**Paula Tuero Flesch** was promoted to Lead Veteran Service Officer in December. Paula has been a VSO for Vietnam Veterans of America since August 2019. She is a passionate and persistent advocate for Veterans and their families. Her work quality is indicative of the commitment and empathy she has for her clients. In addition to her work with the VBP, Paula serves in the US Army Reserves as a sergeant and recently completed her Master of Science degree in Cybersecurity.

The VBP welcomes our new VSO **Queen Brown**. Queen is from Mississippi but now resides in Silver Spring, Maryland. She graduated from Mississippi State University with bachelor's degrees in political science and philosophy. Her career path and advocacy work have always intersected, from the organizations she is a part of – one of which she co-founded, Community Organization Responsible for Engagement (C.O.R.E) – to her employment background, which included serving the families of Harrison County, MS as a Licensure Specialist with the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services.

The VBP also welcomes our new VSO **James Robey**. James is a second-year law student at the Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law. Prior to joining the C&D team, he worked as a case manager for Bergmann & Moore. James looks forward to getting back to working with Veterans.

The Benefits team is happy to welcome **Jessica Simmons** as our newest National Appeals Attorney! Jessica is a Navy veteran who lives with her husband and daughter in San Diego, California. She is passionate about using her law degree to help other veterans and is excited to get started working claims.

The following chart shows how many new grants of benefits were issued by VA for Veterans represented by VVA from December 2022 to February 2023.

State	TOTAL AWARDS ISSUED	TOTAL BENEFITS	NEW AWARDS ISSUED	NEW BENEFITS PAID
VVA Total	142,273	\$285,612,441	437	\$572,268
AK	4,419	\$9,046,561	40	\$85,539
AL	286	\$643,647	1	\$3,824
AR	320	\$802,425	1	\$328
AZ	5,628	\$10,294,695	28	\$13,757
CA	7,351	\$19,949,543	10	\$9,565
CO	448	\$1,053,573	1	\$2,292
CT	918	\$1,844,574	1	\$1,933
DC	104	\$196,640	0	\$0
DE	1,166	\$2,819,938	2	\$2,223
FL	4,033	\$9,570,273	34	\$89,829
GA	556	\$1,339,544	2	\$4,118
HI	308	\$730,684	1	\$166
IA	7,886	\$13,563,955	20	\$20,881
ID	415	\$704,674	1	\$2,292
IL	5,667	\$12,477,282	6	\$4,990
IN	3,067	\$5,673,436	3	\$2,561
KS	1,016	\$2,471,335	0	\$0
KY	624	\$1,309,650	0	\$0
LA	577	\$1,274,721	3	\$3,048
MA	5,190	\$10,223,101	23	\$19,269
MD	822	\$2,046,201	1	\$1,320
ME	124	\$297,994	0	\$0
MI	10,008	\$20,820,511	55	\$45,960
MN	8,420	\$13,701,964	2	\$2,120
MO	3,883	\$7,894,064	14	\$14,535
MS	399	\$997,616	0	\$0
MT	272	\$573,324	0	\$0
NC	1,141	\$2,709,818	2	\$7,996
ND	71	\$112,245	0	\$0

NE	1,500	\$2,239,180	2	\$3,788
NH	310	\$695,741	0	\$0
NJ	4,021	\$10,432,778	8	\$6,863
NM	151	\$317,971	0	\$0
NV	449	\$1,108,698	1	\$3,953
NY	7,089	\$14,661,079	8	\$16,152
OH	2,978	\$4,908,320	4	\$5,273
OK	384	\$963,586	1	\$328
OR	1,190	\$2,667,845	1	\$166
PA	10,485	\$19,443,518	57	\$72,783
PH	60	\$157,822	0	\$0
PR	598	\$1,970,184	0	\$0
RI	942	\$2,175,275	2	\$2,490
SC	219	\$522,030	1	\$166
SD	76	\$156,563	1	\$166
TN	1,328	\$3,173,012	2	\$4,149
TX	7,318	\$15,614,886	15	\$21,544
UT	310	\$718,088	0	\$0
VA	881	\$2,024,834	4	\$10,569
VT	530	\$1,142,533	2	\$7,793
WA	20,513	\$33,802,366	75	\$76,051
WI	3,318	\$5,550,876	2	\$1,486
WV	2,454	\$5,904,282	0	\$0
WY	50	\$116,985	0	\$0
TOTAL	57,349	115,928,536	193	218,955
TOTAL	19,546	42,508,643	26	42,596

**KEY:**

States receiving grant funds

States covered by VVA National





## VETERANS' VOICE OF AMERICA

# April 2023 Quarterly Report

**Vision:** Improving the health and wellness of Veterans, their families, and their communities.

**Our Focus:** VetsVOA is poised to provide our nation's veterans with unparalleled assistance for claims before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), cutting edge benefits/health care resources, and a loud voice in advocating for veterans and their families.

**Public Benefits:** VetsVOA recognizes the importance of the VA and its impact on public health, disability benefits, and economic security. Our goal is to strengthen this relationship with the constituency VA serves.

### Statement from Our President

I am pleased to present VetsVOA's second Quarterly report. Over the past quarter we have continued to build our infrastructure by creating two Committees to tackle our organization's Development and Governance. We have also been zealously following up with VA on our application for accreditation and have been assured by personnel in Secretary McDonough's office that we are on the cusp of our application being granted.

Finally, I am especially excited to have Jeremy Williams join our team. He is a Marine Corps combat veteran with 22 years of extensive experience in veterans' healthcare strategic planning as well as being an expert in sales, marketing, and outreach. I have no doubt that Jeremy will be instrumental in preparing our fundraising plan and ensuring that VetsVOA has the necessary resources to accomplish its mission.

There are hundreds of organizations that help U.S. veterans, but very few that provide holistic support on a national level. That's the dream Veterans' Voice of America is built on. Founded by passionate veterans' advocates, Vets Voice envisions a future where all veterans, regardless of when they served, how they served, where they come from, what they believe, and who they love, can receive the support they deserve.



Nadhal Eadeh



**Work done on behalf of VetsVOA by VVA employees (during work hours):**

Employee	Task	Time (approx)	Dates
Alec Ghezzi	Fundraising call with VetsVOA Treasurer	1h	3/20/2023
Chayah Yisrael	Fundraising call with VetsVOA Treasurer	1h	3/20/2023
Alec Ghezzi	Correspondence - Accounting & thank you note to donor	30m	3/21/2023
Alec Ghezzi	Prepared Quarterly Report	1h	4/12/2023

## VetsVOA's Board of Directors

### 1. Nadhal Eadeh – President



Nadhal joins Veterans Voice of America with over 11 years of experience at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) where he developed an expertise in public-policy and communications. In his last position at VA, Nadhal served as the Special Assistant and Intergovernmental and Veteran Service Organization liaison for the Under Secretary for Benefits. Most recently, his passion for public health and Veterans issues led him to join healthcare technology company, WellHive, where he manages the company's marketing and government services portfolio.

Nadhal received his Masters in Policy Leadership from Georgetown University and received his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Sociology from John Carroll University in Cleveland, OH. He currently resides in Washington D.C.

### 2. Jeremy Williams - Treasurer



Jeremy served with distinction in the U.S. Marine Corps and was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Combat "V." Since his discharge, Jeremy has advanced the mission of several organizations in the Veterans Community, including Student Veterans of America, the Wounded Warrior Project, United States Veterans Initiative, Inc., and the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers.

Jeremy was also the Director of Veterans Behavioral Healthcare Initiative working for the Mental Health of America of Greater Houston. Jeremy holds an Executive Master's Degree in Public Service Administration, a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

### **3. Alec Ghezzi– Secretary**



Alec was first introduced to veterans' law when he participated in the UDM Mercy School of Law veteran's clinic (Project Salute). It was there that he was shocked to learn that far too many U.S. veterans do not receive the representation and benefits that they earned. After graduating Law School and becoming a member of the Maryland Bar, Alec worked for a private firm that exclusively represented veterans and their families for several years.

In April 2017, Alec joined the Vietnam Veterans of America Veterans Benefits Program. As an accredited representative of a Veterans Service Organization, Alec had unparalleled access to VA internal systems which greatly enhanced his ability to serve VA claimants. In October 2017, Alec had the honor of leading VVA's office located at the Board of Veterans' Appeals and transitioned to the role of Training Advising Attorney in March 2019. In November 2021, Alec was promoted to Deputy Director for Claims and appeals and in March 2022, became Director of VVA's Veterans Benefits Program. In this capacity, Alec helps VVA's advocates acquire the tools they need to best serve our nation's veterans.

### **4. Honorable Carlos Acosta – Member**



The Honorable Carlos F. Acosta is a Maryland Circuit Court judge sitting in Montgomery County, MD. Prior to this appointment, he was a Maryland State District Court judge. Before going to the bench, he served as Inspector General for the Prince George's County Police Department. In that role Judge Acosta functioned as the independent authority over the Internal Affairs Division, as well as being responsible to investigate systemic or programmatic issues affecting the police department's missions.

Previously, he served as Deputy State's Attorney for Prince George's County and as a Trial Attorney for the United States Department of Justice Criminal Division's Gang Squad. As a federal prosecutor, he also served as program manager for the Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training program for the Mérida Initiative (Mexico). Judge Acosta has taught at the American University Washington College of Law as an adjunct Associate Professor of Law since 1997. In that capacity, he currently teaches in the Trial Advocacy Program instructing courses in prosecutorial ethics as well as prosecuting complex homicides. Judge Acosta also lectures internationally in diverse areas from international wildlife smuggling to gang prosecution to trial advocacy.



#### 5. Gretchen Klinger – Member



ethnographic research.

Gretchen has been actively involved in Veteran organizations since she completed her 6-year enlistment in the United States Air Force in 2015. As a student at Ohio State University, Gretchen became two-time President of Vets 4 Vets, a chapter of Student Veterans of America, and was selected as a Pat Tillman Foundation Military Scholar in 2017. She completed her bachelor's degrees in Anthropology and Arabic in 2019. She comes to VetsVOA with experience in social media, grassroots networking, national outreach, and qualitative and

Gretchen served 2 tours overseas, including Afghanistan (OEF), Djibouti (GWOT-EM), and Iraq (pre-OIR). She continues to serve her community as the 2021-22 VFW Department of Ohio VMS Chairman, Ohio District 11 Surgeon, and Post 4931 Adjutant. She is also 2nd Vice of American Legion Ohio Post 1 and is an American Legion Americanism National Council Member representing Ohio, as well as a member of DAV Ohio Chapter #3, AMVETS Post 89, and Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 746. Gretchen currently works as the Executive Assistant of VFW Ohio Charities.

#### 6. Gerry Gingrich – Member



Dr. Gerry Gingrich serves as the Faculty Director of McCourt's Executive Master in Policy Leadership at Georgetown University. Previous to this position, Gerry was a full professor at the National Defense University for 25 years where she was a founding member of the College of Information and Cyberspace. In that role, she directed the Department of Defense's flagship executive program in leadership and information technology.

Dr. Gingrich is an expert in strategic leadership and decision-making, organizational innovation, and technological and behavioral change. In 1990, Gerry co-founded and led the first executive program in the country in the leadership and management of information systems at The George Washington University. Before entering academe, Gerry was a Corporate Lending Officer for Bank of America and a Certified Public Accountant for KPMG. She holds executive degrees in foreign policy from MIT and in information systems from the University of Minnesota; an MS and PhD in organizational and cognitive psychology from the University of Maryland; and a BS in business and finance from the University of North Carolina.

Gerry's mother and father were interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors; they both served as US Army officers in WWII.

#### **7. Danielle Fischer – Member**



Dani has been a Veteran Service Officer for Vietnam Veterans of America since August 2019 and was promoted to Managing VSO of the national team in April 2022. She is passionate about serving those who served. Several of her family members, including her husband and brothers, are veterans, and she is proud to say that every branch of the US military is represented throughout her family tree. Prior to joining VVA, Dani received her bachelor's degree in Political Science from the George Washington University. In 2011, she co-founded the Lights Up Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to providing performing arts scholarships for local students. Dani approaches her VSO work with the goal of maximizing the Veteran's earned benefits and improving their quality of life. Her team of VSOs currently represent more than 12,000 veterans across 26 states and territories.

#### **8. Daniel Smith– Member**



Following retirement from the United States Army after 28 years of service, Daniel has become involved with veteran advocacy as well as working to share veterans' experiences. Daniel has worked for the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, and he has worked with the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to properly commemorate the Centennial of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Daniel currently works with the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration to thank and honor all service members, and their families, for their honorable and dedicated service and sacrifice to our nation during the Vietnam War period.

Daniel is currently a member of the Association of the United States Army; an associate member of the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; and an honorary member of the Old Guard Association.

Becoming a member of the Board for Veterans' Voice of America in the Fall of 2022, Daniel is excited to work to help veterans and their families progress through the challenging transition to civilian life following their military service.





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



21 April 2023  
Report to the Board  
VVA National Board of Directors Meeting

**As of April 11, 2023, the number of Americans missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War is 1,579. The countries are** Vietnam - 1,239; Laos-285; Cambodia-48; Peoples Republic of China territorial waters-7. These numbers fluctuate due to investigations resulting in changed locations of loss.

On April 7, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that U.S. Air Force 1st Lt Frederick M. Hall, age 25 of Waynesville, NC, and U.S. Air Force Major Ernest L. De Soto, age 37, of Manning AR, were accounted for March 23, 2023.

On April 12, 1969, De Soto was the pilot and Hall was the navigator on a F-4D Phantom II assigned to 390th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 336th Tactical Fighter Wing. De Soto's aircraft was one in a flight of three which departed Da Nang airbase for a bombing mission in an unstated area and were returning from a cancelled strike mission near Quang Nam Province, Vietnam, when the aircraft ascended into heavy cloud cover. The lead aircraft noticed Hall's plane was not in sight and immediately began an aerial search without success.

On March 9th, the FY 2024 President's Budget was submitted to Congress; it includes \$196M of Operations and Maintenance (O&M). Again approved by DoD, the \$46M increase from FY 2023 will fund additional research and analysis, and field and laboratory activities. Congress has already commenced its review of the budget request.

Field Operations. Vietnam War. Three RTs conducted excavations in Laos, with each recovering possible osseous material and possible life support equipment; two of the teams recovered ID media belonging to the unaccounted-for Service member. Field operations are currently underway in Laos and Vietnam. In Laos, there are one RT and one Investigation Team (IT) investigating 12 cases.

Two RTs and one IT (investigating 12 cases) are in Vietnam; DPAA's Vietnam counterpart, Vietnamese Office Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP) reported these recovery sites were in jeopardy of being lost to economic development.

Planned Field Operations. In April, an IT is scheduled for joint work with our Republic of Korea (ROK) two cases with leads uncovered by ROK. In May, two RTs, one IT, one partner IT with Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and one underwater RT with the U.S. Army's 7th Engineer Dive Detachment will operate in Vietnam.

DET-3 in Laos, conducted a repatriation ceremony for three separate sets of potential osseous material recover.

Report filed with National Secretary

## COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS

April 21, 2023



### **VVA Milestones: Historic Cooperation Between Agencies Culminates in The Preservation of Ranch Hand Data/Specimens.**

On Wednesday, April 19, VVA hosted the participants of the Air Force Health Study Working Group, on the culmination of their investigation into the safe transfer disposition of the data from the Air Force Health Study, the 20-year-long epidemiologic study of the impact of Agent Orange exposure on the Ranch handlers—*pictured left to right: Dr. Alex Chiu (VA), VVA President Jack McMamus, Dr. David Butler (NASEM); Dr. Linda Birnbaum; Dr. Carolyn Clancy (VA); VVA Treasurer Dr. Linda Schwartz; VVA Staff: Mokie Porter; Sharon Hodge, Harold Hanson; U.S. Air Force counsel; and James Poel (Air Force, Ret.), and on Screen: Dr. Victoria Davey (VA); Marsha Four (VVA); Paul Sutton (VVA), and Dr. George Knaf.*



**VVA Milestone:** On March 30, VVA Hosted a POW/MIA Roundtable to discuss how to ensure that the POW/MIA issue remain in the forefront of the American conscience and that the fight continues for the fullest possible accounting. Joining VVA: National League of POW/MIA Families; Mission: POW/MIA; SFA/SOA; SDIT, Rolling Thunder, AMVETS, DAV, and BVA.



## WEB

(Reporting period – January 1, 2023 – April 20, 2023)



Site Visits: 509,324

Platform:  
**Print and Online**



Desktop: 45.6% Tablet: 3.3% Mobile: 51.1%

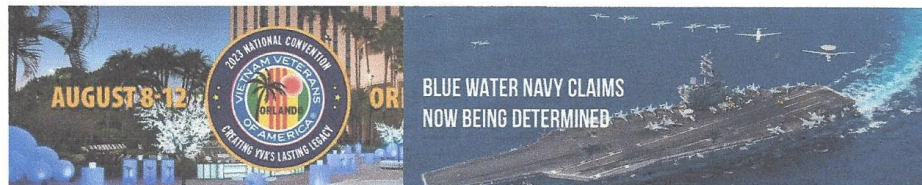
### Demographics:

Male: 44.17% Female: 55.83%

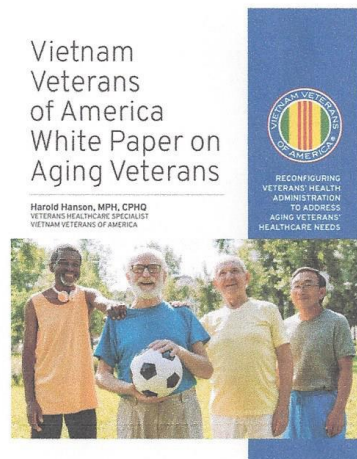
Age Breakdown: 18-24: 10.96% 25-34: 15.46% 35-44: 17.78% 45-54: 18.08% 55-64: 18.95% 65+: 18.77%

### Top 3 landing pages on vva.org

1. Home page
2. Donate
3. Pick-up Locations



VVA's Communications Department produces and updates many printed items.

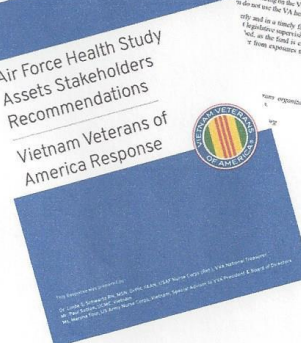


## A REVIEW OF THE VE-HEROES REPORT

by John Rossie  
BLUE WATER NAVY ADVOCATE



## Air Force Health Study Assets Stakeholders Recommendations Vietnam Veterans of America Response



## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES & POLICY INITIATIVES

### Implementation of the Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Toxic Exposure Act Of 2022 or Honoring Our PACT Act P.L. 117-168

Principle of the PACT Act of 2022 was a major step toward addressing the needs of our nation's veterans, we must continue to fight forward in our effort to right the wrongs caused by toxic exposure at home and abroad.

#### Understanding the Issue

The PACT Act marks one of the greatest expansions of veteran healthcare and benefits in our generation. Thanks to the tireless work and commitment of members of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, other members of Congress, and veteran advocates, veterans who have borne the burden of service and have suffered from the effects of toxic exposure now have a path forward to receive the critical care and compensation they justly deserve.

While passage of this legislation is an important step forward for veterans, their families, and survivors, we now face the arduous work of making sure that the promises of this new law are accomplished with compassion and efficiency. Veterans representing financial hardship, and Medal of Honor and Purple Heart recipients, are among the most vulnerable to being left behind in the line. We must ensure that the VA's progress and challenges are met with a steady focus, conducting routine legislative oversight. For that, Congress is critical for the delivery of a timely response to congressional requests.

new organization progressively.

## AWARDS

From Fiscal Year 2023 (to date)

JROTC: 205



Eagle Scout: 55






## NEWS

### Press Releases:





Between January 18, 2023, and April 18, 2023 VVA's Communications Department issued **3** 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 aging veterans healthcare, and VVA's legislative priorities for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress.





**WEB WEEKLY**  
Veteran News Delivered to Your Inbox

In This Issue: April 14, 2023

- [Airmen Hall and De Soto Accounted for From Vietnam War](#)
- [Lawmakers Demand VA Fire Substandard Staff Faster](#)
- [County Seeks Cash for Land to Expand Arlington National Cemetery](#)
- [Marine Thought Dead on Battlefield Gets Back Lost Dog Tags](#)
- [Welcome Home! A Nation Honors our Vietnam Veterans and Their Families](#)
- [A Lifetime After Vietnam, U.S. Veterans Deliver a Diary to Its Home](#)
- [Veterans Initiative Speeds Your Help](#)
- [Health and Benefits](#)
- [News From VVA National](#)
- [Things to Do](#)

FREDRICK MERVYN HALL      ERNEST LEO DE SOTO

**Airmen Hall and De Soto Accounted for From Vietnam War**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced in press releases on April 7 the March 23 accounting of U.S. Air Force Captain Frederick M. Hall, 25, and U.S. Air Force Colonel Ernest L. De Soto, 37, reported missing during the Vietnam War. On April 12, 1986, De Soto was the pilot and Hall was the navigator on a F-4D Phantom II assigned to 390th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing. De Soto, Hall, and another aircraft were returning from a cancelled strike mission near Quang Nam Province, Vietnam, when both aircraft ascended into heavy cloud cover. The lead aircraft noticed De Soto and Hall's plane were not in sight and immediately began an aerial search without success. De Soto was posthumously promoted to Colonel while in a missing status; Hall was posthumously promoted to Captain.

[Read More](#)

### Web Weekly:

Between January 18, 2023 and April 18, 2023, we produced and distributed **13** editions of VVA's Web Weekly to our 49,000 + VVA members, supporters, and members of the media. The open rate for the Web Weekly at **28.00 %** remains well above the industry average for non-profits, which is 20%



## PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2023

No. 23-3  
Contact: Mokke Porter  
301-696-0901

### VVA National President Jack McManus Testifies Before Joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

(Washington, D.C.) – Vietnam Veterans of America National President Jack McManus presented VVA's 2023 legislative priorities and policy initiatives on March 1, 2023, before the joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. In his opening remarks, McManus addressed the origins of VVA, founded in response to the shameful treatment Vietnam veterans encountered on their homecoming, and called for equitable treatment of all veterans. He drew the applause of the whole room when he asserted: "An American Veteran is an American Veteran – regardless of how or when they served."



[Jack McManus testimony begins at 2:19:00]

[Watch the Testimony Here](#)

In his testimony, McManus went on to highlight several of VVA's top legislative priorities and policy initiatives:

- Assure full funding of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency so that the 1,581 unaccounted-for American servicemembers from VVA's long-ago war and their survivors can finally find some peace.
- Address the issues of aging veterans in a VA system that still lacks a clear and comprehensive roadmap to address VA healthcare concerns, and in an environment in which, despite comparable access and quality of care, significant racial and ethnic disparities persist among older veterans.

*Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally-chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnamese veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."*

## HONORARY PARTNERSHIP

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**Report from our Phil Waite, our liaison for our Honorary Partnership with the 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration and Daughters of the American Revolution**

Stats: Below is the latest update regarding our VVA Honorary Partner Initiative –

**236** Ceremonies in **35** states & **GUAM** are scheduled or completed; **5** states (and Guam) have **COMPLETED** ceremonies for all VVA orgs in their state, and **TX & OH** are close, even given their large numbers of VVA chapters in each state.

**67 new DAR chapters** have joined us as partners since we started this initiative! Total number now stands at **2,123** – **16% of all our CP orgs!** They have hosted **6,607 events** during which **383,701 Vietnam veterans have been thanked & honored!!**