

# The Voice of 436

September 2017



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



**Next meeting:**

Sept. 13, 7:30 p.m.  
@ VFW Post 845  
4601 West Lincoln Hwy.  
Downingtown, PA 19335  
610 269-8818

<http://www.vva436.org>

**Bad weather cancellations:**

email notices will be sent or call Post 845 for updates

**Chapter officers 2017-2018**

President: Frank Houck  
1st V.P.: Dave McTavish  
2nd V.P.: Barry Amole  
Treasurer: Jim Doedderlein  
Directors: Robert Gallagher,  
Chris Pitt,  
John Morris,  
Phil Prinzi,  
Bud McCullough,  
Rick Weimar

While our Chapter meetings were on hold during the summer months, a lot of things of interest to veterans continued to occur. We attempt to cover many of those in these newsletters, depending on available space, especially those involving our Chapter members as well as topics of general interest to all veterans. Those already covered in our July & August issues will not be repeated here. And those involving specific Chapter 436 members, and any updated info from the national VVA Convention held in New Orleans in August, will be shown on page 2, to allow us space here to outline several newsworthy summertime items.

One of the more interesting actions, with significant political overtones, occurred in June. The House Appropriations Committee approved an amendment to the defense spending bill, to begin in Federal Fiscal Year 2018, to remove the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) which had been passed in response to the 9/11 terror attacks, and which had authorized Presidents to justify the Iraqi War and to fight against ISIS (? ISIL) in Iraq and Syria. The bill would still have to be approved in the Senate, which appeared to be doubtful.

At the end of May, VA Secty. Shulkin spoke to the White House press corps on the "State of the VA", and his medical approach to assessing, diagnosing, and aggressively treating the patient. Key VA problem areas identified included: access to care, paying providers, community care, quality of care, disability claims and appeals, information technology, capital assets, accountability, staffing, bureaucracy, fraud-waste-&-abuse, and veterans' suicides. His discussion is worthwhile reading/watching ([www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/date/2017/07/06](http://www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/date/2017/07/06)). In late June, Shulkin stated "suicide prevention is my top clinical priority," and released finalized plans for the provision of emergency mental health coverage to vets with OTH (other than honorable) discharges. Effective 7/5th all VHA medical centers were to be prepared to offer emergency stabilization care for vets who present at those centers with any emergent mental health needs. [As a Reminder: "Veterans in crisis should call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 (press # 1), or text 838255."] This comes at an appropriate time as, coincidentally, reports show significant numbers of veterans actually commit suicide in the parking lots of VA facilities.

**Upcoming Meetings**

September 13, 2017; scheduled speaker: Martin Kenny, Sgt., Maj., USMC (Ret.), President & Founder, *The Weekly Fight*.

October 11, 2017; scheduled speaker: Rick Wertz, Maj., 7th SF (Ret.).

**Website:** <http://www.vva436.org> Visit the site often. Webmaster Phil Prinzi keeps it up to date for your convenience and interest, with news, photos, minutes, etc., including pictures from recent events involving our members.

**Newsletter:** Our thanks to John Morris, Jim Doedderlein, and Phil Prinzi for their help in preparing, printing, posting and mailing the issues. A special thanks, also, to all those members who sent us items for inclusion in these summertime issues. We can always use such help, so send items for consideration to [www.vva436@gmail.com](mailto:www.vva436@gmail.com) or [jmahermdmph@yahoo.com](mailto:jmahermdmph@yahoo.com).

**Membership:** At last count, Jim D. reported 142 regular members and 11 Associate members. We would like to have more of them attend the meetings, so please encourage any of them you are in contact with to come and renew contacts.

**AO/Toxic:** A Stars & Stripes news report states that Secty Shulkin will decide "on or before" Nov. 1st whether to add more categories (bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinsons like symptoms, blood pressure, stroke) to the VA's current list of "presumptive diseases" linked to AO exposure. Meanwhile, CA Rep. Mike Thompson, et al., has a House Bill (HR 3327), the Toxic Exposure Declassification Act of 2017, to require DoD to disclose documents re secret tests from the '60s and '70s where some 6,000 military personnel were exposed to bacterial and chemical weapons in projects 112 and SHAD.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

- Dues: \$20.00/year (regular and associate memberships)
- 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)
- VVA Life Membership: \$100       AVVA Life Membership      Cost is based on applicant's age.

### Community Activities:

\*\* The 4th Annual SEVC Car Show was held 8/12, with several Chapter 436 members volunteering for the day. Plaudits go out to Ken Schweitzer, Barry Amole and Jed Burns, and to those members who worked to support the program: Rick Weimar, Bill Gordon, Dave McTavish, Frank Houck, Rob Gallagher, Chris Pitt, & Jim Doedderlein. Thanks also to A.L. Post 602 who provided the food, and to the OJR ROTC cadets who pitched in to help.

\*\* The Chapter's 2nd annual Crab Fest outing, orchestrated by President Frank Houck, was held 8/19, at the Hill Top Crab House, Toughkenamon, where a total of 28 members, spouses and guests feasted on delicious crabs, crab legs, shellfish, and assorted seafood specialties. Thanks to all who attended and made this a great success.

\*\* On 8/25th an entourage of 51 members, spouses and guests travelled to Reading, PA; they enjoyed the pre-game buffet, watched the Reading "Fightin' Phils" beat the Harrisburg Senators by 3 to 1, and marveled at the post-game fireworks. Thanks to Barry Amole for arranging this outing.

\*\* A particular bravo goes to webmaster Phil Prinzi who has posted videos of all three events on our website.

\*\* On 8/30, the Chapter hosted a new version of our catered lunches at the CVAMC's Community Living Facility, Bldg. 138. This was a fish-fry meal, with the following members participating: Ken Schweitzer, Doug Forsythe, Barry Amole, Bob Stone, Frank Houck, Al Duncan, Rob Gallagher, Tony Cantone, Phil Prinzi and Doc Maher.

\*\* Phil has graciously taken the time, prior to heading south for the winter, to add a video of this function to the website, as well.

### Notes from the National VVA Convention (gathered from the website):

\*\* John Rowan was re-elected to his 7th term as national President of VVA, and Dr. Wayne Reynolds was re-elected to a 5th 2-year term as national VVA Treasurer.

\*\* VVA officials condemned the recent violence in Charlottesville, VA, and those "fringe lunatic groups" (KKK, neo-Nazis, and white supremacists) involved.

\*\* Three national legislators were honored: Sen. Richard Blumenthal (Legislator of the Year); Sen. Corry Peters, a Navy vet, and Rep. Mike Coffman, a Marine combat vet (both as VVA Legislators of the Year).

\*\* the convention praised Sen. John McCain for his past efforts, wished him a speedy recovery from his recent medical problem, and once again emphasized the need to focus attention on AO issues.

\*\* VVA's awards for Chapter Newsletter and Website went to Chapters in Fresno, CA, and Denver, CO, respectively.

### VA/Veterans Affairs:

\*\* Pres. Trump has signed into law the Harry Colmery

[Blue print = email addresses](#) • [Red print = website hot links](#)  
[www.vva436.org](http://www.vva436.org): for updates & meetings minutes.

Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, a.k.a. "The Forever GI Bill", which, among its 34 new provisions, does away with the 15-year time limit for vets transitioning after 1/1/13 to use educational benefits.

\*\* Claiming that veterans and active duty personnel are disproportionately targeted by scammers and identity thieves, VVA filed a federal lawsuit on 8/1 to end the DoD's operation of a website which reveals details of the military service of millions of vets and service members to anybody at all, anonymously, for any purpose, in violation of their privacy rights.

\*\* The VA has a "needs-based" pension benefit for wartime vets aged >= 65, with limited or no income, having a permanent & total non-service-connected disability. Detailed info and proofs plus a complicated completed application are required. Visit [https://explore.va.gov/pension?...](https://explore.va.gov/pension?) or contact county VSOs.

\*\* The VA announced a new strategic partnership to generate solutions for TBI and PTSD at its 2nd annual "Brain Trust: Pathways to InnoVation" summit meeting, held at Harvard University. Over 350 invited experts attended.

\*\* In June, VVA lauded VA Secty. Shulkin for taking the lead on OTH discharges and working to correct "the VA's self-imposed policies which have denied services to our most vulnerable veterans for decades.

### Of Interest/Good of the Chapter:

\*\* Pres. Houck indicates we will probably set up the Chapter 436 table at the 5th annual Paoli Battlefield Heritage Day, Sunday, 9/23, 1100-1600, at the Paoli Memorial Grounds, Malvern. All vets are welcome to enjoy the festivities (kids' games, food, table setups, demonstrations, twilight battle re-enactment).

\*\* PA vets may soon be able to get Purple Heart/Combat Wounded motorcycle license plates if the PA House approval this past July goes through.

\*\* PA's General Assembly updated the Crimes Code (now P.L. 214-119) making it a summary offense to fake military experience for purposes of obtaining aid or profit, or while soliciting contributions or subscriptions. Also, misrepresentation of military service or honors (military decorations, medals) with intent to obtain money, property, or other benefit, will be a misdemeanor of the 3rd degree (effective 8/27/17).

\*\* Don't forget the Boscov's Friends Helping Friends event Oct. 17th; contact Chris Pitt for tix or to help.

\*\* The next state PASC meeting is scheduled for 11/2-4 at State College.

\*\* Pending any changes from the planning committee's 9/6th meeting, the West Chester Veterans Day celebration will be held on Sunday 11/12 with a 1400 kickoff time.

\*\* Don't forget the premier of Ken Burns' Vietnam War documentary, PBS, Sept. 17th, at 2000 (8 PM).

\*\* The VA's Caregiver Support Program is resuming. Visit [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) for the details.



### Major L. F. Guillermin Memorial Chapter 436

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Phoenixville, PA 19460

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

