



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 12, 2018
Tentative Until Approved by Board**

President John Rowan called to order the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Friday January 12, 2018, at 9:09 am, at the Double Tree by Hilton in Silver Spring, MD. National Treasurer Wayne Reynolds delivered the opening prayer which was followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

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

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO
Excused: Tom Burke, Richard DeLong and Father Philip Salois

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

Alabama	Present	Nebraska	Present
Alaska	Absent	Nevada	Present
Arizona	Present	New Hampshire	Absent
Arkansas	Present	New Jersey	Absent
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	Present	Rhode Island	Present
Kansas	Present	South Carolina	Present
Kentucky	Present	South Dakota	Present
Louisiana	Present	Tennessee	Present
Maryland	Present	Texas	Present
Massachusetts	Present	Utah	Present
Michigan	Present	Vermont	Absent
Minnesota	Present	Virginia	Present
Mississippi	Present	Washington	Present
Missouri	Present	West Virginia	Present
Montana	Absent	Wisconsin	Present



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

John Rowan, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

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

2. On December 27, 2017, the National Board of Directors was presented with the following motion to file an amicus brief in support of Blue Water Navy Veterans in the Federal Circuit case Robert H. Gray v. Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The Board of Directors was asked to submit their vote by e-mail to Samala Parker (SParker@vva.org) and to Secretary Meeks (bmeeksjr@aol.com) within a 48 hour period. The motion is as follow:

Motion 1: To file an amicus brief in support of Blue Water Navy Veterans in the Federal Circuit case Robert H. Gray v. Secretary of Veterans Affairs (filed 12/13/2017). If approved, VVA's amicus brief will be filed jointly with NOVA (National Organization of Veterans' Advocates).

1st Draft

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

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

<u>Results</u>	
Yes	22
No	0
Abstention	0
Non Vote	1
No Response	1*

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



John Rowan

1st Draft

* Director Richard DeLong was out-of-country and unable to participate.

Preliminary Business

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

Motion 2

**To accept the 2018 January BOD meeting tentative agenda.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Motion 3

**To approve the 2017 October BOD Meeting Minutes 10/20/17.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

National President/J. Rowan

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

November 2nd I attended the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Tupelo, MS at the behest of SCP Rex Moody. I was joined by Treasurer Reynolds, Region 4 Director Spence Davis and LA SCP Terry Courville.

November 8th I attended a Veterans Day Ceremony at Queens Boro Hall that honored one of our Chapter 32 members Spencer Polinger and memorialized deceased Chapter 32 Past President Paul Narson.

November 9th I attended the annual luncheon for the Friends of the NYC Vietnam Veteran Memorial.

November 10-12 Mariann and I traveled to DC for the Veterans Day Ceremony at Arlington.

November 20-21 I was at VVA HQ to deal with some staff issues.

December 1-3 Mariann and I attended a VVA NYSC Executive Board meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY.

December 13th I was at VVA HQ in Silver Spring, MD.

1st Draft

On December 15-16 Mariann and I traveled to Utica, NY to attend a meeting of the Grand Post of the Masonic War Veterans of NYS.

December 26-Jan 1 Mariann and I traveled to Ireland. While there I visited the Memorial to the 30 Irish-born Veterans killed in Vietnam with the US and Australian military in Ennis, Co. Galway.

National Vice President/M. Four

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

Activities for this period included the following:

- Committee Chair Meeting: October meeting agenda consisted of
 - a review of the orientation handouts
 - who can provide assistance in the National Office
 - printing of items for the committee meetings: copy codes to be provided
 - discussion of the proposed policy on electronic meetings
 - Next meeting January 12, 2018
- Activities
- Attended and presented Agent Orange, legislative and Veterans Initiative information at plenary sessions along with a VVA information table. (November 3-5, 2017)
- Travel to for Veterans Day representing VVA on Dais at The Wall and at the Women's Memorial. Also attended represented VVA at the event hosted by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation. Was able to arrange a future conference call with Lynn Novick in order to connect with the Vietnamese governmental appointee who assisted Lynn and Ken Burns while they were filming in Vietnam. It is felt this could be of advantage to the VI when it returns to Vietnam in January (November 9-11, 2017)
- President Rowan and I traveled to Silver Spring to meet with individual staff and hold a Director Meeting and a full staff meeting. staff (November 19-22, 2017)
- Beginning to review the Employee Handbook with Samala Parker, Director of Administration and Personnel Services, for possible edits.
- Providing pictures to the production director of the PA Veterans museum for use in exhibits
- Continue work with the American Academy of Nursing and its "Have You Ever Served" campaign. Our last conferences call (January 5, 2018) set a re-directed path to achievable goals and outcomes.
- Attended the Veterans Health Council meeting (January 10, 2018)

National Secretary/B. Meeks

Secretary Meeks gave a brief verbal report on the deadline for Honorary Life Memberships which is thirty (30) days prior to the BOD meeting and all requests received after that deadline will be handled at the next BOD meeting.

National Treasurer/W. Reynolds

Treasurer Reynolds gave a written report.

1st Draft

It's great to welcome in a New Year with VVA. I expect this year to be one of continued expansion and growth in VVA.

Since my last report in we have had some a great deal of activity in VVA. We attended the Veterans Day activities in Washington and I was assigned to be at Arlington. In addition, I was privileged to be a guest to be at the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Tupelo, MS.

As chair of the 40th Anniversary Commemoration, we are proceeding with plans to have an event by VVA for VVA in October 2018.

We are preparing for the FY 2019 Budget along with the Finance Committee. The FY 18 Budget is doing well with each cost center manager doing great work managing their expenses. Our Revenue projections are maintained their expected funding.

It is time to consider the renewal of a lease on the National Office. We are working with a firm to review our options and we project some cost saving in the new agreement.

The 501c# which was established for the Veterans Health Council is producing results. Through this mechanism, we are able to apply for grants that we were previously now eligible for. Dr. Tom Berger has been very effective in seeking new fund sources to allow for expanded services to veterans.

Treasurer Reynolds presented the following motion with a second from Vice President Four.

Motion 4

**To approve allocation of \$30,000 to 40th Anniversary from Bequests Funds.
Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America/ S. Hobbs

Since returning home from the October Board meeting, the Board has conducted business and communication through our online conferencing platform. The minutes from the October meeting have been approved. The minutes and all Officer, Regional, and Committee reports can be read on the AVVA website. (www.avva.org). We worked diligently until the week before Christmas; we took two weeks off to be with our families during the holidays and the New Year.

We began online educational refresher sessions for the Board in December. These sessions are geared to upcoming proceedings (i.e. 2018 state and chapter elections), policy changes, and implementation of new policies. Our intent is to equip the Regional Directors & Deputies with the tools and knowledge to be of service to our States and Chapters.

1st Draft

In November, AVVA attended the ceremonies in Washington DC and worked in the Membership/Information tent. Sharon Hodge (AVVA Governmental Affairs Chair) laid the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; I laid a wreath at The Wall and at the In Memory Plaque.

Fran Davis, AVVA Chaplain, continues to work with Father Phil in sending sympathy cards to the families of all reported deceased members of VVA and AVVA. Inside each card is an additional card inviting the families of the deceased to apply for induction into the *In Memory Registry* if their loved one meets the criteria set forth by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF).

Since the October meeting, AVVA has donated \$1500 to the VVA hurricane victims in Florida, Texas, and Puerto Rico.

AVVA has signed MOU with another vendor for AVVA Collectibles. Beginning last November, *The Agent Orange Store* began offering our members clothing, jackets, hat, patches, etc. The vendor can be reached through a portal on the AVVA website.

January is budget time for AVVA. All budget proposals were due to the Finance Committee by December 1st. Our Finance Committee is meeting to prepare the 2019 proposed budget; the budget will be presented to the Board for approval during the April meeting.

AVVA is gearing up for the 2018 Leadership Conference in Palm Springs, CA. Award nominations are being accepted now; we are currently searching for our Project Friendship recipient. All nomination forms are posted to our website. We plan to announce this year's Project Friendship during the April Board meeting.



Sharon Hobbs, AVVA President

Conference of State Council Presidents/R. Moody

CSCP President Moody noted that they were thirty-nine (39) presidents in attendance. There were several topics of discussion including the 40th Anniversary Dinner and honorary life membership requests.

Veterans Benefits Program Director's Report/K. Yoon

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 2018

Kelsey Yoon, Esq.

Director, Veterans Benefits Program Vietnam Veterans of America



CONTENT

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

1. Director's Note

Vietnam Veterans of America's Veterans Benefits Program (VBP) continues to be a high-volume and active office. Most recently, the activity surrounding the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 ("the Act"), which became law on August 23, 2017, has already started to impact our operations. Although the Act will not take effect until February 2019, the Act authorizes VA to roll out a pilot project.

This pilot project, referred to as the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program or "RAMP", is permitting selected veterans who have pending appeals to opt-in and have their claim(s) processed through *part* (not all) of the new appeals process. However, VA is treating RAMP as not a pilot project, but a way to substantially decrease its backlog, at the possible expense of the veteran. In November, VA sent out 500 letters to claimants giving them the opportunity to opt-in to RAMP, and this number was increased to 5,000 letters in December and 10,000 letters in January. In February and March, VA intends to send out 25,000 opt-in letters each month, and as soon as April, the number of opt-in letters sent each month will increase to 30,000 until the end of the pilot.

Depending on how many opt-in letters VA receives, VA staff from the Denver RO and Phoenix RO may be brought in to help adjudicate RAMP claims. The VBP continues to be strongly concerned over the execution of RAMP and the new law; however, we are committed to continuing to work with VA to ensure that both RAMP and the new law are implemented with a pro-veteran philosophy. In addition to providing substantive feedback on over 100 pages of proposed regulations, RAMP forms, procedures, and FAQs, we continue to participate in VA organized meetings and roundtables to voice our opinions and ideas.

1st Draft

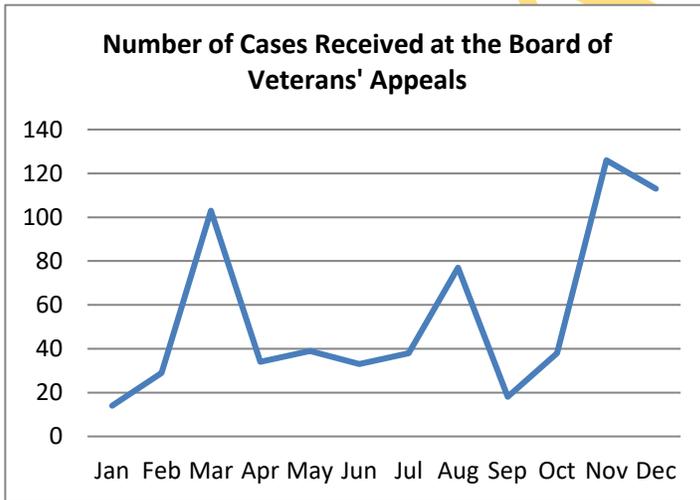
In order for VVA to ensure that we are properly advising and representing veterans, VVA service officers must continue to stay in the forefront of this new claims process. As such, I am proposing that VVA support a mandatory in-person service officer training at the end of 2018 so when the new claims process comes into effect, our service officers will be able to continue to zealously advocate for veterans and their families. Without adequate training, our service officers will be left in the dark, which will ultimately hurt the veterans and family members we promised to zealously serve.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Yoon, Esq.
Director, Veterans Benefits Program

2. VBP Activities

The VBP continues to achieve a “win rate” at the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (“Board”) above 71%, with 28.8% of its cases granted and 42.8% of its cases remanded this past year.¹ As anticipated, and similar to other organizations, we are still experiencing a substantial increase in cases added to our backlog at the Board. Since my last report in October 2017, and not including hearing request cases, we have received 277 additional new cases, 113 cases just in December alone.²



Due to the large influx of cases, unfortunately, VVA cases are still being held up by our office, not VA.

In attempt to responsibly tackle our backlog at the Board, we have initiated 2 new pilot projects where we are reaching out to claimants whose cases have recently arrived to the Board to let them know that we have received their claim(s) and to check to make sure they are still interested in maintaining

their appeal. The hope is that these new initiatives will provide increased transparency and information to VVA represented veterans who have appealed to the Board, and to ensure that they are still interested in maintaining their appeal at the Board.

TOTAL APPEALS BACKLOG AT BOARD

LOCATION	Number of cases (Jan)	Number of cases (Apr)	Number of Cases (July)	Number of Cases (Oct '17)	Number of Cases (Jan '18)
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¹ VVA recorded a denial rate of 19.5% and 9.0% of the cases recorded a disposition of “other”.

² 241 originals and 36 post-remands.

1st Draft

	'17)	'17)	'17)		
Pending Attorney Review	569	728	895	886	1014
Pending Travel Board Hearing	227	205	211	196	205
Pending Videoconference Hearing	563	610	654	659	687
Pending Central Office Hearings	Data N/A	15	18	16	19
TOTAL VVA BACKLOG AT BOARD	1,359	1,558	1,778	1,757	1,925

Source: VACOLS; Board of Veterans' Appeals

As shown in the table below, VVA continues to file over 100 NODs and around 100 Form 9s each month. Most of these claims will eventually make their way up to the Board.

VVA Appeals Filed Nationwide (Jan 2017-Sep 2017)		
	NODs Filed	Form 9s Filed
Jan	120	107
Feb	141	131
Mar	115	129
Apr	130	112
May	142	103
Jun	127	95
Jul	120	107
Aug	141	131
Sep	127	95
Oct	118	91
Nov	114	119

Source: Veterans Benefits Administration (12/2017)

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

Correspondence & Visitors Report (2016-2017)												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phone Calls	239	310	325	254	161	246	279	293	233	271	289	205
Voice Messages	109	104	105	79	91	60	73	63	53	74	58	55
Emails	421	433	556	476	450	375	388	412	330	379	253	263
Appointment/Walk-In	3	5	0	7	8	8	4	11	11	6	5	7
Mail/Faxes	38	44	76	71	92	62	74	90	87	107	85	122

Source: VetPro (1/1/2018)

Number of Tracked Appealed Claims by E-VSO

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
98	111	131	123	122	172	105	132	147	127	157	158

We continue to methodically track substantive appeals nation-wide. For the months of October, November, and December, our E-VSO tracked, on average, nearly 150 appeals each month.

Rating Decisions Reviewed (VSO Queue)											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
69	100	92	82	103	93	143	138	110	15	51	30

Fortunately, the number of

rating decision reviews our office conducted in October, November, and December substantially decreased due to the VBMS update of the “Station of Origin” search feature. Now, our service officers in the field can track, monitor, and check *their* claims and our office is only responsible for the following stations that do not have an active service officer program, including: (1) South Carolina; (2) Idaho; (3) North Carolina; (4) Alabama; (5) Arkansas; (6) Colorado; (7) Georgia; (8) Hawaii; (9) Kansas; (10) Kentucky; (11) Maine; (12) Montana; (13) Nebraska; (14) Nevada; (15) New Mexico; (16) Oregon; (17) South Dakota; (18) Utah; (19) Wyoming; (20) Maryland; (21) Virginia; and (22) Washington, D.C. We also frequently cover stations on an emergency basis if a local service officer is unable to cover his or her station for short periods of time.

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:

In July 2017, a veteran passed before receiving his retroactive benefits check. His widow was advised by VA to return the check and they would issue new one to her, but no VA office would take accountability for issuing the check. From August to December, [Senior Managing Attorney Homer Richards](#) persistently pursued VA staff at the Appeals Management Office and various regional offices to find out why a replacement check had not been issued. [In December 2017, VA staff admitted an oversight on their part caused the delay and the widow was sent a new check for \\$146,900 that was owed to her late husband.](#)

[Senior Appellate Attorney Katherine Ebbesson](#) disputed a rating decision that provided an incorrect effective date for an increased rating claim for PTSD. Based on Katherine’s arguments, the RO issued a new rating decision that provided the Veteran with a [70% rating, effective 2014 instead of 2015, and that resulted in an award of \\$21,989.24.](#)

In October 2017, [Senior National Veteran Service Officer Dee Wallace](#) filed an increased rating claim for a veteran’s right knee condition. Although he started at a 10% rating, [the veteran was awarded a 100% rating going back to September and a 30% rating for the knee beginning in November.](#)

1st Draft

After [Appellate Attorney Carlie Steiner](#) submitted an IHP in support of a duodenal ulcer grant, the Board granted [service connection for duodenal ulcer that resulted in a 40 percent rating, effective January 2009, amounting in a \\$43,659 retroactive payment.](#)

In November 2017, [E-VSO Christina Manning](#) implemented VVA's notification system to alert VSOs of the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP). RAMP is VA's pilot program of the Appeals Modernization Act that Congress enacted, which will dramatically change the VA claims and appeals process. [Every month Christina sent a notification email, information sheet, and template letter to Chief Service Officers and State Council Presidents to strongly encourage all VSOs to reach out to their veterans who will be receiving RAMP Opt-In letters](#) so they can give informed advice to veterans on the pros and cons of this program.

[Senior Managing Attorney Alec Ghezzi](#) assisted a Veteran in filing a claim for lung cancer in September, which was granted in December. The Veteran was awarded a [100% rating with special monthly compensation and a retroactive payment of \\$10,730.](#)

[Contract Attorney Michael Garza](#) successfully argued to the Board of Veterans' Appeals that a veteran and, by extension, his widow were [Nehmer class members](#) and that service connection should be granted back to 2000. He had served along the DMZ in Korea, and the widow sought entitlement to accrued benefits for any claim pending before VA at the veteran's death. Upon careful review of the claims file, Michael discovered a pending claim for service connection for [laryngeal cancer dating from 2000.](#) (Respiratory cancer, to include cancer of the larynx, is presumptively linked to herbicide exposure.)

This quarter, [Administrative Assistant Elaine Chaney](#) assisted our program in mailing [well over 200 letters](#) and placing dozens of calls to VVA represented veterans who are in various stages of appeal before VA. Elaine also provided substantial support in testing our ["Still Interested" Letter pilot project](#), where she provided the initial outreach efforts to selected veterans.

In October 2017, [National Appeals Attorney Whitney Wells](#) submitted written arguments for a veteran to become [service-connected for bilateral hearing loss](#), a claim the veteran filed in 2009. A veteran's law judge agreed with Whitney's position and [granted service-connection.](#) Whitney transitioned to the role of VVA's VSO Counsel in November 2017.

[Appellate Attorney Amy Borgersen](#) successfully persuaded the Board to [advance a case on its docket for her service connection claim for major depressive disorder.](#) This Veteran, a single mother of two children, was facing financial hardship, yet does not meet the Board's criteria for "automatic" advancement (homeless, or near-homelessness). Due to Amy's advocacy, this Veteran's claim was properly expedited.

4. People & Staff Changes

1st Draft

I am proud to report that the Veterans Benefits Program is currently fully staffed! At the end of October, unfortunately, we lost Jonathan Davis and Amanda Bedford from our program. We wish both Jonathan and Amanda well in their future endeavors. In January, we welcomed two new National Appellate Attorneys at VVA's Office at the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

National Appellate Attorney Felicia Mullaney (right) joins our team with prior veterans benefits and military experience. Prior to joining VVA, Felicia represented veterans before the Board of Veterans' Appeals as an Assistant Director with the American Legion. Felicia served in the United States Army at Fort Drum, as well as serving a fifteen-month tour in Iraq, where she provided support to construction teams and supervised and performed maintenance on military vehicles and construction equipment.



National Appellate Attorney Alexandra Rigby (left) joins are team with extensive disability rights experience. Prior to joining VVA, Alexandra interned with the Department of Justice—Civil Rights Division, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law, and Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities. Alexandra also spent time working with the American Bar Association Commission on Disability Rights where she researched and proposed programs and methods for making the legal profession more open to individuals with disabilities.

We welcome Felicia and Alexandra to the VVA Benefits team!

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

Rick Weidman spoke about where VVA was on our legislative efforts with Congress and Director Weidman answered questions related to the lack of VA services available in Puerto Rico. President Rowan expressed the need to present these issues to the VA Central Office to seek resolution and several other matters.

POW/MIA Committee's Guest Speaker

Chair Grant Coates introduced the Director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Kelly McKeague who spoke about the past/present work of the Agency and Director McKeague thanked VVA for our work to assist in the recovery of MIAs in Southeast Asia.

VVA National VAVS Deputy Representative/Ken Rose

Ken Rose gave a verbal report and a written report which can be found in the Appendix of the minutes.

HGDP Report/Q. Butcher

Quentin Butcher noted that the program was on pace with 2016 and that the control of expenses caused a reduction of mailing by 30%.

Membership Department/T. Houston

Tracie Houston gave an update on the department operation which included that membership rosters were being sent and explained about the yellow cards for the Membership Directory which members were receiving.

Communication Department/M. Porter

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

**2017 COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS
SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS**

January 12, 2018

SOCAL MEDIA

VVA Facebook 2017

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

The VVA Facebook has had a **6%** increase in followers in a 12-month period (January 1, 2017- January 1, 2018);

As of January 1, 2018, VVA Facebook had **124,645** likes, an increase from **117,573** likes recorded on January 1, 2017.

We have gained nearly **7,000** additional followers since January 1, 2017. We currently have **171,000** followers.

Faces of Agent Orange Facebook 2017

The Faces of Agent Orange Facebook page had a **7%** increase in followers for the same 12-month period (January 1, 2017- January 1, 2018);

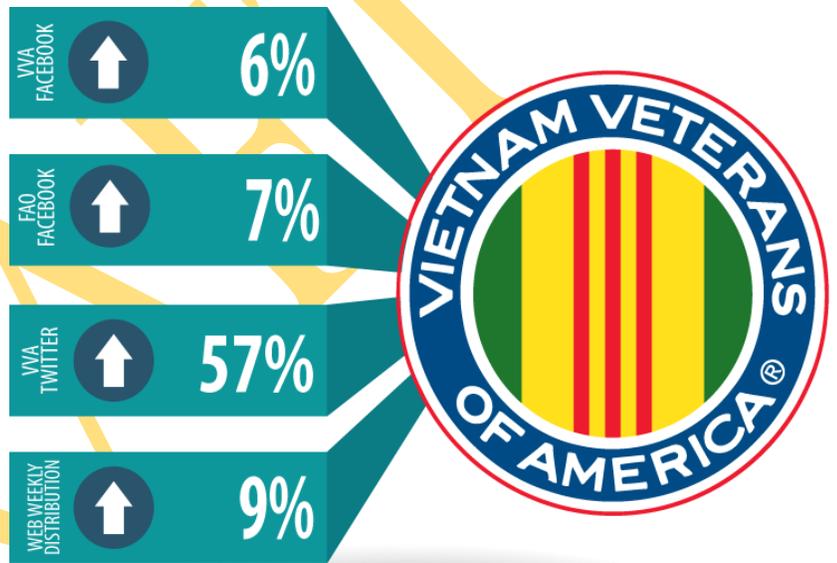
As of January 1, 2018, FAO Facebook has **17, 473** likes, an increase from **16,358** on January 1, 2017.

VVA Twitter

VVA’s twitter account as of January 1, 2018, has **4,222** followers, up **57%** from January 1, 2017 (**2,691** Followers).

VVA has issued over **8,000** tweets. Followers often “retweet” our messages to their followers, some of whom have thousands of followers.

Faces of Agent Orange Twitter



1st Draft

VVA’s FAO twitter account, as of January 1, 2018, had **1,130** followers, up 20% from January 1, 2017 (**942** Followers).

VVA FAO has issued over **4,500 tweets**. Followers often “retweet” our messages to their followers, some of whom have thousands of followers.

YouTube

Our Vietnam Veterans of America YouTube channel has **91,340** views and **481** subscribers as of January 1, 2018. This is a **13%** increase in views (10,680 additional views) during 2018 and a **7%** increase in subscribers (34 news subscribers) during 2018.

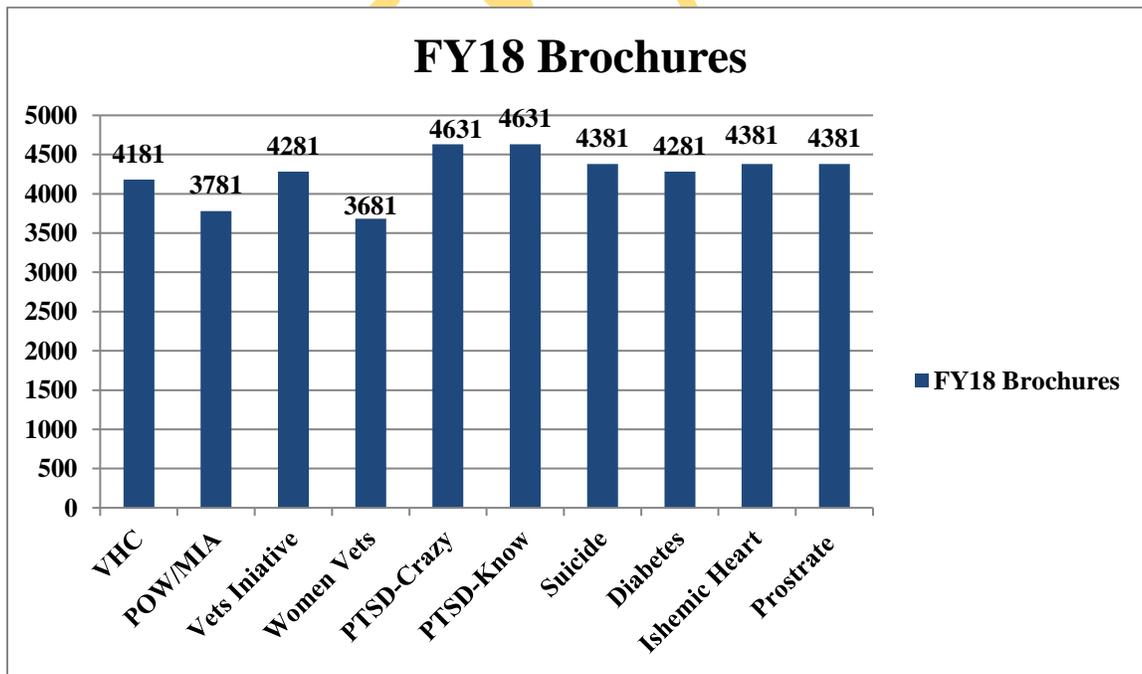


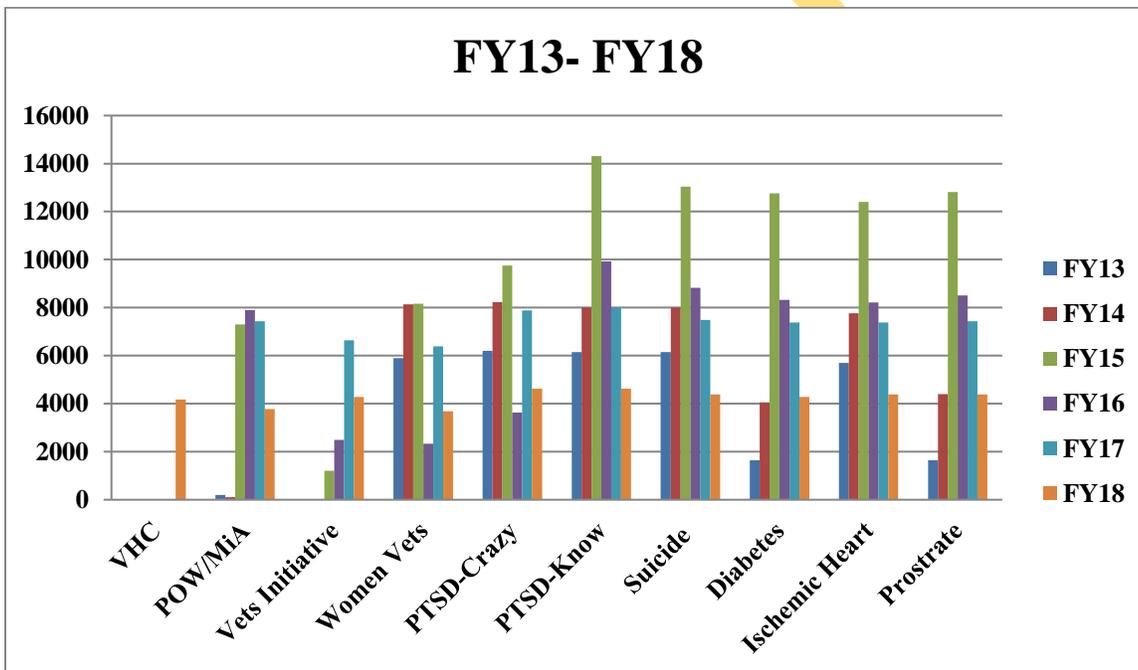
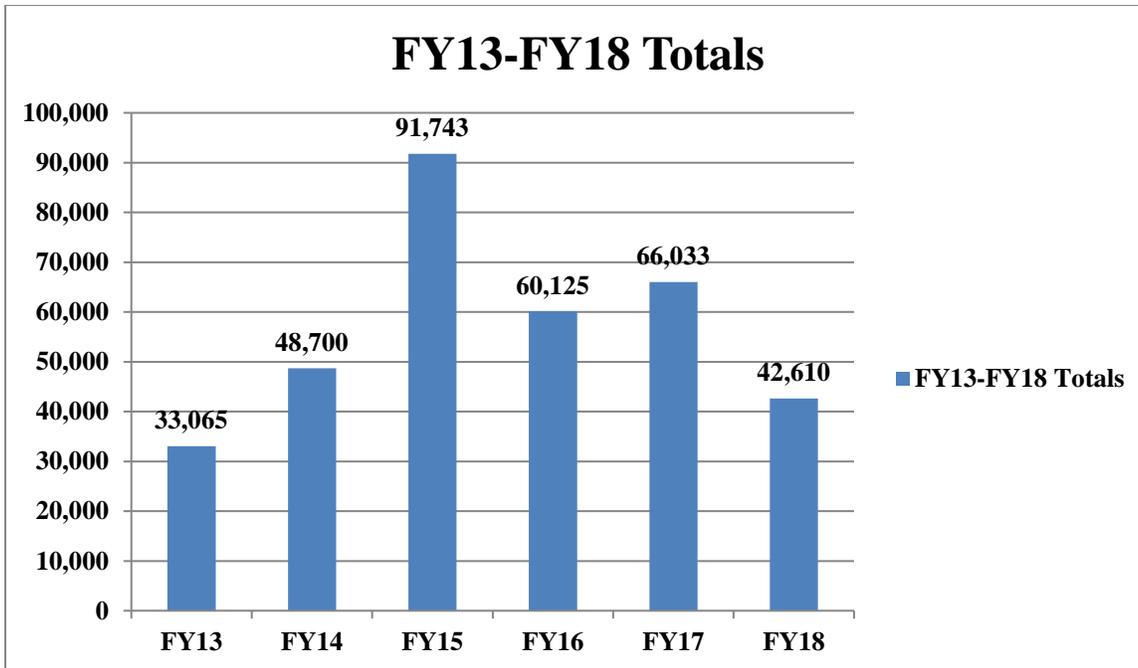
Our Faces of Agent Orange YouTube has **94,329** views and **486** subscribers as of January 1, 2018. This is a **6%** increase in views (5,991 additional views) and **1%** increase in subscribers (5 new subscribers) during 2017.

Brochure Totals Fiscal Year 2013-2018

FY18: 42,610 (January 1, 2018)

FY2013-2018: 342,816 Brochures distributed





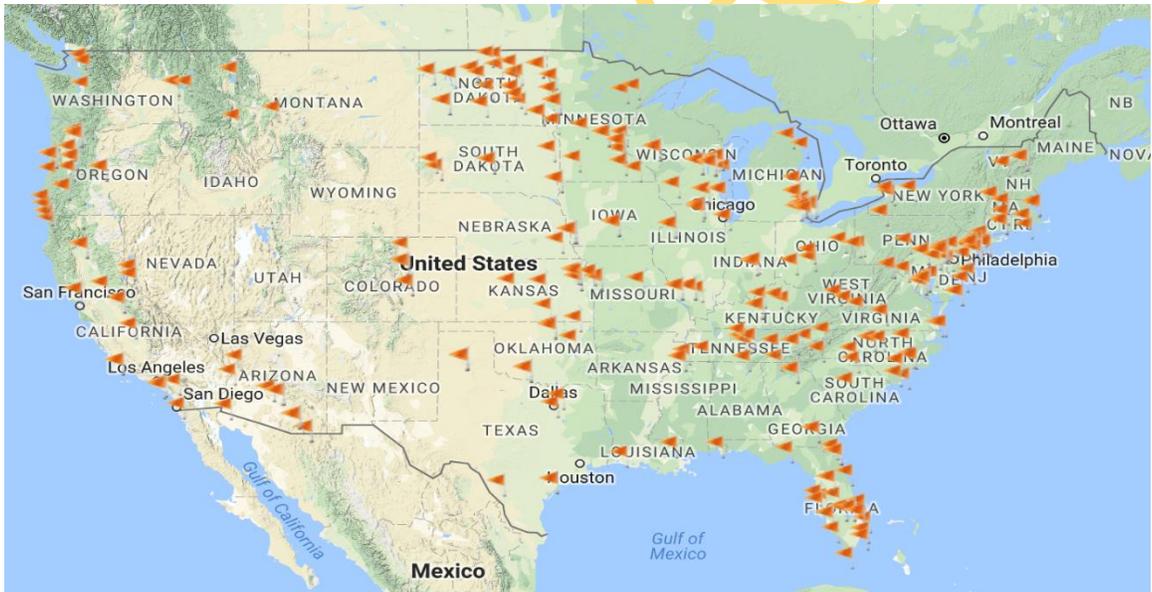
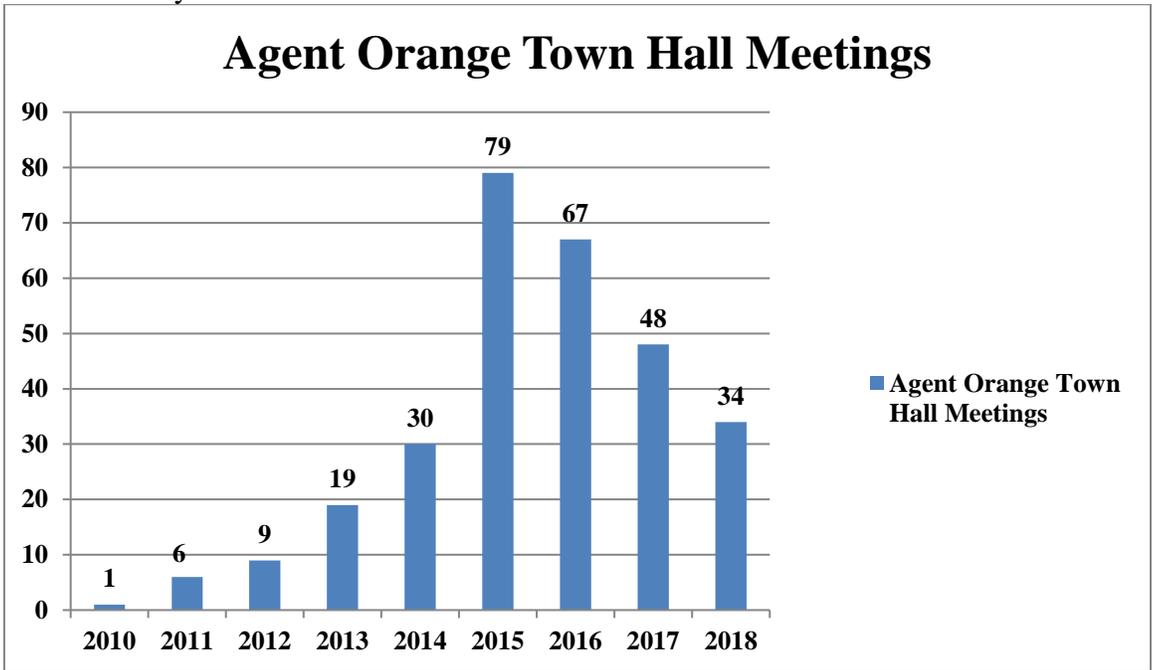
NEWS

VVA's **Web Weekly** is distributed to our 28,000 + VVA members, supporters, and members of the media who have provided email addresses.

Web Weekly is **10% OVER** non-profit industry average for percentage opened. Impressively, we have **increased our distribution by 2,106 opt-in addresses since January 1, 2017**

Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings

294 Faces of Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings have been convened since August 1, 2009; In FY2018, 32 town hall meetings were held; 2 more are scheduled for FY2018; 9 are currently scheduled for FY2019.



Google Map of Agent Orange Town Hall Meetings to date

Agent Orange Folders Sent

27,597 Agent Orange folders have been sent for past 6 years--began tracking in 2012
FY18-2,986 | FY17-5,283 | FY16-6,762 | FY15-7,310 | FY14-3,206 | FY13-2,050

Agent Orange Booklets Sent

97,612 Agent Orange Self-help Guides for past 4 years--began tracking in 2014

FY 18-12,332 | **FY17-18,583** | **FY16- 29,887** | FY15-36,810

BOD Meeting recesses until Saturday morning: 11:13 am

President Rowan reconvened the meeting on Saturday January 13, 2018, at 9:20 am. Roll Call by National Secretary Meeks of the National Board of Directors & State Council Presidents and other preliminary business.

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

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

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

Present: Joseph A. Sternburg, CFO

Excused: Tom Burke, Richard DeLong and Father Philip Salois

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

Alabama	Present	Nebraska	Present
Alaska	Absent	Nevada	Present
Arizona	Present	New Hampshire	Absent
Arkansas	Present	New Jersey	Absent
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	Present	Rhode Island	Present
Kansas	Present	South Carolina	Present
Kentucky	Present	South Dakota	Present
Louisiana	Present	Tennessee	Present
Maryland	Present	Texas	Present

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

Presentation

President Rowan recognized the Buckeye State Council President Cliff Riley who made a presentation of a POW/MIA quilt to the VVA National office.

Finance Committee Report

Ned Foote noted that the Finance Committee will meet March 1-3, 2018 and introduced CFO Sternburg who discussed the budget preparation process.

Veterans Health Council/Dr. T. Berger

Dr. Berger gave a verbal report.
Since Oct BOD mtng:

-attended meetings re: veterans’ employment opportunities with senior executive from the biopharmaceutical and related industries; draft suicide prevention legislation; VA Mental Health Advisory group; HIV medications; “Protect Medicare Part D” working group; and a myriad of other health-related agency and Congressional hearings

-represented the VHC and VVA as co-host for the annual PhRMA Research and Hope Awards ceremony and dinner along with VVA colleagues Mokie Porter, Cathy Wiblemo, Maureen Elias and Sharon Hodge

-contributed written material to a variety of coalition petitions to the VA, DoD, HHS, and CMS re: healthcare and/or funding issues affecting veterans health

-started the Post-911 Toxic Exposure research project with the assistance of Maureen Elias

-addressed the VVA CSCP and BOD on GINA and the President’s EO re: improving mental health care for transitioning vets.

Consent Calendar

Secretary Meeks submitted the following motion:

Motion 4
Consent Calendar

1. VVA Annual Financial Report; and
 2. To remove Randy Cassels from the PTSD/SA Committee.
- Without objection motion passed.**

Yes: 21

No: 0
Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 2

Committee – MOTIONS ONLY

Government Affairs – P. Peterson made the following motion.

Motion 5

VVA to join NVLSP amicus brief in the Monk vs Shulkin case – a class action suit against the CAVA.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Agent Orange/Dioxin – M. Kaderlik – No motions.

Constitution – K. Holybee – No motions.

Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – No motions.

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

Minority Affairs – G. Gomez made the following motion.

Motion 6

To sit Mr. Clifford Riley, Buckeye SC President and Mr. William C. Garcia as members to the Minority Affairs Committee. At no cost to VVA.

Without objection motion passed.

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

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

Motion 7

To add Jack Kempter as a member to the VAD Committee. At no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

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

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

Motion 8

TO SPONSORS OF THE FOLLOWING BILLS: Senate Resolution 61 – A resolution calling on the Department of Defense, other elements of the federal government, and foreign governments to intensify efforts to investigate, recover, and identify all missing and unaccounted-for personnel of the United States.

Senate 120 – Bring Our Heroes Home

House Resolution 2765 – Perpetual POW/MIA Stamp Act.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Membership Affairs – R. Lindbeck made the following motion.

Motion 9

To remove the certification section of the VVA Election Report.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – No motions

Public Affairs – D. Howland made the following motions.

Motion 10

To appoint Ken Rogge (MI) as a member to the Public Affairs Committee.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

National Leadership Planning Committee – D. Stenvold – No motions

PTSD and Substance Abuse – Dr. T. Hall – No motions

Veterans Benefits – J. Margowski – No motions

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

Motion 11

To add Sandi Wilson as a member to the Women Veterans Committee at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0
Non Vote: 1
Not Present: 2

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

Motion 12

To add Wayne Reynolds and James Fleming of Oregon as members to the Health Care Committee at no cost to National.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Unfinished Business

Electronic Meeting Rules and Requirements - Secretary Meeks submitted the following motion.

Motion 13

To approve the Electronic Meeting Rules and Requirements for conducting an electronic meeting.

Electronic Meeting Rules and Requirements

Article I, Section 7 - Committees

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

For the purposes of VVA,

The following requirements for conducting an electronic meeting or e-meeting have been agreed upon by the members of the Committee of Committee Chairs. An e-meeting is one in which business will be accomplished, such as; making motions, voting on motions and debating motions.

- A. **Notice.** Notice of the date, hour (time zone) and origin of the meeting must be delivered to the committee members a minimum of 72 hours prior to the start of the designated meeting. **This requirement applies only to e-meetings held between regularly scheduled committee meetings at the national headquarters.*
- B. **Quorum.** A quorum is a majority of the committee's members.

- C. **Written material.** All written material (agenda, discussion topics, previous minutes, etc.) pertinent to the meeting must be made available electronically or in hard copy format a minimum of 72 hours prior to the meeting.
- D. **Documentation.** The following documents are required for every committee meeting:
 - Agenda
 - Meeting minutes
 - recorded on the approved VVA form for committee minutes
 - contain a roll call of members present
 - report the establishment of a quorum
 - contain a record of motions made and results of voting
- E. **Modes of Communication.** The following are examples of acceptable modes of communication:
 - Conference call or video conference
 - Freeconferencecall.com
 - Gotomeeting.com
 - Skype

Without objection motion passed.

Yes: 21

No: 0

Non Vote: 1

Not Present: 2

National Meetings and Special Events/W. Guidry

Wes Guidry gave an update on several items.

New Business

Honorary Life Membership Requests - Secretary Meeks with a second by Treasurer Reynolds made the following motion.

Motion 14

To approve the honorary life membership requests.

Name	Requested By
Billie Eugene Stephens	Chapter 1124 (TN)
Harrison Conyers	Chapter 1046 (FL)
Mitchell D.K. Kalauli II	AZ State Council
Mark Nexsen	AZ State Council
Many-Bears Grinder	TN State Council
Peter Radford	UT State Council
Carolyn Collins	Chapter 1087 (MT)

Without objection motion passed.

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

Chapter # 822 (OH) Revoke Charter – Secretary Meeks with a second by Treasurer Reynolds made the following motion.

Motion 15

To revoke the charter of Chapter 822 (OH) upon a written recommendation from the Buckeye State Council.

Without objection motion passed.

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

VVA National Office Lease – Treasurer Reynolds with a second by Vice President Four made the following motion.

Motion 16

To authorize the National President & National Treasurer to negotiate lease for National Office to be ratified by BOD in April meeting.

Without objection motion passed.

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

Committee Reports Only:

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

Veterans Health Care – C. Baker – verbal report

Government Affairs – P. Peterson – verbal report

Agent Orange/Dioxin – M. Kaderlik – verbal & **written** reports

Constitution – K. Holybee – verbal & written reports

Economic Opportunities – F. Barry – verbal & written report

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

Minority Affairs – G. Gomez – verbal & written reports

Veterans Against Drugs – D. Simmons – verbal report

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

Membership Affairs – R. Lindbeck - written report

Meeting recessed for Lunch 11:50 am

President Rowan reconvened the meeting of Vietnam Veterans of America National Board of Directors on Saturday January 13, 2018, at 1:26 pm.

Committee Reports Only (con't):

Homeless Veterans - S. Miller – verbal report

Public Affairs – D. Howland – verbal & written reports

National Leadership Planning Committee – D. Stenvold – verbal report

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

Veterans Benefits – J. Jennings – verbal & **written** reports

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Meeks, Jr.
National Secretary

DRAFT

Appendix: Committee Reports

VVA WOMEN VETERAN COMMITTEE REPORT. 1.13.2018 KATE O'HARE-PALMER.

Meeting was held on January 12, 2018 at 1415. Patti Dumin, V.Chair, was excused due to death in the family. The October 20, 2017 minutes were reviewed and accepted without additions or corrections. The agenda was reviewed and new topics added included: PTSD Problems, Women's reception for the 25th Anniversary of the Vietnam Women's Memorial, and Agent Orange committee Survey rough draft by Dr. Linda Schwartz.

Review of chair activities: Speech at Veterans Day event in D.C . at the Wall. It was well received. Mokie filmed it and will work to get it on the website. It is available on the Cspan webpage or Youtube. The aftermath of the fires in our County have kept the chapter very busy. Also attended An event, "Spirit of Veterans Day "event ceremony in Roseville, Ca. Kate was given a California State Assembly Public Service award and a Congressional Award for public service to Veterans.

Topics: Old business.

1. Budget: reviewed, discussed and suggestions made to include more items and increased allowances.
2. S. B. 803 letter to Dr. Shulkin, Dir. Of Dept. of VA motion: letter completed and sent. Stated concerns of no follow through on Health care at the VA for Active duty personnel following MST.
3. Long and Short term goals

New Business:

1. Report L DoD SAPRO Report on Sexual Assault and MJIA 11.16.2017 Press Conference by Sen. Gillibrand . Dr. Berger and Sharon Hodge were present. Difficult timing with the news of Sen. Franken's discretions. Not the press coverage expected. The Survey results for 2017 were reviewed..but it is clear that the data % don't give a complete picture of true respondents views. Refer to S. Gillibrand's webpage for more info. Chuck Byers volunteered to help committee with formulating a help guide for our members for resources on how to proceed with claims process for MST and Sexual Harrassment .
2. Committee webpage: Much discussion on the difficulties with the page...hard to find. We don't have our quarterly reports up that have been turned into Secretary. We are not able to add extra topic information updates in a timely fashion. This was Discussed at board meeting Saturday with list of needs and possible solutions.
3. VVA Leadership Conference: discussed presenting a Discrimination Prevention and Harassment Prevention session. Dottie had several suggestions. This may be best set up for entire audience..rather than a breakout session. Will research speaker options.
4. VVA Women data information for 40th anniversary year celebration for VVA. Kate had asked women to send in info from our chapters on their contributions to VVA..will compile this for sharing at the celebration in Palm Springs and VVA national.
5. PTSD problem: Sandi shared incidence of veteran going into a clinic visit and when asked how he was doing, he responded,"fine". His PTSD compensation was

downgraded within two months! This was discussed. Dr. Tom Hall reiterated that we must be honest with talking about our true feelings and not always just putting on our “outside happy face.

6. Agent Orange Survey: Dr. Schwartz presented the rough draft of survey for VVA veterans for information about service and exposure to toxins and also exposure to other stressors. This is just a survey. It will be reviewed and any suggestions should be emailed to Linda or Cathy by January 23, 2018.

Minority Affairs Committee Board Report January 2018

As we entered into this New Year 2018, the Committee is envisioning in getting to work right way for the benefits of our VVA Minority membership and their families.

We hit a brick wall in trying to get the SC Presidents to answer a very simple question to which a round count of VVA Minority membership in their Chapters. For those that answer the question negatively it was more in a hostile basis in why count our Minority Membership in VVA. It was not our intentions in offending any member of the Corporation, it was a call for help as the Committee was under the impression that we were going to be supported as any other committee in the Corporation.

There were four SCs that did answer in a positive way, without hesitation or negative comments. They are North Dakota, SC P Dan Stenvold; Puerto Rico, SC P Jorge Pedroza; Montana, SC P Beverly Stewart and my own SC. I would like to thank those SCP for their support. We were able to count up to 444 Minority Veterans with membership in VVA. The reason that this count was asked is so that the Committee could have a base of Minority Veterans in the Corporation that we can count with. Just like any other situation, we will like to know the WHAT, WHEN and WHY, basic knowledge for any committee Chair to know. The Committee is looking in having the name of the Committee change to Minority Veterans Committee, as Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) conflicts, as expressed by SCP, with the Membership Affairs Committee (MAC) acronyms. This has not been an issue for 17 years. But it's an important issue for many SCP today, many found out that we do have a (MAC). This change will be presented to the membership at our next Convention.

We will be summing our request for space at the Leadership Conference in July in Palm Springs CA. Our plan is to present a session of 90 minutes were all will be welcome to express their cultural/ethnicity issues within the Corporation, if any, and be able to discuss them in an open forum.

Other areas that we will be looking at during the course of this year is to continue to visit our goals and priorities of the committee, identifying local community resources, maintaining

attendance at National Minority Veterans Organizations and lastly selecting an individual in the Nation that we can present our Diversity award too at our next Convention.

Gumersindo Gomez
MAC Chair

Membership (MAC) Report

January 2018

This past year, we achieved a milestone by reaching an all-time high in membership of 82,000+ members. I believe the MAC Membership Growth Awards and the permanent reduction to \$100.00 Life Membership dues contributed to that growth. Although much is being speculated on the announced Workgroups that will be deciding VVA's future, we still have years left to be productive and our numbers are still growing. At the October MAC meeting, the committee set our long term goal at 85,000 by the end of the 2019 term.

Our Fourth Annual Membership Growth Awards program is looking very good. March 1, 2017 - February 28, 2018, is the timeframe for growth to be considered for awards; some chapters are showing outstanding numbers. The recipients will be announced at the National Leadership Conference in Palm Springs, CA. We will be asking our past winners to submit a short summary as to how they are increasing their membership totals. Those will be distributed at the 2018 Leadership Conference too.

Veteran's Day in DC was successful in that we spoke to a number of veterans, handed out applications, brochures, and State Council contact information. I must say that I was disappointed in the smaller number of people visiting the booth, but I am told that there was record number attending The Wall ceremony for the 35th Anniversary.

Charlie Hobbs, Chair

EOC Report from meeting of January 12, 2018

The EOC held a roundtable yesterday on the Post 9/11 GI Bill called the Forever GI Bill. The presentation was conducted by retired Air Force General Robert M. Worley II who is the Director of Educational Services for the US Department of Veteran Affairs. Thanks to the efforts of Joe Wynn and Vet Force over 40 veteran related organizations and businesses attended including the DC Mayor's office of Veterans Affairs and the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation. Also attending were members of High Ground Veterans Advocacy who reminded the director that VVA was responsible for putting the "Forever" in the new GI Bill.

The official name of the Forever GI Bill is Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act 2017 named after the man who wrote the original GI Bill back in 1944.

A few key statistics: the VA processes approx. 4 million education claims and pays out 12 billion dollars a year to a million beneficiaries. Thanks to an automated system claims are processed quickly and accurately-approximately 17,000 claims a day.

Other legislation discussed: The VALOR Act-Veterans Apprenticeship and Labor Opportunity Reform Act and the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvements Act of 2016.

There are a few sections of the Forever GI Bill that will be implemented in the future including:

January 28, 2019 a Vet Tech Pilot Program-five year high technology programs that veterans can enroll in.

August 1, 2019 STEM Scholarship Program provides up to nine months of additional Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to certain individuals who are in STEM-Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math courses.

The remainder of the roundtable focused on the 8A direct award program and about increasing contracting opportunities for Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses in the federal marketplace.

The committee will be making a visit on Capitol Hill in April in support of the Kingdomware Supreme Court decision that is currently being challenged.

Thank you.



Vietnam Veterans of America

8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100 • Silver Spring, MD 20910 • Telephone (301) 585-4000

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Finance (301) 585-5542 • Veterans Benefits (301) 585-2614

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

JANUARY 2018 BOARD MEETING

TO: Board of Directors, State Council Presidents

FROM: Ken Rose, National Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Representative

All State Councils and Chapters should be participating in the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) program. The first step toward participating in the program is to appoint a State VAVS Chair to coordinate activities at Chapters in your state. Each Chapter needs to have at least one active volunteer at every participating VA medical center in your state.

Please look on the VAMC website to locate the closest VAMC, or Community Based Outpatient Clinic. If you are in need of assistance doing so please feel free to contact me utilizing the information below. Please leave me a message if I do not answer, I will get back with you at my earliest convenience.

To clarify the certification process for new VAVS Representatives and Deputies, candidates for these positions need to be nominated by a State Council President in order to serve in this position. The ideal person for these positions would be someone who has previous VA Medical Center or CBOC volunteer experience. Due to the Rep/Dep representing Vietnam Veterans of America it is important for the individual to be in good standing with the organization. A Representative **cannot** work for two different Veteran organizations at the same VAMC; all VVA/AVVA members are welcome to volunteer.

As leaders of the VVA, it is imperative to continuously recruit individuals for our Reps and Deps positions, this will keep us not only present in all VAMC and CBOC, it will allow us to maintain a great presence in our society.

If you wish to nominate someone for the Rep/Dep position, please reach out to Samala Parker (Sparker@vva.org) (301) 585-4000 ext. 134, she is the certifying official at VVA National Office. If nominees are sent elsewhere, they might be mis-directed or lost. Samala will send you all the information needed to get the individual, certified.

President, John Rowan sent out a VAVS Quick Start Guide in May 2017, if you do not have it available to you please reach out to myself or Samala we will get this to you as soon as we can.

Thank you for everything you do on a daily basis, as always if you have any questions please feel free to contact me, I will more than happy to assist you.

Ken Rose
National VAVS Representative
d35cav9thkrose@yahoo.com
(215) 527-3494



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

13 January 2018
Report to the Board
VVA National Board of Directors Meeting

- **To Date:** **Missing** – 2,601 Public number 2,602
 One set of remains identified but name not released

- Met with Director Kelly McKeague, DPAA, on Monday, 8 January
- U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs
 - 21st Plenum met November 8, 2017
 - Ongoing digitizing of Soviet military records
 - Project Zebra – Lend-Lease program during World War 2 memorial Elizabeth Beach, N.C.
 - 139 Russians buried in U.S.
 - Pushing for quarterly meetings of four working groups
 - World War 2
 - Korea
 - Vietnam
 - Cold War

- Veterans Initiative Program team consisting of VVA Vice President Marsh Four, POW/MIA Chair Grant T. Coates, and Mokie Porter, Director of Communications and Protocol Officer will be leaving on Vietnam mission 17 January and returning January 10th. The VIP team will be meeting with various Vietnamese government and provincial agencies, including senior military and bomb removal officials, veterans, and humanitarian groups associated with missing personnel from the war. The VIP is scheduled to attend 26 meetings.

Report filed with National Secretary

Constitution Committee Report

January 12, 2018

Report of the Chair

Answered questions from members, chapters and state councils related to bylaws, the constitution and parliamentary procedures. Referred several inquiries received via the VVA “Contact Us” page to the appropriate person. Revised the proposed E-Meeting Rules and submitted to Mr. Meeks for distribution and BOD consideration.

The Constitution Committee conducted its first fully electronic meeting via FreeConferenceCall.com on December 13, 2017. Seven of eight committee members were able to attend. Three members participated using both audio and visual means while four members participated with audio only. We had an ambitious agenda consisting of approving the minutes of the October 2017 meeting and discussing the revised draft of the E-Meeting Rules. We were able to accomplish everything on the agenda. A few members had trouble connecting visually but they had no problem with the audio connection. We considered the experience a success!

Constitution Committee meeting January 12, 2018

- As required by board motion the Constitution Committee has established the following goals for 2018:
 1. Submit an article for every issue of The Veteran.
 2. Review and update all information posted on the VVA web including chapter and state council bylaws templates, information related to constitutional amendments, etc.
 3. Submit proposals for bylaw seminars for the 2018 NLC
 - Reviewed and approved the Constitution Committee Budget for FY 2019
-

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING

JANUARY 12, 2018 – 2:15 P.M.

The Public Affairs Committee met on the date and time above with the following members and guests:

Members

Dennis Howland – Chair
Grant Coates
Ken Holybee
Ken Rogge
Robert Grabinski
Marc Leepson – Staff Advisor
Dan Stenvold
Ken Rose
Wes Guidry – Staff Advisor
Mokie Porter – Staff Advisor

Guests

John Kost

Image of the new approved JROTC Medal was distributed to members, background information on the medal and suggestions for selection criteria. This information was later distributed to members of the BOD.

Details on the medal and program information layout will be presented to the BOD at the April meeting in Silver Spring.

The Committee Chair has been asked to work toward some type of recognition for Eagle Scouts. It is requested that SC and Chapter Presidents send information on their current programs to dennishowland@msn.com. Seeing that many Chapters have their own good programs currently, the committee saw no need to reinvent something that may be shared among chapters.

The Committee also discussed the many public requests that come through the VVA.org website:

Only a few Examples:

- ***Veterans in Classrooms** – Appreciation goes out to the SC Presidents who have responded positively to the requests after Committee Chair relays the requests.
- ***Speakers** – The Public Affairs Committee would like to create a list of members across the country who are available and comfortable with speaking to or doing interviews with students and writers about their Vietnam Service experiences. Send you info to the same email address as above.
- ***Am fielding a request currently** for a Vietnam Veteran willing to go to Shang Hai to speak to the American School.
- ***Request for interviews by a Russian TV Channel**. Reminder that all TV requests go through Mokie Porter.
- ***Helped a veteran wounded in Vietnam** connect with a nurse he credits with saving his life. That was a great success story.

Committee members exchanged activity information from their State Councils and Chapters, and shared information and ideas that could assist others in recruiting or participating in their communities.

And Finally, shared information about Utah's 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War and the dedication of its Replica of the Vietnam Memorial, both scheduled for July 14, 2018 in Layton, Utah.

National Veterans Benefit Committee
January 2018 Report

The committee met on Thursday evening and again on Friday morning.

1. Roll Call was held and it was determined that a quorum was present.
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Minutes of the October committee meeting were presented and approved.
4. Director Yoon presented her report to the committee. She provided the committee with the status on the new Ramp proposal by the VA. Advice was provided that the VA was sending out letters to several thousand veterans over the next several months. The purpose of the information was to let the committee know that even though many would be contacted our department was recommending that at present no veteran should opt in to the pilot program. None of the staff at the VA had as yet been trained on the new program and no one knew where this was going to go. And if the Veteran opted into the new program they could not go back to the legacy version for adjudication Once switched over that was all she wrote.
5. National President, Sharon Hobbs, AVVA presented her report to the committee. The committee was advised that John Rowan, Sharon, John Margowski, and Kelsey Yoon had met prior to the committee meeting. Without going into a lot of detail suffice to say, John requested that Sharon should come up with a plan no later than the April Board meeting to have AVVA decide how they wanted to proceed with their Service Officer Program.
6. Committee Budget was discussed with no changes.
- 7A -Report of Sub-Committees:
 - Service officer Grievance Committee - Chair Joe Jennings advised that his committee had nothing pending at this time and reported no issues in the works.
- 7B. Grant Review Committee: - Chair Joe Kristek - Advised that all current grantees had submitted their reports as required. Also the new grant cycle was fast approaching and his committee will be sending out new cycle paper work to all grantees soon. Mr. Kristek advised that some grantees have been voicing concern over some of the requirements currently requested to be included in the required reports submitted for grants. Photo's being one, old 990's for another. The Committee Chair advised that he was in contact with Keith King and he would take this up with him for discussion.
- 7C Strategic Planning Committee - Chair Marc McCabe advised that the committee is moving forward with a VBC Policy rewrite. He believes that the committee should have this updates complete prior to the April Board Meeting.

C. New Business:

1. Amicus Brief - Blue Water Navy - A motion was made by this committee to have this brief presented to the NBOD for approval of VVA to enter into the case of "Gray v Secretary of Veterans Affairs a Petition along with NOVA, NVSLP, MOAA, NLOSVCC, VFW and VVA for Review of Changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs Manual M-21-1 Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. - 502. case 2016-1782 2018.1.3 for a grant for a rehearing on the decision reached in the matter of the petition known as the Blue Water Navy.

2. Appeals modernization Act - Kelsey to submit a proposal to the finance committee as part of her budget to hold a 3 day training session in January of 2019 for Service Officers. Approximate cost \$109,000 dollars for the three days. Motion was made by the committee and passed to support this proposal as presented. This training would also serve to give credit to those attending for recertification of service officers currently required every five years by the VA. The committee would also consider providing CEU's for the training or a certificate of completion or both.

3. Records Retention - This refers to the current project of this committee concerning Paper scanning. There was \$25,000 dollars put into Kelsey's budget last year to provide some back up of money to help- State Council's with expenses doing the project. Requirements to get a portion of this money were sent out to the State Council's currently in the program. Applications will have to be submitted to the department, with receipts of expenses or a plan of what expenses will be if the program is in the planning stages with the State Council.

4. A question was submitted to the committee concerning State Organizations. We have states that desire to have an MOU with VVA for the purpose of accreditation or cross accreditation for certain individuals as service officers. Prior to Ms. Yoon becoming Director of the Department, the former director allowed service officer's in several states to be accredited with VVA. This was allowed knowing that VVA did not have a presence within the states Regional Office. (note - there are reasons why representation by VVA in a states Regional Office is necessary in order to properly process claims and appeals among other things) Question: Did the committee believe that it would be proper for the VBP / department to enter into an MOU with a state that had no VVA personnel within the state's regional office. The committee decision was NO. To many times we have had situations turn south when no personnel were present from VVA at the Regional Office. Service Officers are aware of why this is necessary.

V BC report - Page 3

5. We have been negotiating with the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) for an MOU for several months. A document has been produced that is fairly close to being complete. The committee moved a motion that the MOU should be brought to the attention of the NBOD for reading and future action. The MOU was presented to the Board at

the meeting. No motion was made at this time for approval. This was done in order to provide the board members time to become familiar with the document before we submit a motion for approval.

6. Another Amicus Brief was submitted to the committee on the case of Monk v Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The committee looked this over at the meeting. The brief was approved to move forward to the Government Affairs committee for further action.

End of report

Submitted

Tom Burke -
National Chair

January 12, 2018 11AM-1PM Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee Mt.

Meeting was called to order with member roll call

Rick Weidman was there to answer any questions that the committee members may have on legislation and those that are law (such as the kids)

The chair explained that if anyone had previous research done on the children to please forward it to the National Academy of Science, Medicine and Engineering. Vice chair Robert Behrens gave an update on what's happening with Monsanto. Linda Swartz back with VVA after her retirement from the VA explained the draft copy of the survey this committee is doing. It will be adjusted with corrections and possibly sent out to our membership after the April BOD Meeting. The chair talked about the pre-meeting on Thursday from 6-8PM in the VVA National Library which all may speak with their knowledge on the very important issue.

Waynard Kaderlik

VVA National Agent Orange Committee Chair
