



MIKE VOTH MEMORIAL CHAPTER 5

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

August 2020 NEWSLETTER

MEETINGS 1ST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH @ 7:00 P.M.
HELD AT VFW POST #7232, 2900 W. FOLSOM, EAU CLAIRE, WI



Together Always

Volume 6 – 8

EDITOR – Julia McBee

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 08/05/20 Chapter Meeting 7 p.m./AVVA 6:30 p.m.
- 08/07/20 National Purple Heart Day

OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President - Mike Korger 715-404-5796
- VP - Kenny Piel 715-533-2732
- Treasurer - Joe Heil 715-559-2945
- Secretary - Mac McBee 715-202-0181
- Chaplain & Sgt. At Arms - Joe Graff
- BOD Bill Buss 715-5-669-3952
- BOD Joe Graff 715-579-0912
- BOD Ralph Ottum 715-223-6260
- BOD Rory Schutte 715-563-1583
- BOD Al Weix 715-832-4792

Chapter website: www.mikevothmemorialvva5.org
 Chapter email: www.mikevothmemorialvva5@gmail.com
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/mikevothmemorialvva5

COMMITTEES

- AVVA Chapter Representative - Rick Talford 715-926-5302
- Color Guard – Rick Talford 715-926-5302
- Eau Claire Veteran’s Council – Dan Ziegler 715-559-5158
- Finance – Joe Heil 715-839-7089
- Fundraising – J. Heil, J. McBee
- Government Affairs – Bob Laguban 651-285-8518
- Historical – Julia McBee 715-202-0181
- Minority Affairs – Dave Zien 715-829-9436
- Membership – Joe Heil 715-839-7089
- Outdoor Recreation – Bill Anderson 715-530-3481
- POW/MIA/Highground – Joe Graff 715-579-0912
- Public Affairs – Joe Graff 715-579-0912
- Scholarship – J. Heil, Chair; J. Graff, M. Korger, J/J McBee
- Veterans Assistance – Dave Mayenchein 715-669-3169
- Veterans Home – Rory Schutte 715-563-1583
- Women Veterans – Julia McBee 715-202-0181

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA’S
FOUNDING PRINCIPLE,

***“Never again will one generation
of veterans abandon another.”***



God Bless All Veterans

P.O. Box 832, Eau Claire, WI 54702





August 2020

Greetings,

Hopefully, this finds everyone in good health. It felt great to see all who were able to make it to our July meeting which we held outside at Post 7232. The highlight for July was the monster flag and flagpole dedication on July 3rd for the Chippewa Valley Veterans Tribute Trail at River Prairie Park in Altoona. We had a lot of our members there amongst a good-sized crowd to witness this unique event. (pictures below)

Our Chapter's Color Guard led the parade at Mondovi on July 4th which was a hot one. We also supplied the Color Guard at the cemetery in Mondovi for the military honors for deceased VVA member, Dwight Winberg. The Mondovi American Legion did the three volleys and three Marines from St. Paul played Taps and did the flag presentation. Four of us also participated in military honors at West Lawn Cemetery in Augusta for a WWII Marine veteran, George Stanek.

Other than our monthly meeting, I am unaware of any planned activities in August. But keep your eyes and ears open, especially for the needs and concerns of fellow veterans.

I hope to see many of you at our next regular VVA meeting at 7:00 p.m. (AVVA at 6:30 p.m.) at VFW Post 7232 on Folsom Street on the west side of Eau Claire.

Mike Korger
President, VVA Chapter 5



VVA CHAPTER MEETING 7/1/2020

Sgt. At Arms, Joe Graff, opened our meeting at 1910 with the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer, and asked for silent prayer for Gladys Heil, wife of Treasurer, Joe Heil, who was taken to Mayo Hospital late this afternoon with an emergent health concern. Joe will not be present tonight, please keep them and their family in your thoughts and prayers during the week. There are no guests or new members present tonight.

REPORTS

SECRETARY – Motion made by Ralph Ottum, seconded by Jake Eunglach, to accept the report as sent via mail and email; motion carried.

VICE PRESIDENT – Larry Wryzca not present, no report.

PRESIDENT – Mike Korger welcomed everyone after months of not seeing one another due to Covid-19, we will plan on having an August meeting, but if there are city/county directives we need to follow, messages will be sent out reflecting this, otherwise we're hoping to see everyone on Wednesday, August 5, 2020, until then, stay healthy, practice good social distancing, wear your masks and keep one another posted about any health concerns or family issues that Chapter members should be made aware of.

The Veterans Tribute Trail is finally going to be realized! The new name will now be **Chippewa Valley Veterans Tribute Trail** as the location in Altoona's River Prairie Park was chosen to encompass all the Chippewa Valley. Tomorrow, Thursday 7/2 at 5:00 p.m., there will be a practice for the flag raising, which will be held on Friday, 7/3 at 11:00 a.m. where social distancing will be adhered to, as much as possible, and face masks encouraged. There will be an opening message, a reading by Dave Zien, prayer by Joe Heil, and then the 40'x80' flag will be raised by area veterans and dedicated. There will not be any type of a social gathering afterwards, but information will be available if you wish to find out how to purchase a Legacy Stone or donate to the foundation.

Our Chapter's Color Guard will be marching in the Mondovi 4th of July Parade, step-off is at 1:00 p.m. with line-up at noon. If you wish to participate, please call Rick Talford to coordinate. There will be a veteran's gathering at the Marten Center, on Main Street after the parade from 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

AVVA - Rick Talford was re-elected as Chapter Representative by AVVA members present tonight. He is also now the Region 6 Director after Fran Davis stepped down. Congratulations Rick on your promotion from Deputy Director to Director. Currently there are 323 AVVA members in the state of Wisconsin with 26 members from Chapter 5. Pat Furno remains Wisconsin's State Representative and it is hopeful that there will be a State Council meeting in September. More on that reality when available.

Did you know that our very own Sally Johnson was recognized as a Jefferson Awards recipient last year? Founded in 1972, the Jefferson Awards for Public Service recognizes individuals for their public and community service, both on a national and local level *"that recognizes, inspires and activates volunteerism and public service in communities, workplaces and schools across America."* WQOWs July 2019 winner for her dedication to helping veterans, Sally can be found at the L.E. Phillips Senior Center every Wednesday to offer support and help, especially with VA red tape! And if you've ever been the recipient of one of her quilts, you'll know how dedicated she is to honor the service of veterans in memory of her late husband, Glenn. Chapter 5 has been blessed to have had quilts gifted to us as prizes in our yearly raffle fundraiser.

The AVVA website has been redesigned, is more readable and user friendly. Also, *The VVA Veteran* is now only available in an online format. Though the Leadership Conference in Dayton was cancelled due to Covid-19, the AVVA still contributed \$10,000 to the Feeding America, Inc. national office and \$2,900 to Holt Street Miracle Center in Dayton, OH.

VVA NATIONAL – Plans are to hold the next national conference in Greensboro, NC in August of 2021.

WI STATE COUNCIL – Plans are to hold a state council meeting this September in Waupaca, if this changes notification will be made. Plans are to hold a Toxic Exposure Townhall in November in Milwaukee, again, if there are any changes to this plan, notification will be made.

DISTRICT 6 – There are no plans currently to hold a District 6 meeting until “Covid is over.”

BENEFITS – No report available.

MINORITY – Dave Zien talked about the plans to possibly include Highground as part of the National Park Services, primarily due to the monument dedicated to Native American veterans, but as of now Highground is still private. He also asked for support of the Chapter to have Don Quicker as an inductee to the UW Hall of Fame and he passed out a copy of a write-up written about Don for all to see. He also reported that there was an article in the *EC Leader* about the Roadside Diner and wants to remind everyone that the owners are entitled to their view on wearing/not wearing masks, as is everyone, and that they are the ones that have allowed us to install the Legacy Signs and where we want to install the third sign dedicated to Dennis Werlein and the Hmong, and they are anxious for us to get that sign installed but he is still trying to get information from the Hmong.

MEMBERSHIP – Currently we have 125 VVA members and 26 AVVA members.

OLD BUSINESS

RAFFLE/FUNDRAISER – Our Chapter’s raffle license has been renewed with the state, so we are good to go for next year. No thoughts yet about organizing next year’s raffle.

HIGHGROUND – Joe Graff reported on the new director, Chris Prattis, a 28-year USMC veteran, who is from Osseo and returned there with his family upon retiring from the military. There is a raffle going on, Ralph Ottum and Dave Zien have tickets if interested, with the drawing planned for August 8th. Camp Victory is planning an Open House on August 15th and there are already two veteran retreats planned for this September, one for men and one for women.

CLOTHING – There are shirts and hoodie sweatshirts available, interested individuals would need to contact Joe Heil to see what colors and sizes are available. Joe is working with a new vender to get our Chapter logo downloaded so new stock can be obtained.

NEW BUSINESS

CHAPTER ELECTIONS – Nominees for President, Mike Korgor; VP, Kenny Piel; Treasurer, Joe Heil; Secretary, Mac McBee; BOD, Bill Buss; BOD, Joe Graff; BOD, Ralph Ottum; BOD, Rory Schutte; BOD, Al Weix (Note: Dave Mayenschein, has offered to be an alternate BOD/delegate if needed.) With no further discussion or nominees, Joe Graff made a motion, seconded by Ralph Ottum, to accept these individuals for Chapter officers and Board of Director members; motion carried. Mike Korgor then asked three times for any other nominees, hearing none, voting for the officers and BOD members as motioned was unanimously agreed upon. Officers and BOD will serve for a two-year term. Discussion

then turned to delegates for the VVA State Council and as we are allowed to name up to 12 members to be delegates or alternate delegates, we determined to name all officers and BOD members as delegates since these individuals are the usual attendees to state council meetings. Without further interest being added to the list of delegates from those present, Joe Graff motioned that we accept all officers and BOD members as state council delegates, seconded by Ralph Ottum; motion carried. (Note: Dave Mayenschein also agreed to be a delegate/alternate.)

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Dave Zien commented on the issues he has been having with his rock pile in front of his home. There will be a township meeting on 7/14 to render a decision. He also requested that we keep in our thoughts and prayers a brother veteran who is experiencing some health concerns and is feeling down as there doesn't seem to be any answers for what/how/why and no effective treatment thus far.

Encourage one another as we are aging and experiencing health/family concerns that really affect all of us, keep one another in prayer, make phone calls, send cards, etc., to encourage one another and if a need is known, offer to find someone or an agency, that could help; even if you don't know where or who to turn to, by making a need known to others, an answer may be found.

Augusta American Legion will be celebrating their 100th year anniversary this August, more information on a celebration when available.

Trinity Equestrian Center has cancelled their annual *Horsepower for Veterans* event but have created a *Champions for Veterans 2020* event which is a virtual ride anyone can take "anywhere, anytime, on anything through Labor Day. Email your trip photo, along with names and a message if desired, to ChampionsForVeterans@gmail.com, and your photo will be posted the Friday after your donation is received on Trinity's Facebook page, OR, take a trip out to Trinity and take a selfie by their *CHAMPIONS FOR VETERANS* banner and forward along with your donation. Keep up to date on *CHAMPIONS FOR VETERANS* at #CFVRIDE. Trinity Equestrian Center, S5300 State Road 37, Eau Claire, WI 54701.

Next Chapter Meeting – Fingers crossed, we will be able to return to regular, first Wednesday of the month meetings here at VFW Post 7232 with AVVA starting their meeting at 6:30 p.m. and VVA at 7:00 p.m. so hopefully, we'll all see one another on August 5th. Should there be any cancellations due to health concerns or city/county closures, you will receive notification.

For Immediate Release, July 14, 2020

Chairman Takano, Luria Respond to the Long Awaited VA Character of Discharge Regulation

Washington, D.C. – Today, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Mark Takano (D-CA) and Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Chair Elaine Luria (D-VA) released the following statements regarding the new Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposed federal regulation to update and clarify regulatory bars to benefits based on character of discharge (COD). VBA's proposed rule comes after almost four years of pushing from Veteran Service Organizations and advocates like Kris Goldsmith, a "bad paper" veteran who shared his powerful testimony last week, and just two days after the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs hearing "Stuck in Red Paper; How VA's Regulatory Policies Prevent Bad Paper Veterans from Accessing Critical Benefits" that detailed the barriers Other Than Honorable (OTH) veterans face.

“VA’s proposed rule to update its character of discharge policy is a clear win for the LGBTQ community—finally removing archaic references to same sex preference and other discriminatory language that has historically precluded LGBTQ veterans from receiving the benefits they earned,” said Chairman Takano. “We have to make sure this is more than a feel good exercise and that VA continues to engage with advocates to create a rule that is fair to all “bad paper” veterans and increases access to key benefits and care. The 500,000 veterans currently left out of the VA system cannot afford any further delays in the search for an equitable process.”

“Just two days after our Subcommittee hearing, VA finally published its proposed rule, and I’m grateful that our oversight could play a role in expediting a process that’s taken almost four years,” said Chair Luria. “VA’s proposal is a step in the right direction by removing all references to sexual orientation and assuring that VA will consider ‘compelling circumstances’ as it determines a veteran’s character of discharge. However, the definition of ‘willful and persistent misconduct’ is unclear –as written, two minor behavioral issues within two years could bar a veteran from benefits. The proposal also fails to extend the ‘compelling circumstances’ consideration to veterans discharged in lieu of general court-martial, a rule that could adversely impact veterans of some branches like the Army and Air Force that use that separation process more frequently. VA’s final rule must ensure that all veterans receive fair consideration for these much needed benefits.”



Mondovi, WI 4th of July Parade, 2020

VVA Chapter #5
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