

Vietnam Vet Gazette



In Service to America®



Dec 2016

Issue 171



Veterans Day Parade in Beaver



The 5th Annual Toxic Exposure Balloon release was held on November 11, after the Veterans Day Parade in Beaver. Emcee was AVVA President Bobbie Morris, and speakers were Larry Googins and Jake Barsottini. It was a beautiful day with 110 in attendance. A special thanks to pastor Doug for entertainment, and Matt from Ron Lewis Automotive Group for the balloons. Thank you for your continual support of our Veterans and families affected.

—Bobbie Morris

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 862, Southwestern Pa.

www.vva862.org | PO Box 26, Rochester, PA 15074

Monthly Meetings
— 7pm —

Board of Directors
Second Wednesday

General Membership
Third Wednesday

All meetings held at

Rochester VFW • 179 Virginia Ave • Rochester, PA 15074

Our Motto: Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.

Legislative Update

December 5, 2016

Bart Farzati, Government Affairs

As of this writing President Elect Trump has not chosen a VA Secretary for his new cabinet. In a recent meeting with Trump transition staff, representatives from thirty-one veterans' organizations pressed the incoming administration for the need to keep most VA services in house and resist efforts to expand the Choice program to every veteran thereby depleting resources and patients from the VA system. VVA's Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs told the new administration "You ain't seen nothing yet if you send people to the private sector" (*Washington Post, Power Post, 1 December 2016*) The new administration has made campaign statements to indicate they favor proposals that would expand the choice program but has not yet explained how it would be paid for or how to address the cost to the VA health care system.

VVA National President John Rowan has published an open letter to both President Obama and President Elect Trump asking them both to use their executive action to administratively change the bad discharges many combat veterans got under the so called Personality Disorder diagnosis. These discharges are considered "bad paper" and

make these veterans ineligible for services from the VA that they may need to address conditions that were the result of their service. It is a great letter available at the VVA website or at the following link: <https://vva.org/programs/government-affairs/an-open-letter-to-the-president-and-the-president-elect/>

PASSED Unanimously (week of December 10) — Miller-Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Act of 2016. This legislation contains all the language of the *Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015*, of which Vietnam Veterans of America was a strong supporter. Here is a statement from VVA national President John Rowan's press release:

"This legislation, a necessary first step, has been a top priority for VVA. It will lay the groundwork for the research we need on the health of our children and grandchildren, whom we believe have been impacted by exposures during our military service—and in keeping with our founding principle: Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another—this legislation will ensure that our newer veterans will not have to wait 50 years for answers." <https://vva.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/VVA-Press-Release-16-34.pdf>

Upcoming Chapter 862 Special Meetings & Events

- Dec 17 – Wreaths Across America, Quay Park Gazebo, Beaver, 12:00pm
- Dec 21 – Christmas Membership Dinner (at the beginning of the VVA Meeting— 7 pm)
- Dec 24-25 - Christmas Vigil, Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Other Events

- Dec 21– Veterans Breakfast Club, Robert Morris University
- Feb 18 – Tet Party Reunion, The Fez, Hopewell Twp

Red text indicates updated information



In Memoriam

Member Livio Pagani

Fallston, Pa. — November 20, 2016

Life Member Don Cripe

New Galilee, Pa. — November 28, 2016

Rest in Peace, Brothers

Vietnam Veterans of America



Chapter 862 - Southwestern PA

18TH ANNUAL
**TET PARTY
REUNION**

Saturday, February 18, 2017

The Fez

2312 Brodhead Road - Hopewell Township, PA

Doors open at 4:30 PM—Program starts at 6:00 PM—Dinner follows



Program Features



Memorial Ceremony for Beaver County Veterans Lost in Action
VVA Chapter 862 Color Guard & Marine JROTC Color Guard



Tickets only \$25 - Tables of 10 may be reserved for \$250

*Price includes Buffet Dinner, Draft Beer, Soft Drinks, Coffee & Dessert * Cash Bar available*

Music & Dancing by **Rudy Zetz**

Call for tickets NOW: **724-843-6828** (tickets sell out early)

To order tickets by mail, send check with a self-addressed stamped envelope to:
VVA Chapter 862, 119 Jonathan Drive, Darlington PA 16115



General Meeting MINUTES

November 16, 2016

Next VVA 862 Meeting: Dec 21, 7:00 p.m.

Michelle Wilcox, Secretary VVA 862

Called to order by President Larry Googins @ 7:00 PM

Opening Prayer by Lon Hogue. Attendance was 118.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Exec VP Bill Laughner

VVA Motto: "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another"

Roll Call of Officers Present – 11, Excused - 3, Absent – 0

Guest Speaker – Susan Pierce, a Gold Star family member spoke about the Foster Grandparent Program of Southwestern PA. She is the Program Coordinator for Allegheny, Beaver & Butler Counties. Foster grandparent volunteers help children develop academic & life skills critical to future success. Sue can be reached at 724-728-2110 for more information.

Introduction of Guests or Prospective Members – Don Tice & Philip Connor.

Members Sick or in Distress – Philip Morris, Gloria Villella, Ron Heitzenrater & Ted Rutkowski.

Secretary's Report: Minutes: No corrections to the October minutes. Communications - All communications were read.

Treasurer's Report: Jake Barsottini went over all acct balances, which were approved pending audit.

Committee Reports

Agent Orange – Mike Coligure worked four outreaches including the Rolling Thunder conference in Washington, DC. He also talked about "Going Back to Vietnam" on WQED. Talk to your congressmen about the Toxic Exposure Act

Legislative – Bart Farzati talked about the Veterans First Act, which includes toxic substances, caregivers, etc. He talked to current state representatives, asking them to put pressure on our Federal legislators from PA concerning toxic exposure acts.

Membership - Gary Shaffer Membership 778 - LIFE 691. Since August 2015, there have been 156 Life members added, 75 which are new members.

Publicity – Dick Pegg stated that WBVP has approved a time slot for Lynwood Alford and himself to talk about our organization and the need for minority involvement.

Women Veterans – Terri Carr said that the Veterans Hope group was very appreciative of the donation from our chapter.

Hospitalized Veterans – Terri Carr talked about the successful visitation at the Butler VA. A date hasn't been set for Brighton Rehab.

Honor/Color Guard - Rick Raich – Honor Guard – 1 funeral. The Veterans Day parade was a great success. Next honor guard practice will be on December 9th @ 7:00 PM at the Midland VFW.

Memorial Bricks – Ron Heitzenrater – Three bricks were put in place and two more applications were given to Rome monuments.

Information from the November BOD meeting

- 1.) Exec. Pres. Bill Laughner – talked about the flag raising ceremony that he, Jake Barsottini and Michelle Wilcox attended at Blackhawk Intermediate School on October 8th.
- 2.) Larry Googins & Bill Laughner attended the County commissioners 2017 budget meeting. There will be no cuts, the satellite offices will receive their funds and the county office will be making cuts.
- 3.) There are some loose bricks on the memorial planter. Will fix when the weather warms up.

MINUTES – *continued*

- 4.) The Agent Orange Recognition Resolution was presented at the CCBC Veterans breakfast.
- 5.) Christmas Vigil. John Szatkiewicz volunteered to chair the vigil.

President's report

New Business

Larry talked about our continuing association with the Yellow Ribbon Girls. Motion made by Joe Maverro and 2nd by Luke Patrino to donate \$1000.00 to the Yellow Ribbon Girls. Motion passed.

We support Bochek's Battalion, who ship Christmas cookies to our troops. Motion made by Bill Harlow and 2nd by Wally Chevront to donate \$500.00 to Bochek's Battalion. Motion passed.

VVA National is establishing two panels to formulate a strategic plan to transition VVA in the future. The 1st is to decide how disburse the assets and programs started over the years; the 2nd to decide what to do with the VVA, i.e. "last man standing", transition or integration into another organization. National is still looking for volunteers to serve on the panels.

Festival of Trees – Chuck Inman dispersed information concerning times. He needs people to work at the VVA table. This is also the last day to purchase a wreath for Wreaths across America.

The December 21st meeting & Christmas dinner will start at 7:00 PM. Dinner will be served first with the meeting to follow. Bring desserts. This is for members of VVA & AVVA only.

Vice-Presidents' Reports

Exec. VP Bill Laughner – The Veteran "thank-you" letters on the tables were created by the 3rd grade students of Hopewell Elementary School.

If you received a survey from the VA, please consider filling it out.

AVVA – Linda Szatkiewicz - Membership 156 - Life 99

The chapter is 2nd in the nation, 2nd in the region and 1st in the State. Need volunteers for the Festival of Trees. Christmas card envelopes are in and the cards can be picked up at the Festival of Trees. 50/50 was \$150.00 and was won by Pete Herman.

Good of the Chapter

- 1.) Rick Raich talked about the 2nd annual Operation Oreo being held by Robert Morris University Band and Kappa Kappa Psi Band Fraternity. They are collecting packages of Oreos until Dec. 4th for the 316th Army National Guard from Moon Twp who will be deploying to the Middle East in December.
- 2.) Bart Farzati talked about the changes in the VA for prescription glasses. You no longer have to be 40% to qualify. The eye department is in Oakland.
- 3.) A request was made to donate to the memorial fund of the fallen Canonsburg police officer. Officer Bashioum served and retired from the Air Force. Motion was made by Chuck Szabo and 2nd by Steve Kisio to donate \$1000 to the Officer Scott Bashioum memorial fund. Motion passed.
- 4.) Ken Pingatore talked about the Military Museum at the Beaver Falls Library. They are looking for donations of uniforms. Contact director Betty Anderson @ 724-774-6229.
- 5.) Rochester VFW is retiring flags on November 19th @ 9:00 AM.

Closing Prayer by Lon Hogue. Meeting adjourned @ 8:30 PM.



Bring a Dessert to Share at the December 21 meeting (*members-only dinner for VVA & AVVA*). Dining begins at 7 pm and is followed by the business meeting.

AVVA Meeting MINUTES

October 19, 2016

Next AVVA 862 Meeting: Dec 21, 6:00 p.m.

Keith Black, Secretary AVVA 862



A regular meeting of AVVA Chapter 862 was called to order by Vice-President Linda Szatkiewicz at 6:00 pm with a reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the POW/MIA.

Chaplain Barb Googins said a word of prayer.

Guest Susan Pierce was welcomed.

Roll Call of officers and board members: Sandy Giordano, Bobbie Morris, and Carl Curtis were excused.

Treasurer Sue Bridgewater gave report. Approved pending audit.

Secretary Keith Black read the minutes for October. A motion was made by Barb Googins with a second by Judy Hage. Motion carried.

Membership Chair Sue Smith reported that we now have 157 members and 100 life members. We are 2nd in National, 2nd in the region, and 1st in the State.

VISTA Chair Laurel Beitsinger: 62.5 hours were submitted.

Old Business

Envelopes were ordered in Metallic Red.

Rita Swesey is continuing to take shirt and sweatshirt orders.

The Festival of Trees is coming up and help will be needed to cover the tables at the Brady's Run Lodge. Check with Rita for time slots and how you can assist.

Barb Googins attended the VA Butler visit along with Terri, Rick, Lee, Ken, and Larry. Pete Herman walked around with them all day. The veterans liked and wanted the VVA shirts and gave laundry lists of needs. The VVA is working on getting the shirts and maybe some of the PX out there to them.

New Business

Next month's meeting, dinner will be at 7:00 p.m. then the VVA meeting will be held. Bring desserts.

Terri Carr was asked if she could add Beaver Valley to her list of locations where Veterans Visits will be done. We usually do a Christmas visit but a date has not been setup as of yet.

For the Christmas Banquet, if there is anything that Barb needs for decoration, we would be happy to help.

Bobbie made offer to make a donation to the VFW children gift giving if the Post is having one. The Post declined since it is in-house but was grateful for the offer.

Bobbie asked that we purchase gifts for the Women's Shelter in Beaver. Barb Googins made a motion to reimburse for whatever the cost is since the number of children is not known. Rita Swesey made a second. Motion carried.

TET Raffle tickets are available for purchase and to sell. Please see Rita.

Good of the Chapter

The Toxic Exposure Balloon release was a great success. Thank you for attending to recognize, remember, and honor our veterans affected by Agent Orange and toxic exposures.

Senator Vogel's Veterans Breakfast was great turn out and a honor for VVA/AVVA to receive the Agent Orange Proclamation Certificate.

Thank you to Donna for driving in the parade. The signs looked great. Bobbie has pictures.

Susan Pierce talked about the Foster Grandparent program. Volunteer work is done wherever education is taking place to assist children with special needs such as learning problems, a parent in the military, or physical limitations as examples. Thank you Susan, it is always great to see you.





VVA and AVVA Visit Butler—Larry Googins, —, Terri Carr, Rick Raich, Lee Corfield, Ken Pingatore (Barbara Googins is behind the camera!)

VA Butler Community Living Center

Larry Googins, President

On November 10, Terri Carr arranged for members of Chapter 862 to visit the patients at the VA Community Living Center in Butler. She purchased and collected small gifts and we distributed gift bags to all the veterans residing in the 60 room facility. Together with Terri Carr, Rick Raich, Lee Corfield, Ken Pingatore, Barbara Googins and I visited the veterans residing in this excellent facility. We were also aided by VVA 862 life member Pete Herman, who is also currently residing in the Center. It was a very enjoyable and rewarding afternoon for both the residents and us. We met World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans who were all National heroes. I wish more members of our chapter had been there to see the faces of these veterans when we entered their rooms. Even those who struggled to speak recognized that we were there and found a way to smile. It was a fantastic day. When you see Lee, ask him about the Korean War veteran in room 414.

Terri plans to arrange visits to other local veteran's homes very soon with the same program. I encourage more chapter members to join her and bring a little joy to our brothers and sisters. It will be time worth spent. Thank you.



January Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 2 | Mary Alice Bernstein
James Shumaker | 16 | James McGeehan
Tony Spataro |
| 3 | Murl Thompson | 17 | Mark Buczko
Bob Dunlap |
| 4 | Charles Tarr | | Don McCuean
Mike Mikulich |
| 5 | Lynwood Alford
Bill Harlow
Michelle Wilcox | | Dennis Johnson
William Sobona |
| 6 | Dennis Graham
Rich Tindell | 18 | Don Griener |
| 7 | Jerome Szatkowski | 19 | Al Cooper
Dave Hendrickson |
| 8 | John Voycik | | James Huntsman |
| 9 | Dan Nightingale
Geraldine Pierce
Larry Pearsol
Dan Pratt
Bob Schmetzer | 20 | Terry Speerhas
Joe Todorowski |
| 11 | Herb Gruntz
Dave Landsbaugh | 21 | Milen Cokrlc |
| 12 | Rich Evans
Wes Hill
Nick Williams | 23 | Don Miller |
| 13 | Dan Erzen | 25 | Dennis Curtin
Alex Sebastian |
| 14 | Mike Hornick
Allan Jones | 27 | Mike Galbraith
Rich Wertz
John Krul |
| 15 | Bill Herstine
Jerome Gogolin
Tony Pallatto | 28 | Frank Santilli |
| | | 30 | Shawn Duguay
Steve Kisio |
| | | 31 | Bob Eiler
Tracey Escamilla
Rich Kulpa |

Vietnam Veterans of America MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Vietnam Veterans of America Membership
is open to any Veteran who served
Anywhere during the Vietnam War era

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Birthday ____/____/____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

I served in the US military (for other than training purposes) between 8/5/1964 & 5/7/1975

OR

I served in the US military in Vietnam between 2/28/1961 & 5/7/1975

DD-214 enclosed

I did not serve in the military during these times, but I wish to join the **Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA)** - \$20.00 / Year

NEW MEMBER

RENEWAL - Membership Card # _____

One (1) Year Membership \$20.00

Three (3) Year Membership \$50.00

Life Membership \$75.00



In Service to America

Mail completed form, copy of DD-214 and check to:

VVA Chapter 862
P.O. Box 26
Rochester, PA 15074

Chapter 862 Officers & Directors

(All 724 Area Codes unless noted)

Officers

President– Larry Googins 869-7090
Exec– VP Bill Laughner 843-6828
1st VP– Phil Morris 643-5725
Secretary– Michelle Wilcox 847-3463
Treasurer– Jake Barsottini 601-7293

Directors

Nick Pavkovich (3)	Gary Shaffer (2)	Don Villella (1)
Ron Heitzenrater (3)	Rich Raich (2)	Cliff Hawes (1)
Ron Ippolito (3)	Terri Carr (2)	Lee Corfield (1)

Chapter 862 Delegates

Larry Googins	Lee Corfield	John Szatkiewicz
Bill Laughner	Nick Pavkovich	Gary Shaffer
Philip Morris	Rich Raich	Dave Walker
Michelle Wilcox	Terri Carr	Bob Weismantle
Jake Barsottini	Ray Rapp	

Standing Committees

Agent Orange / Dioxin– Mike Coligure412-613-1810
Chapter Service Coordinators– Michelle Wilcox 847-3463
 Nick Pavkovich 847-0592
Community Services– Chuck Inman 709-7747
Finance / Auditor– Bill Winkle 774-2626
Government Affairs– Bart Farzati 777-2193
Membership– Gary Shaffer 643-8941
Minority Affairs– Reuben Fuller 378-4990
POW / MIA– Phil Morris 643-5725
Public Affairs– Katy Miller 709-8104
Veterans Affairs / Benefits Advisor– Kathy Nairn 770-4450
Women Veterans– Terri Carr 330-692-1849

Special Committees

Honor / Color Guard– Ray Litzinger 378-5855
Homeless Veterans– Bill Porupsky 495-7051
Hospitalized Veterans– Terri Carr 330-692-1849
Nominating– Lon Hogue 846-8857
PX– Frank Petz 774-1867
PTSD / Substance Abuse– Ray Litzinger 378-5855
Scholarship– Lon Hogue 846-8857
Veterans Assistance– Bill Laughner 601-3597

Other Positions / Chairpersons

Chaplain– Don Villella 843-7401
Highway Clean-up– Charles Ray 827-8310
Memorial Bricks– Ron Heitzenrater 452-7483
Newsletter– Susan Fudurich .print@myinkstar.com 847-2940
Veterans Memorials– Rich Tindell 336-5457
Webmaster– Lee Corfield 775-3027

AVVA Chapter 862

Officers

President– Bobbie Morris 643-5725
VP Linda– Szatkiewicz 643-8422
Secretary– Keith Black 513-3177
Treasurer– Sue Bridgewater 643-0731

Directors

Sandy Giordano 203-4569
 Carl Curtis 869-0294
 Rita Swesey 775-7529

Parliamentarian Veronica Grant 462-3717
Chaplain Barb Googins 869-7090
Membership Susan Smith 728-6741