



## Colorado State Council

### Colorado State Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: March 11, 2017 Start Time: 1:00 PM  
Meeting Location: Philip S. Miller Library, 100 S. Wilcox St. Castle Rock, CO 80104

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Meeting called to order by President Lee White at 1301 hour.

**Invocation:** John Altfeltis (Chaplain, Chapter 1071)

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Lee White

**Moment of Silence for POW's / MIS's:** Lee White with POW/MIA chair cover by Manuel Pedraza

**Roll Call of Officers (Present):** Lee White, Manuel Pedraza, David Ramey, Joe Plant, Milt Omoto

**Chapter Delegates, Representatives and Members:** Stan Paprocki (President 1071), Terry Ritenour (Vice President 1071), Robert Primeaux (1071), Dan Dietz (1071), Steve Newton (1071), Jose Gonzales (1071), Thomas Dowell (Vice President 1075), David Lyons (1106)

**Guests:** Dick Southern, Region 9 Director, John Altfeltis (Chaplain 1071)

**Meeting minutes** from the December 10, 2016 Colorado State Council meeting: Motion to approve by Joe Plant and second by Dan Dietz. Minutes approved without modifications.

**Reading of the State Council Declaration of Principles:** Manuel Pedraza

**Member Sickness and Distress:** Joe Plant reported that a power wheelchair (brand new that was donated to Chapter 1106) was provided to a disabled veteran and shown how to operate it.

**Introduction of New Members / Visitors / Guests:** Terry Ritenour, Robert Primeaux, John Altfeltis

**Treasurer's Report:** David Ramey

For the month ending February 28, 2017:

Income:	\$ 2,3216 (HGDP)
Expenses:	\$ 1,737 (HGDP disbursements to three Chapters)
Checking Account:	\$ 18,026.95 balance
Savings Account:	\$ 7,173.73 balance (Navy Credit Union)

Notes:

HGDP Report for the Period Ending February 28, 2017 is \$29,180; the report will be submitted to National on March 13, 2017 by David Ramey. Chapter HGDP reports for last six months of FY (September 2016 through February 28, 2017) are due to National; Chapter Presidents must sign and submit forms.

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Dick Southern noted that it is important to submit forms early, well before due date, to ensure that we continue to receive HGDP fund. The amount will not change significantly for the next year. So, continue to promote VVA household goods program and pickup in your community.

**Reading of Communications:** none

### Chapter Activity Reports

a) Chapter 1071 (Stan Paprocki, President)

- Membership: Now stands at 162 (and growing)
- Chapter web site received 2,850 visits in January
- The King Soopers Neighborhood Rewards Program provided \$321 to the Chapter
- At the February Chapter meeting, the Daughters of the American Revolution presented members with a Vietnam Service Recognition certificate; 82 were presented
- The Honors Burial program continues with 22 veterans to be interned during a ceremony at Fort Logan on March 24, 2017 at 1:00PM; on June 23, 2017, additional veterans will be interned; the group includes three veterans from WWI; 9 News will conduct a behind the scenes investigative report of the Honors Burial Program
- Chapter members will participate in the Vietnam Veterans Day which is celebrated annually on March 29 (corresponding to the last combat troops withdrawn from Vietnam)
- The Chapter poppy donation event will be held at three King Soopers on May 27, 2017; it is an excellent source of funds for the Chapter
- The Chapter continues with presentation events at local High Schools, 5 to 6 annually; they discovered that High School libraries had no books on the Vietnam War; Chapter members collected books to donate to High Schools
- In the latest issue of the American Legions magazine features VVA's National Chaplain, Father Phil Salois, who served with the Army's 199th Light Infantry Brigade in Vietnam

b) Chapter 1075 (Manuel Pedraza, President)

- The Chapter is actively working to recruit new members
- The Chapter is planning an Agent Orange Town Hall for May (date and venue TBD); they are waiting on the Veterans Affairs department to provide a speaker; suggestions for speakers are welcome
- The Chapter continues with fund raising activities
- Manny extended an invitation to all for Mittie and Manuel's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary celebration, June 30, 2017 at the Stonehaven Event Center, 7740 Deer Hill Grove, Colorado Springs, 80919 (719.955.7025)
- A Veterans Resource Fair is scheduled for Friday, March 24, 2017 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Mt. Carmel Center of Excellence, 530 Communication Circle, Colorado Springs (719.309.4714)
- Tom Dowell reported that the Chapter is presenting a scholarship award to a graduating High School Senior

c) Chapter 1106 (Lee White, President)

- Membership: 80 members and 20 Associate Members for a total of 100
- The Chapter sent letters to life time at-large members asking them to transfer into Chapter 1106 to enable the Chapter to receive member funding from National; 12 transfers were received
- Efforts continue to establish a new VVA Chapter in Colorado; Post Commander of the American Legion Post in Longmont was contacted to request presence at their next meeting on Tuesday; they have over 800 members with many Vietnam veterans; the purpose is to determine interest in starting a VVA Chapter in Longmont
- The Agent Orange Town Hall is scheduled for Saturday, April 29, 2017 at the American Legion Post 161, (6230 West 60th Avenue, Arvada); a "save-the-date" flyer has been distributed; the Post building can accommodate up to 250 people; Sons of the American Revolution will be the Color Guard, dressed in period costume; moderator is Dick Southern; Breakfast is provided by the Hep-C organization (Virginia) and lunch provided by the American Legion; Lee gave Stan a \$250 cash card courtesy of Thrivent Financials to help pay for the event; speakers from the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs have been arranged; Dave Lyons to speak on the VA's

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PTSD Rehabilitation Program that he is a graduate of; U.S. Representative Ed Perlmutter (CO-07) declined to speak at the Town Hall; Milt Omoto will contact Representative Mike Coffman's office to determine the Congressman's availability to speak at the Town Hall; KOA has been invited to show a little of Steffan Tubbs Film, "ACRONYM: The Cross-Generational Battle With PTSD" and speak on PTSD (limited to 30-minutes total); to date six VFW Posts were informed of the Town Hall

- Stephan Tubbs of radio KOA host of the American Veterans Show, has advertising time slots available on this Saturday morning show; Lee and Stan are looking into the possibility of advertising the Agent Orange Town Hall event and to promote each Colorado VVA Chapter; four 60-second time segments will cost \$600
- Dick Southern noted that there is treatment for hepatitis C (a once-daily pill, called Harvoni); Dick participated in a 12-week program and at the end was told that he was rid of hep-c after the second week; the cost is \$1,000/pill and the VA has received funding (to the tune of \$2 Billion) to treat veterans; you need to get primary care approval to take a blood test to determine hep-C presence
- Chapter 1106 will be conducting Poppy Drive fund raisers at four King Soopers on May 27<sup>th</sup>
- Rolling Thunder has arranged with the Colorado Springs Sky Sox (Triple A league and affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers) to have a "Chair of Honor" at the Sky Sox stadium to honor and remember our POW and MIA; the chair dedication is on Friday, May 26 2017 at 6:15 PM (game time is 7:00PM vs. New Orleans); Mike Messenger of Rolling Thunder will have tickets available for \$12/each
- The Chapter will participate in Englewood High School's Memorial Day Celebration on May 28<sup>th</sup>; there were over 600 students participating in the last veterans event and it was an opportunity to advertise the Chapter's scholarship program; there is a veterans memorial in front of the school; the Principal is a veteran of the Air Force;
- The Chapter has established a speaker's bureau of Chapter members who will speak at High Schools and other events
- Bob Rotruck, web master for the State Council's web site, continues to seek photographs and articles to post on the site
- Lee will attend the next VVA Conference of State Council Presidents Meeting, April 6, 2017

### Other Items

- Tom Dowell reported that a color guard is being formed with American Legions Post 209 Colorado Springs to support any veteran organization in need of a color guard for their event; the intent is to provide a color guard at the new Pikes Peak National Cemetery (to be built east of Marksheffel Road, between Bradley and Drennan in Colorado Springs); there will be 95,000 grave sites available when completed in the Fall of 2018; the color guard is being formed because there is a lack of color guards at veteran burial services
- Robert Primeaux reported that there is also an American Indian Veterans of America color guard

### Old Business

None

### New Business

- a) Manuel Pedraza reported that he attended the Conference of State Council Presidents Meeting in January 2017; some highlights:
  - John Rowan had a positive experience with his treatment at the VA hospital
  - The National Disciplinary Policy was discussed; it is complex and difficult to administer; it is better to address issues at the Chapter level first if possible before escalating it to State or National
  - Revised travel policy now has National pay for individual rooms rather than share at conferences
  - The budget was reviewed
  - National Women's Veterans and the need to identify and reach them was discussed
  - Panel discussion of the future of VVA; Panel A will address how to close VVA at the end of its life; Panel B will address what to do with VVA at the end; Dick Southern reported that the first meeting of

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Panels is April 2017; there are no preconceived plans and any rumors you hear are just that; Panels will report progress and any items up for vote at the 2017, 2019 and 2021 National Conventions; A maximum of \$200,000 has been allocated to fund these Panels; they will decide on the frequency of meeting at the April 2017 meeting;

- b) John Altfeltis suggested that the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of those who fought and worked to save the Union) and the legal successor to the Grand Army of the Republic has carried on the legacy of Civil War Veterans and that the VVA could consider doing the same.

### Report by Dick Southern, Region 9 Director

- a) Delegates to the National Convention: If your Chapter submitted a financial and election report for 2016, you are qualified to have delegates attend the National Convention;

Number of Chapter Members	Delegates Allowed
25	1
50	2
100	3
150	4

The State Council gets one delegate per 100 at-large members; so, the Colorado State Council qualifies for two delegates (289 total for CO); the State Council President is an automatic delegate; make your hotel reservation now to secure a room at the Marriott;

- b) Ground Transportation: *goairportshuttle.com* has \$14/one-way and \$28/round-trip fares from the Louis Armstrong Airport to hotels;
- c) Manuel Pedraza and David Ramey will rent a van and drive to New Orleans; contact them if you want to share their ride;
- d) This will be the largest VVA National Convention to date (VVA now has 80,000+ members);
- e) There are two Convention hotels: the Marriott will host the Convention and the Sheraton (across the street) will host meeting and breakout rooms; book directly with the hotel of choice;
- f) Status of the Region 8 and 9 Conference, Denver, CO; June 23 (travel day), 24 (conference), and 25 (travel day); Dick has checked (and stayed one-night) the Radisson Hotel (Aurora), 22 miles from DIA; the hotel has airport shuttle service; the light rail also stops across the street from the hotel; current quote is \$119 + tax/night; Dick is also checking the Holiday Inn Suite on Tower Road (also stay one-night to assess), 5 miles from DIA, \$121 + tax/night; guarantee of 35 rooms; Dick is still negotiating best rates; the conference will be a full day of meetings; cost is \$65 that includes materials and lunch; Colorado VVA members should attend; it will have a standard meeting agenda as in past Regional Conferences; 70 to 90 have attended in the past;

### Good of the Order

- a) David Ramey reported that the fiscal year ended February 28th; each Chapter must submit their election report and annual financial report forms; you also need a confirmation from the IRS of Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax) submittal and receipt (obtain from the IRS website, enter your EIN); submit these documents to National as soon as possible, even though not due yet; otherwise, National will not recognize your delegate qualification; call David if you have any questions; Dick suggest you scan the documents and email in to avoid potential loosing hard documents in mail;
- b) Please provide Lee White with feedback on how the State Council meetings are conducted, suggestions for improvement, and what you would like to see changed;
- c) Manuel Pedraza reported that Mission Command at Fort Carson has asked for Vietnam veterans who were in Mission Command in Vietnam to speak; 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), "Red Diamond"
- d) Jose Gonzales reported that the City Council of Brighton has approved a veteran wall starting with over 200 names to be engraved (including his!); a dedication ceremony will be on May 29, 2017 (Memorial Day); you are all encouraged to attend (Brighton City Hall);

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- e) Lee White reported on a newspaper article regarding a Dave and Busters restaurant that did not allow veterans to enter because their dress was “gang related” with veteran patches and identifications; they are “reviewing” there policy, but in the meantime veterans should avoid Dave and Busters!
- f) Robert Primeaux reported on VA’s “special” monthly compensation program for disabled veterans; you have a service connected rate of 100% and an additional minimum 60% to qualify; you must enter “special” on the VA website; the compensation is retroactive; best to get with your Service Advisor;
- g) Robert also reported that five NFL players quite professional football to enter the service; he strongly suggests that these five should be recognized in the NFL Hall of Fame; letters written by Robert were provided to President White;
- h) Robert further reported that as many as 45 Native American veterans have committed suicide recently; Stephanie Elaine Birdwell, Department of Veterans Affairs’ Director, Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR), is clearly not doing her job and many are of the opinion she needs to be replaced.

### **Next Colorado State Council Meeting: June 10, 2017 @ 1300, Castle Rock Library**

Closing salute to the flag lead by Lee White; closing prayer and benediction provided by John Altfeltis

The meeting was adjourned by declaration with no objections at 1508 hour by President Lee White.

This Colorado State Council Meeting minutes submitted by: Milt Omoto, Council Secretary

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