



TEXAS Vietnam Veterans NEWS

Member of the Texas Community Newspaper Association

"VVA Newspaper of the Year 2000, 2002 and 2003"



Volume 1 Issue 1

May-June-July-August 2011

Texas State Council Meeting June 3-5, 2011 Borger, Texas Thursday and Friday.

VVA Chapter 404 was the host chapter this time around for the state council meeting.

VVA and AVVA members from Texas VVA Chapters started arriving in Borger for the Summer Meeting of the VVA Texas State Council on Thursday, June 2nd and were treated to a free rib eye steak dinner at 7.00 p.m. courtesy of the Elk Club across the street from the Holiday Inn Express where everyone was staying. Frank Phillips College just behind the hotel provided all the meeting rooms for Vietnam Veterans Assistance Foundation of Texas (VVAFT) on Friday afternoon at 4p.m.; AVVA State Council on Friday evening at 6:30 p.m; the VVA state council meeting all day Saturday as well as the awards banquet 7 p.m. Chapter 404 also provided lunch to the delegates and guests at the lunch break on Saturday.

Since this is a VVA National Convention year being held in Reno, Nevada in August there were some of the candidates seeking VVA National office or At-Large National directors positions. The Texas State Council hosted a Candidates Forum Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the college. They were VVA National Secretary Barry Hagge running for the office of VVA National Vice President; National Treasurer Larry Frazee seeking re-election to the Treasurers position; Region 7 Director Allen Manuel seeking re-election as VVA Region 7 Director; VVA Region 3 Director Bruce Whitaker running for the office of VVA National President; VVA Region 2 Director Fred Elliot running for the office of VVA National Vice President; VVA At Large Director Bill Meeks running for the office of the VVA National Secretary; Tom Burke running for the office VVA National Secretary; Dennis Andras, Louisiana State Council President, Pete Peterson (Oklahoma), both running for one of the ten at large directors positions; and Richard DeLong a current At Large Director seeking re-election to that position.

VVA 404's Hospitality room

Chapter 404 VVA and AVVA members opened their hospitality room at noon on Friday until midnight. The chapter proved a good spread of food and beverages for the VVA delegates, AVVA representative and guest to enjoy. They provided beef brisket, pulled pork, fried chicken, potato salad, cole slaw, pinto beans, chips, 18 homemade pie of various flavors, homemade cookies and drinks (Coke & Pepsi products and an assortment of beer all of which was donated to the chapter for the hospitality room. Percilla Newberry's mother baked 18 pies and a chapter member made the cookies.

Vietnam Veterans Assistance Foundation of Texas

At 4:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon, the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Foundation of Texas [VVAFT] held their Board of Directors meeting. The board members, TVVN assistant editor Susie Moreno, and guests Bruce Whitaker, Barry Hagge, Fred Elliot, Allen Manuel, Richard DeLong, Tom Burke, Dennis Andras, Tony Chavira (VVA 574 El Paso), Humberto Nevarez (VVA 574 El Paso) and Bill Smith (VVA 137 Dallas)

Business was conducted and the four (4) chapters that submitted packets for VVAFT Operation Ed-U-Cate were passed out to the directors to judge. You can read the first and second place submissions elsewhere in this issue of the Texas Vietnam Veterans Newsletter. (They will also be in the October issue of the Texas Vietnam Veterans Newspaper.

- 1st Place \$500 winner VVA Chapter 1000 Killen/Fort Hood Area;
- 2nd Place \$300 winner VVA Chapter 366 San Antonio;
- 3rd Place \$200 winner VVA Chapter 937 Bryan/College Station
- 4th Place \$100 winner VVA Chapter 915 Austin

NOTICE

This online Newsletter is taking the place of the May, June & July Texas VV News. The next issue of the newspaper will be published in late October. This is due to the bad economy and the fact that the VVAFT finances is presently at a critical level. It costs the VVAFT around \$5100 per issue of the newspaper. This newsletter will afford the foundation to regenerate its funds to be able to cover all of its obligations.



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TEXAS STATE COUNCIL OFFICERS

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VVA At-Large Director

Bill Meeks, Jr.

AVVA State President

Marilyn Rose

AVVA Region 7 Director

Kathy Andras

Texas VV Newsletter – is the official publication of the VVA Texas State Council. All VVA members, Chapter and other interested parties are invited to submit articles, pictures and opinions for publication on subject matter that is relevant to veterans’ affairs issues. The newsletter staff reserves the right to edit for length and grammar only, and reject any material that is libelous or obscene.

TEXAS VVA STATE COUNCIL CHAPTERS

VVA Chapter 137 Dallas	VVA Chapter 278 Texarkana
VVA Chapter 292 Beaumont	VVA Chapter 297 Amarillo
VVA Chapter 343 Houston	VVA Chapter 348 Orange
VVA Chapter 366 San Antonio	VVA Chapter 379 Big Spring
VVA Chapter 404 Borger	VVA Chapter 457 San Angelo
VVA Chapter 574 El Paso	VVA Chapter 685 Galveston
VVA Chapter 734 Conroe	VVA Chapter 844 El Paso
VVA Chapter 854 Hallettsville	VVA Chapter 856 Harlingen
VVA Chapter 863 Kerrville	VVA Chapter 870 Schulenburg
VVA Chapter 898 Victoria	VVA Chapter 910 Corpus Christi
VVA Chapter 915 Austin	VVA Chapter 920 Denton
VVA Chapter 922 Baytown	VVA Chapter 923 San Marcos
VVA Chapter 929 Beeville	VVA Chapter 931 Nacogdoches
VVA Chapter 932 Tyler	VVA Chapter 937 College Station
VVA Chapter 973 Sherman	VVA Chapter 987 Longview
VVA Chapter 991 Palestine	VVA Chapter 1000 Killeen
VVA Chapter 1009 Corsicana	VVA Chapter 1010 Waco
VVA Chapter 1013 Grand Prairie	VVA Chapter 1029 Yorktown

TEXAS STATE COUNCIL COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audit: Don Mathews (379)	State Agent Orange Coordinator: John Cook (137)
Constitution & By Laws: Bill Meeks (343)	State Legislative Coordinator: John Miterko (915)
ETABO: Al Navarro (343)	State Homeless Veterans Coordinator: Greg Beck (278)
Finance: Alan Hill (863)	TSC Chapter State-up Coordinator: Mike Dawson (1000)
Government Affairs: John Miterko (915)	Veterans Benefits: Jim Hallbauer (137)
Minority Affairs: Paul Washington (343)	Veterans Incarcerated: Special Advisor Lynda Greene
Membership: Jim W Boyd (TSC Treasurer)	Women Veterans: Eilleene Grozier (574)
Nominating Committee: Greg Beck (278)	TSC SPECIAL AD HOC COMMITTEES
POW/MIA: Don Boling (379)	Chapter Subsidy Fund/Silent Auction:
PTSD: Joseph Boatman (915)	Lynn Kennedy (AVVA 1000)
Public Affairs: Buddy Farina (685)	Gina Mathews (AVVA 685)
Special Advisor Sandra Womack (AVVA 292)	Live Auction: Special Advisor Percilla Newberry
Scholarship: Don Kennedy (TSC VP)	AVVA –TSC Project A.M.I.G.O.:
Special Advisor Percilla Newberry (AVVA SC VP)	Marilyn Rose (AVVA SC President)
	Nancy Smith (AVVA 137)

VIETNAM VETERANS ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION OF TEXAS, INC.

Officers

President Bill Meeks (2011-2013) / Vice President Don Kennedy (2011-2013) / Secretary Kerwin Stone (2011-2012)
 Treasurer Jim W. Boyd (2011-2013) - **Board of Directors:** Greg Beck (2011-2013) / Victor Flores (2010-2012)
 Al Navarro (2011-2013) / Luther Newberry (2010-2012) / Robert Rangel (2011-2013) / Dennis Thomas (2010-2011)/
 Hal Thomson (2011-2013)

TSC PRESIDENT REPORT

My Brothers and Sisters, I hope everyone had a safe trip home from Borger. I want to personally thank the members of Chapter 404 for the wonderful job they did hosting the State Council Meeting. I have to brag on my home Chapter because this was one of the best meetings I have attended. The food was excellent from the steaks on Thursday to the Hospitality Room on Friday to the Lunch and Dinner on Saturday.

Friday evening we had a forum for Candidates running for National Office. I want to thank all of the Candidates for coming to our meeting to share with us their reason for running and answering our questions.

Now it is time to get ready to go to the National Convention in Reno, Nevada. There will be elections held for National Officers to guide our Corporation for the next two years and Vietnam Veterans from all Chapters and State Councils from the United States come together for camaraderie and to conduct the business of the Corporation.

Chapters who are on suspension for not turning in their election report, financial report, 990-N, or not in compliance with the Secretary of State, will not be allowed to register in Reno. Please remember you need to submit these reports to both State and National. You might also need to carry a copy of these documents with you to Reno in case they got delayed or lost in the mail.

Semper Fi

Buster Newberry

AVVA STATE PRESIDENT REPORT

The Summer Texas State Council meeting was hosted by Chapter 404, Borger, Texas and was fantastic. Chapter 404 members and the city of Borger went all out to host this State Council meeting. Not one member went away hungry. I have never seen so much food made by the AVVA members and so many pies all made personally by Percilla's mother, Sally Nicholas. I think I gained 10 lbs. Thanks to all the members, families and friends that participated in making all the decorations, food, gifts, etc. GOOD JOB WELL DONE.

We had 5 Alternate Reps, 12 Reps, out of 36 Chapters in Texas to attend our meeting. Total attendee's were 26. Our guests were Kathy Andras, AVVA Region 7 director and Husband Dennis Andras. We also enjoyed having Jody Pacheco from Project Jody for speaking to us about all her Projects and how to help Veterans. Also thanks to Jake Minton from Minton's Funeral Home for speaking to us about losing our spouses and what to expect. I think everyone appreciated everything they talked about. We learned a lot.

The election for the AVVA State officers was held. Thanks go out to Rose Peterson, Election Chairperson and to Kathy Andras, Region 7 Director, and all the helpers. The election was held with no problems.

The new AVVA State Officers are as follow: President, Marilyn Rose; Vice President, Percilla Newberry; Secretary, Lynn Kennedy; Treasurer, Gina Mathews.

Congratulations to everyone. I look forward to serving as President for my third term and working with everyone. Our AVVA has an open door policy, contact me at anytime.

The Project Amigo this past State Council Meeting was to the Living Waters Ministries and there were great contributions that were received. Thanks everyone.

We will be having seminars right after opening ceremony in Galveston. PTSD – Loving your Veteran.

We will also be discussing again in the afternoon seminars Elections for AVVA and other topics on AVVA.

The next Texas State Council is being hosted by Chapter 685, Galveston County and the meeting will be February 3-5, 2012. Each VVA Chapter and AVVA member that attended received a Registration Form for the TSC meeting. If you need one please contact me or Jim Rose and we can email one to you. The Hotel is the Hilton Galveston Island at 5400 Seawall Blvd, Galveston, TX. Rooms must be made by January 2, 2012. We look forward to seeing everyone in Galveston.

Marilyn Rose -AVVA Texas State President

VVAFT PRESIDENT' REPORT

Well the current economy has done very little to improve the foundation's revenue raising efforts for the year as our telemarketing is in a summer decline as usual and VVAFT has commitments to meet regardless of that fact. The VVAFT Board of Directors has found it necessary to publish an on-line issue of the Texas VV News instead of the regular June-July-August printed copy and this is a temporary fix so that **VVAFT can continue to make our regular commitments to benefit the veterans of our state.**

We should be able to resume the regular publication of the Texas VV News in October and hopefully the revenue raising picture will rebound in the Fall months. The electronic newsletter will be sent out by our various e-mail contact lists or you can go to the foundation's web site <http://www.vvaft.org> to view the next issue.

Bill Meeks – VVAFT President

TSC Meeting continued from page 1

VVAFT also held an election of the officers and board of directors. The VVAFT board of directors are staggered and are for a two year term of office. The four officer and directors whose term of office was up were all reelected to another term. In June 2012 the remaining directors whose term will be up will seek their position and any VVA member is Welcome to submit a letter of intent to seek one of the open director's position no later than 45 days prior to the June VVAFT Board of Directors meeting. Bill Smith, VVA Chapter 137 submitted his letter of intent for this term, but unfortunately all incumbent officers and directors were re-elected.

VVAFT had also granted AVVA Texas State Council an RFP to cover expenses to send Marilyn Rose to the AVVA National Leadership in Reno, NV. Which also covered the registration for all four (4) AVVA State officers and lodging for two rooms for the Borger Texas State Council meeting in the amount of \$1278.

Texas Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA)

The Texas AVVA State Council business meeting was also held on Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. Their officers are President Marilyn Rose, Vice President Percilla Newberry, Secretary Lynda Greene, and Treasurer Merle Morris. Their meeting was well attended by AVVA Chapter representatives. AVVA also held their biennial election and President Marilyn Rose (685) and Vice President Percilla Newberry (404) were re-elected to serve another two years. Lynn Kennedy (1000) was elected as their new secretary and Gina Mathews (685) was elected as their new treasurer. AVVA Region 7 Director Kathy Andras also attended swore the newly elected AVVA state officers during the VVA Texas State Council meeting on Saturday. The new VVA Advisor to the AVVA is Bill Smith (137) who replaced Lee Derby.

AVVA Chapter Rep's turned in a written reports and passed them out to the AVVA chapters in attendance.

Texas State Council Meeting

The TSC President Buster Newberry called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Saturday morning and the Presentation of the Colors was by the Hutchinson County Joint Task Force Color Guard; National Anthem was sung by Brian & Cloyce Kuhnert; Vice President Don Kennedy led the Pledge of Allegiance; Invocation by Myron Peterson, Chapter 404 & Victor Flores, Chapter 574 performed the POW/MIA Table Ceremony.

Chapter 404 President Myron Peterson welcomed the delegates and guests to Borger and introduced Dr. Jud Hicks – President of Frank Phillips College; Jeff Brain – Mayor of Borger; Jack Barnes – America Supports You Texas; and Andres W. Welch – Director of the Thomas E. Creek VA Medical Center in Amarillo

TSC President Newberry introduced the following guests to the state council meeting in Borger: Barry Hagge – VVA National Secretary; Larry Frazee – VVA National Treasurer; Allen Manuel – VVA Region 7 Director; Dennis Andras – Louisiana State Council President; Kathy Andras - AVVA Region 7 Director; Richard DeLong – VVA National At Large Director; Bill Meeks – VVA National At Large Director; Fred Elliot – VVA Region 2 Director; Bruce Whitaker – VVA Region 3 Director; Tom Burke – VVA National At Large Director; Leslie DeLong – Felix Peterson – Oklahoma Chief VSO; VVA National Constitution Committee Chair; VVA At-Large Director Bill Meeks (VVAFT President); VVA At-Large Director Richard DeLong; AVVA Region 7 Directors Kathy Andras; Texas AVVA President Marilyn Rose; VVA National Constitution and Bylaws Chair Leslie DeLong; and VVAFT Board of Directors.

President Newberry asked any newly elected chapter delegates to come forward to introduce themselves and take the oath of office so they could be seated as delegates on the Texas State Council. Also, Paul Washington was sworn in as the new Minority Affairs Committee Chair replacing James Leonard who had resigned.

AVVA State Council President Marilyn Rose gave her report to the VVA Texas State Council delegates. The AVVA Project A.M.I.G.O. presentation was to the Living Waters Ministries by Marilyn Rose.

The chapters present gave oral and written reports of what each chapter has been doing since the June February 2010 TSC meeting in Borger, Texas

After a break for lunch the TSC committee reports started:

- Audit Committee report – Don Mathews, committee chair, is still going through the state councils financial records to complete the audit with the change of Treasurer's last June 2010. More records were turned over to the state council in February and those are what Mathews is presently reviewing.
- Constitution/By Laws Committee chair Bill Meeks turned his time over to the VVA National Constitution committee chair Leslie DeLong to go over several proposed VVA Constitutional Amendments.
- ETABO – No report Al Navarro excused absence
- Chapter Start-up – Chair Mike Dawson no report absent
- Government Affairs – Chair John Mitekro discussed in detail government and legislative information at the state levels.
- Homeless Veterans – Chair Greg Beck passed out a detailed report on Homeless veterans
- POW/MIA – Don Boling and Greg Beck passed out a detailed report on the POW/MIA .
- Membership – chair Jim Boyd gave the totals count for both VVA and AVVA in Texas per the April 30th VVA National Roster and then turned his remainder time over to Bill Meeks the VVA National Membership chair, who discussed the Election Reports and Finance Reports due dates to both VVA National and the State Council both of which are due no later than July 15th. Allen Manuel took a head count of those delegates that are planning on attending the VVA National Convention in August. As of those delegates present at the meeting there are 28 members of the 88 Texas authorized delegates planning on attending.

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TSC Meeting Continued from page 4

- .Minority Affair – Chair James Leonard stepped down for personal family reasons and Paul Washington (Chapter 343) had been sworn in earlier in the day but no report since he had just taken over the committee.
- PTSD – Chair Joseph Boatman gave a brief report.
- Public Affairs – No report
- Veterans Benefits – No report as Jim Hallbauer, the TSC Chief VSO was still in the process of putting his office back together after a massive water pipe bursting at the Dallas VAMC.
- State Agent Orange Coordinator – John Cook was not able to attend but sent a large report of handouts by the new Chapter 137 Delegate Mike McCulloch. .
- Women Veteran – Eillen Grozier was unable to attend because of family health problems but send a written report by Chapter 574 President Robert Rangel.

Unfinished Business

- VVAFT President Bill Meeks passed out the 6th Operation Ed_U_Cate checks to those chapter that submitted their write up and chapter newsletters in to be judged by the VVAFT BoD. Winners are covered above under VVAFT Board of Directors meeting. Meeks passed out the 7th Operation Ed-U-Cate contest flyer for the June 2012.
- TSC Secretary Kerwin Stone stressed the importance of filing you chapter election and financial reports in a timely fashion to both VVA National and Texas State Council. Also that the chapters need to file the IRS Form 990N along with their financial report to VVA National.
- TSC Treasurer remind delegates that the Household Goods checks needs to be turned over to the chapter treasurer once they return home so they can be deposit since it is printed on the checks VOID after 60 Days.
- *The TSC Delegates after a serious discussion voted to bring a motion to the floor that had been tabled at the San Antonio, in June 2010 to change the state council meeting dates to April and October starting in 2013. Reasons for making the changes is to separate the state council meetings by six months and not have both meetings in the first six months of the year along with a possible Region 7 meeting in July and either a VVA National Convention or Leadership Conference in late July or early August. The only requirement to host a state council meeting is that any chapter chosen to host the meetings coordinate with the state president since VVA National Board meetings are held in Silver Spring in both of those months and he/she has to attend them.*

New Business

- TSC Secretary Kerwin Stone reminded the chapters to make sure that their Registered Agent and Register Office are kept current with the Texas Secretary of State. Chapter elections are in April, Election reports should be sent to VVA National, with a copy to the TSC Secretary.
- VVA National Convention – Reno, Nevada – Region 7 Director Allen Manuel reported that all VVA National Officers are up for election and already are being contested. Also the Regional Directors and At-Large Director positions are up for election.
- **TSC February Meeting 2012** – host Chapter 685 Galveston, February 3-5, 2012
- **TSC June Meeting 2012** –host Chapter 920 Denton, June 2012 dates to be confirmed
- **TSC April Meeting 2013 open**
- **TSC October Meeting 2013 open.**

Scholarships – The scholarship committee passed out to the delegates and officers seven (7) scholarship applications at the beginning of the meeting and asked everyone to read them and turn in their votes by the end of the meeting. The results and checks were passed out at the Awards Banquet Saturday evening. 1st place \$1000 Rebecca Morris; 2nd place \$750 Joseph Foutz, 3rd thru 7th places \$500 went to Bailey Beck, Stormy Champion, Amy Castillo, Sarah Koenigh & Amber Metula. Total amount paid out to the scholarship applicants \$4250.

Silent Auction conducted during the state council meeting brought in \$1892 and the host chapter was given a check for \$946 and \$946 went to the VSO line item fund. The Coins & Pins brought in \$126 for the VSO Line Item Fund.

Live Auction brought in \$1580 plus a \$50 donation for the scholarship fund.

TSC Awards:

- Friend of VVA – Sally Griffin (Submitted by Borger Chapter 404)
- AVVA Member of Year – Merle Morris (submitted by Texarkana Chapter 278)
- Incarcerated Member of Year – James Sepsi (submitted by Beaumont Chapter 292)
- Legislator of the Year – Leticia Van De Putte – Texas State Senator (submitted by Austin Chapter 915)
- Pointman of the Year – George Wilson (submitted by Nacogdouches Chapter 931)
- President's Award – (Friend of VVA) – Mike Mahan – M&M Vending Co (Submitted by Killeen Chapter 1000)
- Boot Award – Rodney Gobert (Submitted by Beaumont Chapter 292)
- Heart of Patriotism – Mrs. Jan Bell –School Liberian (submitted by Borger Chapter 404)
- A certificate of Appreciation was given to the members that did not receive the award they were nominated for by their chapters.

Region 7 Director Awards:

Region 7 Chapter of Year – Dallas Chapter 137 Region 7 / Veteran of the Year – John Cook Dallas Chapter 13

Region 7 Point Man of the Year – Larry Poe Galveston Chapter 685



Chapter 404 Hospitality Room – Chapter 574 Members
Photo Jim W Boyd



Chapter 404 Hospitality Room – Chapter 343 Delegate Paul Washington Photo Susie Moreno



Chapter 404 Hospitality Room – L-R: Region 7 Director Allen Manuel & Chapter 278 President Greg Beck Photo Susie Moreno



TSC Meeting-L-R: Kathy Andras, Dennis Andras, Bill Meeks, and Marilyn Rose Photo Susie Moreno



Posting the Colors
Photo Susie Moreno



Posting the Colors
Photo Susie Moreno



POW/MIA Ceremony
VVA Chapter 574 Vice President Victor Flores
Conducting the ceremony
Photo Susie Moreno



Berger Mayor Jeff Brain read a proclamation to the
state council delegates.
Photo Susie Moreno



TSC President Buster Newberry swearing in new
Chapter Delegates.
Photo Susie Moreno



TSC President Buster Newberry swearing Paul
Washington as the new Minority Affairs Committee
Chair
Photo Susie Moreno



L-R: Texas State Council officers: Treasurer Jim
Boyd, Vice President Don Kennedy, Secretary
Kerwin Stone.
Photo Susie Moreno



Region 7 Director Allen Manuel being introduced to
the state council delegates
Photo Susie Moreno



Lou
being introduced to the state council delegates.
Photo Susie Moreno



1st Place VVAFT's Operation Ed-U-Cate winner.
VVAFT President Bill Meeks presenting a check for
\$500 to Lynn Kennedy Chapter 1000 Killeen
Photo Susie Moreno

2nd Place VVAFT Operation Ed-U-Cate winner
VVAFT President Bill Meeks presenting a check for
\$300 to Bruce Hill Chapter 366 San Antonio



AVVA State Council President Marilyn Rose being
introduced to the state council delegates
Photo Susie Moreno



AVVA State Council Officer being sworn in by Kathy
Andras AVVA Region 7 Director L-R: Gina Mathews
Treasurer, Lynn Kennedy Secretary, Percilla Newberry
Vice President,
& Marilyn Rose President



TSC Awards Banquet Photo Susie Moreno



TSC Scholarship – Baily Beck one of seven state council scholarship award recipients Photo Susie Moreno

**VVAFT's Operation Ed-U-Cate 2011
Chapter 1000 Fort Hood Area
1st Place Winner**

Since we last applied for this grant, the chapter has been exceptionally busy as we continue to grow and become more involved in the activities in the Fort Hood Area.

In the last election, the chapter elected three new officers. These officers have been instrumental in taking the chapter to a new level. Bill Whittaker-President; Lupe Lopez – Vice President; Pat Hidy – Secretary; Don Kennedy – Treasurer, re-elected. Thanks to Lupe Lopez the chapter now has a web site: www.vietnam-vet-chapter-1000.org.

Chapter members participated in laying wreaths representing Vietnam Veterans at the Memorial Day Ceremony held at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery and the POW/MIA Ceremony at the Memorial located in front the Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center on Fort Hood.

The Patriot Guard held their National Gathering of the Guard in Killeen and escorted the American Traveling Tribute which includes a Vietnam Wall Memorial replica. The chapter set up a table in the vendor section with membership applications, exhibits of VVA activities and memorabilia for sale.

Once again Chapter 1000 attended the Annual Retirement Day activities on Fort Hood. Members of the chapter set up a new member booth and were successful in recruiting new members.

For the second year in a row, chapter 1000 participated in the Killeen Veterans Day Parade. This year the parade honored the Korean veterans. Several chapter members riding in two trucks received an enthusiastic welcome from the large crowd attending the parade. Next year our members will bring the 1963 M37 Three Quarter Ton Dodge Power Wagon., Vietnam era truck, to the parade. Currently, the vehicle is being restored by several chapter members.

The chapter officers and several members presented a check for \$1000 to the commander of VFW Post 10377, Lake Belton. This money will be used for the Vietnam Veterans State Memorial that will be located on the grounds of the State Capitol in Austin.

Last year the chapter was invited to help with the Wounded Warrior Fishing Tournament held on Lake Belton. Once again Lt. Michael Cooper to the 1st Warrior Transition Battalion asked the chapter to support this effort. On April 8, 2011 chapter members served coffee, fruit drinks, doughnuts, and kuliches to those participating in the tournament: the soldiers and the bass club member that would be fishing with them. Lt. Cooper presented a certificate of appreciation to our chapter president, Bill Whittaker and a Battalion Coin for Excellence to each chapter member who came out to help with the tournament.

Project Serving Those Who Serve:

The project continues its mission to serve the soldiers of Fort Hood. The Soldier Readiness Center (SRP) has been extremely busy sometimes processing 700 or more per day. We have spent about \$1000 more than we did last year due to this increase.

The Texas Military Family Foundation, which started us on the project has closed its door and the building has been torn down. It was closed due to the fact that Julie Curtis could not effectively run it due to serious health problems. We will be able to get needed supplies there any longer.

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Members of 1st Cavalry Brigade waiting on the deck of the SRP Center for a briefing.



Lt. Cooper, 1st Warrior Transition Bn – presenting Certificate of Appreciation to Bill Whittaker



However, we do have two organizations who contribute to the project. M&M Vending Company donates sodas and chips and the TREA Auxiliary, Killeen brings snack items once a month. These organizations help, but the majority of the items we serve come from our funds. We operate solely on donations.

We have served the following units in the last several months:

- III Corps troops returning from their final deployment in Iraq
- 4th Sustainment Brigade going to Iraq to support 29 National Guard Units from 16 states
- 4th Advise & Assist Brigade, 1st Cavalry going to Iraq which oversees the northern third of Iraq centered in Mosul.
- 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment deployed (4th deployment) to Iraq to help train Iraqi police.
- 36th Engineers returned from Balad, Iraq
- 20th Engineers returned from Afghanistan
- 1st Cavalry 2nd Division Brigades Combat Team deployed to Iraq, in April.
- 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters and 1st Air Cavalry Brigade deployed in May to Afghanistan: They began processing April 12th.

The soldiers from these units have been so complimentary and appreciative for what we provide them. One very cold morning in February we arrived about 6:30 a.m. and were freezing cold when they come through our line. They sure did appreciate the hot coffee, hot cocoa, and the food. This is why we do what we do.



NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER

VVAFT Operation Educate 2011

VVA Alamo Chapter #366

Second Place Winner

The City of San Antonio and the Fiesta Commission San Antonio annually hold an event that honors all veterans. The event called All Veterans Memorial Service is held in April of each year as part of Fiesta San Antonio at Veterans Plaza.

The event has been held since 1989 and the Vietnam Veterans of America, Alamo Chapter #366 have been the host of the event. For many of those years due to the small size of The Chapter and lack of financial resources the event was lacking in substance and not well attended.

In 2005 the chapter became a Participating Member Organization (PMO) of the Fiesta Commission. As a PMO the chapter received funds from the Fiesta Commission and this allowed the chapter to showcase the event. Also membership in VVA #366 increased to over 100 members which provided more volunteers.

The responsibility of the chapter in hosting the event is to coordinate the event by preparing the site, securing a speaker, color guard, band and a trumpet player to play Tap[sic]. The chapter also provides wreaths and carnations for the honored guests and attendees to place at the foot of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The cost to provide these items in 2010 was over \$1,500.

On April 25, 2010 the largest [sic] crowd ever attended the memorial service. It was estimated that over 400 people attended the service including veterans from WWI, Korea, Vietnam and active service men and women. Also in attendance was a contingent of South Vietnamese soldiers that fought alongside of the Vietnam Veterans. The speaker was Maj. General Russell J. Czerw, US Army, Commanding General at Fort Sam Houston (2010). The General's speech emphasized the importance of supporting the veterans and to not forget the service men and women currently serving our country. He continued to say that celebrations held on day(s)[sic] other than traditional Veterans celebrations is an excellent way to show support of the veterans. As this event has grown so has the presence of the chapter. This event has also been a place to recruit new members. The Chapter website address is vietnamveteransofamericaalamochater366.com



[EDITORS NOTE: *There were seven scholarship entries this year. 1st place received \$1000; 2nd place received \$750; and 3rd through 7th received \$500 each- due to the length of the essays the 1st & 2nd will be published entirely in the next issue of the Texas Vietnam Veterans News in October as has been the standard practice by the Texas VV News staff over the years]*

History On The Shelf: The Tet Offensive and Its Affect

By Rebecca Morris – 1st Place - \$1000 Scholarship

Throughout the history of our nation there has always been a sense of pride in all that it has done. Pride in everything that is until the Vietnam War. It can easily be said that the TET Offensive that began on January 31, 1968 was a pivotal moment in the course of a war already seen as unpopular and politically motivated. The effects of this offensive led to a shockwave to all that was political and social in the United States.

The Effects of the TET Offensive

By Joseph Foutz, 2nd Place Winner - \$750

(One of last year's scholarship winners)

Today's America is a place full of people and their ideas. It is a land where people trust and believe, love and achieve. It is, for the most part, a stable environment for people to live and thrive in. It is a country where freedoms are granted at birth, where mothers love their children and fathers love their mothers. Currently, it is a country in the throes of war. War, however, to the majority of the American population is not something that is thought about every day. It's not a reality to them personally because they are sitting safely at home while others are doing what needs to be done. War is a distant tragedy that people groan and whine about but don't take too seriously until something severe happens. This is not necessarily bad but it does show how desensitized and different today is compared to years ago. Years ago, the country waited anxiously for any news that wars or battles were turning in American favor and would be ended swiftly. War was not something that people tolerated easily. Granted, battles are fought way differently than thirty years ago and with less hand to hand combat but still, in any skirmish, battle or fight, lives are lost. During the Vietnam War, which many Americans did not want America to be in anyway, North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap led what came to be known as the TET Offensive, "In the early morning hours of January 31st, the first day of the Vietnamese New Year, NFL/NVA troops and commandos attacked virtually every major town and city in South Vietnam as well as most of the important American bases and airfields." (Colvin) and blasted America's sense of unity and strength to rubble.

VVA National Candidates Roster, Reno VVA Convention

Officers

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Michael Marks-AZ / John Weiss-RI / Pat Bessigano-IN

COLA 2012 Update

The ongoing effort to rein in federal spending includes a possible change in the way cost-of-living adjustments are calculated. If that happens, military retirees could lose a lot of money. Army Times reported that even the small change being discussed—an average of

0.25 percentage points—would cost a military retiree thousands of dollars over his or her lifetime. The publication noted that an active-component E-7 retiring this year after 20 years in uniform would receive more than \$109,000 less in retired pay over a 40-year period. That's a drop of 5.6 percent from what that retiree would receive under the current calculation. For an O-5, the figure would be

nearly \$208,000, or a 5.5 percent difference. Also affected by the possible change would be retired federal workers and Social

Security recipients, among others. According to Army Times, Congress and the White House are considering changing the index to which COLA is currently figured. It is now tied to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners, which tracks the costs of goods and services. Under consideration is a switch to the Chained Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers, which includes nonwage earners. Over the last year, it has increased at a slower rate than the other index and economists predict the difference over time would

be .025 percent. [Source: NGAUS Washington Report 12 Jul 2011]

S. 894 Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2011

As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on June 29, 2011

S. 894 would increase the amounts paid to veterans for disability compensation and to their survivors for dependency and indemnity compensation by the same cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) payable to Social Security recipients. The increase would take effect on December 1, 2011, and the resulting adjustment would be rounded to the next lower dollar.

The COLA that would be authorized by this bill is assumed in CBO's baseline, consistent with section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, and savings from rounding it down were achieved by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-33) as extended by the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-183). Because the COLA is assumed in CBO's baseline, the COLA provision would have no budgetary effect relative to the baseline. Relative to current law, CBO estimates that

enacting this bill would increase spending for those programs by \$475 million in fiscal year 2012. (The annualized cost would be about \$630 million in subsequent years.) This estimate assumes that the COLA effective on December 1, 2011, would be 1.1 percent.

VA: Invoking God at services OK

Cemetery guidelines released by VA on Thursday appeared to confirm that VA's National Cemetery Administration does not allow volunteer honor guards to submit any texts to veterans' families for review.

Prior restraint? - Such a policy is an unconstitutional prior restraint on speech, said Hiram Sasser, director of litigation for the Liberty Institute, a nonprofit that filed the suit. "In this case they're telling private citizens that their speech is banned, and they're banned from even talking to the families and letting the families even know that there are options, religious or not religious," Sasser said.

A memo released by VA on Thursday was sent to all VA cemetery directors on Nov. 1, 2007, by William Tuerk, under secretary for Memorial Affairs at the time. It states that cemetery employees, including VA-sponsored volunteer honor guards, "shall not provide texts of any such recitations to the deceased's survivors for consideration."

'She was told to do this' - Similar language is used in a document titled, "Houston National Cemetery Honor Guard Guidelines." It is signed by Ocasio and dated March 15. "I guess at least now we know why Ms. Ocasio was doing what she was doing," Sasser said. "She was told to do this. To find out that that's part of the national policy, that's shockingly unbelievable."

Neither the NCA memo nor the Houston National Cemetery guidelines released Thursday ban the words God or Jesus. They do list some limitations on texts, but those limitations do not include religious language.

"VA will not accept for reading any texts that would, as determined by the cemetery director, have an adverse impact on the dignity and solemnity of a cemetery honoring those who served the Nation," the guidelines say. "Among the texts that would not be read would be those that are obscene, racist, are 'fighting words,' or are coarse, abusive or politically partisan."

Ocasio's guidelines for honor guards in Houston permit a veteran's family to request a member of the clergy to conduct a brief religious service, which may include a reading from scriptures or a brief prayer.

The guidelines state that military honors at funerals should consist only of the "core elements" of flag folding, presentation of the flag to survivors, playing of Taps and a rifle salute. Any additions can be made only at the request of the veteran's family.

The latest allegations of religious hostility at Houston National Cemetery add fuel to a controversy that first erupted last month over Pastor Scott Rainey's prayer in Jesus' name at a Memorial Day service.

U.S. District Judge Lynn Hughes ruled May 26 that the government couldn't stop Rainey from using the words "Jesus Christ" in his invocation at the cemetery. Hughes issued a temporary restraining order to prevent VA from censoring Rainey's prayer.

Liberty Institute, which filed that suit on Rainey's behalf, amended it Monday to include additional allegations of religious discrimination by cemetery officials against American Legion Post 586, Veterans of Foreign Wars District 4 and the National Memorial Ladies, a volunteer group that attends funerals of fallen service members.

Congressmen speak up

The controversy shows no signs of letting up, especially now that lawmakers have jumped into the fray.

U.S. Rep. Ted Poe, R-Humble, sent a letter this week to VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, asking for an investigation and calling for Ocasio's termination if the allegations against her are true.

Congressman Gene Green, D-Houston, whose father is buried at a VA National Cemetery, also voiced his concern. In a statement released Thursday, Green said freedom of speech and religion is a constitutional right that veterans buried at all national cemeteries fought for and defended.

"I believe all faiths should have the freedom to honor our Veterans, and it is unacceptable for the government to try to deny that right," Green said.

Law Suit - Several Houston-area military veteran groups filed a lawsuit against Houston National Cemetery, alleging that director Arleen Ocasio has been stamping out religious speech at the cemetery's military funerals. Specifically, members of groups like the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, as well as cemetery volunteers, claim they were not allowed to use words like "God" and "Jesus" during ceremonies or in condolence letters. For those wondering whether this could be an issue in Abilene, a visit to the Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene offers a pretty clear piece of evidence. A large painting, depicting servicemen and women of all branches, covers one of the walls in the administrative building. At the top of the painting are the words, "In God We Trust, United We Stand." In his office just next to the mural, cemetery director Clint Lynch offered a straightforward explanation of his policies, which mirror those of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The families of the deceased ultimately have the final say as to the religious content of their loved one's service. "If the family wants a minister, they get a minister. If they want bagpipes, we provide them bagpipes," Lynch said. Houston, he said, is Houston.



New Texas VVA Service Representative

The Texas State Council has received a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs welcoming Richard (Rocky) Hernandez Sr. as an accredited Service Representative for Vietnam Veterans of America. His address is 114 Daffodil Dr. Killeen, TX. 76542-1819. He presently works out of VFW Post 9192, 301 Wolf St., Killeen Texas, where he maintains an office. Phone number there is 254-526-2767.

A Thank You to all Vietnam Vets from a Marine in Iraq

A guy gets time to think over here and I was thinking about all the support we get from home. Sometimes it's overwhelming. We get care packages at times faster than we can use them. There are boxes and boxes of toiletries and snacks lining the center of every tent; the generosity has been amazing. So, I was pondering the question: "Why do we have so much support?"

In my opinion, it all came down to one thing: Vietnam Veterans. I think we learned a lesson, as a nation, that no matter what, you have to support the troops who are on the line, who are risking everything. We treated them so poorly back then. When they returned was even worse. The stories are nightmarish of what our returning warriors were subjected to. It is a national scar, a blemish on our country, an embarrassment to all of us.

After Vietnam, it had time to sink in. The guilt in our collective consciousness grew. It shamed us. However, we learned from our mistake. Somewhere during the late 1970's and on into the 80's, we realized that we can't treat our warriors that way. So ... Starting during the Gulf War, when the first real opportunity arose to stand up and support the troops, we did. We did it to support our friends and family going off to war. But we also did it to right the wrongs from the Vietnam era. We treat our troops of today like the heroes they were, and are, acknowledge and celebrate their sacrifice, and rejoice at their homecoming ... Instead of spitting on them.

And that support continues today for those of us in Iraq. Our country knows that it must support us and it does. The lesson was learned in Vietnam and we are all better because of it.

Everyone who has gone before is a hero. They are celebrated in my heart. I think admirably of all those who have gone before me. From those who fought to establish this country in the late 1770's to those I serve with here in Iraq. They have all sacrificed to ensure our freedom. But when I get back home, I'm going to make it a personal mission to specifically thank every Vietnam Vet I encounter for THEIR sacrifice. Because if nothing else good came from that terrible war, one thing did. It was the lesson learned on how we treat our warriors. We as a country learned from our mistake and now we treat our warriors as heroes, as we should have all along. I am the beneficiary of their sacrifice. Not only for the freedom they, like veterans from other wars, ensured, but for how well our country now treats my fellow Marines and I. We are the beneficiaries of their sacrifice.

Semper Fidelis,

Major Brian P. Bresnahan

United States Marine Corps

PTSD Update

The National Veterans Wellness and Healing Center (NVW&HC) in Angel Fire, N.M., will offer free, weeklong retreats this summer for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and their spouses. The retreats, which started on a pilot basis in 2010, are sponsored by the wellness center and the State of New Mexico Department of Veterans Affairs, but are open to veterans nationwide. Lodging, meals and therapy are provided at no cost in a truly awesome setting, nestled in the Sangre de Cristos Mountains. The retreat includes individual and couples counseling as well as non-traditional therapies including acupuncture, yoga and massage therapy. To qualify, veterans must be diagnosed with PTSD, must be in or have been in counseling, and must have been referred by a VA vets center. For more info you can contact Hoot Gibson, vice president of the wellness center, at (575) 377-1082.

At <http://www.veteranswellnessandhealing.org> you can download an application from the center's

Blue Angels Air Shows in Texas

The Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, recently resumed all previously scheduled performances for the 2011 season. The Blue Angels had interrupted its show schedule for two weeks for rigorous training and air show demonstration practice. Below in the remainder of their 2011 show schedule. For more information, including show information, visit the Blue Angels website <http://www.blueangels.navy.mil>:

- OCT 22-23 Amigo Airshow - El Paso, TX
- OCT 29-30 Randolph AFB Air Show - San Antonio, TX



VVA Texas State Council Meeting
Galveston County Chapter #685
February 3-5, 2012



HOST HOTEL: Hilton Galveston Island – 5400 Seawall Blvd, Galveston, Texas
409-744-5000 or 1/877-425-4753

Room Block: VVA Texas State Council
Room Rate: \$94.00 per night + 15% Tax until cutoff date Jan 2, 2012

REGISTRATION FORM

(ONE (1) Form per person please

(Delegate/AVVA/Guests on separate registration forms so that name tags can be made in advance)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Contact Number: _____ Email: _____

Check one: Dessert: Sugar Free _____ Regular _____

VVA Delegate: _____ VVA Chapter #: _____ Title: _____ \$40.00 per person

AVVA Member: _____ VVA Chapter #: _____ Chapter Rep: _____ \$35.00 per person

Guest: _____ \$35 per person Guest of: _____

Please Make Checks Payable to VVA Chapter #685

Mail to: Jim Rose at 4307 Winterborne Drive, Pasadena, TX 77505

Registration MUST BE POSTMARKED BY: January 2, 2012

Contact Person: Jim Rose – 281-991-1467
Jhr0545@comcast.net

OR

Marilyn Rose – 281-991-1467
mrose4319@sbcglobal.net

PROJECT A.M.I.G.O. Recipient: [The Resource & Crisis Center, Galveston, TX](#)
