



Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 1106

Membership Meeting September 2, 2023

Meeting Location: South Metro Fire & Rescue Building, 9195 E. Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO 80112 (Board Room). Zoom provided.

Meeting called to order by President Dave Lyons at 9:00 AM.

Invocation and Prayer: Reverend Garry Turks

Pledge of Allegiance: (All)

POW/MIA Chair Presentation: Dan Green

Moment of Silence: For all those men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice and for those still MIA. We also remember our VVA and AVVA members who have passed.

Memorial Recognition honored Chapter member Leslie "Sonny" Gorsuch, US Army, who died August 18, 2023.

Officer and Board Member Roll Call: Dave Lyons, Milt Omoto (online), Mike Huber (online), Sally Ann Eaves, The Rev. Garry Turks, Joe Plant, Joe Robinson, Joe Dempsey, John Vargas, Tom Werzyn. Patti Ehline, Lee White (Founder/Past President), Litta Plant-Schaper (AVVA)

Members Present: Mort Anderson, Jim Blumberg, Bob Brown, James Chisel, Bill Clark, Tony Croce, Rockie Cuppari, Charles Daldry, David Dawson, Joe Dempsey, Leland Eagleson, Bob Easter, Sally Ann Eaves, Patti Ehline, William Evans, Rance Exline, Craig Fagerness, Bob Ferguson, Barry Fiore, David Gaul, Dan Green, Leo Greunke, Lou Grounds, Pat Hammon, Ted Hanfelder, Warren Harrison Jim Henderson, Mike Huber, Jack Hunter, Bob Lee, Walter Leuci, Chuck Luley, David Lyons, Larry Majors, Jim Martindale, Elijah Mitchell, Harry Montgomery, Tony Nickerson, Milt Omoto, Gary Palka, Ed Phillips, Joe Plant, James Ponzi, Joseph Robinson, Juan Romero, Bob Rotruck, Murray Sallenbach, John Sheadel, Charles Smith, Ron Smith, Phil Snyder, Jerone Springs, Wayne Stowe, Garry Turks, John Vargas, Dan Wagle, Tom Werzyn, Gary Weston, Lee White, Lew Wood, David Woods **Associate Members Present:** Jane Brown, Linda Croce, Ita Dempsey, Diane Graham, Claudia Hunter, Litta Plant-Schaper, Barbara Rotruck, Detlef Schaper, Jai Smith, Leann Stelzer, Naomi Turks, Jim Williams,

We currently meet the first Saturday of every month at 9:00 AM at South Metro Fire and Rescue Building, 9195 E. Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO 80112

Visit Us at: www.vva1106.org

Attendance: (Jack Hunter) Attendance today is 81 including eight on ZOOM.

Introduction and Recognition of Guests and New Members: Guests included Janelle L. Mendelssohn, Public Affairs Specialist, VA, Eastern Colorado Health Care System; Tony Thomas, Director, VA, National Cemetery Administration, Fort Logan Complex; Bobby Tynan, National Agent Orange Medal Foundation. New members introduced themselves.

Guest speaker: Bobby Tynan and his wife traveled from South Carolina to familiarize us with the Agent Orange Medal Foundation. He spoke on the origin of the foundation and the current activities to get the DOD to issue an official Agent Orange medal for Vietnam Veterans. He has been successful in getting the medal recognized in 9 states and working for federal recognition. Everyone who served in SEA during the Vietnam War is eligible for the medal. The website is <https://www.orangeheartmedal.org/>

Member Biography: Tom Werzyn gave us a look into his life, especially his duties with the US Army in Military Intelligence. Following study at the Army Vietnamese Language school, he served in Vietnam in 1968-1969 with I Corps in Intelligence and as an advisor to the ARVN, in intelligence collection (read spook), and had several missions with Air America. He finished his time in the Army with the Special Forces at Fort Bragg. Originally from Washington DC, Tom and his wife have been in Colorado for 25 years.

President's Report: (Dave Lyons)

- Highlights of the 2023 National Convention:
 - Chapter 1106 was designated as "Chapter of the Year" nationally. Thank you to Milt Omoto for writing the winning entry and thank you to all Chapter members for making the Chapter worthy of this recognition.
 - Discussion of the end of VVA as a national organization was left to be determined.
 - Whenever the national organization ends, our Chapter can continue.
 - Thankyou to all who attended, and especially those who helped with the Chapter Summer picnic. We had about 70 people attend a very successful picnic.
 - We are still looking for a new e-mail "blaster", a newsletter editor, a webmaster and membership chair.
 - The Cherry Creek School District (CCSD) Annual Military and Veterans Community Celebration will be held on Saturday, September 9, 2023. Tom Werzyn will address that in his report. Your participation is strongly encouraged.

Vice President's Report: (Milt Omoto)

- Hello and thank you to all for attending.
- Thank you to Bobby Tynan for coming all this way to speak to us.
- Thank you to each and every member for all you have done to help us become the "Chapter of the Year." The award write up consisted of five pages of individual actions that combined to make up our list of accomplishments.
- The CCSD Military celebration on September 9 is really important, not only to recognize the actions of our military and veterans, but to motivate young people.

Treasurer's Report: (Mike Huber)

- Expenses included the six \$12,000 Scholarships.
- John Vargas corrected the report to include a non-Chapter "pass thru" which was a donation outside of the organization.
- Motion to approve the Treasurer's report made by Joe Dempsey, and seconded by Joe Robinson. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report: (Sally Ann Eaves)

- Motion to approve the August minutes was made by Bob Rotruck and seconded by Tony Nickerson. Motion carried.

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership: (Lee White- temporary chair)

- We are looking for a Membership Chairperson. It is a chance to contribute without a huge time commitment.
- Chapter 1106 has 198 VVA and 43 AVVA members.
- We are encouraging spouses and friends to support the Chapter as AVVA members.
- Nationally, there are 90,622 VVA members with most chapters averaging 115 members.
- There are 842 VVA members in the state of Colorado.

Color Guard: (Ron Smith)

- We are supporting the Sep 9th CCSD Military and Veteran Community Celebration at Legacy Stadium and look forward to your participation.
- Veterans Day requests are starting to come in. So far we are supporting ceremonies at Horizon Middle School on Nov 6 and Ben Franklin Academy on Nov 10.
- We are looking for more Color Guard members. If interested, see Rom Smith or Dan Green.

Veterans Emergency Assistance Program (Joe Plant)

- During the past month, we were able to assist 4 veterans for \$984.22.

Government Affairs: (Tony Nickerson)

- The PACT ACT is constantly fluctuating. Though it is thought to be "ended" for Vietnam veterans, a Vietnam veteran can still register, though you will be placed at the bottom of the list which includes other, more recent war veterans, based upon the date of application. There are outside agents who advertise that they can help with gaining benefits of the PACT ACT or VA and government benefits. DO NOT USE THEM. They don't do anything that you can't do yourself. The VA Benefits HOTLINE is 1-800-827-1000 and the VA Health Benefit HOTLINE is 10877-222-8387.

- There is frustration in calling the VA Medical Center and asking to speak with your doctor. It is best to say "I want to make an appointment". That gets a better response.
- Here nurse Patti and a few other members included information on the VA Health App. This is "MyHealthVet" and offers secure messaging.

Chaplain's Report: (Chaplain "Chappy" Garry Turks)

- Is awed to be in the company of fellow Vietnam veterans and the power this group has to heal.

- He reiterated the friendships and companionship offered by the Buddy Calls this Chapter is known for.

- Emphasized the presence of other chaplains, State Chaplain Joe Plant, Chaplain Mike Huber (on ZOOM), and Chaplain Lonnie from Ft Logan National Cemetery, if anyone would like to speak with a chaplain. This is a particular benefit of these meetings.

Speaker's Bureau (Tom Werzyn)

- The Speaker's Bureau is beginning to become active following the summer break. It will be up and organized when the students get back to school. I anticipate more requests after Labor Day.

- The CCSD football game and celebration will be covered in the Round Table portion of today's meeting.

Grants and Fundraising (Milt Omoto)

- Please continue to support the Household Goods Program. It is a steady income source for us.

Chapter Events Coordinator (Joe Robinson)

- We are tentatively planning a trip to the Colorado Freedom Memorial sometime in the future.

Scholarship Committee (Gary Weston)

- The Six \$2000 scholarship checks have been sent to the schools.

- Gary will resign from this duty due to his being named as a VSO for Douglas County.

- Thank you to Lou Grounds for stepping up to take Gary's position for us.

Social Committee: (John Vargas)

- Thank you to Gary Weston for his superb lead of the Scholarship committee.

- Thank you to Bobby Tynan for visiting us and for his very educational presentation.

- Thank you to Janelle and Tony for attending our meeting, especially on a holiday week-end.

- He emphasized the importance of Buddy Calls so no one feels lost or left out.

Promotional (Joe Dempsey)

- We have lots of shirts available including long sleeve shirts.

- Also available are hats.

- WE have new VVA Chapter 1106 Challenge coins for \$10 and a presentation box for the challenge coins for \$6.

Veteran Health and Women Veterans (Patti Ehline)

- We acknowledge AVVA members and women veterans

- Do use the Myhealthvet app.

- There are several handouts here for your information.

- There is a new COVID vaccine available in the health care systems.
- The new Wounded Warriors can be trusted.
- Advice: Do not eat fish or food grown in Vietnam.
- Additional discussion with Gary Weston and Pat Hammon: You can still file an application for the PACT ACT and when considering VA health benefits also consider claims for children and grandchildren who might be afflicted with issues as a result of your service.

WEBMaster/Newsletter (Bob Rotruck)

- Thank you to the membership. It has been a privilege to serve as your webmaster, blaster, and newsletter editor.
- Now we need replacements for all three jobs.

Former President (Lee White)

- Remember we are looking for volunteers for several duties.

AVVA Chapter Liaison: (Litta Plant-Schaper)

- Remember AVVA is here to assist you if you have ideas for them.
- See me for any name tags you might need.

Roundtable Discussion:

- Tom Werzyn: Our partnership with the Cherry Creek School District (CCSD) has been very rewarding. Remember the 13th Annual Military Appreciation Ceremony and Football Game on Sep 9th. A free lunch will be provided from noon to 2pm at the Cherokee Trail High School cafeteria followed by a Community Celebration with activities in the East parking lot of Legacy Stadium from 2 to 5pm. The kick off for the football game is at 6pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Cherry Creek School District Military Veterans Community Appreciation Event, Saturday September 9, 2023; Legacy Stadium (lunch at noon at Cherokee Trail High School cafeteria)
- September is National Service Dog month.
- Patriot Day is September 11th.
- National POW/MIA Recognition Day is the Third Friday in September (15th).
- US Air Force birthday is September 18.
- The next Board meeting is Saturday, September 23, 2023 at 9:00 AM at Mr. President's house.
- The next Forgotten Heroes Awards Ceremony, Sep 23, 2023 at 11:00 AM at American Legion Post #1
- Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day is September 24th - A day to honor the families of fallen Servicemengers.

MEETING ADJOURNED by Dave Lyons, President at 11:00 AM.

This Chapter Membership Meeting minutes submitted by Sally Ann Eaves, Chapter Secretary

Published 09/04/2023

Circulation Notice: These minutes may contain sensitive and/or personal information; therefore, please use discretion when sharing this information with non-VVA members.