The Spirit of '776

September 2024

Volume 28 Issue 9

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 776

Meeting at The American Legion

September 25, 2024

"Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another."

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Cam Rahn Bay Reunion

September 2024, St. Louis

Officers and Board of Direectors

President	Steve Satre	210-633-6470	Director	Harold Hansen	563-505-9674
Vice President	John Lavelle	563-355-4213	Director	Greg Paulline	563-650-3055
Treasurer	Joe Wesenberg	309-582-4379	Director	Larry Witt	563-579-6521
Secretary	Tom Lemons	563-359-3201	Director	Ernest Ledtje	563-785-6182
Director	Richard Wahlstrand				

VVA 776 Meeting

September 25, 2024

Call to Order: Meeting called to order by President Steve Satre. Officers present are Vice-President John Lavelle, Treasurer Joe Wesenberg and Secretary Tom Lemons. Pledge of Allegiance said and moment of silence for POW/MIA and those still serving in harm's way across the globe.

Introductions: Darrell Thode, Harold Hansen, Dave Thode, Edwin Hildebrand, Steve Satre, Judith Hildebrand, Thomas Lemons, John Lavelle, Bruce Cheek, Greg Paulline (Cell Phone), Lyle Peterson (Cell Phone), Dennis Queal, Ernest Ledtje, Jimmie Meurs, Bill Albracht, Rod Kjersten, Bill Churchill, Paula Wesenberg, and Joseph Wesenberg.

Secretary's Report: Approved; Motion to accept and seconded, Dave Thode and Bruce Cheek.

Treasurer's Report: Filed for audit.

Finance Committee: No Report.

Members hospitalized or in distress: Robert Behn, Edwin Hildebrand.

Correspondence: Henry Jensen's family donated a check to the Friends of the Bettendorf Parks and Recreation committee to help take care of the Veterans Memorial. We have a thank you from Quad City Veterans Outreach for our ongoing support of our veterans. Humility of Mary is having the unity brunch on the 20th of October, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Outing Club on Brady Street. They'd like us to RSVP by October 14.

A Letter and Certificate of Appreciation was received from the Veterans Administration. "On behalf of a Grateful Nation and the entire staff of the United States of America, Vietnam War commemoration, we commend you for being a top performer commemorative partner since the inauguration of the commemoration in 2012, the organization is faithfully representing our nation by selflessly hosting 5 or more events which thanked and honored our Vietnam Veterans and their families. As such,

your team is among the top 15 % of more than 13,000 commemorative partners, organizations that have precipitated in this noble effort. Congratulations on this achievement. Your dedication and initiative contributed significantly to this nation's tribute whereby over 4 million veterans and their families have been recognized for their service and sacrifice. Through 28,000 events over the past 13 years, while truly amazing, your indelible impact cannot be measured by in numbers, but rather in the hearts and faces of those whose lives were touched and will never be the same again. Your worthy efforts have helped facilitate healing and bestow honor to those veterans and their families in our communities. As a token of gratitude, we present you with the enclosed certificate of appreciation specifically designed for the top performer commemorative partners. Thank you again for your incredible support of this generation of their patriots, their families and the Vietnam War commemorative."

Coin Stories: Rod Kjersten advised this past weekend he had the privilege of being a part of our Cam Rahn Bay reunion in St. Louis. He went there with four coins in his pocket and gave one to VVA Chapter 794. They were kind enough to lend us their flags to use in our display area. he gave Rich Anton a coin and then the one to the daughter of a career Air Force man who was Vietnam. Because of the coordinating work she did, she had uncovered someone in Wisconsin who willingly gave $1500 for us so that the bus could take us to the Perry Vietnam Memorial. It's has a replica of the Vietnam Wall. And then on Saturday evening, before the banquet, a woman stopped rod to ask about this Cam Rahn Bay reunion. Turns out she was a donut dolly at Cam Rahn Bay and her husband was a C141 pilot. We have a couple more people now that we can look to for participation. Rod owes coins to four young men from the Scott Air Force Base who provided the color guard. They were really interested in getting a coin.

Members: 216 Members 23 Associate Members

Honor Guard: We have a funeral tomorrow for Bob Jackson, a former president of 299. Lyle Petersen met with him one time and discovered they were born at Moline Lutheran Hospital the same day, same time. We did a color presentation at Eldridge. Gold Star Family was anonymously grateful.

We did a flag presentation at the Honor Guard dinner. And we had a good turnout for the returning Honor Flight. Ken Madden was on that flight.

Business Meeting: Renewed discussion on the purchase of a brick for the chapter atDavenport Veterans Memorial Park.

Potential brick design:

Our website state logo

1st Line Welcome Home

2nd Line Vietnam Vets

3rd Line Chapter 776

Clover Sales: We'll do clover sales on Saturday the 26th of October and maybe the 25th on a Friday, depending on the stores, at the Hy Vees on Utica Ridge Rd. and Devil's Glen Rd.

Christmas Party: Thursday the 5th of December at 5:00 p.m. at the American Legion Hall.

Davenport Veterans Memorial Park: We had seven things we want to install in the park, and we intended to install them this summer. When we disclosed what the seven items were that we want to put in phase three down at the park, they said not so fast this time. In phase two we just did it. Now the city wants us to submit electronic plans and the city inspector who needs to work with us will not be available until much later. The seven things that we want to add in phase three are: 1) the brick project, 2 & 3) statues of a female combat soldier and a sailor, 4) 6 flagpoles representing the branches of service, 5) a totem pole with arrows and mileage, 6) Vietnam Wall honoring the local veterans killed in Vietnam, 7) and the soldiers cross that Tom Glick, local artist, carved.

Greg Paulline: Referred us to two articles in this month's VVA Veteran Magazine.

1) Should we consider conducting a member survey to establish a definitive VVA position on National Service? While we may engage in personal debates on this issue, it is only through active participation of every VVA

member that we can reach a consensus. Additionally, is it possible for supporting mandatory National Service to become a part of VVA's legacy? And should we try to have a VVA position prepared in time for the 2025 National Convention? Your insights on this matter are greatly appreciated.

2) We are also pushing hard for the **Molly R. Loomis Act** (H.R. 3909/S. 3958). This bill, backed by Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), as well as Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), would allow the Department of Health and Human Services to study how toxic exposures have affected the children and grandchildren of veterans.

PX: No Report

Our next meeting is the fourth Wednesday, October 23, 2024, at the American Legion Hall at 1800 hours.