



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

AUGUST 2010



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING Aug. 11, 2010



Chapter 1 President Andy Megrath cooked beef at the Vermont Veterans Home picnic June 26.

Eight members attended.

Members approved without dissent the June minutes as printed in the newsletter.

Dave Mathis reported \$26,043.48 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent.

President Andy Megrath reported membership at 134, including 92 life members, 42 who have joined from one to three years, and three associate members. A couple of new memberships are anticipated.

Andy and Robin Mainwaring-Healey reported on the Agent Orange meeting June 19 at the State House in Montpelier. Chapter 1 board member Bill Whitney also attended. Sen. Bernie Sanders was present, and Sen. Patrick Leahy and Rep. Peter Welch sent representatives. Andy described the

session as "pretty well attended" and said that "things went very well."

There was some testimony to the effect that products coming out of Vietnam today are generally free of dioxin, the toxic substance known to have contaminated Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Robin, an associate member much younger than our Vietnam veteran members, took 22 pages of notes on the meeting. In a heartfelt introduction to her summary of the session, she said, referring to herself, "I don't know how it's possible to have grown up so ignorant of everything that's gone on."

She expressed her pride in veterans and thanked us for our service, patriotism and courage. "You gave of yourselves to . . . protect another country from aggression and share freedom with that country's people. I have only words to tell you of my deep concern for your status in the struggle to get recognition, justice and medical treatment."

She admitted she had had no awareness of the "long appalling battle Vietnam veterans and others, for a variety of reasons, have had to fight" and still must fight for "honorable care." She said she

“was ignorant of the vast scope of the shocking problems Vietnam veterans and other veterans face.”

In the course of the Montpelier meeting, Robin said, “it became apparent that the toxic war chemicals that Vietnam veterans were exposed to in all areas during the course of the Vietnam conflict are a scourge of tragic, continuing proportions for Vietnam veterans.”

“Not for themselves alone — for their families — spouses, children, grandchildren and an unknown number of future generations of children, the cost is just as severe,” she said.

“Equally important,” she continued, “was the Vietnam veterans’ level of awareness” of the struggles of other veterans from different conflicts, “the acute concerns that these other veterans must not be left to suffer,” and the determination of Vietnam veterans to prevent their fellow warriors “from being treated similarly.”

“During veterans’ and veterans’ families’ testimony, notice was keenly voiced that necessary research has not been accomplished,” she noted. “Repeatedly stated was the desire for good credible research to be done, this being of utmost importance to all afflicted — past, present and in the future. Chief among concerns brought forward is the lack of responsive scientific research accomplishment, not only for veterans in veterans’ lifetimes but for the suffering spouses, children, adult children and grandchildren of veterans.”

Vietnam veterans spoke of “their grave awareness of ” and their concern for “the toxic war chemicals exposure being experienced by warriors in the current theater with the full knowledge of the devastating, disabling effects these brave warriors’ own spouses, children, adult children, grandchildren and further future generations will suffer.”

Also prominent at the meeting, she noted, was testimony on the destructiveness of post traumatic stress disorder. Veterans repeatedly stated its known repercussions and wanted research into its connection with toxic environmental warfare, she said.

She was struck by Vietnam veterans sense of responsibility to tell other American veterans about the disabilities, dysfunctions and birth defects caused by and resulting from the uses of Agent Orange, dioxin, and other toxic war substances."

A comprehensive informational packet was made available to those that attended. **Anyone interested may drop a note to VVA Chapter 1 at 15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701-4026 and request it.**

In other news, Andy Megrath has been elected vice president of the VVA State Council at the council’s meeting June 26, putting him in a position to succeed John Miner, longtime State Council president, in two years. As a result, Andy is now participating in national and regional VVA meetings, including a recent regional meeting in Bennington. The meeting allows participants to meet other VVA officials from around New England, which constitutes Region 1. Andy said he is hoping John will continue as VVA liaison to the Vermont Legislature after John’s term as president ends.

Andy is expecting to accompany John to Washington, D.C., in October for the next meeting of the VVA board and state council presidents.

June 26 was also the date of the Vermont Veterans Home picnic, served by VVA members from around the state. Andy, Jack Crowther and Robin took part from Chapter 1.

Chapter 1 plans to update on Veterans Day in November the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. Anyone wishing to have his or her name added should contact Chapter 1 at the above address. A copy of one's service record, Form DD 214, verifying Vietnam service is required. The veteran must also have entered the service from Rutland County.

Dick Doyle noted that the Veterans Administration has opened a health clinic in Brattleboro. The clinic, a satellite of the VA Medical Center in White River Junction, is located at 71 GSP Drive in Brattleboro and has hours every weekday. The phone number is 802-251-2200.

Respectfully submitted, Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE CHAPTER WILL SKIP THE SEPTEMBER MEETING; THE NEXT MEETING
WILL BE WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13, AT 6 P.M. AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES
AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**