



Updates

Spring 2014

President's Message

The 2014 Project Friendship is Shalom Homes, Inc.

Shalom Homes, Inc. is a faith-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing affordable short-term residential housing and support services for homeless Veterans located in Wichita, KS. AVVA and VVA will be collecting gift cards, checks, and money orders for Shalom Homes. You can learn more about them on the AVVA website or at www.shalomhomeks.org.

I sent a special thank you to the Kansas State Council for their \$1,000 donation. President Ron Zink presented AVVA with a check during the April National Board meeting in Silver Spring. Let's make this a record year for our Project Friendship. Donations can be sent to the National Office in c/o AVVA Project Friendship or brought to the Leadership Conference. Make all checks and money orders payable to Shalom Homes, Inc.

During the April Board meeting, AVVA participated in the **Faces of Agent Orange** Briefing on Capitol Hill. I congratulate those who worked so hard to make this event happen. AVVA will continue to educate the families of the Vietnam Vets until all families know of the legacy and all legislation has passed.

The National Leadership and Education Conference plans are almost complete. Although AVVA will be meeting with VVA for most of the educational sessions, we will break away for two seminars, an Annual Membership Meeting, and a roundtable discussion. More details in our next issue.

Together Always,

Sharon

shobbs@avva.org

*President's Message ~ Cover
Feature Article ~ Pg. 3
Article of Interest ~ Pg.14
Last But Not Least ~ Pg.17*



*Updates Issues:
January 30 Winter Issue
April 30 2014 Spring Issue
July 30 Summer Issue
October 30, 2014 Fall Issue
Article submission: 10 days prior to issue.*



Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America,
Inc.
PO Box 64732
Baltimore, MD 21264-4732



*Sharon's quote for this issue:
"If your actions inspire others to
dream more, learn more,
do more and become more, you
are a leader."
-John Quincy Adams*

The Spring Updates is a bit behind schedule and we apologize for that. We held up distribution in order to get as many election results submitted as possible.

Happy Birthday Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

National Vice President ~ Cathy Keister

It is finally spring, many of you experienced a very harsh winter. But, now it is time to enjoy the sunshine.

Reflecting back on my winter projects; attending the April meeting of the Board of Directors in Silver Springs, Md. is always very educational and enjoyable. I continue to work with the In Memory Plaque Task Force. I also attended and presented on line classes for the Directors and Officers of AVVA.

I continue to assist our President Sharon Hobbs as requested.

Locally, I had the pleasure of attending the Grand Strand Chapter #925 for their monthly meetings. I also attended the South Carolina State Council meeting. It was great to meet new members along with those who I have known for many years.

I have several visits scheduled for the summer months. I will be visiting PA State AVVA by invitation in June, I will be spending Memorial Day weekend at The Mall in Washington DC, assisting in the membership tent. In August I will be attending the National Leadership and Education Conference in Wichita KS.

Hope to see all of you in Wichita.

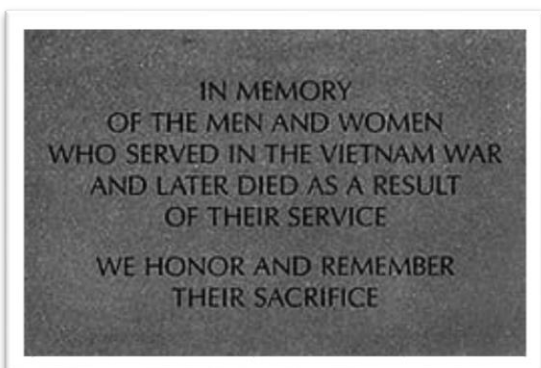
In Memory Plaque ~ Cathy Keister AVVA Task Force Chair

Progress continues on the redesign of the In Memory Plaque. J.C. Cummings, the Architect of record for "The Wall" as well as Kline Memorials of Alexandria VA will be presenting proposal for consideration.

The Task Force is working with The National Park Service to meet all government requirements.

The In Memory Task Force include the following: Marsha Four (VVA Vice President), Cathy Keister (AVVA Vice President), Joanna Henshaw (AVVA Secretary), Bill Williams (AVVA Treasurer), Nancy Switser (AVVA Past President), Carl Tavin (VVA Government Affairs), Mokey Porter (AVVA member and VVA Public Affairs), and Sharon Hodge (AVVA member and VVA Government Affairs).

President Rowan and President Hobbs are instrumental in helping the Task force move forward.



National Secretary & AVVA Webmaster ~ Joanna Henshaw

ZIPPO LIGHTERS? HOW IS THAT IMPORTANT?

It is certainly interesting to have the connection that I have with the AVVA website. As the Webmaster, I get many interesting questions and comments, but this one – this one is one for the books!

I was contacted a couple of months ago by a lady named Ruth Mathys, who used to live in the United States, but now resides in Switzerland! The first thing that I thought was: "WOW. They read our website in Switzerland?" The second thing was, that I was totally intrigued by the fact that someone was writing to try to find ways of getting some old Zippo lighters back to the families of several Vietnam soldiers and/or Marines.



Let me take you back for a moment. Ruth's co-worker took a trip to Vietnam in 1994. When he came back, he had a small bag full of old Zippo lighters he had acquired while there. These lighters had obviously been either out in the weather for many years, or had been found buried somewhere. In any case, they certainly seemed like something the troops had left behind, due to inscriptions and names engraved on them.

The friend gave the lighters to Ruth, as she was interested in veteran related things in her town at the time. Ruth was determined that she was going to find a way to locate family members and attempt to return these items to where she felt they belonged.

In 1995, Ruth contacted the Reader's Digest Magazine, who referred her to the National Personnel Records Center, and the National Archives in Washington DC. She wrote to them both. Ruth received a response from Susan Francis, at the National Archives, referring her to Gayle Gamise of the Vietnam Veterans of America, who advised her to try the "Veteran" locator. She also sent Ruth a list of the names that she did have, and where they are found on The Wall! Cont.



It took some time but, after a few follow up contacts, Ms. Tracie Houston, from the VVA National Office, advised Ruth to try placing an add in the VVA Veteran [magazine] Locator. Ruth tried this, as she felt so strongly about attempting to find a place for these lighters; their owner's family (ideally), or at least some honorable disposition for them. She could not bring herself to just dispose of them.

Due to a change in employment, Ruth stopped pursuing this project for some years, and set the lighters and the documents aside in her home. Remember, the Internet did not really exist until a couple of years after she started her search, and it took a few years for it to build into what it is now.

Earlier this year, Ruth stumbled on the lighters again, stashed away in her home. She decided to start another search, and somehow, ended up contacting me! Need I say: this is now my mission, to help Ruth figure out what can be done with these pieces of Vietnam era memorabilia.

In case family could not be found, I contacted the VVMF to see if they might like to display them in the new Education Center at the Wall, but I have received no response from them thus far. I intend to see what can be done to try to find someone who recognizes one or more of these lighters, and barring the ability to find family, I will help Ruth find a suitable place for these lighters to rest.

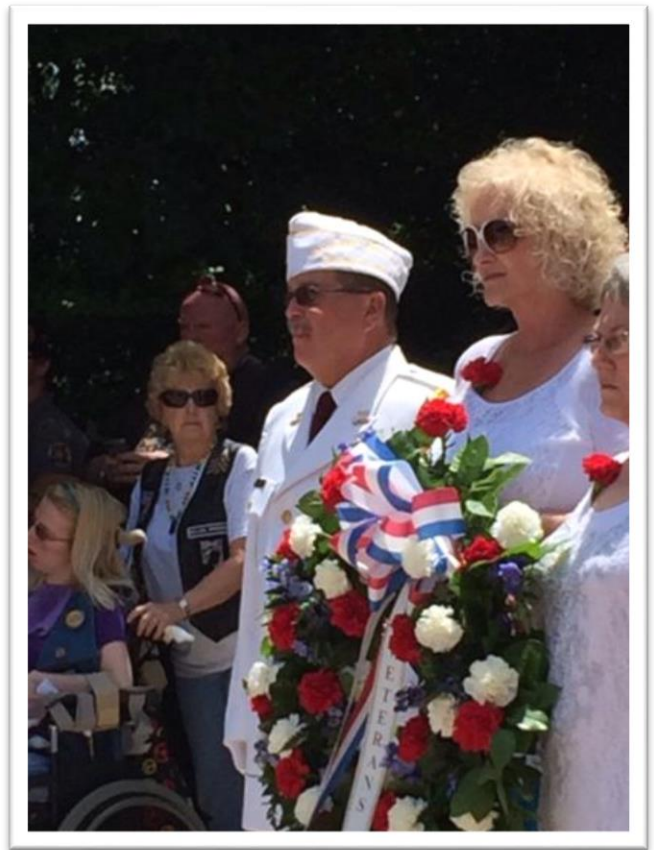
We actually have an idea we are working on for a dignified resolution for these lighters, and if it works out, it might be the best thing that could happen to them. They belong (as far as we are concerned) in a place of relative honor; a remembrance of those who held them in their hands, as they passed through the doors of hell on their way to heaven's gate.

(If by any chance, you recognize any of these lighters, please email webmaster@avva.org)



Late addition ~ What an Honor!

Memorial Day Arlington National Cemetery 2014



Sharon Hobbs, AVVA National President and Sherry Wright Anderson Region 6 Director (far right) placing the AVVA wreath at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington DC ~ Memorial Day 2014.



This article was taken from the: KCET website—the nation's largest independent public television station.

This is true inspiration!

Local Hero ~ Bea Cohen



Thank you, KCET, for this honor. As an immigrant, I am proud to be an American by choice. As a real-life 'Rosie the Riveter' and American soldier, I was able to pay back this country that I love for allowing me to become an American. As a community volunteer, I was able to give back to humanity."

World War II veteran Bea Cohen has spent more than 70 years of her 102-year-old life giving back to the United States and supporting the American military.

She collected black widow spiders and sent them to the University of Southern California so that their strong webs could be used in the crosshairs in the sites of submarine periscopes during the Second World War. She also expressed her patriotism by working at Douglas Aircraft Company and becoming a Rosie the Riveter - one of the thousands of female factory workers who contributed to the war effort by producing munitions and war supplies.

Despite her efforts, Ms. Cohen wanted to give more to the country who gave her and her family, who left Romania to restart their lives in the United States, their newfound freedom.

She gave her notice to Douglas Aircraft Company and joined the U.S. Army. Douglas Aircraft Company offered her five cents more per hour to stay, but she did not budge. Ms. Cohen said that immigrants are what made America what it is today; and now veterans are carrying on what immigrants began. She hopes people will honor, remember and thank veterans for their service and sacrifices. She traveled all over the United States and was assigned for service overseas. During her stay in Stone, England, she witnessed history in the making - American planes on their way to invade Normandy.

As Private First Class Abrams assigned in Elveden, England, about 90-miles from London, Ms. Cohen worked in the communications department with top-secret mimeographed documents, kitchen patrol and relieved the stress of being in the military by singing in a choir and playing in an all-female baseball team, a sport she loves. She hopes people will also remember the service of remember of Women Veterans, who were pilots, doctors, dentists, clerks, nurses and much more. She said that there isn't anything a woman cannot do.

After the war, she married Ray Cohen, a former prisoner of war who was imprisoned in Corregidor Island, Philippines for more than three years. Together, they became involved with an Ex-POW group that still meets at Veterans Home of California - West Los Angeles.

Ms. Cohen is one of the few people alive who witnessed the beginning of World War I in 1914, when, at age four, she and her brother, sister and mother watched while low- flying airplanes dropped bombs on the factories next to her backyard in Buhush, Romania.

She has been instrumental to many philanthropic organizations, including the Jewish War Veterans Auxiliary Post 667, where she became its child welfare chairperson. She has also been involved with the United Cerebral Palsy - Spastic Children's Foundation for more than 35 years, where she coordinated various outings for the children. She made lap blankets for veterans at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital and continues to offer friendship and kindness to veterans. She also volunteered at the Los Angeles Air Force Base for Family Services, and also for the City of Hope.

Up until one year ago, from 1961 to 2011, Ms. Cohen took upholstery classes, making wheelchair and walker bags for Veterans, as well as lap robes and blankets and learned how to upholster her own furniture. All she needed help with was a ride to and from her class.

Cont.

If the class had not lost funding, she would still be taking upholstery classes today. She hopes that this class will be made available to veterans to help them learn a trade.

In 1990, Ms. Cohen became legally blind. In 2003, Mr. Cohen passed away. But like a true soldier, Ms. Cohen marches on.

She still attends Ex-POW meetings at the Veterans Home of California - West Los Angeles, offers a sense of comraderie to the ex-soldiers, attends the Blinded Veterans Association of Southern California meetings and continues to touch the lives of America's heroes. When asked what she would like to accomplish in 2012, she answered, "to collect clean, white socks for homeless veterans, and to meet First Lady Michelle Obama."

Bea continues to cook a Sader Dinner at her home each year for Passover for up to 20 friends and family members. Ms. Cohen has two daughters, an extended family and many friends. She said, "Our men and women veterans are America's real heroes."

Coming up ~

August 2014 Board of Directors/Annual Business Meeting:

August 2014, during the 2014 Leadership Conference Hyatt Wichita, Wichita KS. Below are listed some highlights of what we have to look forward to:

- **VVA/AVVA 2014 National Leadership and Educational Conference:**
August 5-10, 2014 Hyatt Wichita, Wichita, KS
- **Leadership Conference:** Seminars are now set.
- **Birthday/Welcome Home Party:** \$15 per person. Tuesday night. Will have live band, and will have table with gifts that guests can choose from, for a donation. Donations will be added to our Project Friendship totals. Casual Dress.
- **AVVA Luncheon:** Menu is Lasagna and an alternative. Alternative main dish must be pre-arranged.
- **AVVA Annual Meeting:** will be held Thursday after the luncheon.
- **Project Friendship:** The Shalom Home in Wichita

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AVVA!



AVVA Officers toured the Fisher House at the DC VA Hospital during the April 2014 National BOD meeting and presented them with a donation from AVVA.

From left to right:

Veronica Evans, Asst Manager Fisher House – Sharon Hodge, VVA Sr Staff – Bill Williams, AVVA Treasurer, Sharon Hobbs, AVVA National President – Cathy Keister, AVVA National Vice President.

You can contact your National Executive Officers at the following e-mail addresses.

National President: Sharon Hobbs shobbs@avva.org

National Vice-President: Cathy Keister ckeister@avva.org

National Secretary: Joanna Henshaw jhenshaw@avva.org

National Treasurer Bill Williams bwilliams@avva.org

Region 1:

Connecticut Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire Rhode Island, Vermont
Frances Cartier fcartier@avva.org

Region 2:

Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
Nancy Rekowski nrekowski@avva.org

Region 3:

Washington DC, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia
Beverly Pounds bpounds@avva.org

Region 4:

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
Jeri Wallis jwallis@avva.org

Region 5:

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
Penny Meinhardt pmeinhardt@avva.org

Region 6:

Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska South Dakota, Wisconsin
Sherry Wright-Anderson sanderson@avva.org

Region 7:

Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
Kathy Andras kandras@avva.org

Region 8:

Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming
John Birch jbirch@avva.org

Region 9:

Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, New Mexico
Nevada, Philippines, Utah

Elayne Mackey emackey@avva.org

States

CA. AVVA ~ Elayne Mackey President

CA Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America held their elections April 26, 2014. Our officers are:

- President Elayne Mackey
- Vice President Nina Schloffel
- Secretary Penny Chamousis
- Treasurer Carol Southern
- At Large Representative Chelli Croucher

We also are preparing for the CSC 2014 State Convention to be held in June 2014. This is always a special time for everyone and then looking forward to the trip to Wichita KS in August.

Chapters

Chapter 47 ~ Riverside, CA.

Chapter 47 welcomes a newly elected Chapter Representative, Alice Gomez. Alice come to us with knowledge and enthusiasm. We wish Alice the best of luck along with our complete support.

**Chapter 53 ~ South Bay, CA.
Submitted by Matt Davison**

For the last several months, I've been working with an organization that serves the most underserved to the Veteran population...women Veterans and Veterans caring for families.

The organization is called Human Potential Consultants, located in Carson, CA, and we provide these Veterans with employment assistance, training that leads to employment, and guidance on college grants, scholarships, and housing resources. We are a place where women Veterans who have been ignored and pushed aside can come to for free services, bonding, and hope for a better future while transitioning back into civilian life.

For the past 11 years, I have been Chairman for the VietNow Veterans Incarcerated Committee. While VietNow is not VVA, I don't really see this as a competitive issue. I believe that all VSOs should only have the Veterans' best interests in mind. At any rate, I recently was able to help reverse a decision at the Trenton State Prison, where a 65-member Veteran Group was disallowed to meet or take responsibility for their Memorial Day and

Veterans Day dinners. After a series of letters to prison administrators, the meetings and dinners have been restored.

I am still fighting to get the Florida Department of Corrections to transfer a Desert Storm Veteran dealing with PTSD to a Veterans Dorm, where he can receive PTSD counseling. In connection with this advocacy on behalf of at-risk Veterans, I was interviewed on an internet radio show last week, by Cosmos Productions out of Michigan.

Chapter 203, Inc. ~ Chattanooga TN, held elections on April 21st.

L-R: Joyce Simpson, President; Susan Price, Treasurer; Charlene Holloway, VP.



**Chapter 862 ~ Beaver County PA
Submitted by Bobby Morris**

VVA/AVVA Chapter 862's Annual
Maple Syrup Festival.
Chairman Kamm Kamzelski.
Thank you and a great day of
Recruiting, Fund-raising, and fun working together.



Group photo from Chapter 862 visit to the veterans at the Beaver Valley Nursing Home on St. Patrick's Day.



The below article is one of many great articles that you will find on: <http://www.avva.org/about.html#>

About AVVA

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) is a national, nonprofit Membership and Service Organization dedicated to advancing the awareness of issues affecting Vietnam Veterans, their families, and their communities. Over the years, we have evolved into an organization that has become cognizant and responsive to the problems affecting all Veterans.

In our infancy, AVVA was as a group of members within Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. In 1999, as the scope of activities and the number of members grew, the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. was established. AVVA now functions as an independent Membership and Service Organization. AVVA continues to work in conjunction with Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. (VVA) striving to ensure that Vietnam veterans, as well as ALL veterans, attain the honor, respect, and benefits they deserve. We lend our expertise, support, and leadership to all VVA programs, legislative actions, community service, and social activities, while remaining actively involved in our own programs, legislative agenda, and services.

AVVA is the extended family of VVA. We are made up of Veterans of all eras, families and friends of Veterans, and all persons who support Veterans' issues. AVVA is a catalyst for action, healing, reconciliation, mutual support, and fellowship. With more than 8,000 members, we are a thriving and strong organization.

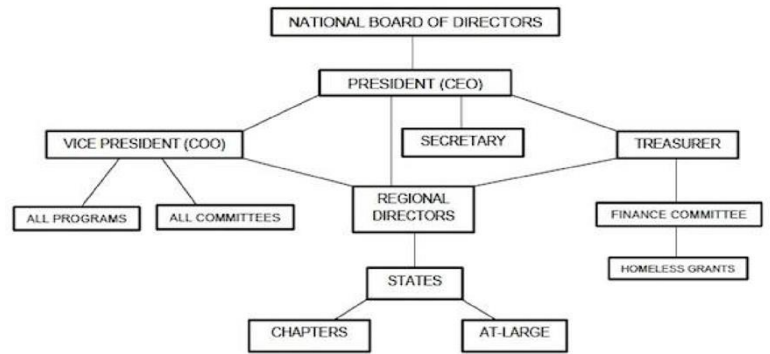
Read the history of AVVA at this link: AVVA History.

AVVA is a non-partisan, tax exempt organization.

AVVA is similar to any other non-profit business, with an organizational structure like most Corporations.

Below you can view an organization chart, which will help to understand how the different levels interact.

AVVA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Chapter 975 ~ Mohave County Arizona ~ Congratulates Casey Farrel, AVVA Representative on her recent election.

A good article about the Town Hall meeting(s) in North Caroline. Use the links below to read:

<http://www.avva.org/news/NCaoarticle.pdf>

Has your Chapter or State thought about an Agent Orange Town Hall meeting?

<http://www.vva.org/Committees/AgentOrange/Mtg-Docs/Town-Hall-Meeting.pdf>

Great book to have in your library:

Our Sons, Our Heroes ~ Memories Shared by America's Gold Star Mothers from the Vietnam War.

Those interested in reviewing it may go to:

www.sonrisapress.com

-www.facebook.com/oursonsourheroes

(or) http://www.amazon.com/Heroes-Memories-Americas-Mothers-Vietnam/dp/0989150607/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1389405281&sr=8-1&keywords=our+sons+our+heroes

The book is available online at: Barnes and Noble: (click on books, then enter the title)

Please check it out, from what we see already, this will be a very special book. Linda Jenkin Costanzo, the author, is also an AVVA member - Chapter 77 in New York

Committees

Agent Orange ~ Nancy Switzer

We have been very busy trying to find educational information to put on the web site and preparing a written "explanation". There are numerous articles that will be sent to Joanna to continually update the public as well as our members. We will eventually submit our plan to her. The following is briefly what has transpired since January:

I attended the North Carolina and Montana Town Hall meeting on February 20, 2014 and April 15th, please see the following report and article. I will be attending 3 Town Hall meetings this week Oregon and one in Washington State.

We are asking each Regional Director to appoint a designated person in each region that would act as a liaison between me, them and the chapter doing the Town Hall meetings. The person should be familiar on how to hold a meeting. The staff is being inundated with numerous phone calls and this would help the office greatly. This is how AVVA can help out. Please let me know if you are interested.

I have continued to send out the Paper Safe and Survivor benefits pamphlets to all those holding Town Hall meeting and am quite excited that so many chapters are requesting these as well.

Mooresville, North Carolina and Helena, Montana Town Hall Meetings

On February 18th, I left for a Town Hall Meeting in Mooresville, North Carolina. Pam Scheffer-Bossardet, AVVA NC State Representative and AVVA Accredited Service Officer, coordinated one of the best Town Hall Meeting I have been involved with. Assisting and working with her was her husband, Richard, Crosspointe Baptist Church, and Chapter 909, president, Nelson Lee. What a wonderful bunch of individuals, helping their community of Veterans and their families, it was just awesome.

It was held at Richard's Coffee shop, where over 200 veterans and their families go to each Thursday and Saturday for free coffee. Ralph Dagenhardt, the manager especially should be thanked for all the accommodations he gave to us and the veterans.

Over 150 veterans and their families came to our presentation. Out of those 150 approximately 80% were not members of VVA or AVVA. The panelists were Mokie Porter, VVA Director of Communications, Joe Kristek, NC VVA State President, Timothy Tereska, from the Cabarrus County Veterans Service Office, Tony Musolino, an accredited VVA Service Officer and Pam was an outstanding monitor and also participated in the discussions regarding claims.

Everyone was very interested and the people who ran the meetings were very satisfied at the outcome. There were some

heartbreaking stories. I think the most poignant question came from a grandmother whose grandchild was born without a head. To some the realization that the cause of the birth defects with their children and grandchildren possibly could be caused from Dioxin, but the belief that they were not alone and did not have to carry the "idea" by themselves was a heartfelt feeling.

On April 5, 2014, Beverly Stewart, Montana State VVA President and President of the Helena Chapter, held an outstanding Town Hall meeting, the first in Montana. Approximately 60 people came to the Helena VA facility to hear more about the trans-generational effects from Agent Orange.

Regrettably, again, to see so many veterans not knowing that they should be putting claims in for their problems, and educating of what entitlements they are owed, was aggravating to say the least. I can only say that Pam and the County Veterans Service agency will be busy. They have already made appointments with Pam.

The meetings were fantastic and Pam and Beverly did a wonderful job in educating the public on Agent Orange/Dioxins and its' effect on the veterans and their families.

The Paper Safe and Survivor Benefits Pamphlet: If you wish to order Paper Safes for yourself or for your chapter/state, please contact Nancy Switzer at NSwitzer@avva.org

Town Hall Meetings ~ Past & Future

May 6, 2014 Lebanon, Oregon

6:00 pm
The River Center
3000 S. Santiam Hwy
Lebanon, Oregon 97355

May 7, 2014 Roseburg, Oregon

Douglas County Fairgrounds-
Cascade Hall in the Community Hall Building
2110 Frear Street
6:00 pm

May 8, 2014 Salem, Oregon

6:00 pm
Chemeketa Community College
Bldg G Auditorium
Use purple lot, off 45th avenue NE

May 10, 2014 Seattle, Washington

1:00 pm
NYC Memorial Hall
1212 S. King Street
Contact: Tom Owen at towen@vva.org

May 11, 2014

**Ohio State Convention
Batavia, Ohio (Eastgate, Ohio)**

Holiday Inn, East Gate, Clermont County
Contact: Cliff Riley

May 17, 2014

10A-2P

AmVets Post 161
535 Western Ave.
Lynn, MA

Attn: Bruce Dobson

email: vva908publicaffairs@verizon.net

May 18th, 2014

The Bordentown Township Senior/Community Center
New Jersey State Council Town Hall Meeting

3 Municipal Drive, Bordentown TWP NJ 08505

May 18, 2014 2:00 PM.-5:00 pm

Contact Mike Eckstein

Email- ME1065@verizon.net

May 20, 2014

Cleveland, Tennessee

6PM - 9PM

Keith Street Ministries

4000 Keith St NW Cleveland, Tennessee

Contact: Barry Rice, President

Tennessee State Council

barryrice.tsc@gmail.com

June 28th

Wilmington, North Carolina

11:00 to 1:00

Elks Lodge Wilmington, NC

Contact: Tony Musolino 910-352-5128

tondeb@yahoo.com

July 19, 2014

Lewisburg, West Virginia

Armory

1:00-4:00

Contact: Dave Simmons, dsimmons@vva.org



If you are interested in holding a Town Hall meeting you can contact Mokie Porter at MPorter@vva.org or contact myself at NSwitzer@avva.org. Working together we can make a difference.

Chaplain Report ~ Sherry Wright Anderson

I have sent out over 160 sympathy cards to our VVA/AVVA family who had a loved one pass away since July 24th 2014. There are a lot of hurting people out there. I have received numerous prayer requests for families with special needs.

You may give my email to them if needed. Please have them put **(Chaplain)** in the Subject line and I will answer them immediately.

Again it has been a learning experience working with the AVVA National BOD. Blessings and Peace to all!

Election Committee ~ Elayne Mackey

Please read:

Chapter elections have come and gone for this election cycle. The Election Committee congratulates the elected Presidents and Representatives. Please, don't forget to send your Election Report –to your State or Regional Officer.

- http://www.avva.org/forms/election/ElectionResultsUnincorpAndAtLg_fill.pdf
- http://www.avva.org/forms/election/ElectionResultsIncorpSubsidiaries_fill.pdf

At the April 2014 National BOD meeting, the Election Committee requested to make a change in the election policy.

Now all chapters whether incorporated or not will hold elections every two years.

The one-year election option is **no longer** in the chapter policy.

Those Chapter Representative and Presidents elected this year will be the official voting delegates to the National Convention in 2015.

AVVA Membership News ~ Cathy Keister

Reminder, our address has changed for all renewals and new applications:

**Monument Bank
AVVA Lockbox
9602 Colesville Rd.
Silver Spring MD 20910**

If you send anything to the old address, it will be returned to you. Information available on our website: http://avva.org/orhttp://www.avva.org/forms/membership/IndividualAppForMembership_fill.pdf

Our membership is growing, as of March 2014 we have **8,277** members. West Virginia is leading in new members recruits, keep up the great work.

Renewal Gifts: Renew your membership for 3 years or change to a life membership and receive a special gift from AVVA. All new life and 3 year members will also receive a gift.

Gifts are mailed separately and will not arrive with your membership card.

New applications are available send your request to: Membership@avva.org

Public Relations ~ Beverly Pounds

We have had very successful Go to Meeting workshops and now we are working on a Public Relations Kit for States and Chapters.

“We must be the change we want to see” bpounds@avva.org

Veterans Benefits ~ Nancy Switzer

Submitted by John Margowski, Director and Nancy Switzer

We are in the process of reviewing the Policies and Procedures of the Veterans Benefits program. And I will be presenting this to the board after the April BOD meeting. One of the changes will be to delete reimbursing people for the NVLSP course. The committee feels that if a person is committed to becoming a Service Officer they need to show that there are dedicated.

There are currently 26 AVVA Service Officers, 14 are in the field, 12 of are the attorneys who do our appeals. One service officer was in question because of no reporting and their accreditation was taken away. There are 2 applications out there that soon will be submitted to us, one from Hawaii and another from Pennsylvania.

As some of you are aware, we have been trying to get the figures for how much our Service Officers are “bringing in” for our veterans and their families on behalf of AVVA. I found the problem was when there was a turn over between the last Benefits Director, those AVVA forms, were not being sent to the service officers, but VVA forms were, so that when the figures and reporting came through they were given to VVA.

We still have the problem that VVA State Presidents need to realize, that applicants need to fill out our application and not theirs. John and I have discussed this and we will be doing a letter to the state presidents of both VVA and AVVA on the procedures they need to do if someone is interested in becoming a service officer for AVVA. As a regional director, please contact the AVVA State Representatives and Presidents to start educating their members and advertise our program.

I attended a Survivor Benefits forum and will distribute the minutes as soon as we have reviewed and accepted them.

I thank Joanna for all the work that she has done on the web site for the service officer program and Agent Orange committee. We are still in the works of getting more information out to our members.

Regions

Region 1 ~ Frances Cartier

AVVA in Region 1 was busy with taking care of our homes as well as local veterans and homeless veterans were taken care of due to the very long and harsh winter.

All members of Region 1 AVVA were sent information regarding the new AVVA web page and the election process for delegates for the AVVA convention 2015 via us mail.

If you are reading this and didn't receive the information in March please contact me with a current mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.

When you have articles or events you want published in the AVVA Updates please send them via e-mail to me @: fcartier@avva.org

Region 6 ~ Sherry Wright Anderson

I just got back from the BOD of Directors Meeting in Silver Spring Maryland. This was truly a busy and productive meeting. We learned about E- Voting which is very interesting. We got to go to Capitol Hill and speak to our State Representatives and Senators regarding Bill- S1602. It was interesting seeing how the senator's conduct the meeting and I enjoyed listening to Senator Blumenthal speak, about our Veterans.

I have held a Chapter Rep. election for Chapter 912, AVVA here in Kansas. Linda Sears is our new Chapter Rep. Judy Devitt is the N.D. State Rep.

I will be heading to Columbia MO to VVA/AVVA's State Council meeting in June, to help with the AVVA State election and swear in the State Rep.

I have been invited to N. D. State Council meeting to speak in July, so I am looking forward to meeting the chapters in that area.

I have also been working on a booklet for the Microsoft and Excel for the August 2014, Leadership courses in Wichita Kansas.



Ron Zink giving National AVVA a \$1000.00 check for Project Friendship

Linda Sears: newly elected Chapter Rep for VVA/AVVA 912 Ottawa, Kansas

Region 7 ~ Kathy Andras

The new officers for Texas AVVA are as follows: Lynn Kennedy President, Percilla Newberry Vice President, Martha Brown Treasurer and Gina Mathews Secretary.

Wishing the new officers good luck. I am looking forward to working with everyone. It was an honor to work with Marilyn Rose.

On May 2, 2014 Oklahoma AVVA held their election for AVVA State Representative. Wanda Ross was reelected. Ideas were presented to the members on projects that AVVA/VVA could work together on.

Looking forward to working with Wanda and all the chapters' representative from Oklahoma.

Region 8 ~ John Birch Director

"Well as the quarterly newsletter deadline draws near I am reflecting on what have I been up to that I may provide some meaningful content to this newsletter. I have been busy with life, recovering from my neck surgery, help raising a 7 year old daughter at the age of 52, work, garden and hobbies. Then comes the real work bettering myself so that I can advocate for Veterans. I am going to sum up my work and involvement since the last news letter with some notable events. But this is not all about me there are so many others who work as hard or harder than myself.

Chapter 585 Mid Valley lost a good friend who passed away on 03-31-14, he served in Vietnam. But because his dates of service was prior to the recognized dates set by Congress my friend "Gator" (Carrell "Gator" Alden) was



resigned to being involved as an AVVA member. We tried to rectify that fact but it never worked out. During VVA meetings he was always voting in VVA motions and that action provided some interesting sidebar conversation, I tell you. Good times, Gator provided and you are true southern gentleman. He also was given honorary lifetime membership to the VVA. Not quite what he wanted but that was part of his "bucket list."

I did mention Gator had a bucket list that was not completed but Tom Owen Region 8 Director and I at the request of Gator's Family did something that would of made Gator a very happy man we took him to the Wall! Gator was placed at the panel on the Wall that would denote the time he was in Vietnam 1961. He liked cigars and we got one, we wrote a poem and read that poem in the presence of fellow VVA members. We felt Gator, even though not there physically, he was there in spirit and it was the perfect Spring evening with Washington DC's cherry trees in full blossom.

May he be resting peacefully, he will be missed so much, he was involved heavily with the chapter.

I have provided a picture of an event we were invited to in Lebanon Oregon.



It was a business expo and the Chamber of Commerce asked Mr. Owen if we would like to set up a booth to give us exposure to the community about the planned Agent Orange town hall meeting. Cont.

We will have this event in Lebanon, Roseburg and Salem Oregon and then the show moves to Seattle Washington. I will have further information to share in the next quarterly newsletter and more pictures.

Before I leave I want to mention to all that read this please contact your Senators and ask them to assist Senator Blumenthal efforts in passing S 1602. This bill will provide testing on the generational issues of children of Vietnam Vets exposed to toxins related to their service. To get something like this, to this level is akin to winning the battle. We want a solid victory so please support this with a note to our elected officials."

Region 9 ~ Elayne Mackey Director

Region 9 states continue to work hard and prosper with many great things happening.

We are proud to say that Colorado is now in the process of forming an Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America as is No. Utah Chapter 961. Cont.

We are looking forward to having their input into Region 9 and meeting everyone.

Elections are being held and the next Updates I will be able to have a listing of the State Representatives/Presidents.

Chapter 961 ~ St. George Utah Dan Greathouse VVA President

I would like to thank Doug Hunt and the past officers for their service over the last year. Thank you also to Lil Hunt for work with the AVVA.

I know we all have lives outside of the Chapter. Family and jobs always come first, but I still need anything you can give to make your Chapter move forward.

I'm looking forward in being your President once again.

The AVVA point of contact is: Lynn Greathouse.

Memorial Day at the Wall 2014
~ courtesy the VVA Veteran



Beverly Pounds Region 4 Director helps a Veteran at the VVA/AVVA tent at the National Mall.

Some good AVVA State/Chapter websites to visit:

STATES:

- Arizona State Association
<http://www.vvaarizona.org/avva.php>
- AVVA Nevada State Association
<http://forourvets.com/avva/index.html>
- AVVA Ohio <http://ohioavva.org/>
- AVVA Pennsylvania State Association
<http://www.vva-pa.org/avva.htm>

CHAPTERS:

- AVVA Chapter 203, Chattanooga, TN (incorporated)
http://www.vva203.org/chapter_203_010.htm
- AVVA Chapter 240, Sumner County, TN
<http://www.vva240.com/avva.html>
- AVVA Chapter 272, Greenville, NC
<http://www.vva272.com/avvanews.htm>
- AVVA Chapter 899, New Jersey
<http://www.vva899.org/id20.html>



Cathy Keister & Beverly Pounds present the AVVA wreath at the Wall.



AVVA PRODUCT SALES



<http://www.avva.org/coins.html>



<http://www.avva.org/forms/flagorderform0408.pdf>



http://www.avva.org/forms/AOPinOrderForm_fill.pdf

ProForma:

<http://www.four51.com/UI/Custom.aspx?p=Catalog&CatID=VGwuswxjFztz6ih7iR5arGIBQHJMpyhvQqowbIgmseo-pfvqJbsx9rQ-e-e>

AVVA Women's Apparel

AVVA Men's Apparel

AVVA Bags



AVVA Pins, Patches & Other Cool Stuff AVVA –Youth apparel

Military Best is extremely proud to have partnered with Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America to offer a variety of products to its members. We continue our long standing tradition of offering High Quality merchandise such as patches, lapel pins, laminated-die-cut, vinyl decals and custom embroidered clothing and are extremely excited about this partnership. 10% of your purchase is directed back to AVVA in support of the organization. Thanks to all our AVVA members! <http://militarybest.com/associates-of-vietnam-veterans-of-america.html>



AVVA 15vr Anniversary Patch

Price: \$5.69



AVVA Decal

Price: \$4.49



AVVA Mens Embroidered Dress Shirts

Price: \$34.99



AVVA Custom Oxford

Price: \$49.95



AVVA Mini Stick Flag
Item #: AVVAFlagMini
Availability: Usually ships in 2-3 business days
Price: \$2.69

Flag stands available also.

Article of Interest

The C-123 Veterans Association
1233 Town Center Drive, Fort Collins CO 80524
971 241 9322 www.c123agentorange.com

22 Feb 2014

To: Our Fellow Citizens

Subject: C-123 Aircrew Agent Orange Exposure & VA Claims

Requested Assistance: Challenge Department of Veterans Affairs to obey law!

Summary: USAF C-123 veterans flew the C-123 transport aircraft following use in Vietnam spraying Agent Orange. The contamination became identified in 1994 but was not shared with veterans for decades. Veterans became aware of the tests confirming C-123 contamination in May 2011 and sought VA service connection. VA opposes on the basis of "secondary exposure" and creating concept of "dry dioxin" to suggest not "enough" exposure to warrant benefits. Veterans oppose with a large amount of evidence from other federal agencies, universities, physicians and scientists.

Senator Burr and his staff, particularly Mr. Brooks Tucker, are very familiar with our two-year struggle with this issue. Senator Merkley (Mr. Will White) and Congresswoman Bonamici (Ms. Carlie Katz) are also firmly involved in our support.

1. Number of personnel: estimate 1500-2500 aircrew, aerial port and maintenance from Westover AFB MA, Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station PA and Rickenbacker Air Reserve Station OH. Precise numbers unavailable, mostly traditional Reservists.

2. Background: After Vietnam C-123s returned to US. Spray apparatus was removed and airplanes then flew traditional cargo and aeromedical missions until 1982 retirement. 42% of fleet sprayed AO.

3. USAF records released in 2011 proved the C-123s had remained contaminated by military herbicides after Vietnam. AF toxicologists first officially confirmed contamination by military herbicide residue in 1979 following complaints from our maintenance personnel. The problem was better revealed with far more extensive official testing in 1994 in which toxicologists confirmed our airplanes were "heavily contaminated" and "a danger to public health." The contamination was not theoretical, but confirmed many times by Air Force military and civilian toxicologists, and by contract laboratories, and also described in sworn testimony by the 1994 testing experts in federal court. In 2010, the C-123s, still judged too contaminated for landfill, were all destroyed as toxic waste, other than a few scattered in aviation museums.

4. Agencies providing findings confirming C-123 veterans' exposure include Columbia University, University of Texas Medical School, many others. Contamination was NOT hypothetical, secondary, nor scientifically questioned by any expert, agency, or university...**only** VA VHA.

Yale Law School conducted an extensive research project and concluded the C-123 veterans are fully entitled to presumptive service connection for Agent Orange exposure. The Journal of Environmental Research published "*Post-Vietnam Military Herbicide Exposures by UC-123 Agent Orange Spray Aircraft*" establishing the significant exposure to TCDD experienced by C-123 crews and maintenance personnel.

5. In 1996, the USAF Office of Environmental Law directed all contamination information "be kept in official channels only." Contaminated aircraft had accidentally been sold to Walt Disney Films and to foreign governments and AO toxicity became potentially embarrassing. USAF directed HAZMAT quarantine of remaining C-123s in a special fenced, restricted area of Davis-Monthan AFB until 2010 destruction of all airplanes as toxic waste. This secrecy decision cost veterans decades of lost time addressing their exposures.

6. Affected veterans eventually began to approach the Department of Veterans Affairs claiming exposure to military herbicides and were immediately advised that no exposure was possible. We have been assured by the VA that no exposure occurred during the full decade we flew the C-123, with hundreds of hours aloft, hundreds of hours on the ground, hours spent cleaning, scraping, grinding, repairing, sleeping aboard during tactical deployments, trying to tolerate stench inside the airplanes and also to fly our assigned missions throughout the Western Hemisphere and Europe. On 1 June 2011 Headquarters, Air Force Reserve Command confirmed "**The C-123 aircraft in the 731st TAS fleet had been used to disperse chemical defoliants over Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.**"

7. VA advanced an illogical position labeled "**unscientific**" by [Dr. Jeanne Stellman and others](#). VA says that the dermal barrier is a near-perfect barrier preventing "dry dioxin transfer." We learned from IOM and other reports that much occupational exposure to dioxin is via the dermal route. The VA's slant has been described as "unscientific" by other toxicologists, ten of whom joined with five physicians in forwarding their challenge to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on 29 November 2012. Expert scientists and physicians who concluded our C-123 crews were exposed and need dioxin exposure care.

8. Dr. Tom Sinks, Deputy Director of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, evaluated our situation and stated, "**I believe aircrews operating in this, and similar, environments were exposed to TCDD.**" Drs. Schecter and Stellman differ only in the degree of exposure our crews experienced, with Stellman saying it was more than Vietnam ground soldiers and Schecter saying exposure was about the same as the troops. Subsequently, Dr. Sinks' finding was affirmed by Dr. Christopher Portier, Director ATSDR and then by Rear Admiral R. Ikeda, Acting Director.

9. Dr. Linda Birnbaum, Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and also Director of the NIH National Toxicology Program, determined "**exposure is assumed based on wipe-tests demonstrating high dioxin concentrations in the C-123K's.**" Cont.

The VA ignores other agencies resulting in the juxtaposition with one agency (VA) making a ruling that veterans' exposure was "unlikely" and others agencies (CDC, NIH, EPA) with specific authority for determining that C-123 veterans were exposed.

10. Legal basis: VA promulgated its herbicide presumption in 2001 and the issue of herbicide exposure outside Vietnam was addressed. While required to adhere to the 1991 law as well as C.F.R.s, the VA doesn't and disregards numerous disinterested proofs of C-123 veterans' herbicide exposure. Rivera v. Shinseki requires VA to "sympathetically" weigh veterans' evidence, but in LtCol Bailey's case, every effort was made to prevent any merit being granted his large body of compelling and supporting evidence.

Unable to dispute the contamination, VA has opted to "explain" how the contamination could not have exposed the veterans. Parsing the word "exposure" has included the VA even redefining it but adding the requirement of bioavailability for exposure to have occurred. Scientists explain to the C-123 veterans that is simply wrong - "putting the cart before the horse" is a perfect analogy.

Thus far, all C-123 veterans' claims are denied in regional offices but have eventually been reversed and granted upon appeal to Board of Veterans Appeals, but such decisions carry no precedent and can take five years to be heard. Most C-123 veterans are too old, too ill to waste five more years on top of the two years or more needed for the basic claim to be heard and denied for submission to the BVA for correction.

Sharon Hobbs, AVVA National President administers the Oath of Office to Jerry Eversman sworn in as the Ohio State Representative.



A good story to read – A spouses Story - PTSD

<https://www.facebook.com/ASpousesStoryPTSD/posts/785835808115545?fref=nf>

Great information for Veterans and their families.

www.va.gov/CoachingIntoCare

This is so easy, please take time to watch this video:

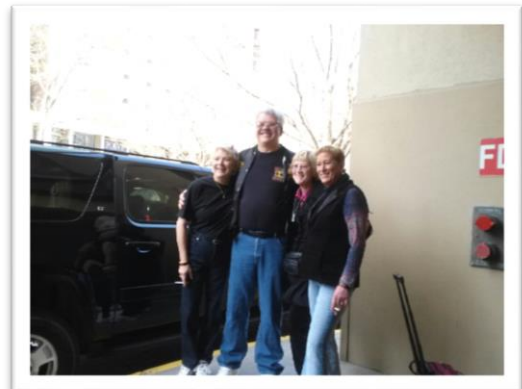
<http://blog.petflow.com/if-youve-ever-eaten-chips-you-have-to-see>

this/?utm_source=ilmd&utm_medium=Facebook&utm_campaign=chips

Two of our favorite "Charlie's!"



Great purse Charlie!



"Charlie from Missouri" ~ always has a smile!



Doesn't this look like a great spring or summer treat or table centerpiece?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AVVA!

Last But Not Least

22 STRANGE & FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT SLEEP

The full moon, bulldogs, dreaming in color and other curiosities.

Have trouble waking up on Monday morning s? Blame “social jet lag” from your altered weekend sleep schedule.

We are the only mammals that willingly delay sleep. Finding it hard to get out of bed in the morning is a real condition called dysania. It may signal a nutritional deficiency, depression or other problems.

Insomnia is not defined by the sleep you lose each night, but by the drowsiness, difficulty concentrating, headaches, irritability and other problems it causes each day.

English Bulldogs are the only canines known to suffer from sleep apnea, a breathing disorder. Their unusual air way anatomy (short snouts and under-bites) is likely the reason.

Being awake for 16 hours straight decreases your performance as much as if your blood alcohol level were .05%. (The legal limit is .08%.)

Tiredness peaks twice a day, at 2 a.m. and 2 p.m. That’s why you’re less alert after lunch.

In the 17th century, getting up in the middle of the night was normal. People slept in two segments divided by an hour or two of alertness (time for reading, praying, intimacy or socializing with others).

One job in early English mill and factory towns was to knock on people’s windows to wake them up for work.

Doing without sleep is likely to make you hungry as levels of leptin, an appetite regulating hormone, fall.

You’re less likely to have a traffic accident when daylight savings time ends. Statistics show that the extra hour of sleep reduces accidents.

Research shows you’ll sleep better during a new moon and worse during a full moon, although the reasons are unclear.

If it takes you less than 5 minutes to fall asleep at night, you’re probably sleep-deprived. Ideally, falling asleep should take 10 to 15 minutes.

Sleeping on the job is less of a problem in Japan. Companies may accept it as a sign of exhaustion from over work.

Insomnia is often a normal part of grieving. Taking sleeping pills can disrupt this natural process. Regular exercise usually improves your sleep patterns. Exercising sporadically or right before bed may keep you up.

Today, 75 percent of us dream in color. Before color television, just 15 percent of us did.



Whales and dolphins literally fall half asleep. Each side of their brain takes turns so they can come up for air.

Some car rental contracts make you promise not to drive on fewer than 6 hours of sleep.

One of our biggest sleep distractions is 24-hour Internet access.

Sea otters hold hands when they sleep so they don’t drift away from each other.

Stress, physical or mental illness, living or sleeping arrangements, family history, shift work, diet and exercise habits can all cause insomnia.

~ clevelandclinic.org/HealthHub © 2014 Cleveland Clinic

If you need this image to be larger:

<http://spiritualnetworks.com/photo/208141/keyboard-d-symbols>

How to make symbols with keyboard



Alt + 0153.....™... trademark symbol
Alt + 0169.....©... copyright symbol
Alt + 0174.....®...registered trademark symbol
Alt + 0176°...degree symbol
Alt + 0177±...plus-or minus sign
Alt + 0182¶...paragraph mark
Alt + 0190¾...fraction, three-fourths
Alt + 0215×...multiplication sign
Alt + 0162.....¢...the cent sign
Alt + 0161.....¡... upside down exclamation point
Alt + 0191.....¿... upside down question mark
Alt + 1.....☺...smiley face
Alt + 2☹...bla ck smiley face
Alt + 15.....☼...su n
Alt + 12.....♀...f emale sign
Alt + 11.....♂...m ale sign

Alt + 6.....♠...spade
Alt + 5.....♣... Club
Alt + 3.....♥... Heart
Alt + 4.....♦... Diamond
Alt + 13.....♫...eighth note
Alt + 14.....♪... beamed eighth note
Alt + 8721.....Σ... Nary summation (auto sum)
Alt + 251.....√...square root check mark
Alt + 8236.....∞... infinity
Alt + 24.....↑... up arrow
Alt + 25.....↓... down arrow
Alt + 26.....→...right arrow
Alt + 27.....←...left arrow
Alt + 18.....↕...up/down arrow
Alt + 29.....↔...left right arrow