



Vietnam Veterans Of America *Chapter One*

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NOVEMBER 2007



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

Nov. 14, 2007

Five members attended.

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

Dave Mathis presented the treasurer's report showing a total of \$14,914.49 in the chapter's two accounts. The report was unanimously approved.

President Andy Megrath reported on the Veterans Day program he participated in at Otter Valley Union High School on Nov. 9, apparently the first such program ever at the school. He said the American Legion Color Guard, the veterans of three wars present (World War II, Korea and Vietnam) all were well received and respected. Several in the audience came on stage afterwards, shook hands and thanked them for their service.

Andy also reported on the Oct. 27 observance at the Vermont State Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sharon along Interstate 89. The day marked the 25th anniversary of the memorial, the first in the nation sanctioned by a state government. The original dedication preceded the dedication of The Wall in Washington by two weeks.

Gov. James Douglas, Rep. Peter Welch, Sen. Bernie Sanders, national VVA President John Rowan, and the presidents of the Vermont, New York and Connecticut state councils, as well as all of the Vermont VVA chapter presidents were on hand. A combat veterans motorcycle group was also present at what Andy described as a well-put-together ceremony.

Mrs. Olive Pettis laid a wreath at the main memorial. Chapter 1 members will recall that she is the mother of Steven Pettis of West Haven, who was killed in the Vietnam War. Andy said he got to meet a woman whose stepson was killed in Iraq and two fathers whose sons died in Iraq.

Andy said he had written "nastygrams" (notes of complaint) to the Rutland Herald and Valley News of Lebanon, N.H., as neither had a representative present for the event. Andy subsequently had a conversation with the Herald editor about coverage of veterans events.

Andy noted that The Veteran, the national VVA's regular publication, will be highlighting in the January-February edition the 14 VVA chapters that survive from the original 30 chapters. Secretary Jack Crowther had prepared a draft of the article for review by those attending the meeting. Included in the submission will be a number of pictures of Chapter 1, including in-country photos and activities of the chapter.

Andy reported that although the chapter had authorized donating up to \$200 for a large American flag for ceremonial purposes, the Rutland County Veterans Council had secured enough funds that the chapter contribution only needed to be \$75.

Contemplating the Chapter 1 charter on our office wall, Dick Doyle suggested we might wish to put some of our more important documents in a fireproof box, just in case. After a bit of discussion, he made a motion to acquire a fireproof container. Seconded by Mike Divoll. Motion passed unanimously.

Jack Crowther reported on a call he had received from the wife of a veteran anxious to have his name put on the Honor Roll at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. He made a motion to have the chapter prepare an updated plaque for installation on Memorial Day next year. Seconded by Dick Doyle. Motion passed unanimously.

Dick Doyle noted that the electronic delivery of the newsletter to about 45 of our members is saving the chapter close to \$20 an issue on postage. It also saves a little on printing.

Andy displayed a photocopy of a sign posted at the Fire & Ice restaurant in Middlebury: "Veterans Parking: Reserved for Those Who Served." The chapter will consider promoting the sign with businesses as a way to support vets. Andy said one supplier can provide the 18-by-12-inch signs for \$21 apiece. He'll sound out a couple of local restaurants

Andy Megrath brought up the case of an area veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, reportedly suffering from post traumatic stress disorder and/or traumatic brain injury who has had trouble keeping a job and is experiencing financial troubles. The veteran is from the area. Andy spoke by cell phone to the veteran, who was openly seeking financial help.

Andy explained to the vet that the chapter won't write a check to an individual but will considering paying outstanding bills. No bills have been submitted to Chapter 1, however. While leaving the door open to help from the chapter, Andy recommended this vet contact the National Guard family assistance office or BROOC, the local anti-poverty agency. Dick Doyle suggested the vet could contact Friends of Veterans, which requires an income statement. Dick noted the importance of the steps needed to answer aid requests, as opposed to instant solutions.

Andy said the vet was unable to provide specifics about the nature of his financial needs, as the vet stated that another person "takes care of all the bills." Lacking a specific request, the chapter took no action at this time.

Submitted by Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, DEC. 12, AT 6 P.M. AT THE
CHAPTER OFFICE AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT**