



# Vietnam Veterans Of America

## Chapter One

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JANUARY 2011



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### MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

Jan. 17, 2011

Four members attended. We were joined by Brad Young, a readjustment counselor with the Vet Center of the Veterans Administration in White River Junction. The Vet Center is for combat veterans of any war to come to for help with personal issues, such as the effects of post traumatic stress disorder, family issues and benefits. While affiliated with the VA, the vet center operates separately. Notes from counseling groups are kept private from the VA records, for example.

Different programs at the Vet Center focus on Vietnam veterans and those whose service was in the global war on terror. A combat veterans wives' group is a possibility. Brad Young is from Rutland and is currently counseling vets twice a week at space provided by Castleton State College, which potentially might evolve into another vet center. Besides White River Junction, Burlington hosts a vet center, which was the first one in the country.

Brad explained that besides the formal psychotherapeutic groups, counselors are available for drop-in talks with vets. The center in White river provides a safe space for vets to simply "hang out" if they wish. A kitchenette, pool table, television and couches complement the counseling rooms and professional staff. The center also serves people who are close to vets, including families and girlfriends, who may need assistance.

Brad explained that the space at the Castleton State College Student Center is being developed in "the hopes of possibly having a vet center outstation at some point, which would be available for all the folks in this area." He said there seemed to be a pocket of veterans in this area who could benefit from such a center. Brad is currently assigned to the Rutland area a couple of days a week, an amount of time that could grow as the demand increases. Establishment of a formal vet center "outstation" in Castleton would require proving a need exists, he said.

The Vet Center is located at 2 Gilman Office Complex, White River Junction, VT 05001, tel. 802-295-2908. Anyone interested in joining one of the counseling groups can call that number or Brad's cell phone at 802-343-8674.

President Andy Megrath noted that it takes congressional action to establish a new vet center, and he's invited Brad to meet with a representative of Sen. Bernie Sanders' office with that possibility in mind. In the meantime, Brad hopes to spread word of the services available at Castleton by word of mouth, visiting local armories and "yellow ribbon" events and possibly bringing the VA's mobile vet center to town.

Returning to regular business, members approved without dissent the November minutes as printed in the newsletter.

Dave Mathis reported \$27,595.17, in the chapter's two accounts. The report was approved without dissent. Dave noted the bank is now charging \$3 a month for a printed statement. The chapter will review issues such as service charges and interest, with the possibility of switching banks to get more favorable treatment.

The chapter approved a series of appropriations based on the need for the chapter to keep its balance below \$25,000. Maintaining a balance above that changes the status of the chapter with both the national VVA and the Internal Revenue Service. The change would increase various paperwork and filing requirements.

With an eye toward lowering our balances, as well as helping the organizations targeted, Andy Megrath made several suggestions and led a discussion of them. At the conclusion, Jack Crowther moved to make the following donations:

- \$1,300 to the Dodge House for homeless veterans in Rutland. Andy Megrath, a member of the Dodge House board, explained that the home is planning to establish a women's annex in a separate building. It will cost about \$1,300 for the plumbing and electrical work to accommodate the washer and dryer that will allow the women to do their laundry.
- An additional \$2,500 to be set aside for a replacement van for the Dodge House. The present van has in excess of 60,000 miles on it and is showing its age. The Dodge House is approaching three local auto dealers seeking offers on a replacement. The dealership will have the right to put its advertising on the vehicle in return for any price concessions.
- \$2,500 for the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County for its programs for area youth. The chapter has supported the club in the past.

Dave Mathis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Andy reported a \$250 donation from Carl Baldwin of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who has joined our chapter after previously being an unaffiliated VVA member. Carl has ties to the area and sent us a picture of himself in front of the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland, which he visited in the fall.

Andy reported that VVA in Vermont has 615 members and 35 associate members. Nationally, there are 64,541 members, including 2,012 who are incarcerated and 271 permanently hospitalized. Andy also noted that Vermont VVA membership is 614, plus 35 associate members. The number of Americans missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia stands at 1,707 nationally, with five of those from Vermont.

Andy reviewed the fact that upon consultation with Larry Young, Dave Mathis, Jack Crowther, Bub Crosby, and Dick Doyle, all of whom are officers or board members, he had sent a hardship assistance check to BW, who is a board member, to assist with a truck repair bill he was unable to pay. All but one of those consulted had said they didn't feel the money needed to be paid back.

Jack Crowther, who had favored repayment, said he had learned more about the situation and would approve non-repayment. He recommended that the national VVA treasurer be notified, if that is required by the national constitution when a board member receives VVA funds. Andy said he would check on that requirement when he attended a national VVA function in a few days in San Francisco.

Jack moved that the hardship grant of \$1,000, without a repayment requirement, be approved. Seconded by Dave Mathis. Passed unanimously. The national treasurer will be notified, if required.

Andy said he had been approved for a hardship grant from the national VVA to cover most of the expenses involved with the coming San Francisco trip.

Jack suggested that the chapter make a concerted search for a vice president who can assist Andy as Andy takes on additional duties as vice president of the VVA State Council. Anyone interested should make their interest known by the March meeting, when nominations are normally made. Elections are in April.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE CHAPTER WILL NOT MEET IN FEBRUARY. THE NEXT MEETING  
WILL BE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, AT 6 P.M. AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES  
AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**