



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA MICHIGAN STATE COUNCIL

Annual Membership Meeting
June 10, 2018

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President John Riling, in Detroit, MI at 10:03 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, a moment of silence for the POW-MIAs and those serving in harm's way with the opening prayer by Tom Meinhardt.

Approval of the Agenda: Motion by 313/380 to accept the agenda as printed, motion passed.

Approval of the minutes: Motion by 528/310 to approve the minutes of the meeting dated April 22, 2018, motion passed.

Certification of New Delegates: Motion 1083/313 to seat Jim Suhay of Chapter 9, passed.

Introduction of Guests: Jack McManus, former MSC president; Dan Ashcraft, former MSC vice president; John Spencer, Plymouth-Canton Chapter 528 president

Roll Call of Officers:

President John Riling - Present

Vice-President Ken Rogge – Present

2nd Vice President Tom Meinhardt – Present

Secretary Gary Estermyer - Present

Treasurer Floyd Carmichael – Present

Roll Call of Chapters: 9 Jack Devine P, 18 Jim Pike A, 31 William Collins P, 73 Bob Elliot A, 109 John Gibbs P, 110 Ralph Sharp A, 133 Richard Lash P, 142 Michael Goode A, 154 Mike Schneider P, 175 Joe Mishler A, 180 Thomas Brown E, 237 Jerry Cummings A, 259 Mike Goodpaster P, 264 Ronald Schrieber A, 267 Phil Smith P, 274 Duke Mayo E, 284 Louis LaParl A, 287 David Huffman A, 310 Jon Luker P, 313 Phil Savage P, 345 Ray Phillips A, 380 Vic Romback P, 387 A, 390 Charlie Marton A, 494 Ray Essenmacher E, 528 Dennis Bielskis P, 571 Dennis Peterson A, 583 Robert Cummings A, 730 George Fincham S, 882 Terry Frank A, 1047 Joe Prato A and 1083 Tom Meinhardt P.

Present - 12, Absent - 16, Excused – 3, Suspended - 1

Chapters on suspension or Incarcerated Chapters without representation are not included in the quorum. A quorum is present.

President's Report: John welcomed everyone to this meeting and thanked everyone who helped plan the weekend events. National President John Rowan and National Vice President Marsha Four had arrived Friday afternoon and participated in the Saturday workshops and they had a good time at the banquet Saturday evening. Both of them left this morning to return home.

John spoke about the upcoming (July 24-29, 2018) Leadership Conference in Palm Springs, CA. He encouraged all members who could afford it to attend. All the officers will be going. The future of VVA will be a main topic of discussion.

1st Vice-President's Report: Ken Rogge had no report at this time.

2nd Vice-President's report: Tom Meinhardt had no report at this time.

Secretary's Report: Gary Estermyer reported he has received 15 chapter election reports as of today with 9 remaining to be sent to him by the July 15th deadline. The nine that need to be sent to him are; 73 – 264 – 284 – 287 – 345 – 387 – 571 – 583 – 730. Gary plans to submit the MSC election report to National shortly following this meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Floyd Carmichael reviewed the finance report. The bills are being paid and we still have funds in the bank. Floyd worked hard on the convention program book and it looks like we made a profit on the sale of ads to help cover convention expenses. Floyd also reported he has received 11 of 32 chapter finance reports thus far. Please go back to your chapters and let them know those reports are due to Floyd and National by July 15, 2018.

National At-large Director: Sandie Wilson spoke about veteran's health care and agent orange usage at military bases. Steve House (Army, Korea service in mid 70's) has been an excellent advocate in A.O. testimony. Sandie also spoke about the Choice Health Care program. Jack McManus was asked to speak on the issue also. Jack spoke about the passage of the Toxic Exposure Act last year and the need to follow this legislative process. We all know of the lack of leadership within the VA and the related problems that has caused. It has been reported that the VA in Denver has lost a large number of children claim files. Even though the VA won't grant any of the claims for children the VVA is checking into this situation.

Ambassador: Tim Driscoll spoke favorably about the banquet last night with all of our out-of-town guests. Tim and his wife Kathy have personally dealt with their child health issues. Washtenaw County Charles S. Kettles Chapter 310 today was having a care package packing party. They have now mailed over 4,000 care packages to our troops wherever they are stationed. Tim stressed it is always a good idea to socialize with your chapter. Tim also spoke about the Ann Arbor Fisher House project which has a matching fund campaign until June 30 for those who wish to donate.

Elections: Phil Smith explained the election process and reviewed the ballot with the delegates. The two candidates for 2nd Vice President; Tom Meinhardt and Sandie Wilson were each allowed to speak and answer questions. Shortly afterwards Phil announced that Tom was the winner. All the other candidates were unopposed and voted in by a vote of acclamation, 313/9. There was a motion 380/9 to destroy the ballots after 30 days, motion passed.

Announcements: June 26, 2018 – Veteran's Night at Comerica Park, flyers are available. Phil Smith announced that there were 8 nominees for Vet of the Year, none from VVA.
June 20, 2018 – Vic Rombach of Chapter 380 leaves for his 5th Habitat For Humanity trip to Vietnam. The group hopes to build two or three, 16' x 26' houses for needy families. Each house costs approximately \$3,000.00 and Habitat pays 1/3 of the expenses. Vic thanked all those chapters and individuals who made donations to offset his expenses.
August 21, 2018 – there will be an escort from Cabela's to Howell of the DAV "Wall That Heals"
August 22, 2018 – help is needed to set up the "Wall"
August 25, 2018 – Agent Orange Day at the "Wall"
August 26, 2018 – 2:30 PM, Closing ceremony at the "Wall"
November 11, 2018 – 25th anniversary of the Women's Vietnam Memorial @ Wash. DC

Committee Reports:

Agent Orange Riders: Mike Goodpaster reported he and other AO Riders from around the state will participate in the "Wall" escort and set-up in August and they always welcome new members.
Constitution/Bylaws:

Finance: Floyd Carmichael announced the travel policy will be reviewed by the executive board members at their next meeting.

Fundraising:

Government Affairs: Jack Devine, Michigan Veterans' Programs Funding Resolution was read and discussed. The delegates 9/310 voted unanimously to approve this Resolution, copy attached.

Grant Writing: Richard Lash / John Riling

Minority Affairs: Motion 154/133 to re-instate Chris Franklin as chairman of this committee, motion passed.

Missing In America Project: Phil Smith reported 3 veteran cremains (2 – WWII, 1 – RVN) would be interred at GLNC. Two surviving spouses were to be buried with their husbands, one at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans cemetery and one at GLNC. Military records have to be researched before burial at any state or federal cemetery.

National Cemetery: Tom Meinhardt reported there were 37,483 total burial/interments at GLNC with 2,445 YTD. On June 14th there will be a flag retirement ceremony. On August 4th the GLNC Advisory Committee is staging a golf outing fundraiser. Motion 154/528 to donate \$100.00 for a hole sponsorship, motion passed. It was also reported that GLNC was rated # 8 and Ft. Custer # 33 among 135 National Cemetery's. Floyd Carmichael reported there was now 35,856 total burial/interments at Ft. Custer, 29,143 gravesite burials. The landscaping and stump removal project has begun to allow for additional burial space.

Outreach Committee: Joe Mishler

POW/MIA: It was again reported that SSGT Marshall F. Kipina, Calumet, MI remains were identified. This now reduces Michigan's count to 48 remaining MIA from Vietnam.

Product Sales: John Riling and his crew will be leaving for Effingham, IL next weekend.

PTSD & Substance Abuse: John will move this committee to Veteran's Health Care.

Public Affairs: Ken Rogge reported he is monitoring VVA National JROTC program progress.

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS): Phil Savage reported that there is hallway and gym asbestos removal currently going on at the Battle Creek facility. Phil suggested all VAVS representatives attend their local meetings to get up-to-date information. Different VA hospitals have many different volunteer needs, such as; shuttle bus drivers, hospital greeters and the Red Coat escort program. Tim Driscoll is unaware of the Red Coat program and will check into that at the Ann Arbor VA hospital.

Veteran's Benefits/Service Program: Phil Smith reported scanning into the VVA VetPro program continues daily. The McNamara Federal Building renovation/remodel project is now working on the 13th floor, we are next. The Service Office continues to handle walk-in claim intake regarding appeals, discharge upgrades, funeral benefits, surviving spouse benefits and other general questions.

Veterans Health Care: Sandie Wilson again expressed her uncertainty regarding the VA health care direction as they have no idea of top leadership direction.

Veteran's Incarcerated and in the Justice System: Tom continues to make prison visits. Bill Collins of Muskegon Chapter 31 reported that the Muskegon facility has an ongoing prison ministry program. Chapter 31 has donated a new set of service flags and a national flag for the Muskegon prison. Muskegon also has an active Veteran's Court program which graduated 15 veterans recently. John Casazza is a volunteer mentor and strong advocate of this program. It was suggested Bill Collins become part of this committee.

AVVA: Kathy Driscoll announced that she is the newly elected MI AVVA President. There are now 14 AVVA chapters in the state which now includes Dearborn. 62% of them were in attendance this weekend. Harrison Chapter 1047 has 125 AVVA members. She had the new AVVA challenge coins available for sale and they do plan to resume the 50/50 raffle at future meetings.

AVVA Region 5 Director: Cecilia Essenmacher, Project Friendship fundraiser has targeted the amount of \$12,000.00 to raise for presentation during the Leadership Conference in Palm Springs. Cecilia reported that the Illinois AVVA members donated \$1,000.00 for Project Friendship. Motion 1083/109 to donate \$200.00 for Project Friendship, motion passed.

Unfinished Business: Leadership Conference, Palm Springs, CA, July 24-29, 2018

Next Meeting: VVA & AVVA – August 26, 2018 – **10:00/11:00? AM** – Howell American Legion
Have to confirm availability with Howell Chapter 110 on start time.

Next meeting for the Board will be Thursday, August 23, 2018 – 10:00 AM - Plymouth VFW

Oath of Office administered by Jack McManus to newly elected personnel.

Colors were retired by the combined 259/267 Honor Guard.

Meeting adjourned at 1:43 PM

Closing Prayer was offered by Floyd Carmichael and Tom Meinhardt.

Minutes taken and transcribed by: Gary Estermyer

Lodging in the Howell area is:

Holiday Inn Express
1397 N. Burkhardt Rd.
Howell, MI 48855
(517) 548-0100
South of Tanger Outlet Mall

Baymont Inn
4120 Lambert Drive
Howell, MI 48855
(517) 547-0712
North of Tanger Outlet Mall