



Mike Voth Memorial

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #5
Eau Claire, WI 54702
February Newsletter 2016



Meetings held 1st Wednesday of every month @ 7pm at
VFW Post #7232, 2900 W. Folsom St., Eau Claire, WI

Volume 2 Issue 2 Editor □ Julie McBee Asst. Editor □ Dennis Wood

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 02/01/16 Welcome Home Picnic Committee Meeting @ Xcel Energy from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- 02/03/16 Chapter Meeting @ 7 p.m.
- 03/02/16 Chapter Meeting @ **Chippewa Vets Home**
Come for a tour @ 6 p.m. and stay for the program
- 03/19/16 VVA State Council Meeting @ Waupaca
- 04/02/16 Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day @ Eagles Club
- 06/18/16 VVA State Council Meeting @ Highground
- 06/18/16 Welcome Home Picnic @ Carson Park
- 07/19-25 Persian Gulf Tribute @ Highground
- 09/10/16 Chapter 5's 4th Annual Fundraiser

NOTE: Shirts and hats still available, if interested call Joe Heil. Shirts, depending on whether color guard or not, \$20 or \$40 with \$2-4 more for XL sizes; braids \$12.50; hats \$21.50

COMMITTEES

- Finance: Joe Heil 715-839-7089
- Govt. Affairs: Bob Laguban 651-285-8518
- Membership: Joe Heil 715-839-7089
- Public Affairs: Joe Graff 715-579-0912
- Minority Affairs: Roger Schuh 715-926-6052
- Veterans Affairs-Benefits: Rory Schutte 715-563-1583
- Women Veterans: Julie McBee 715-202-0181
- POW/MIA/Highground: Joe Graff 715-579-0912
- Agent Orange/Incarcerated & Veterans Health Care: Peter Breed 715-827-0359
- Fundraising Chair: Larry Wrycza 715-402-0106
- Fundraising Co-Chair: Julie McBee 715-202-0181
- Scholarship: J. Graff, J. Heil, J. McBee, D. Werlein & L. Wrycza
- Welcome Home Picnic: R. Pettis, B. Laguban, E. Laventure, P. Breed & D. Johnson

CHAPTER CONTACTS

- President: Dennis Werlein 715-577-8514
- VP: Bob Laguban 651-285-8518
- Treasurer: Joe Heil 715-839-7089
- Secretary: Mike Korger 715-726-3918
- Chaplain: Dan Ziegler 715-559-5158

BOARD of DIRECTORS

- Joe Graff 715-579-00912
- Ken Lenstrud 715-556-9440
- Dan Ziegler 715-559-5158

**Founding principle,
Vietnam Veterans of America
"Never again will one generation
of veterans abandon another."**



God Bless All Veterans

CHAPTER MOTO: "HONOR THE DEAD AND FIGHT LIKE HELL FOR THE LIVING"



☑️ pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.☑️

To be given slow and deliberate, not a speed test!



Chapter Members,

We had another good meeting last month. There was lots of enthusiasm for an outdoor recreation committee to take handicapped kids fishing, etc. About five Chapter members stepped up to participate in the effort. We also had a good time at the Christmas party on a cold night. There was good music and nice door prizes given out.

Throughout our Chapter's history we have made good friends and alliances in the surrounding communities. In the future our Chapter needs to cultivate and expand these to lead the pack on Veterans' and other issues and create new examples of participation to help those in need of help in our communities.

In our February meeting on the 3rd, we will have to form a nominating committee to research and find nominees to continue the Chapter's mission as I will not be running for reelection as Chapter President.

Other Chapter business to be done: 1) Update of the Welcome Home Picnic, 2) Plans and needs for the annual Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day scheduled for April 2nd at the Eagles Club and 3) Report from the Education Committee on the classroom presentations.

Our March Chapter meeting will be held at the Chippewa Vets Home on March 2nd. We will be inviting the Vietnam Veterans in the home to attend and will be showing a DVD on the highlights of the beginning of the VVA formation and its founding convention.

Also as a point of information, all members of the Chapter are invited to a weekly Vietnam Veterans meeting over coffee and donuts every Wednesday afternoon from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the LE Phillips Senior Center on Bellinger Street.

See you there and at the next Chapter meeting on February 3rd at VFW Post #7232 at 7 p.m.

Your Chapter President,

Dennis Werlein

NOTE: If you have ordered shirts you need to pick them up and pay for them from Joe Heil—he has about six or eight shirts that were ordered but as yet picked up or paid for. Thank you!

VVA Meeting of 1/6/2016

President Dennis Werlein called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

Larry Wrycza led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chaplain Dan Ziegler gave the opening prayer. Dennis told us to say an extra prayer for Mac as Julie took him to the hospital today.

President Dennis acknowledged new member David Mayenschein.

A motion passed to accept the Secretary's Report by Mike Korger as emailed and mailed out.

A motion passed to accept the Treasurer's Report given by Joe Heil.

Dennis then gave us the President's Report. The National Toxic Exposure Act which is national legislation needs more co-sponsors, so call your Senators and Representatives to get them on board. There is a possible extension of the \$100 Life Membership for VVA members. The original deadline was Dec. 31st, but those postmarked this week will be accepted yet.

National Council Meeting Report: Joe Heil said there is no report presently as National happens every two years.

State Council Meeting Report: Jim Blaha went to the last meeting but he is not here to give a report. Jim was to ask at that meeting for an Agent Orange presentation to be possibly done at our next annual Vietnam Veteran's Day.

VA Benefits Claims Report: Rory Schutte gave a short report. He said to call the number that is on your First Choice Program card. Ron Perry said that he was surprised to receive a smaller amount of travel pay the last time he went to Tomah VA. He found out that the travel pay is only to the nearest VA facility, which for him was Owen. Many were unaware that there was a VA office in Owen, but some were aware of its existence. Much discussion ensued on health care issues.

Minority Report: Roger Schuh said he did not have a report.

Membership Report: Joe Heil emphasized that all paperwork for new members should be sent to him first and he will make a copy just in case National loses the paperwork, as has already happened. Joe said we should wind up with about 120 members after all current paperwork is finalized. President Dennis gave a Chippewa Veterans Home Report. There were some changes in officers at the annual election meeting. Dennis said we could have a VVA meeting there and maybe have a tour and a show a DVD movie. A motion passed to have our March VVA Chapter meeting at the Chippewa Vets Home.

Joe Graff gave the Highground Report. Joe said that for the next two months at the Learning Center, 30 college students will be doing interviews with veterans. Then the students will write what they got out of the interviews and do some abstract art to convey that. Joe stated there is a POW camp building being constructed as part of a POW camp set-up. Joe reminded us about the Persian Gulf Tribute, July 19th – 26th. There will be a "Wall of Terror" on display and volunteers for guard duty at

night while that wall is displayed there. The Bootprint will be inaugurated on July 23rd. There is a bowling tournament on Jan. 31st as a fundraiser for the Working Dog Tribute to be built at the Highground. Joe also has raffle tickets for a "Vietnam Wall" framed picture and he has brochures for the Highground Veterans Memorial Park Endowment Fund. Joe also had a sample of a woven Vietnam bracelet made by a wheelchair-bound youth from Augusta that we could buy.

Joe Heil gave the Clothing Report. We need to get our choice for a VVA jacket narrowed down. He said Sue could do the printing on them. Joe was hoping for a cost of about \$50.00 each. He suggested that the Board of Directors could decide at their next meeting.

New Business: Bill Anderson suggested taking handicapped kids on a fishing trip. Joe Heil said the Rod and Gun Club takes residents from the Vets Home out on Lake Wissota twice a month. Joe said rods and tackle boxes would be available from 1st Wisconsin Muskie's Inc. Dan Ziegler asked if we would have to rent pontoons. Bob Bonesteel stated that fishing gear and people are available through the DNR. Bill said to contact him with information and ideas at 715-530-3419. Volunteers for a fishing committee: Larry Wrycza, Bill Anderson and Dan Ziegler.

Rory Schutte gave a progress report on getting a van to take veterans to Tomah or the Twin Cities. Rory said Chilson Motors and maybe the Elks Club would be contributing toward the van, but more volunteer drivers are needed to sign-up to help make the van a reality.

President Dennis gave an update on the Welcome Home Picnic. A meeting on it will be held January 15th at Xcel Energy building on Hamilton. Dennis said an invitation will be sent to the National VVA President John Rowan. Applications were made to two of the Vietnam traveling walls to come here and a wall of Vietnam equipment and artifacts and also to the Wisconsin Air National Guard for a flyover at the game.

Joe Heil reported on scholarships. He needs more information from Alacia at CVTC and then he will call a committee meeting.

Under Good of the Order, Joe drew the winner of the monthly attendance prize, Jeff Brown was not present so the February meeting drawing will be for \$30.00; the winner of the 50/50 drawing for a gift certificate was Ralph Ottum. Joe also presented an Appreciation Plaque to Dan Ziegler representing VFW Post 7232 where we hold our meetings and fundraiser.

A closing prayer was given by Chaplain Dan Ziegler and the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m., 23 members had been in attendance. Next VVA Chapter meeting will be Wednesday, February 3rd, at 7 p.m. at VFW Post 7232.

----Mike Voth Memorial Chapter #5 Vietnam Veterans of America 2016 Meeting Schedule---

January 6th February 3rd March 2nd (at Chippewa Vets Home) April 6th May 4th
June 1st July 6th August 3rd September 7th October 5th November 2nd December 7th
All meetings held 1st Wed. at 7 p.m. at VFW Post 7232, 2900 W. Folsom St., Eau Claire, WI

Please keep these dates in mind, also our **☒Welcome Home ☒**picnic will be on Saturday, June 18th and our **4th Annual Fund Raiser** will be on Saturday, September 10th. If you have an e-mail address, please let Joe Heil know so that you can be sent info by e-mail. Joe's e-mail address is jheil13@att.net.

LRB 4524/1: Proposed Legislation and a Step in the Wrong Direction

LRB 4524/1 Is proposed legislation that provides that Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs may approve a county veterans service consortium to administer veterans benefits and services and makes county veterans service officers *optional* for counties. It also strives to eliminate any support staff to the County Veterans Service Officer.

Current law requires each county in Wisconsin to elect or appoint a County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO). A CVSO in each county provides for local representation, education and distribution of veterans benefits, both state and federal. CVSOs act as a local resource, to offer benefits access, assistance and advocacy with the individual veteran's interests first and foremost.

Without the assistance of local, veteran benefits experts, our most vulnerable veterans and their widows would be tragically underserved. It is the homebound and infirm, the veterans in local assisted living facilities and nursing homes who cannot transport themselves to a central benefit office to be served. Although we face a decreasing veteran population, this population in Wisconsin is an aging population. This, in combination with the injuries and exposures suffered by our veterans over the last decade of war, serves to increase the complexity and urgency of our veterans' needs.

This bill proposes to make CVSOs *optional* for counties, and in their place to provide a consortium or regional Veteran Service Office. The proposal dismantles the current established structure for delivery of benefits, and is based on the potential of regionalized delivery before such a system has been emplaced or proven. Even if emplaced, the question remains one of access and true advocacy. The very definition of advocacy is based on the premise that the interests of the representative align with those of the individual, outside of the influence of the agencies that regulate the very benefits they seek. Further, it would be cost prohibitive for a state-wide consortium to provide the level of services currently being delivered by CVSOs. This proposal will not match --much less improve-- the level of services to our state's most vulnerable veterans and their widows.

If you are a veteran, related to a veteran, or know a veteran who lives in Wisconsin, you should be concerned about the impacts of LRB 4524/1. Our veterans deserve the best possible services we have to offer as a society. All levels of government should strive to enhance services and benefits provided to veterans. Instead, this proposed legislation holds disregard for the wellbeing of veterans on a statewide level. It is disappointing to think that such ill-advised proposed legislation targets a sub-population of Wisconsinites that merit the best we can offer and deserve our utmost thanks and appreciation- the Veteran.

As concerned citizens and friend to the veteran, I ask that you please contact your area political representatives and voice your opposition to LRB 4524/1. Our veterans served us when we needed them, now let us serve them.

- State Representative Warren Petryk (93rd district) 888-534-0093 or 608-266-0660 email rep.petryk@legis.wisconsin.gov
- State Representative Kathleen Bernier (68th district) 888-534-0068 608-266-9172 Rep.Bernier@legis.wisconsin.gov
- Senator Terry Moulton (23rd senate district) 888-437-9436 or 608-266-7511 sen.moulton@legis.wisconsin.gov
- Senator Kathleen Vinehout (31st senate district) 877-763-6636 or 608-266-8546 Sen.vinehout@legis.wisconsin.gov

Tim Moore and Eau Claire County Veteran Services can be reached at (715) 839-4744 or veterans@co.eau-claire.wi.us .



One Time Special Offer

Extended Special Enrollment for Veterans

Life Membership Application

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

Eligibility: Membership is to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purpose) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975. **You MUST submit a copy of your DD214 with this application.**

Send To: Joe Heil at 1231 Rowe, Eau Claire WI 54703-1569 and he will make copies of your application, DD214 and proof of payment for our Chapter records and forward onto National, just in case something gets "lost" the Chapter will have backup documentation.

VVA Chapter #5
 P.O. 832
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