



Vietnam Veterans of America

PA Chapter 415

Chapter Meeting Minutes 10.02.14

DRAFT

The regular monthly meeting of the Chapter convened and was called to order by President George Puzio Thursday October 2, 2014 at 7:00 pm at the Banko building. In attendance were: President George Puzio, 2nd Vice President Rich Hudzinski, Secretary Gary Powers, Treasurer Sam Sanguinito, Don Bear, John Bowen, Walt Buzin, Duane Cerino, Jeff Chewing, Barry L. Dannenhower, E.G. (Jerry) Farris, Tim Gilbert, Colleen Hauser, Ken Howard, Terry Hermany, Jeff Hero, George Hrymack, Bill Johnsen, Tom Kent, Mike Regrut, Pat Roxberry, George Shumack Jr., David A. Tedesco, New VVA member Joseph V. Capone, AVVA Members, Pete Hermany Point of Contact, Beth Masiado, Linda Schuler, new AVVA member Kody Hermany and guests PA AVVA State Treasurer, Jo Roseberry, John R. Higgenbotham and Don McGraw.

President's Welcome : George Puzio welcomed all and extended a warm to welcome to our new members; VVA – Joseph Capone, AVVA - Kody Hermany and our guests, PA AVVA State Treasurer Jo Roseberry, John Higgenbotham and Don McGraw.

Invocation: George Schumack Jr. gave the invocation and George Puzio followed with a request for a moment of silence and reflection for our POW/MIAs. George then led the Chapter in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Reading of the Minutes/Report of the Secretary

The minutes of the September 4, 2014 General Membership Meeting were presented and read. John Bowen **motioned** for approval of the minutes and they were unanimously **approved** by general consent.

Report of the Treasurer

Treasurer Sam Sanguinito presented the treasurer's report. Rusty Wolfe **motioned** to accept the treasurers' report pending audit. The motion was seconded and **approved** unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Membership Committee: None

PTSD and Substance Abuse: "Jerry" Farris reported that new research has called into question the accuracy of new diagnostic criteria for PTSD as outlined in the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). In a direct comparison of the diagnostic criteria in the 5th edition and the 4th edition, researchers note that their findings "raise fundamental concerns as to whether changing the PTSD definition (a definition proven to be highly useful in guiding treatment for more than 25 years) will enhance diagnosis and clinical care, and what this means for current and future generations of veterans".

More than 30% of soldiers who met criteria for PTSD under DSM-IV-TR did not meet DSM-5 criteria, and an equal number met criteria only under DSM-5. The study also highlights hazards that the changes in diagnostic criteria will introduce in the administration of veterans' benefits and access to care. There should be a period of transition between legal use of DSM-IV and DSM-5 so that potential effects of these changes can be examined and that deserving individuals are not denied their legal rights. Additional analyses of the DSM-5 field trials in VA hospitals in Dallas and Houston will be done.

PTSD can affect how couples get along with each other. It can also affect the mental health of partners, and have a negative effect on the whole family. Male Veterans with PTSD are more likely to report the following problems than Veterans without PTSD: marriage or relationship problems, parenting problems and poor family functioning. The same problems can occur, though, when the person with PTSD is female. A study comparing Veterans with PTSD and those without PTSD showed that Vietnam Veterans with PTSD got divorced twice as much, were three times more likely to divorce two or more times, and tended to have shorter relationships.

Families of Veterans with PTSD experience more physical and verbal aggression. Such families also have more instances of family violence. Violence is not just committed by the males in the families. One research study looked at male Vietnam Veterans and their female partners. The study compared partners of Veterans with PTSD to partners of those without PTSD. Female partners of Veterans with PTSD: Committed more family violence than other female partners and committed more family violence than their male Veteran partners with PTSD. The partners of the Vietnam Veterans with PTSD reported lower levels of happiness, less satisfaction in their lives, more demoralization, and half felt "on the verge of a nervous breakdown." These effects weren't limited to females. Male partners of female Veterans with PTSD reported lower well-being and more social isolation. Partners say they have a hard time coping, feel stress because their needs aren't being met, and go through physical and emotional violence. Wives of PTSD-diagnosed Veterans tend to take on a bigger share of household tasks such as paying bills or housework. They also feel that they must take care of the Veteran and attend closely to the veteran's problems. They also try hard to lessen the effects of those triggers.

Citations are from: Research questioning the accuracy of new diagnostic criteria for PTSD as outlined in DSM-5, by Charles Hoge, MD, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, published online August 14, 2014 in the Lancet Psychiatry; Back from the Front: Combat Trauma, Love, and the Family, by Aphrodite Matsakis; After the War Zone: A Practical Guide for Returning Troops and Their Families, by Slone, L.B., & Friedman, M.J.; Trauma and the Vietnam War Generation: Report of Findings from the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study, by Kulka, R.A. et al, and Problems in Families of Male Vietnam Veterans with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 60, 916-926 by Jordan, B.K. et al.

Agent Orange: Mike Regrut reported that the next Agent Orange planning meeting will be Wednesday October 8th at Wegmans on Route 512 at 7:00 p.m., second floor. Bobbie Morris, PA AVVA State President will be the "go-to" and take the reins helping us fine tune this event. Bobbie is currently helping plan three other A.O. Townhall Meetings and her help will be invaluable. The first known case of Agent Orange exposure in Korea has been approved. AO was sprayed along the DMZ and any veterans who served in Korea in or near the DMZ between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971 should contact the VA and sign up for the Agent Orange Registry. They should also familiarize themselves with the list of

diseases associated with exposure to the chemical and seek help in filing a claim for disability if they believe they qualify. Visit VA.gov for more information or attend one of Chapter 415s meetings. We can point you in the right direction.

Incarcerated Veterans: The position of Chair is open. George Puzio reminded the chapter that Chapter 415 will be attending Veteran's Day Ceremonies at Graterford Prison on November 11th as guests of prison Chapter 466. To date we have 12 members who have send in their clearance applications. See Gary Powers if you'd like to attend with us. We'll be car-pooling.

Newsletter: No Report

Special Events: George applauded the efforts of the Special Events team which organized the annual Chapter Picnic. Special thanks went out to John Shields and Chris McAtee who were instrumental in making the effort a huge success. From the advance party which got there early to set up to the clean-up crew which policed up the area when the event was done, the day was filled with fun and brotherhood. The food was wonderful, the company was great and two Victory House veterans were able to attend and see us again. Head count was somewhere between 50 and 75. Everyone brought something special to eat to the party. To top it off, Chris surprised the group by bringing a patriotic custom cake for all to enjoy.

Finance: No report

Veterans Benefits : No report

Government Affairs : Rich Hudzinski reported that House Bill (H.B.) 4741- Surviving Spouses' Benefit Improvement Act, which would increase the monthly rates of veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation payable to surviving spouses through the Department of Veterans Affairs has been referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. According to insiders the bill has a 3% chance of passing. Dr. Adelman will be meeting with LVMAC on October 16th to discuss "Healthcare in our Community". Rich suggested that he be contacted to be a speaker at Chapter 415's Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting. Note: Senate Bill (S.1602) "Toxic Exposure Research and Military Family Support Act of 2013" and House Bill (H.R.4816) "Toxic Exposure Research and Military Support Act of 2014" are still working their way through committees. They stand a 36% chance of passing according to govtrak.us. (S. 1602 is in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and H.R. 4816 has been referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel). LVMAC is back on the Veterans Advisory Committee. The meetings will rotate between 4 locations. Chapter 415 could attend one of these meetings to bring up issues we are concerned with. The Paralyzed Veterans Pension Bill passed 50-0 in the Senate and is now in the Veterans Committee where it looks like it may pass. Chapter 415 worked very hard with PA State VVA on this bill. The "Veterans Needs Assessment Study" is being reviewed by Penn State, Harrisburg, Department of Military Affairs and should be done some time this month. According to a Defense.gov news release (NR-495-14), the "Obama Administration Proposes New Regulations to Expand Important Financial Protections for Military Families", Department of Defense (DoD) is proposing regulation changes that would reduce predatory lending practices, significantly expand the protections provided to service members, close loopholes in current rules, and help ensure military families receive the important consumer protections they deserve. The new proposed actions are designed to apply the protections of the Military Lending Act to all forms of payday loans, vehicle title loans,

refund anticipated loans, deposit advance loans, installment loans, unsecured loans, unsecured open-end lines of credit, and credit cards.

POW/MIA : Walt Buzin reported that the remains of six veterans from previous wars have been recovered in the last month: Richard N. Bean, William Cook, Eric N. Honeyman, Arthur Richardson of Fall River, Mass and Bernard Gavrin of Brooklyn, NY. As of this report, no additional brothers' remains have been returned from Vietnam since last report. There are still 1,641 personnel listed by the department of Defense as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

Homeless : There will be a 15 minute meeting after this one to discuss the next Stand Down which is on October 25th.

LVMAC : Duane Cerino reported that the September 17th meeting of LVMAC featured guest speaker David Rubright, Workforce Education Coordinator for the Lehigh Career & Technical Institute (LCTI) in Schnecksville, PA. The Institute has a student body of over 3,000, some of whom are returning veterans looking for a career path. David spoke on "Veterans, Employment and the Realities of the Business World". At the meeting Rich Hudzinski said that LVMAC would be meeting with the Wilkes-Barre VA facility to try to get better service for veterans. He reported that the 211 system wasn't working for the Lehigh Valley. LVMAC will be trying to get the town of Bethlehem to help with the homeless.

Unfinished Business :

- Mike Regrut has more books on the Korean War for chapter members to give to veterans who served in Korea during the war. Please give Mike the name and address of those you hand them out to.
- If you'd like to be measured for a long sleeve, white, collared parade shirt with a 415 logo, please visit the company representative across the hall tonight. You will be called when the shirt is ready for pick-up and payment.
- George Puzio verified that Chapter 415 is bonded through Hays Companies of Washington, D.C.

New Business :

- There are three copies of "Changed by War" by Dan Slattery on the table. Please borrow a copy if you'd like and return it at the next meeting for others to read.
- State Council Delegates and Officers are going out to PA VVA State Council on Oct 18th and 19th. Please relay any issues you may want the chapter to bring to committee that weekend.
- There will be no Board meetings on even numbered months. Next meeting is November 17th.

Good of the Order :

- AVVA member Pete Hermany asked the attendees to rate the top ten activities we have participated in over the last year or so and passed around a form. He also asked for suggestions for future events. The Holiday Party and Meeting for breakfast tied for first place. Coming in second was the Annual Picnic. Tied for third was attending an Iron Pigs Game and taking a Day bus trip, and fifth was Sharing Veterans Day with prison inmates at Graterford Prison. Many other suggestions were made for future events.

- Beth Masiado brought along a T-Shirt that the Gold Star Mothers were selling as a fund raiser. They sell for \$15.00 each and took orders. Beth and her sister Linda Schuler reported on the Stars for Troops and the Birthday cards to Veterans in Nursing Homes project they have been very successful in starting and maintaining.
- Plan to attend one of the Veterans Day functions on November 11th.
- Ground Breaking for EAHS Vietnam War Memorial takes place on November 11, 2014!

Date and Place of Next Meeting

The next General Membership meeting will take place on Thursday November 6, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Banko Center.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Gary Powers

Date of Approval:

Secretary