

The Voice of 436

March 2019



Major Louis. F. Guillermin Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 436



Next meeting:
Mar. 13, 7:30 p.m.
@VFW

4601 Lincoln Highway,
Downingtown, PA 19335

Bad weather cancellations:

email notices will be sent
or call 484 705-5041
A notice will also be
sent by email.

Chapter officers 2018-2019

President: Frank Houck
1st V.P.: Dave McTavish
2nd V.P.: Barry Amole
Secretary: Michael DiPuppo
Treasurer: Jim Doedderlein
Directors: Robert Gallagher
Chris Pitt
Sandy Lopacki
Vince DiLodovico
Bud McCullough
Rick Weimer

The February 13, 2019, regular meeting of VVA Chapter 436 was called to order at 1935 hours, with 23 members and 1 guest in attendance, by President Frank Houck who then led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by a moment of silence for our POW-MIAs, and then Chaplain Joe Crescenz gave the opening prayer. The reading of the previous meeting's minutes was skipped following unanimous approval of the Motion (Amole, DiLodovico) to accept them as circulated and posted. Also, upon proper Motion (Maher, Massaro), Jim Doedderlein's Treasurer's Report and Barry Amole's SGOC Report were both approved unanimously, subject as always to audit.

The evening's guest speaker, introduced by Jim Doedderlein, was Mr. Tom Bucci, President and founder of the organization *Soldier Sanctuary*, a 501 c (3) non-profit agency, "By Combat Vets For Combat Vets." Soldier Sanctuary's Mission is to provide outdoor activities for combat veterans with retired working dogs to promote camaraderie and outdoor fitness.

Tom is a combat veteran whose Army career spanned 33 years and 21 countries, including tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Upon return from duty stations he had found that doing outdoor activities provided a soothing escape from the rigors of the military. And with the

addition of dogs this approach became a "therapeutic activity". He is not a trained counselor, but now advocates the benefits of outdoor life for such impacted veterans. He makes great use of his trained support dogs, Gino and Max, to assist in the rejuvenation of the participating veterans, and provides weekly pet therapy to the PTSD Unit at the CVAMC, from which many of their members come. They are all combat vets who hang out together. Each vet has experienced the 4-5 man "fire team," enduring the worst times together and with their lives depending on each other. These activities attempt to recreate the fire team mentality as a sanctuary and tool to help assist, mentor, motivate, and rehabilitate these veterans.

Tom gives programs and sets up numerous events for them throughout the year and, since they are all 100% volunteer and unpaid, these are generally funded out of pocket and/or from donations. All events are free to combat veterans. He invited any of our members to join with him in their meetings and outdoor events.

Following the Q and A session, President Houck presented him with one of our Chapter's challenge coins and a commemorative photo was taken, which will be sent to Webmaster Prinzi for inclusion with the minutes.

Upcoming Meetings

Regular membership meetings are held the 2nd Wednesdays of each month, exclusive of July and August, at the VFW Post 845 in Downingtown.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for March 13th, at 1930 hours.

Scheduled speaker is Deb Ryan, from the Stewards of Children Association (abused children).

Website: <http://www.vva436.org> Visit the site regularly to stay abreast of events, announcements, minutes, and any other official postings. Provide Webmaster Phil Prinzi with your constructive feedback and, if you have any items which would be of interest to the members or would be worth posting, please be sure to route them through Ken Schweitzer first.

Newsletter: Between regular meetings, we gratefully receive items of general interest/importance for consideration for inclusion in these newsletters. Forward them as early as possible to John Morris at www.vva436@gmail.com or to Doc Maher at jmahermdmph@yahoo.com since we try to get the final draft out as close to the end of the month as possible. Any items too late for inclusion will be brought up at the next meeting.

Membership: Membership Chair Jim Doedderlein announced we had 138 regular members and 10 Associate members at the last count. We have had two applications since then and hope to get those included by the next meeting. Please continue your personal efforts to recruits any eligible VN War/Era vets you meet during the week.

Agent Orange: Bob Stone forwarded a note received from ProPublica, which reiterated the report about the 9-2 decision of the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, overturning the lower level court decision and ruling that the VA was wrong to deny AO benefits to BWVNNVeterans, and reminding about their "Reliving AO" Series which was so supportive of VN veterans causes. ProPublica has a list of >700 Navy ships possibly exposed to AO in VN. They ask Vets with information or records on those ships to contact www.agentorange@propublica.org

Membership form

Regular membership in VVA is open to any Veteran who served **anywhere** during the Vietnam War era.

Mail to PO Box 189
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____

Email: _____ Born: _____ / _____ / _____

- VVA Life Membership: \$50 (this is a new and reduced price)**
- I served in the US military, for other than training purposes, between 8/5/64 and 5/7/75
- I served in the US military in Vietnam between 2/21/61 and 8/5/64.
- DD214 enclosed (Applications without DD214s will be processed as associate memberships)
- I wish to join the Associates of the VVA. (No military service needed) (No age limits)
- AVVA Life Membership. Price based on age**

Incoming Correspondence:

- ** A thank you note from Jennifer Lily, Chief of Volunteer Services, CVAMC, in appreciation for our Chapter's help.
- ** The current issue of the Rolling Thunder Newsletter.
- ** A thank you for past support, and a request for a donation from the Veterans Multi-Service Center, Philadelphia, which runs the Mary Walker House in Coatesville.
- ** Several members had received notices from the Military Order of the Purple Heart organization inviting veterans to their annual banquet to be held 2/24th at the Saint Anthony's Lodge, Downingtown, at which our Chaplain, Joe Crescenzo was to be one of several individuals honored for their efforts in support of Veterans.

Education Committee: We will need some additional help with this. Jim D noted that the group may have to meet separately as Jed Burns is convalescing. Suggestions for this year's essay topic will be welcome.

Honor Guard:

- ** President Houck explained that we were invited again to participate in Kennett Square's Memorial Day Parade but, since this is the alternate year, we are committed to participate in the Downingtown parade instead.
- ** After some consideration, we do not plan on participating in the Delaware County Memorial Flag Raising Ceremony, but Frank will make some visits to DelCo schools.

VA/Veterans Affairs

- ** The Navy Secretary has denied the claims for reimbursement for care for veterans and families who were exposed at Camp Lejeune, saying there was no legal way he could pay those bills, and referred them to the Congress for legislative assistance.
- ** DoD's 2019 National Defense Act now allows veterans with 100% permanent and total service-connected disability to fly space-available on military aircraft (as Category 6, the lowest) along with retirees and their dependents.
- ** **Military.com** states that the 2019 Federal Budget deficit exceeds \$1 Trillion and they are looking at ways to respond to that, including decreasing spending & increasing revenues (raising Tricare enrollment fees for military retirees, and/or reducing veterans benefits).
- ** The VA has created a 24 page Welcome Kit to guide Veterans to the benefits and services they've earned. There is some kind of problem with their website, but it can be found and downloaded by going to <http://www.va.gov> and keying in a search for the phrase "Welcome Kit."
- ** The national VVA's 19th biennial convention is scheduled for Spokane, Washington, July 15-20; none of the members present showed any interest in making that trip.
- ** A bill, H.R. 1151, has been introduced to allow Veterans to use, possess, and transport medical marijuana and to be able to discuss it freely with VA doctors.
- ** The PA estimates that 10% of all homeless are Veterans.
- ** The January 23rd issue of DMVA Digest has an item debunking many of the myths being circulated about

Blue print = email addresses Red print = website hot links
www.vva436.org: for updates & meetings minutes.

returning Veterans.

- ** Lee Corfield forwarded to us a Veterans Outreach Survey. See enclosure (4) in the posted Minutes
- ** VVA has a 24 page Self Help Guide to Service Connected Disability Compensation for AO Exposure which can be downloaded; go to www.VVA.org and click on the What We Do button.

The SEVC:

- ** Bingo Night is set for March 26th; all are welcome. if you can help contact Ken Schweitzer.
- ** The SEVC also plans a Valentine's Day party for their residents.
- ** We are still looking for memorabilia donations to put in the showcase in Bldg 3, CVAMC. We plan to move the items around from time to time, especially if, and when, Jed Burns is able to get back to working on it.

Old Business:

- ** Bob Gallagher updated the group on the recruitment advertisement and costs. It is now in its first issue of the paper and we are looking for responses from Veterans to join our organization.
- ** In follow-up of the motion to provide financial help to a needy Veteran, which was approved earlier (January Newsletter and Minutes), President Houck and the Executive Committee gave executive approval for the payment of part of the individual's utility bills in collaboration with other VSOs, until his benefits had been restored by the VA. The members now unanimously approved the specific expense cost upon proper Motion (Massaro, Lopacki).

New Business:

- ** Jack McFadden announced the 6th Annual Veterans Trap Shoot, which benefits the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, is scheduled for the West Chester Gun Club, 27 April.
- ** A Motion (Amole, Gallagher) to make a donation to the Veterans Multi-Service Center to support their operations was approved unanimously.

Nominations for Annual Election of Officers &

Directors: President Houck brought up the topic of annual elections which must be completed fairly soon. After brief floor discussion, a Motion (Amole, Massaro) to nominate all the current Officers and Directors to serve an additional one year term in their present positions was then amended by a secondary Motion (DiLodovico, Amole) for Ken Schweitzer to replace Dave McTavish (who may be moving during this year) as 1st VP, and was approved by acclamation.

Of Interest/Good of the Chapter:

- ** Ken announced the Annual Banquet will be held on 6 April, from 1330-1730 hours at Spring Hill Golf Club. The General Fund will cover the cost for members and spouses.
- ** Update: Five members and three wives attended the MOPH event in honor of Joe Crescenzo.



Major L. F. Guillermin Memorial Chapter 436

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website: <http://www.vva436.org>

Address label here