



Vietnam Veterans Of America Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

DECEMBER 2011



NOTE: In an effort to save time and expense in mailing the newsletter, it will now be emailed to any member for whom we have an email address. HOWEVER, if you notify us that you want to receive a hard copy, we'll be glad to continue sending it by regular mail. Simply email President Andy Megrath at [vthogman AT comcast.org](mailto:vthogman@comcast.org) and let him know. At present the newsletter goes to about 40 members electronically, saving the chapter considerable postage and time.

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

Dec. 14, 2011



Dick Doyle (left), is shown with Capt. Cole Derosa and Tony Cox at Fort Campbell, Ky., in November. Doyle and Cox were recognized as Distinguished Members of the 506th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. Details, last page of newsletter.

Six members attended.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Ed Wiehe reported a balance of \$23,357.46 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent.

Andy, attending his first meeting since knee replacement surgery, noted the chapter has 133 regular members and 4 associate members.

Andy noted that Clayton Clark is moving on from his job as veteran services director of the Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs at the end of December. Candidates are being screened and a replacement should be on board by the middle of January.

Wearing another of his veterans' hats, Andy on Dec. 13 attended a meeting of the Governor's Veterans Advisory Council, of which he is a new member. He serves on the Legislative Committee. At the session, members put three main money issues before the governor:

1. A recommendation to increase funds for the Veterans Assistance Fund, raising the appropriation from \$28,815 to \$48,000, which was its previous level. Andy said that in the past a veteran who called for help would typically get \$500, but the amount was cut to \$200 when the appropriation was reduced. According to Andy, the governor said he



The new VVA Vermont State Council patch is available for \$5 to members. See next page of newsletter for details.

would find a way to put the appropriation back to \$48,000. Clayton Clark reported there had been a major increase in people calling for assistance.

2. Support of a master plan for the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Randolph. It will cost the state \$250,000 to have an engineering company produce the plan. Once the master plan is done and approved, the federal government will reimburse the state.

3. The committee supports Vermont House Bill 50, which would exempt the first \$5,000 of military retirement pay from state taxes. The surrounding states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts and New York provide some exemption, whereas Vermont currently does not. A surge in retirements from the National Guard is anticipated.

Five non-monetary issues presented to Gov. Peter Shumlin included:

1. Work with the secretary of state is needed to streamline licensure procedures for veterans when their service is applicable to the license they are seeking.

2. Support was voiced for Vermont House Bill 39, which would recognize military advance directives, amending rules to no longer require Vermont residency for the directives to be obeyed. Advance directives are legal documents to ensure your end-of-life and other critical health care matters will be acted on according to your wishes.

3. A recommendation to set at 900 feet the buffer zone between protesters and military funerals and make the fine for violations \$750. The issue of protests at military funerals has come before the courts elsewhere. Apparently, protesters may cross the buffer zone if they don't carry out verbal harassment or carry placards within the funeral area.

4. A suggestion to add a person's veteran's status to his driver's license when requested by the driver.

5. A recommendation to expand the moose hunting lottery of five permits for Global War on Terror veterans to all veterans. The council felt the lottery for one group of veterans was unfair.

Andy said Gov. Shumlin basically supported the measures proposed, but had some concerns about the money involved. Andy said the meeting lasted about two hours and was "a good meeting."

Andy displayed the newly completed VVA State Council patches (pictured on the front of the newsletter). The patch was designed by his granddaughter. Chapter members may purchase them for \$5. Send the money to Andy, care of VVA Chapter 1, 15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701-4026. A self-addressed stamped envelope would be appreciated.

Carl Baldwin of Santa Fe, New Mexico, sent the chapter a \$250 donation, a continuation of contributions he has made in the past. Carl is a member of Chapter 1.

Patrick Conway Jr. wrote to request that the spelling of the name of his brother, Richard Conway, on the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial be corrected. It's now listed as "Gonway." The chapter will correct it at the next revision of the Honor Roll.

Robert Wheeler, treasurer of the VVA State Council, wrote to inform us of a bank account being set up to purchase flags in years ahead for the VVA flag and flagpole at the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph. The large, 8-foot-by-10-foot flags cost \$500 each.

Dick Doyle moved to donate \$250, later amended to \$1,000, to support the fund. Seconded by Jack Crowther. Passed unanimously.

The day after this meeting, Jack Crowther, Chapter 1 secretary, learned from Dennis Clark of the local Disabled American Veterans chapter that the DAV had ordered a new van to transport veterans to the VA Center in White River Junction. An anonymous Chapter 1 member donated \$1,000 to the DAV for the van, and Chapter 1 donated \$300. The van is expected to be delivered in the spring and is paid for with national DAV funds, local fundraising and DAV chapter funds.

Dick Doyle is a Chapter 1 board member, longtime membership chair and a retired Army sergeant major. He saw combat duty with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam and volunteered for active service with the Army Reserve during 2001 and 2002. In November he received a Distinguished Member of the Regiment award from the 506th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. He was among four World War II vets and 17 Vietnam War veterans so honored in ceremonies at Fort Campbell, Ky., home of the 101st. Dick not only served 33 years in the military but also spent 33 years working as a veterans employment specialist with the state Department of Employment and Training. Congratulations, Dick!

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, FEB. 8, AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**