

The Voice of 436

January 2018 ✪ Major Louis. F. Guillermin Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 436



Next meeting:

Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m.
@ VFW Post 845
4601 West Lincoln Hwy.
Downingtown, PA 19335
610 269-8818

<http://www.vva436.org>

Bad weather cancellations:
email notices will be sent
or call Post 845 for updates

Chapter officers 2017-2018

President: Frank Houck
1st V.P.: Dave McTavish
2nd V.P.: Barry Amole
Treasurer: Jim Doedderlein
Directors: Robert Gallagher,
Chris Pitt,
John Morris,
Phil Prinzi,
Bud McCullough,

The December meeting of VVA Chapter 436 was called to order at 1935 hrs on 13 December 20, 2017 by President Frank Houck at VFW Post 845 in Downingtown Pa. There were 9 officers, and 22 members and one guest speaker in attendance.

President Houck led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for POW/MIA, followed by the reading of prayer by Chaplain Jed Burns.

Secretary Mike DiPuppo submitted the minutes of the 16 November 2017 meeting with no exceptions.

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Dave McTavish, seconded by Bud McCullough, and approved unanimously.

Treasurer Jim Doedderlein presented his report, to include VVA bank statements for all accounts and a motion to approve as submitted was made by Rick Weimer & seconded by Bud McCullough, and approved unanimously.

Jim also informed the membership that we had 144 members and 12 Associate members at this time.

Barry Amole submitted Small Games of Chance report, and his document was motioned for approval by Mike DiPuppo, and seconded by Dave McTavish, and was subsequently approved.

Our guest speaker was introduced at this time by Dave McTavish. Mr. Ralph Galati, Capt. U.S. A.F. is the Director of Veteran's Affairs Services at St. Joseph's University. He was also an F-4D Weapons systems officer, Vietnam Veteran and former P.O.W. in the Hanoi Hilton. He was one of over 600 prisoner's housed in several different compounds while in Hanoi. He was a member of the 25th Tactical Fighter Squadron flying out of Ubon Royal Thai Air Force base, in Thailand when he was shot down by a Surface to Air missile, while on a bombing run over North Vietnam. He was just 23 yrs old.

He discussed his capture and subsequent internment at great length, and remarked "A good day was being bored". His treatment by his captors covered many different scenarios, ranging from physical abuse, to mental pain and anguish. Lack of proper nourishment, resulted in severe weight loss, and other maladies associated with captivity. He explained to the group the importance of maintaining one's faith and a belief that rescue was always their end result. He thanked the members who served, for the POW program, and upon his move to an open compound, he was able to relay to the long term captives, the program was in place and that they had NOT been forgotten.

This was great news and was an uplifting moment for many. On March 28th, he was driven by bus to the Hanoi airport with several other captives, where upon arrival, where repatriated, while being met by US personnel, boarded at C141 Starlifter {Freedom Bird} and was returned home. Ralph took several questions from the membership and was presented a VVA challenge coin by President Houck, and a VVA436 t-shirt by Jed Burns. He received several moments of ovation and concluded his remarks by again thanking the work done by VVA in spreading the Word and continuing the fight for recognition for our service and benefits owed.

President Houck addressed incoming correspondence:

Pro Family Support: Needs funds to support the effort to help addicted individuals and assist in their recovery.

Rolling Thunder Newsletter
Special Operations Warrior Foundation

Carmella Hayden thanked us for honoring her father's memory

Requested funds to support Special Forces Trap Shoot {we donate to this charity}

Jed Burns motioned a donation of \$500.00 to the Chester County Food Bank/ seconded by Chris Pitt and approved unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Constitution: Barry Amole reiterated the fact that we have a current one, and it is being followed.

Membership: See above

Veteran's Affairs:

The US Department of Veterans Affairs regularly provides a "Vantage Point Blog Update" to keep Veterans informed of items of interest.

President Houck made a strong recommendation for all Vietnam and Southeast Asia Veterans to have their doctors perform a blood test to specifically test for the River Fluke parasite that was prevalent in many years then attacks your organs, specifically, bile duct, to cause major damage in a form of cancer. This is easily (continued on page 2)

Membership form

Regular membership in VVA is open to any Veteran who served *anywhere* during the Vietnam War era.

Mail to PO Box 189
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____

Email: _____ Born: ____/____/____

- Dues: \$20.00/year (regular and associate memberships)
- I served in the US military, for other than training purposes, between 8/5/64 and 5/7/75
- I served in the US military in Vietnam between 2/21/61 and 8/5/64.
- DD214 enclosed (Applications without DD214s will be processed as associate memberships)
- I wish to join the Associates of the VVA. (No military service needed) (No age limits)
- VVA Life Membership: \$100** **AVVA Life Membership** Cost is based on applicant's age

is easily remediated with medication, once diagnosed.

Also, he stressed getting checked for Hep C. Many returning vets have this and are unaware, as it is asymptomatic for many years.

The distribution of the VA's new I.D. card has been suspended, as demand has overloaded the system. A corrective action is in place, and being implemented. Stand By.

Chester County ID cards are available. Veteran's Crisis Line is an important resource for Veterans in need of help. 1-800-273-8255 press 1.

VVA436 challenge coin:

President Houck passed around the recently finished drawings of our new coin, so that all could see the product.

A special Thanks to Bob Gallagher and his lovely wife Kathy for all the hard work in designing and finishing the coin. The drawing was also transferred into a PDF file to enhance our presentation to the minter.

Frank has contacted the minter and is in the process of selecting the finish edging, and profile of the coin. He hopes to have the ball rolling very soon.

General Reports:

Government Affairs:

President Houck recommended all members visit the various Government websites for information regarding the VA, Military Health, VVA National and PA., and

Government Affairs.

Barry Amole informed the group of the \$30,000 in the PAVF for use by chapters to help defray the costs incurred when performing Veterans Service functions. We identify a need, compile a budget, and request assistance from the fund. The fund, if approved, provides 50% of the total of the need. Could be used for a Household Goods project.

Ken Schweitzer proposed we put together a program to give \$3000.00 to the West Chester 11 Organization. We already gave \$9000.00 and we can ask for a \$2000.00 reimbursement from State Council.

Jed Burns would like to donate \$11000.00 per year to the West Chester 11 Organization. Jed has a continuous donation of \$6000. per year.

Minority Affairs: No report

Honor Guard:

We have the Flyer's game on 15 March 2018. We have the tickets, we need to contract and pay for the bus as yet. President Houck will contract with Krapf buses, the same line we used last year. The funds have already been budgeted for.

We received an invitation to participate in The Kennett Square Memorial Day Parade. Since it was decided to alternate with Downingtown, we will attend, since we participated in Downingtown in 2017.

Blue print = email addresses  Red print = website hot links
www.vva436.org: for updates & meetings minutes.

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Scholarship:

Jed Burns Still working on the program. Jed informed the membership re: Mr. Fifer's continued donation of \$250.00 per month. We discussed various ways of thanking him for his generosity, and decided to have a lunch meeting with Mr. Fifer, to discuss our intention to develop a scholarship in his and his wife's name, to be awarded in conjunction with our chapter's Scholarship program. The luncheon was attended by President Houck, Jed Burns, Jim Doedderlein, Bud McCullough, and John Morris, all from the Scholarship committee. After much discussion, and some cajoling on our part, Mr. Fifer has agreed to our plan as stated above.

Old Business:

The Monthly Newsletter: The Voice of 436 John Maher and John Morris are the editors of our monthly newsletter. Since John Maher has been ill, he is not able to assist. Frank Houck and Jed Burns have agreed to assist in his stead, until such time as Doc Maher can return.

New Business:

VA Coatesville Christmas Party: Jed Burns mentioned that Ed Messner was an aide de camp to General George Patton during WWII and is a patient of the Hospice unit at the Center, and is celebrating his 95th birthday. Jed motioned, Dave McTavish seconded, that we donate \$100.00 to help defray the cost for a luncheon planned by the various VSO's, to honor him Saturday, Dec, 30th, from 1200-1330. Barry Amole stated that since we had monies already allocated to events at the center, a motion was needed. The money will be provided.

A motion by Dave McTavish, seconded by Chris Pitt, to donate \$500.00 to St. Joseph's University office of Veteran's Services and was approved unanimously.

Bob Gallagher mentioned that the Wreath's Across America Activity will be held on Saturday, 12/16/2017.

Chris Pitt mentioned the West Chester Veterans Council of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains will hold a luncheon on 2/4/2018 at noon at the VFW Post 106 in West Chester.

The results of the 50/50 netted \$21.00 to the Chapter's General Fund for operational activities.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote on a motion by Jed Burns, seconded by Dave McTavish at 2050hrs.



Major L. F. Guillermin Memorial Chapter 436

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Phoenixville, PA 19460

Email: vva436@gmail.com

website: <http://www.vva436.org>

