

# 2005 Candidate Statements

These Candidate Statements were written by those running for VVA office. The statements are printed as received. Statements exceeding the word maximum have been shortened. The Candidate Statements are on file with the VVA Nominating Committee.

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT

### Ed Chow

I enlisted in the Army Reserve in 1956 and was commissioned upon graduation from college in 1962. I served in Germany, then as a Captain in Vietnam. I joined VVA in 1984; served as Washington State Council President 1986-1990; and the first Chair of the State Council Presidents 1987-1989. From 1991-1993, I was an At-Large Director and chaired the Veterans Affairs Committee.

I have been National Vice President since 2001. During this time I have met with members in 35 states to listen to their concerns and to assist Chapters and State Councils in resolving issue. I have identified and worked on issues important to veterans and their families such as the work of the Cover the Uninsured Coalition and the proposed Department of Labor Overtime Rules. I have given Congressional testimony and chaired the National Board of Directors meeting in the absence of the President. I have successfully solicited corporate donations on behalf of VVA and shared information on corporate solicitation with State Councils and Chapters so they can access these resources. As Secretary of VVAF, I visited federal work places during the 2003 and 2004 Combined Federal Campaign, which provides the money for grants to our service representative program, and provided information on how

Chapters and State Councils could be involved in this effort at the 2004 Leadership Conference.

I was Director, Washington State Emergency Services 1979-1981 where I managed a budget of \$35 million, 35 employees and several thousand volunteers who reported to me during disasters. As City Administrator of Kent, WA from 1989-1992, I managed a \$65 million budget and 600 employees. I was appointed to the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1993, serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy/Senior Advisor until retirement in 2001. I have successfully run my own businesses and worked as a stockbroker registered with the New York Stock Exchange.

I will bring seasoned financial and management experience to the office of President, and will provide on-site management of the National Office as I live less than 7 miles away. I will continue to build coalitions with other organizations in order to leverage VVA's influence on issues of mutual concern and to identify membership opportunities within those organizations. I will continue to seek additional revenue streams for VVA and will lead a review of operations to identify efficiencies to ensure we get the most from our resources.

Because I believe an informed membership is vital to the organization, I will ensure that all levels of VVA are kept informed on issues, including



discussions and decisions of the Board of Directors.

As your President, I will work for the members of this organization. I will continue outreach to the membership because the chapters are the heart of VVA and are essential in accomplishing VVA's mission of Service to America.

## 2005 VVA CANDIDATES ROSTER

### OFFICERS

#### President

Ed Chow, Wash., D.C.

#### Vice-President

John Rowan, N.Y.

Wayne Reynolds, Ala.

#### Secretary

Bill Meeks, Tex.

#### Treasurer

Alan Cook, Calif.

### NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT-LARGE

Robert Johnston, Sr., Calif.

Lee Fisher, Ohio

Sandie Wilson, Mich.

Steve Mulcahy, Iowa

Douglas Perkins, Va.

Richard DeLong, La.

Billee Cullin, Conn.

John Neuman, Ore.

Francisco Muniz, N.Y.

Dave McMichael, Fla.

John Margowski, Wisc.

Alan Gibson, Mo.

Charles Montgomery, Va.

Francisco Ivarra, Wash.

Randy Barnes, Kan.

Marsha Four, Pa.

Gordon Lane, N.Y.

Larry Frazee, Ohio

Jerry Klein, Fla.

Gerald Yamamoto, Calif.

Joe Ingino, N.Y.

### NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGIONAL

#### Region 1

Al Cummings, Mass.

#### Region 2

Fred Elliott, N.Y.

#### Region 3

Bruce Whitaker, Md.

#### Region 4

Connie Christensen, Fla.

James Gilmer, Ga.

#### Region 5

Richard Abrams, Ohio

Leverett Hobbs, Ohio

Joseph Jennings III, Ohio

#### Region 6

Steve House, Wisc.

#### Region 7

Alan Manuel, La.

Walter Venis, Jr., Okla.

#### Region 8

Donald McDole, Idaho

Robert Hampson, Mont.

#### Region 9

Dick Southern, Calif.

Darrol Brown, Nev.

**NOTICE:** Candidates may run from the Convention floor. See Election Committee report, page 13, for instructions.

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## VICE PRESIDENT

### John Rowan

As Vice President, I would use my knowledge and 25 years of experience at all levels of VVA to assist the President in insuring that the organization functions at an optimum level in order to achieve our goals. In particular I am concerned about the level and quality of the health care being provided by the VA.

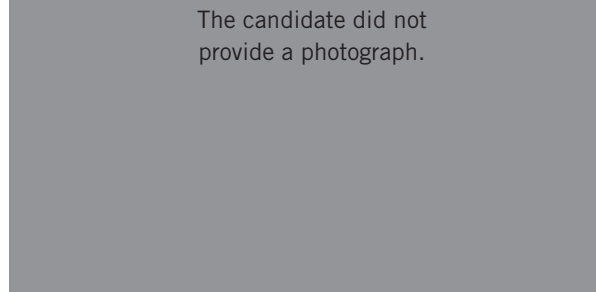
It appears that 2005 will be a year that goes down in history. The Bush administration and the Republican colleagues in the House have decided to radically change the way veterans get benefits in this country. Thus, we are about to embark on an epic political battle, which will determine whether or not the funds will be there to provide the healthcare that veterans require. How it will turn out is up to us.

We must return to our roots and reaffirm our commitment to insure that veterans receive the benefits to which they are entitled. Our VA health care system is in jeopardy. When Vietnam vets were in need in the '80's, the Budget Director, David Stockman, said "veterans are too expensive." Now Assistant Defense Secretary David Chu says

expenditures for veterans and retirees are impacting on the funds available for "National Defense." It's the same old story, as long as you're in battle, they pat you on the back, but come home needing some assistance and all of a sudden you're some "welfare" recipient, begging for a handout.

When VVA began, we were the rebels who were not afraid to stand up and say that we needed more programs to overcome the effects of war. Thus, we got the Vet Centers and compensation for Agent Orange. At that time the other major veterans organizations were comfortable with the old "iron triangle," them the VA and Congress. It took us, the "rebels" to push the envelope and deal with homelessness, drug and alcohol problems, and PTSD, which didn't have a name when we began. Well, we need to rekindle that spirit. Maybe we are a little older and a little slower, but we are still willing to stand up and be heard.

We must ratchet up our activities. Thankfully, many of us are retired and have the time to get involved. VVA was always different. We didn't go along to get along. We were willing to make the



The candidate did not provide a photograph.

hard decisions and take on the battles. This is the twilight of our service to America. We cannot let our efforts go down in vain. It is time to "rock and roll." See you in the "foxholes."

After retiring last year, I began working as a Service Representative. This area could use more attention from VVA National. It still takes the VA too long to complete a claim, and there are still veterans who are not aware that they are entitled to compensation and other benefits. We must rectify these problems.

Please give me a new opportunity to serve you at the national level.

Thank you, John Rowan

### Wayne (Doc) Reynolds

Served in Vietnam (1968-69) in I CORPS as Medic with 95th Evacuation and 22nd Surgical Hospitals.

Life Member of VVA and currently serving in my 5th year as Alabama State Council President.

Nationally, I have served as National Treasurer, Secretary of the Conference of State Council Presidents and as a member of the following committees: Veterans' Affairs, PTSD, Constitution and Employment Training and Business Opportunity.

Served four years as a member of the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund.

Registered Nurse. Work in Emergency Medicine. Graduated from Registered Nurse program in 2002.

Was a Public School Superintendent for 12 years and retired in 1996. Since 1996 I have operated my own business that supervises Home Child Care Providers in a five (5) county area. Service connected Disabled Veteran with Life membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans.

Received Masters Degree in Finance from the

University of Georgia and Doctor of Education in Statistics from Auburn University.

Married to Carol for 35 years with two children and one grandchild. My son, Wesley, is in the Air Force. I am the oldest of twelve children whose father was a WW II and Korean War Veteran with Airborne experience.

When elected your National VVA Vice President, I will be:

Dedicated to serving each member fairly. I am accessible and committed to addressing the needs of the membership. I have the time to do the job well.

Determined to be an officer that pursues the interests of our veteran community and of VVA. We need to increase the percentage of our budget spent on services to our members. We need to be a more open organization. We need to fight for health care and disability pension benefits.

Decisive and understand my role and responsibilities as your Vice President. I have served as a National Officer and understand what it takes to represent you effectively. I am well prepared to carry on the duties of the office of Vice President



and to be an effective leader.

Diligent in working with the other Officers, the Board of Directors and State Councils. I am a team player and will call upon my experience and background to improve VVA.

I promise to remain focused on the interests of VVA. I will represent all Vietnam Veterans in our efforts to secure the benefits we were promised as a result of our service to our country. I ask for your support and your vote.

## SECRETARY

### Bill Meeks, Jr.

**B**orn and raised in Texas, in 1967-68 the Marine Corps gave me an opportunity to visit a tropical paradise (Vietnam), learn a skill (radioman), experience a unique cuisine (C-rations), and hone my survival instincts. Subsequently, these skills, along with teamwork and lightning reflexes, proved invaluable with my wife Suzie, four children, and eight grandchildren. I am finishing up my career at Van De Wiele Engineering in Houston.

VVA became a focal point of my life in 1992. A life member of Chapter 343, Houston, and AVVA member, I was recognized by VVA as 1999 Member of the Year. My credentials with VVA are based on rising through the ranks at the chapter, state, and national levels, my most recent assignments being Texas State Council President 1999-2004, and At-Large Director, VVA National

Board of Directors 2001-present.

My qualifications for National Secretary are based on results, not promises. My 13 years with VVA are results-oriented and team-centered. Specific accomplishments include, chairing CSCP Committee that produced State Council/Chapter handbooks, and as a Disciplinary Task Force member amending troublesome areas of the VVA Code of Disciplinary Policy. As Chair, Membership Affairs Committee since 2001, I lead the team that created the multi-year development plan, made your VVA membership experience more accessible, efficient, and responsive. Daily duty as second term At Large Director has increased my knowledge of VVA's overall organizational operations.

I ask for your support in my campaign for VVA National Secretary.



## TREASURER

### Alan Cook

**I** offer seventeen years of financial background with Vietnam Veterans of America, and twenty five years of corporate Financial accounting.

I began my Vietnam veterans career as Chapter Treasurer and later became California State Council Treasurer, a position I held for ten years. I served as Treasurer of the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund (VVAf) for three years. I have been a member of the National Finance Committee since 1991, and served as chair for two terms. I am currently serving as National Treasurer, seeking another term.

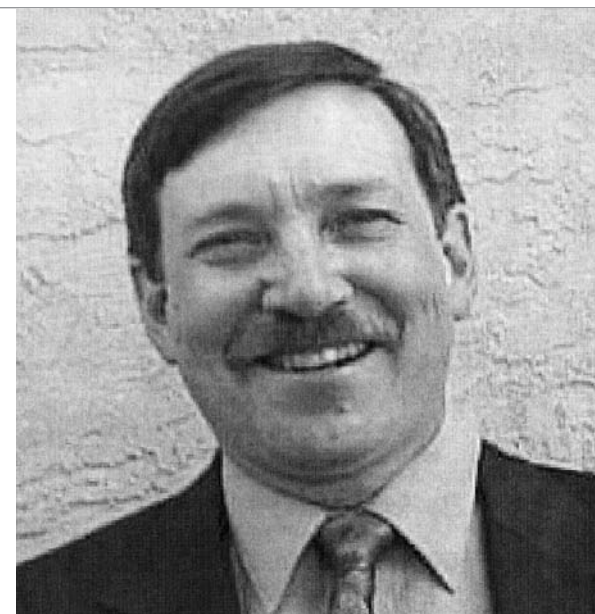
In the past six years our expenses have been increasing as we try to fulfill the various programs mandated by our members through resolutions and committee work. Our revenue has not

increased as quickly as we would like during this period. Our expenses keep on rising as we increase our programs and the cost of doing our daily business keeps rising. We need to look at ways to increase revenue and decrease expenses. We started this process the last two years, but there is a need to continue.

In the past two years I have worked well with the finance department, and I have developed a good working relationship with the staff.

I have spent the last seventeen years as a leader in Vietnam Veterans of America at the chapter, state council, and national level and I am committed to the best interests of VVA and all veterans.

I look forward to continuing our work together and believe we have a bright future ahead of us.



**Robert W. Johnston, Sr.**

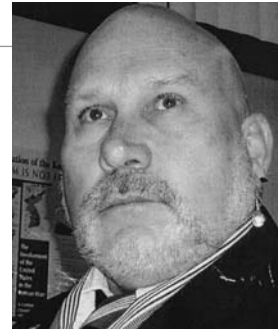
I joined VVA in January 1985, as a Charter Member of the San Jose, California forming chapter, #201. I attended the 1985 National Convention in Detroit as our chapter Delegate. In late 1985, due to resignations of our Chapter Officers, I became the Interim Chapter Vice President and then Chapter President. In 1986 I was elected as Chapter President and remained in that office for the next five years. I returned as Chapter President in 1992, and continued in office until 1997, when I was elected Chapter Treasurer, where I have served thru this current term of office.

I have been involved with the California State Council, since its reforming in 1986. I have

served in many VVA roles, as an elected State Council Board Member, Council Officer and Council Delegate to National Conventions. I was part of the transformation of the council from only 6 chapters and a small voice at the National level, to where it is now, with over 30 chapters, and a contributing part of VVA.

I currently serve on 3 National Committees: Constitution, POW/MIA and Veterans Initiative Task Force. I have Experience, Knowledge and a sense of Personal Dedication and Commitment to VVA, and wish to continue to serve and contribute to the organization in a National Leadership role.

I have many concerns and unrealized issues for



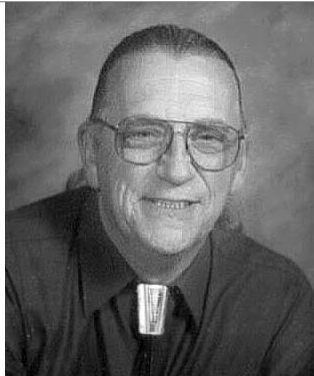
VVA, and want to see us develop into the Veterans Service Organization and leadership role that we have the potential for. But in order to accomplish this,

we as an organization must make some serious changes in Business as Usual.

Communication, the means by which we hear the wants and wishes of our members, must continue to be improved upon and stressed as a two-way process. Before we can truly represent the membership, we must know what their issues and priorities are.

**Lee Fisher**

Lee Fisher was born on July 19th, 1945, in Fall River, Massachusetts. He enlisted in the U. S. Air Force in June 1963 after graduating from high school and was honorably discharged in June 1967. He served in Vietnam from September 1966 until June 1967, spending his tour in country with the 1st Air Calvary Division in the Central Highlands as a member of an Air Force Tactical Air Control Party. He is married and has three girls, three grandkids and a black lab. He has been a life member of VVA since 1992, with several tours as a board member of Chapter 34, founding member and president of



Chapters 717 and 900. He has also filled positions on the Ohio State Council from 1994 until September of 2000 when he became State Council President and in 2002 became

Second Vice President of the VVA Council of State Council Presidents. In 2003 he was elected to the VVA National Board of Directors as an At

Large Director. He also is a member of the Minority Affairs Committee and Veterans Initiative Task Force. He is also one of the Incorporators and now President of the Vietnam Veterans Buckeye Foundation. After this first tour as an at large director and learning the ropes, I ask your support in order to do what is necessary for you and the organization. The next two years will be critical for the organization and YOU will determine the course we take. Thanks for your consideration.

**Sandie Wilson**

Sandie Wilson, candidate for director at large. Retired from Army Nurse Corps, serving in Vietnam 1968-69 with the 44th Med Brigade. Retired from University of Michigan. Currently serve as director at large, vice president VVAF, national committee positions include: Finance, Women Veterans and Health Care. Activities back home include helping homeless veterans with the Michigan Veterans Foundation and funding projects which assist veterans and children as president of Vietnam Veterans of Michigan.

Past national level experience includes Constitution, Strategic Plan, and Veterans Affairs

Committees. On the state level the experience includes 5 years as state council president, 5 years as state council secretary. Appointed to the Michigan Agent Orange Commission by the governor. Worked with all the VSOs in Michigan, as commander of the Commanders Group, to improve the Veterans Homes and advocate for veterans in employment assistance.

My nursing background has provided the scientific knowledge to identify issues and problems and develop possible solutions. My military experience taught me the working concepts of teamwork and leadership. My union positions provided me with the ability to negotiate and represent.



I have had the pleasure of spending the last 35 years advocating for my military and veteran brothers and sisters, I know the issues and the mission. Achieving the goals of the mission takes

leadership and teamwork combined with political action and business stability. I desire to continue serving my fellow veterans as VVA Director at Large.

**Steve Mulcahy**

I was born in Ottumwa and have lived here all my life. I entered active duty in the Army in May 1969. I went to basic training and AIT in Fort Polk LA; I went to Vietnam in October 69. I spent one year there with E-2nd 506th Infantry 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).

I became involved in VVA in the early 90's and started a chapter in Ottumwa shortly after that. I was Chapter President for a little over a year when I was elected State Council President. I served in that capacity for several years until I was elected Region 6 Director. I served in that position for two years, during which time I retired from Deere and went to the VVA Service Representative



Basic Training in Nashville. I have been volunteering in the Des Moines VARO ever since helping Veterans get the compensation they deserve.

In Iowa we are up in membership the last two years and have started two new chapters. We also helped start a chapter in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I have been membership chair for several years in the state. I just recently gave up

the position to Dave Woods and am sure he will continue with growth in the state.

Our membership in the state is growing and our service rep program is growing faster than we would like. I would like to think I was part of this growth and believe I can bring this kind of vision to the National level.

In closing I would ask any one who has a question to please contact me at [vaia@aol.com](mailto:vaia@aol.com), and I will try to answer it for you.

I would also ask for your vote in the upcoming election for Director At-Large.

## Douglas Perkins

**G**reetings, I am Douglas Perkins. I am from Virginia and I am running for Director at Large. I'm divorced and have two daughters and six grandchildren. I'm retired after serving in the Navy from 1968 to 1989. Serving with the Navy I was stationed onboard the USS *Wabash* AOR-5 in territorial water off Vietnam from 1970 to 1972 as Naval resupply support and naval gunfire support.

Joining VVA Chapter 48 in February 1994. Having been actively involved since that time as a member of its Board of Directors. In 1995 I served as First Vice President. In 1996 to 2001, I served as Chapter President. I am presently serv-



ing as Chapter President. At the chapter level, I have been chairman of the POW/MIA, Membership, Legislative Committee, as well as serving on various other committees. State level, I have been a state Delegate since 1994. Chairman of State POW/MIA committee, as well as serving on Constitution and By-Law, Scholarship, a State Regional Director, member of

Membership task force National level. I serve on the POW/MIA Committee and I serve as Vice Chair of Veterans Against Drugs. In 1999 I started attending National Board meetings. I feel National must be held accountable. We must insure and improve communication at all levels. We need to seek and identify potential additional outside sources of revenue. We must seek more legislation on healthcare. Seek more dedicated VVA trained Service Officers. These are some of things I would work toward if elected.

## Richard DeLong

The candidate did not provide a statement.

The candidate did not provide a photograph.

## Billee Culin

**O**n January 10, 1969, I joined the U.S. Army. My MOS was stenographer, and I was selected top stenographer in the 5th Army Area and sent TDY from Ft. Riley, KS, to Washington, DC. I worked in the Joint Chiefs of Staff Office in the Pentagon until May 1971.

I have been serving my brothers and sisters since I went to college from 1976 to 1980. I helped Nam Vets during my college years when working in the VA Office at the college. In 1999 I joined the VVA. From 2000 to 2003 I was Secretary of Chapter 120 in the Greater Hartford



VVA. Then in September 2002 I became the president of the Council. I am currently the Secretary

area and am currently on the Board of Directors. I am the delegate for the VVA to the CT Veterans Coalition. In June 2002, I was elected Vice President of the CT State Council of the

of the CSCP. I am the CT Director of the Order of the Silver Rose.

I believe there is much to be done to help our family and to keep and obtain the benefits that are rightfully due us. We need to continue working on maintaining or increasing our membership. The national elected body must work for us. That's why they are elected.

I have been married for 31 years to Taylor and have three grown children. I have been an insurance agent for over 25 years.

## John Neuman

**I** am running for office, and rather than just say we need change, I'm willing to join the team to get it done. I specifically seek a non-paid position; satisfaction from serving is the only reward I need. I offer 30 years of management and leadership with proven skills, including creativity and innovation, with motion that is team driven. My focuses are helping veterans now and leave a legacy that all veterans can be proud of. I am a straight shooter and I do what I say I will do. I talk the talk, but more importantly, I walk the walk. I spent 6 years flying missions in

Vietnam out of 7 years in the USAF. I'm retired, married to my wife Lynda for 37 years, have 2 children and 4 grandchildren.

I served as Chapter 392 Secretary for 3 years, then President for 2 more where we became Chapter of the Year. At the state level, I served as Treasurer, Vice President, and Executive Vice for the OSC. I also served two terms as Post 110 Commander and still serve on the Board in three organizations. I am a recipient of the Order of the Silver Rose and the Legion of Honor from the Chapel of Four Chaplains. I have been Member of



the Year for Oregon and Region 8. Next to my family, my passion has always been helping veter-

ans. I would appreciate your consideration of my candidacy, would appreciate your support and your vote.

## Francisco Muñiz

I would like to announce my candidacy for At-Large Board member in the upcoming national elections at the National Convention.

Since becoming a member of Vietnam Veterans of America, in 1981, I have been a veteran advocate and joined because of their approach in dealing with veteran issues and concerns.

My goal for this organization is to follow its core values of promoting and supporting all the issues important to Vietnam veterans. We need to remember that VVA's vision is to lead in challenging the pro quo of the elected officials and the Veterans Administration.

There are major concerns that need addressing:

interactions between the divisions of VVA; quality healthcare for all veterans and the need to reform VA claims processing.

Veteran Affairs are at the crossroads of a major transformation; we must have leaders who will undertake challenging positions.

I have taken on leadership roles at every level of VVA, as an elected officer and board member, delegate and Chairman of committees. I have served two terms as your National At-Large Board member ('85-89).

We need to rebuild the trust between members, state councils, regions, and national officers. We must work as a TEAM to accomplish these goals



and we need to elect qualified Team Leaders to move us forward.

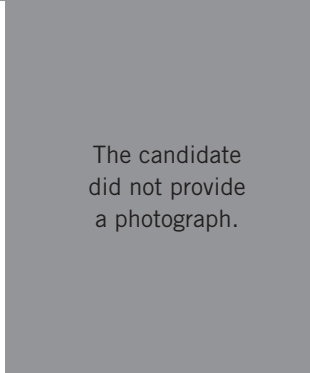
I have always been honest and truthful in representing you. I have the dedication, proven experience,

and commitment to serve as your At-Large Director.

I would appreciate your support and vote of confidence as I seek this position.

## Dave McMichael

Served in the U.S. Army 1966 to 1968 with 191st Assault Helicopter Co. and the 9th Infantry Division. In Vietnam 1967-68 in the Delta area. Married 36 years in September to wife Linda, two children. Helped start VVA Chapter 755 in Osceola County, Florida. Served as chapter treasurer and chapter delegate to Florida State Council. Elected as Florida State Council



Treasurer in 1998, elected as Florida State Council President in 2000 and again in 2002. Served as Treasurer for VVAF from 2001 to 2003. Elected to the

National Board of Directors in 2003. Current Finance Chair. If re-elected I will continue serving the membership, bring open-minded discussion to the Board of Directors and a commitment to try my best to do what is right for the membership and the corporation. I would also like to continue serving as Finance Chair.

## John L. Margowski

I am a candidate for VVA National Board Member at Large. I was raised in Indiana, graduated from high school at Kentucky Military Institute, Lyndon, Kentucky. I attended Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana, for two years and transferred to and graduated from Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky, in 1969.

I entered the United States Air Force in December of 1969. I attended OCS and was commissioned in 1970. I became a navigator on KC135 aircraft. While stationed at Minot AFB, Minot, North Dakota, I flew combat refueling

missions out of Utapao AFB, Thailand, Kadena AFB, Okinawa, and Hickman AFB, Guam. I attained the rank of Captain and was Honorably Discharged in June 1974.

I will bring to the Board 28 years of service to veterans as a County Veterans Service Officer. I work daily with veterans and their families to address their needs. I have served and am currently serving on Advisory Committees to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and Federal VA Committees and Advisory Boards such as One VA, the Milwaukee Center Advisory Board (14 years), a VA Claims Focus Group and VA Stakeholders



Advisory Council. I attended most VISN 12 network meetings and have a very good working relationship with VA Regional and Hospital personnel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

As an At Large Board Member, I will work constructively with all VVA National Officers and Board Members to achieve the goals that VVA

## Alan K. Gibson

Spent 20 years in the US Army, RVN ('69 101st Airborne Division—'70 25th Infantry Division) retired, finished a BS degree from University of Georgia (Columbus), sold real estate; life insurance; stock, bonds & mutual funds; have life-time teaching certificate, worked at the Columbia, MO, VA Hospital as a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist for 12 years. Helped establish Welcome Home Inc. and other programs to help homeless veterans with a hand up. Have had the honor of serving as a Chapter Pres, Sec & Treas., State Council VP (two years) and State President (nine years), re-elected June 5, 2004, for another 2-year term. Elected by the delegates at the National



Convention (Aug. 2001) to the Board of Directors (At-large). Presently serve on the Government Affairs (Vice-chair), Agent Orange and Chair of the Employment, Training &

Business Opportunity (ETaBO) Committees and am one of the VVA representatives on the Task Force For Veterans Entrepreneurship (TFVE) and Task Force For Veterans Preference (TFVP). Am married, have 7 children and 6 grandchildren.

Belong to the following veterans organizations: American Legion, 40 & 8, VFW (life member), Retired Enlisted Association (life member), Disabled American Veterans (life member), 101st Airborne Division Association (life member), Korean War Veterans Association, Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations (Chaplain 6 years) and Vietnam Veterans of America (life member). Am a member, and have served as chair on Finance, Pastor-Parrish Relations and Missions Committees of New Horizons United Methodist Church in Columbia.

## Charles R. Montgomery, Jr.

I, Charles R. Montgomery Jr., Life Member of Chapter 48 residing in Virginia Beach, Virginia, am seeking the position of Director At-large. First joined Vietnam Veterans of America in January 1987. Have been actively involved since that time. I have served as Director At-large, Region 3 Director and Membership Committee Chair in years past. I have a lot of knowledge and enthusiasm to offer our organization and can best serve you, the membership, by having a voice at the National level. I have devoted much of my time and energy at all levels of this organization with



membership being top of the list. We have many more important issues of concern as a national organization. I would focus on our mission and goals. I am a very devoted and committed individual.

Since my involvement with Vietnam Veterans of America I have held many positions within my Chapter, State Council and National. I am also

serving my second term with the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund.

I proudly served in the United States Army with the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vietnam from 1969-1970. I finished my service with the 82nd Airborne Division from 1970-1971. I have been employed by the City of Norfolk, Virginia for over 33 years. I am happily married to my wife Nancy. I promise to continue to serve you, the membership, as diligently as I have in the past. Let's build this organization to be a strong veterans' service organization and work together as a team.

## Francisco E. Ivarra

I have made my life a career of helping others and my personal resolve is strengthened by the values of sharing and caring imposed on me by my parents; in redefining the meaning and value of life after being wounded in Vietnam; and by my passion and commitment to diversity. These same influential experiences have served to guide my daily life and continue to measure my character as a person and as a leader. America Division 196th Light Infantry Brigade (1st/23rd Infantry, 1968-1969), Purple Heart Recipient and member of various military organizations, Chair, Vietnam Veterans of America Minority Affairs Committee, and member, VA Secretary's

Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs Secretary, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 102 Member, State of Washington Governor's Advisory Committee on Veterans Affairs Member, Seattle VAMC Executive Leadership Board of Directors Chair, Seattle VARO Minority Veterans Committee Member, Library of Congress Veterans History Project Board of Directors Member, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Hispanic Veterans Summit Member, Hispanic War Veterans of America National Board of Directors, Former Counselor, (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder) VA Vet Center, Former University professor of Education and Sociology



I value family, friendship and commitment to effective leadership that reflects personal sacrifice for others and not personal gain. I am a veterans-first person and

we must assure that our veterans receive the benefits they are entitled to. I consider your confidence sacred and I will not waver on my responsibilities or in resolving your concerns. I ask for your support and for your vote.

## Randy Barnes

The candidate did not provide a statement.



## Marsha L. Four

I served in the Army Nurse Corps (1968-1970), at Fort Campbell, KY, and in Vietnam with the 18th Surgical Hospital. I worked in hospital nursing until 1996.

In 1993, I fostered the initiation of Philadelphia Stand Down, serving as ED until 1999. I am currently employed as Program Director for Homeless Veteran Services at The Philadelphia Veterans Multi-Service & Education Center. I view this as nursing on a different "plane." My responsibilities include a 95-bed transitional residence for male veterans, a day service program for homeless veterans, a 30-bed transitional residence for homeless women veterans, and grant writer. In May 2003 I was awarded the Unsung Hero Award by the National Coalition for

Homeless Veterans.

I joined Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 67, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, in 1987, serving as a Director, Vice President, Convention and State Council Delegate. At Pennsylvania State Council I am our VISN4 MAC Representative and Homeless Veteran Committee Chair.

In 1999, 2001, and 2003, I was elected National Board Director-at-Large and have served as Chair, National Women Veterans Committee; Vice Chair, Task Force on Homeless Veterans; and member, Government Affairs Committee and Health Care Task Force.

In 2001, I was appointed to the VA Women Veterans Advisory Committee and appointed by the



Secretary as Chair in August 2002, receiving a re-appointment to this position in 2004. In May 2002, I was appointed a consultant/liason to the VA Homeless Veterans Advisory Committee.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, I am married with three sons and have resided in Springfield, Pennsylvania, for nearly twenty years.

I hold honesty and integrity in highest regard. If re-elected, I pledge to continue my work for VVA and veterans, with commitment and responsibility to duty.

## Gordon C. Lane

In 1982 I became # 49 on the original petition to form a VVA Chapter. That chapter became the Central New York Chapter 103 Vietnam Veterans of America Inc.

In 1991 I was defeated for re-election. I beat myself, but I learned from it. After a short break I went back to working with my Chapter and the State Council. I am presently Chapter President again. I have worked my way up the ladder, fell off, and started from the bottom again.

Here are some of the reasons why I want your vote to the National BOD at Large:

Past and present experience as Chapter 103 President; Past experience as New York State Council President; Past experience as a National Board of Director; Chairmanship of a National Committee and member of two National Committees; Long-term involvement with VISN 2 Consumer Council.

I have proven ability to take on large projects and see them through and a willingness to speak out for Veterans and their families.

I know what it takes to run a Chapter, a State Council, and to be a National Director. I won't

make any promises, but this one: I will always remind the powers that be that the Veterans are our number one priority. I will listen to all sides of the issue and make my decision based on fact and circumstances. Issues should be attacked and not people. Rumors should be addressed, found or unfounded, and take prompt, proper action. There should always be a fair, level, and balanced playing field. I will always remind anyone that fair play is always in the best interest of everyone.

Contact me: 315-638-2827, or spd179ret@aol.com

## Larry A. Frazee

Larry A. Frazee: Married to wife Linda for 41 years. Has two children, 4 grandchildren.

Entered the U.S. Army September 1966 and was honorably discharged in August 1968, upon returning from Vietnam. Was with the 18th Airborne Division at Fort Bragg from January 1967 until August 1967. Served with the 3/8th Infantry, 4th Infantry from August 1967 to August 1968, in Pleiku, in the Central Highlands. Auditor by profession for 30 yrs. Graduate of Franklin University with a BS degree in Accounting, graduate of Bank Administration School of Banking at the University of WI, Madison. Hold Certifications as a Certified



been involved with VVA since 1991. I have held offices at the Chapter Level, Treasurer from 1993-2001. State Level, District 1 Director, 2nd Vice President & Treasurer and currently serving

Public Accountant, Certified Bank Auditor, Certified Fraud Examiner, Certified Risk Professional & Certified Financial Service Auditor. Am a Life Member of VVA and have

on the National Finance Committee & Minority Affairs Committee. Also one of the Incorporators and now Treasurer of the Vietnam Veterans Buckeye Foundation.

I have a strong ethic with Veterans helping Veterans. I strongly believe in communication with the membership. I feel that the membership needs to be kept aware of what VVA is doing to meet veterans' needs. If I am elected, I will strive to keep open communication flowing. I will strive to ensure that VVA operates under a sound fiscal policy. The national organization has to operate within the revenue received. The use of reserve funds will only weaken VVA.

## Jerry Klein

My name is Jerry Klein and it has been a privilege to serve on the National Board of Directors for the past 8 years. I served in Vietnam with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division from August 1967 to August 1968. I served in the infantry in Vietnam.

My experience in VVA dates back 25 years. Since 1980, I have continued to work on the important issues that face veterans every day. Those issues are the establishment of Sufficient and Consistent Funding of VA Healthcare and an effective Veterans Benefits Program delivery system.

I helped to establish the first legislative coordinator network in VVA in New York State and I will continue to strive to establish an effective nationwide legislative coordinator network for VVA. Only through effective contact with our elected officials can we project our opinions on the issues we consider important.

The continued improvement of the delivery of professional veterans benefits counseling is a worthy goal to pursue. The establishment of an interactive methodology to train service representatives will enhance VVA's ability to serve veterans and dependents nationwide. Only through



continuous training can VVA provide that quality service to veterans and dependents. I pledge to make that a reality.

Service to veterans has been a life-long endeavor and I

ask the support of the membership to allow me the privilege to continue my service to VVA.

## Jerry (Gerald) Yamamoto

My name is Jerry Yamamoto. I ask for your support as I run for the position of National Board At-Large Director.

I enlisted in the Army in June 1966 and served as an enlisted social worker at the hospital at Ft. Gordon, Georgia, until June 1968.

I hold a BA in anthropology and a Masters in Public Administration degrees. I retired in October 2002 after 31 years with the California Government, including 4 years as a social worker and 26 years as a retirement system office manager, supervisor, and retirement counselor and marketer of retirement and health benefits plans to government agencies.

The candidate did not provide a photograph.

I am a widower and father of one daughter. I was born in Arkansas on October 18, 1943, raised in Ohio until 1957 when I moved to Southern California.

I joined VVA Chapter 53, Redondo Beach, CA, in December 1995 and have served in all its elective offices. I chair the State Minority Affairs Committee, am a member of two other committees and a member

of the California Vietnam Veterans Advisory Council. I'm the Alternate Region 9 Director and a member of the National Minority Affairs Committee.

I originated two laws in California that designated California State Highway One as "Vietnam Veteran" and "Blue Star" Highways, protested a veterans' preference issue, protested illegal leasing of property at the West LA VA Hospital, assisted veterans with VA benefits, and testified at a CARES Commission hearing.

If elected, I will represent you with all of my energy, dedication, and motivation.

## NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT-LARGE

### Joseph J. Ingino

**M**y name is Joseph J. Ingino. I served between 1969 and 1970 with the First Infantry Division in III Corps, Vietnam. I believe with my experience and the time I have available to commit to the VVA, I can successfully help promote improvements to the conditions of our fellow Vietnam veterans as a National At-large Board Of Director.

I have been a VVA member for over 18 years, and belong to Chapter 82 for the last 12 years.

I am the Chapter's First Vice President, serve on its Board, and am one of its New York State Delegates, am the Chapter's Sergeant of Arms,



Hospital Program—which visits Walter Reed to meet with the wounded troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

and the Chair of the Agent Orange/Dioxin and Silver Rose Committees.

I am Public Coordinator/Liaison for our Color and Honor Guard and our Walter Reed

I have been our Chapter Veteran of the Year and have received The Order of the Silver Rose Award.

I have attended the National Leadership Conference.

In 2004, I participated with the Virginia Chapter Color Guard at the "3 Man Statue" for the Victims of Agent Orange. This year, I worked with the Town of Oyster Bay to bring the "Vietnam Wall Experience" to Marjorie Post Park, in Massapequa, Long Island, New York, for the April 30, 2005 weekend.

I retired after 32 years with the Town of Oyster Bay, and am married with five surviving children.

## NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGIONAL

### REGION 1: Albert Cummings

#### VVA Involvement:

Region 1 Director .....2004-present  
State Council President .....2003-present  
Chapter 232 President .....1994-2004  
Chapter 111 .....Member

#### National Committees:

Member, Rules Committee  
Vice Chair, POW/MIA

#### Other Veterans Involvement:

Member VFW Post 620 .....2000-present

American Legion Post 452 .....1997-present

#### Military:

United States Army .....July 7, 1967 to  
December 9, 1968

#### Community Involvement:

Town Meeting Member .....1996-present

Board of Directors, Franklin

Area Survival Center .....2002-present



### REGION 2: Fred Elliott

**I** served in Vietnam from January to December of 1967 with the Army's 9th Infantry and the 11th Armored Cavalry. In 1983 I joined VVA, becoming a Life Member in 1987. I have served as Chapter President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Director as well as a National At-Large Director. Currently, I am the Region 2 Director on the National Board.

I have been a delegate to 9 National Conventions, the Convention Rules Chair twice and am the current Convention Resolutions Committee Chair. Over the past six years, I have served on the Constitution Committee, the



Leadership Conference. I also serve on the combined VVA/VVAF Donor Development Team.

As the Region 2 Director for the past two

Finance Committee, and the Government Affairs Committee. Presently, I serve on the Membership Committee, act as the Vice Chair of the Healthcare Committee, and presented at the

years, I have learned a great deal about the Region and the Chapters in it. I feel I have made many new friends in the region and have been able to work closely with the State Councils and Chapters within the Region. I have written and distributed to all of the Chapters within the Region a Region 2 Director's Report at least three times a year to keep the membership informed about activities at National and within the Region. I thank everyone for their support over the past two years and ask for your continued support by electing me to another term as Region 2 Director.

### REGION 3: Bruce W. Whitaker

**A** native of Cresaptown, MD, Bruce enlisted in the United States Marine Corps while still in high school in 1966, and was sent to Vietnam in November 1966. He served as a machine gunner with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division. He was wounded in action on Operation Union II, June 2, 1967. After receiving treatment for his wound, Bruce returned to his unit and continued his tour of duty leaving Vietnam in December 1967. He completed his enlistment at Camp Lejeune, NC, and was released from active duty in December 1969.

After release from the USMC, he returned to his hometown and was accepted into the Maryland State Police Academy in July 1971, serving for 31 years, retiring January 2003.

He joined Vietnam Veterans of America in 1993, Chapter 172, and became actively involved from the beginning. In 1994 Bruce was elected as Vice-President of Chapter 172 and in 1995 was elected President and held the position until 2002; was elected Treasurer, Maryland State Council in 1996 and held the position until 2000; was elected President, Maryland State Council in 2000 and held the position until 2004.



Bruce will, as Region 3 Director, bring stability along with effective and efficient leadership to the position and to the membership of Region 3.

Bruce has been married to Regina for thirty-four years and has three sons and one grandson.

**REGION 4: Connie C. Christensen**

I served in the U.S. Army for greater than 33 years in both the Active and Reserve Components. My father swore me into the Women's Army Corps on the foredeck of his Navy ship when I was 19 years old on October 14, 1967, and gave me my Commission in the Army Nurse Corps fifteen months later. After completing Officers Basic Training at Ft. Sam Houston, I completed the Army's Basic Operating Room Nursing Course and was awarded the MOS of Operating Room Nurse. In the spring of 1970, I volunteered for Vietnam and received orders in July of that year assigning me to the 67th

Evacuation Hospital in Qui Nhon, where I served until October 1970. I was then transferred to the 3rd Surgical Hospital in Binh Thuy, where I had the fortunate opportunity to serve alongside my Navy father in the Mekong Delta. On many occasions, his blood-splattered daughter told the worried Commander about his wounded sailors. The faces of those men are burned into my memory. It is those memories that continue to inspire me with commitment to make a difference in the lives of America's veterans, to speak for those who can no longer speak for themselves. I was compassionately reassigned to Ft. Stewart, Georgia, in



March 1971. I made the decision to become a Nurse Anesthetist while serving in Vietnam. After fifteen months in CONUS, I transferred to a Troop Program Unit in the Army Reserve, and used my GI Bill to attend a School of Nurse Anesthesia in 1973, a field in which I continue to work limited per diem.

**REGION 4: James Edwin Gilmer**

James will make it his top priority to ensure that all veterans are taken care of. He will attain this goal by continuing to lobby the Congress and Senate regarding all veterans' issues including health care benefits. James will work to see that veterans' health care benefits are kept at the highest standards possible for veterans and their families. He will continue to encourage all veterans groups to adopt and support the

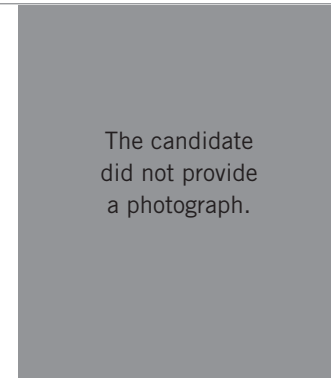


value of "veterans helping veterans and their families." He will help to initiate and support programs region wide that will bring this value into being. James will work

through whatever channels necessary to assure that military personnel today, are not treated the same as the returning Vietnam Veterans were treated after answering their call to duty. James feels it is his responsibility to pursue whatever means needed to make sure that all veterans today are taken care of by our government and that no generation of veterans should ever be abandoned by another.

**REGION 5: Richard Abrams**

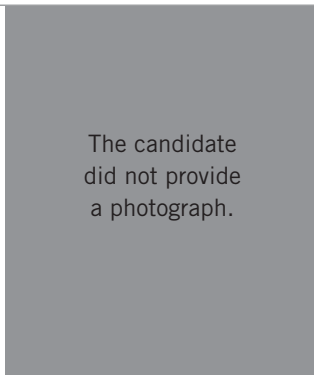
The candidate did not provide a statement.



The candidate did not provide a photograph.

**REGION 5: Leverett Hobbs**

The candidate did not provide a statement.



The candidate did not provide a photograph.

## REGION 5: Joseph A. Jennings

I'm Joseph A. Jennings III, a Life Member (#4487) of Vietnam Veterans of America, I have asked that my name be placed on the 2005 Vietnam Veterans of America Ballot for the position of Region 5.

My service to and on behalf of the veterans: Locally: Columbus, Ohio's Mayor Veterans Advisory Board (Past Chairman 2001)—Operation Unity—Charter Member of VVA 670 Columbus, Ohio); at the State level: VVA-Buckeye State Council Ohio Veteran of the Year 2004, -VVA-Buckeye State Council-Secretary (5 yrs.). -VVA-Buckeye State Council's Representative to Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, past 8 years Past Chairman of



Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (2003-2004) -VVA-Buckeye State Council's Representative to VISN 10 Management Assistance Council (MAC) Vietnam Veterans Buckeye Foundation, Secretary - VVA-Buckeye State Council, Executive Director (since 2002) National as well as Internationally; Vice-Chair of -VVA-National Minority Affairs Committee (Chair-Francisco

Iverra), active member of -VVA-National ETaBO Committee (Chair-Alan Gibson), active member of -VVA- National Veterans Incarcerated Committee (Chair-John Koprowski).- in New Zealand 1998 representing Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. at Parade 98 Vietnam Remembered). I am also an Accredited Service Representative with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as well as Vietnam Veterans of America with over 7,000 hours served in that capacity, which over that same span of time has returned over \$2,000,000 to Ohio Veterans and their families.

It is with these credentials, work ethic, and your support that I will help shape the future of our organization.

## REGION 6: Steve House

I will seek re-election as Region 6 for the 2005-2006 term. I served in the Army from 1968 to 1970. I served with the 18th Military Police Brigade, 178th MP Det. in Vietnam. I affiliated with Chapter 115 in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, in 1988. I am a charter member and founder of VVA Chapter 768. I have held many positions at the Chapter level, including President. I have held many positions on the Wisconsin State Council, including Secretary, Vice President, and President. I'm now finishing my first term as Region 6

Director. I have visited all the State Councils in Region 6 and have visited some State Councils more than twice. I will continue to maintain contact with each State Council and provide assistance as needed. Some activities I am proud of from my first term were the Native American Recognition Program at Haskell Indian Nations University, serving on the VVA BOD, and getting to know many of the VVA and AVVA members. I have met with South Dakota's only VVA Chapter in Rapid City at a Vietnam Veteran Reunion in Deadwood. We're



working on a State Council for South Dakota. Top priorities as I see it for VVA are VA health care, the Veterans Initiative, membership, and community service.

Please consider voting for me and I will continue to work for VVA in the future. We might be in the last quarter, but it's the beginning of the last quarter.

## REGION 7: Allen J. Manuel

My name is Allen J. Manuel: I am running for Region 7 Director. Born in Eunice, La., and residing in Ville Platte, La. Married 47 years to my wife Norma, and have 2 sons, 4 daughters, and 15 grandchildren. Retired from Amoco Prod. since 1993. Life member of VVA, AVVA, DAV, and American Legion. Enlisted in U.S. Army in 1956 until 1966. Served one tour in Korea, 1958-59; Germany, 1961-63; Germany, 1966 until my discharge day. Attended NCO Academy, Fort Hood, Texas. Held the rank of Staff Sergeant E-6.



I am a Charter member of Chapter 632, Chapter Treasurer from 1994 to 1998; La. State Vice President, 1996 to 2000. Elected Region 7 Director in August 1999 to Present.

I am a member at large and serve as a special advisor for AVVA for 4 years. I have attended every National Convention and Leadership

Conference since 1995.

In 2001 I was inducted into the Chapel of Four Chaplains and in 2002 received VVA Achievement Medal.

I traveled with SDIT to Vietnam in March 2003 where they returned to battlefields for the first time where their fathers died. It was one of the most wonderful trips that a person could witness and find honor, peace, and understanding.

In closing, I pledge to you I will serve Region 7 with honor, dedication, and enthusiasm as I have done for the last six years.

## REGION 7: Walter Venis, Jr.

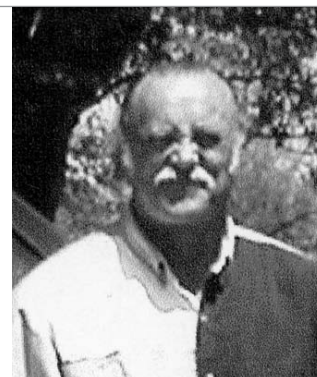
My name is Walter M. Venis, Jr. I volunteered for the draft in 1967. I was inducted into the Army September 10, 1967, and was stationed at Ft. Polk, La., for basic. My first day in-country was the first day of the Tet offensive in 1968. I served in Echo Co., 2nd and 3rd, 199th Light in II Corps in places such as Xuan Loc and the Rubber Plantation.

I was just like countless others over there, I was a poor runner and a piss poor hider and was wounded, for which I received the Purple Heart. I received an early Christmas drop, and in a few

hours time I went from the Viet Nam's jungle humidity to a typical Oklahoma winter wearing only my jungle fatigues.

I am a 100 percent P&T service connected disabled veteran. I am married for twenty-three years and we have three daughters and three grandchildren. We raise Beefalo and Quarter horses, mainly for our own use.

I am a firm believer in the VVA. The original rap groups sponsored by the VVA in the 80s were responsible for convincing me that I was alive and not dead and in hell. I believe that this organiza-



tion is a positive factor in a veteran's life, any veteran. If elected, I will continue to fight for veterans. We need to remember the principles this organization was founded on and

work together to improve the conditions and care for all veterans and their families.

**REGION 8: Donald R. McDole**

I enlisted in the Army in 1966. I served as a “grunt” with the Americal Division, 198th Light Infantry Bde., Co. B, 1st Bn., 46th Infantry from 1968 to 1969 and as a Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Military Police Detachment in Ban Me Thout, from 1971 to 1972. I was discharged from the Army in 1973.

For the past 30 years, I was employed as a Criminal Investigator and a Supervisory Criminal Investigator with a federal law enforcement agency. I retired in September 2003 with over 35 years of government service.



I joined VVA in 1997 and formed the Boise chapter in 2000. In 2001, I became the Idaho State Council President, a position that I still hold. In 2003, I was elected as the Region 8 Director.

I also served on the National Finance Committee.

I am seeking another term as the Region 8 Director, as two years has not been enough time to

accomplish my goals set in 2003. One of my goals was to establish the last State Council in Region 8 that being Wyoming. Because of on-going problems in the Region, I have been unable to get this State Council formed. That will be one of my top priorities if re-elected.

We need to work together to ensure that our elected representatives address our health care issues not only for us, but for all veterans including those now coming home.

Welcome Home and I look forward to seeing you in Reno.

**REGION 8: Robert Hampson**

The candidate did not provide a statement.

The candidate did not provide a photograph.

**REGION 9: Dick Southern**

I am a Life Member of VVA. I was elected Secretary of Chapter 391 in 1997 and still serve in that position. I was a Chapter Delegate to the California State Council from 1998 until I was elected Central District Director in June of 2000. In August 1999, I was the Chapter Delegate at the National Convention and was a California State Council Delegate to the 2001 National Convention. I held the California State Membership Affairs Chair from October 1999 until June of 2002. I was appointed to the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund in October of



2001 and was elected as Secretary of that organization. I was elected President of the California State Council in June of 2002 for two years. If elected as Region 9 Director, I will

bring more input from Region 9 to the National Board of Directors and let the members in Region

9 have a more active role in the decisions that are made. I feel we must have more communication from the Chapters to National VVA and from National VVA to the Chapters. I strongly believe that “Communication is the key” and know that I can continue to be of help to both the Membership Affairs and Public Affairs Committees of VVA. I ask for your vote and promise that you will always have an advocate for the many issues of the Vietnam Veterans of America with me as the Region 9 Director.

**REGION 9: Darrol L. Brown**

Since becoming Region 9 Director in August 2003 we have reached new heights out here. With the cooperation of the State Council Presidents we have had +/-10 monthly conference calls covering a host of issues and concerns important to VVA. We have held 2 Region Conferences and began serious work on adopting resolutions to implement from the Rockies to the Philippines.

Alternate Region 9 Director Jerry Yamamoto has been a key leader in organizing Region events, especially the Region Conferences and the 2005 Convention Golf Tournament.

**Some accomplishments as Region 9 Director:**

1. Attending State Council meetings in Arizona

- (2), California (4), Nevada (4);
- 2. Signing my name to finalize the Charter Application for Chapter 924, Salt Lake City, Utah;
- 3. Visiting Chapter 887 in the Philippine Islands;
- 4. Working with St. George, Utah, to form a 2nd Chapter in Utah; and
- 5. Helping to set up the Region 9 Talklist.

**Goals for 2005-2007:**

- 6. Visit Hawaii and Guam to re-energize their Chapters;
- 7. Visit Colorado and New Mexico State Council meetings;
- 8. Finalize the St. George, Utah, Chapter’s Application;
- 9. Start the Region 9 Website;



- 10. Continue to work on resolutions started at Region 9 Conferences; and
- 11. Set firm dates for Region 9 meetings in 2005-2007.

I thank the Members for their support the past 2

years and ask for your support and vote for the next 2 years as your voice on The National Board.

# Candidates Q&A

## 2005 Candidates for National Office Answer Questions about the Future of VVA

### NATIONAL PRESIDENT Ed Chow

**Q: Discuss the personal qualities and experience that you possess that you feel qualifies you for this position.**

**A:** I have extensive financial and management experience. My experience as a city administrator in managing a budget as large as \$65 million and having to balance needs and resources for a city of 75,000 is very applicable to VVA. My approach will be to work with staff and the Board of Directors to look for ways achieve that balance. When I was the State Director of Emergency Services, I was responsible for over 10,000 search and rescue volunteers. Again this experience is directly applicable to VVA. I have developed policies and programs for organizations and my approach is to involve the affected parties in the process to explore options, rather than just presenting a decision for approval. I relate well to people of varied backgrounds and interests and have represented VVA in a professional manner whether it is at a Chapter meeting or at a Congressional hearing.

**Q: How do you feel you can assist Vietnam Veterans America in meeting its goals, and do you have any specific goals you would like to address?**

**A:** I am a proactive manager and seek opportunities to improve the organization. I will continue outreach not only to our members, but also to other organizations that share our interests and goals. An example of this is the contacts I have made with the Coalition to Cover the Uninsured, which includes both business and labor interests, and which could be a way to promote our concerns about the inadequacy of the VA healthcare budget. VVA must actively seek out other groups that share our goals in order to extend the clout of



our advocacy program. Other organizations such as AARP may be partners on some issues and a source of new members. One of my goals is to publicize the activities of our Chapters and State Councils who serve their communities in many different ways. These will be priorities in my administration.

**Q: How do you feel you can encourage teamwork on the national level of this organization, and are you willing to be a team member?**

**A:** Team work is essential in any organization—especially in a volunteer organization. As President, I want to be part of a team that coordinates national activities and issues, and assists Chapters and State Councils. I will establish regular telephone and face-to-face meetings with the other officers to ensure communication. I will incorporate committee chairs into the team by having joint meetings with all Chairs and assigning an officer as a liaison for each committee so issues and concerns are known in a timely manner. I will seek input from the officers, national committee chairs, and State Presidents to ensure all levels of the organization are heard. I have visited 36 states and will continue outreach to all State Councils to seek their concerns and issues. I also want the other national officers to represent the VVA at Chapter and State Council events.

**Q: How can you help the states that do not receive assistance for service representation to obtain funding?**

**A:** Over the past four years I have emphasized the need to develop other sources of revenue and I have successfully solicited corporate funds. For the past two years, my assignment has been to concentrate on the Combined Federal Campaign

(CFC), the primary funding source for our Veterans Benefits Program. Representing the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund (VVAFF) at CFC activities has shown me there is a definite role for Chapters and State Councils in increasing donations. Last year, states were given the CFC contacts in their areas. They can use those contacts to reach as many potential donors as possible. Publicizing the community activities of our Chapters and State Councils will let people know who we are. We need to review all sources of revenue to determine what can be allocated to this program and continue to look for innovative ways to assist the states that currently do not have programs.

**Q: What do you think your main focus for the organization should be?**

**A:** Increasing membership must continue to be a main focus and we must ensure that all levels of VVA work as a team toward this. I will ask the committees to add to their charge the question, “How is this committee’s work going to increase membership.” I will ensure that communication from the National Office is timely and that our membership is aware of issues and activities conducted by the National Office staff, the Officers, National committees, and the National Board of Directors. VVA provides over 1.5 million volunteer hours a year; we need to showcase our organization’s activities. We can promote our issues if we partner with other organizations that share our concerns. Forming coalitions will not only help us meet our advocacy goals, but also make us more visible. By taking advantage of such visibility, we have the opportunity to enhance our membership.

## VICE-PRESIDENT John Rowan

**Q: Discuss the personal qualities and experience that you possess that you feel qualifies you for this position.**

**A:** Over 25 years I have had the privilege of serving at every level from the Chapter, through the State Council to the National Board. This has given me a broad range of experience in veterans affairs and VVA. During this time I have learned to work well with others to accomplish our common goals.

**Q: How do you feel you can assist Vietnam Veterans America in meeting its goals, and do you have any specific goals you would like to address?**

**A:** Our most immediate goal is to preserve the VA healthcare system and to insure that it has the funds to survive. I would hope to work with the State Council Presidents to organize the political action that will be necessary to turn back the attempts by this administration and Congress to

The candidate did not provide a photograph.

diminish the benefits available to veterans. If we work together for the benefit of all, we can succeed. Our actions such as the rally in D.C., our President's testimony on the Hill and the grass-roots efforts of many of our members seem to already have had some success.

**Q: How do you feel you can encourage teamwork on the national level of this organization, and are you willing to be a team member?**

**A:** Unfortunately, it is apparent that not all of our officers seem to have been willing to work together. We cannot succeed unless we pool our efforts. As Vice President, I pledge to work with the President and the other Officers in developing and implementing our strategy. As a State Council President I have been able to bring together veterans with different points of view and backgrounds to accomplish several initiatives of benefit to veterans. I would like the opportunity to utilize these skills at the national level.

**Q: How can you help the states that do not receive assistance for service representation to obtain funding?**

**A:** One source of funding for the Service Representative Program may be local or state funding, if we can convince elected officials that this program is an economic development program, as much as a social service program. A Service Rep can bring in significant amounts of federal money to their community with a minimal investment. Therefore, local grants would be beneficial to the community, as well as their veterans. This has been done with moderate success in some states, such as Alabama and New York.

**Q: What do you think your main focus for the organization should be?**

**A:** As Vice President, my main focus would be to work with the President and the other officers to implement the organization's goals, as determined by the membership in convention and put into action by the Board of Directors, during our term of office.

## VICE-PRESIDENT Wayne Reynolds

**Q: Discuss the personal qualities and experience that you possess that you feel qualifies you for this position.**

**A:** I have a variety of experiences that have prepared me to assume the role as your Vice President of VVA. I am the oldest of twelve children and learned early in life that we must be responsible for each other. The oldest child in a large family has a lifelong role with his siblings and I believe this role has made me more conscious of the needs of others and increased my concern for my fellow VVA members. I consider myself fortunate to even be a candidate for VVA Vice President.

I served in Vietnam (1968-69) in I CORPS as a Medic with the 95th Evacuation and 22nd Surgical Hospitals. After returning home, I went back to college and eventually received a Doctor of Education in Statistics from Auburn University.

I was a school superintendent for 12 years until I retired in 1996. In 2000 I returned to school and became a Registered Nurse. I work part time in the Emergency Room at a metropolitan hospital.

**Q: How do you feel you can assist Vietnam Veterans America in meeting its goals, and do you have any specific goals you would like to address?**

**A:** I am dedicated to serving each member fairly. I will be accessible and committed to addressing the needs of the membership. I am determined to see that we get the benefits we earned through our service to our country. I am decisive and understand my role and responsibilities as your Vice President. I will be diligent in working with the other Officers, the Board of Directors and the State Councils.

The delivery of promised Health Care and other veterans' benefits by the Veterans Administration



at the National, State and Local level must be improved. As a nurse I know what components are important in healthcare and can "speak the language" when addressing those who decide about the care we are provided. VVA must not falter on its commitment to current veterans and those future veterans that depend on us. We must remember our

commitment that "Never again will one generation" as we plan our strategies.

**Q: How do you feel you can encourage teamwork on the national level of this organization, and are you willing to be a team member?**

**A:** I am a team player. In my family life, my service in the military, my career in education, my offices in VVA at the Local, State and National Level, and my work as a Registered Nurse, I have emphasized the need to work as a team. We must work together in VVA. We must find ways to be

linked together and avoid our tendency to “eat our own” when we face difficulties.

A team is composed of individuals who must commit their time and abilities to the group. I have the time to serve as your Vice President since I only work part time as a Registered Nurse. I promise to remain focused on the interests of VVA. I will also remain an individual and not forget that it is the membership that selects the officers and the membership must be the first consideration of any VVA officer.

**Q: How can you help the states that do not receive assistance for service representation to obtain funding?**

**A:** The VVA Budget for 2005-2006 is 6.6 million dollars. VVA needs to increase the percentage of our budget spent on services to our members.

State Councils and Local Chapters have needs as they support themselves and their members. I have been a State Council President for 5 years, a Chapter president for 4 years, served on the

Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund for 4 years and also served as National Treasurer for 2 years. This background provides me the foundation to know the needs of the organization.

We need to share ideas for raising funds in a more formal way. As your Vice President, I would seek the role of visiting Chapters and State Councils on behalf of National VVA to assist States and Chapters with funding issues. While I was State Council President we started our own direct mail fundraising through our Foundation, increased funding through the sale of VVA license plates, and added new members through waiver of the first year's dues.

**Q: What do you think your main focus for the organization should be?**

**A:** I want to see our organization grow in numbers, lead VVA to be the catalyst to get Congress and the President to adopt our goal of increased veterans' benefits, and move our membership toward unity in which each member has increased

confidence in the National Organization. As a service-connected disabled veteran with Life memberships in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans, I have seen the need for VVA to work closely with the other Veterans Service Organizations in increasing Veterans Benefits.

We must say what we mean and mean what we say. We must be honest and fair with our members and with those we make demands upon when seeking the benefits our members have earned. I am committed to serve each member of VVA. I am a team player and the greater needs of the organization and each member will be the focus of my efforts.

## SECRETARY Bill Meeks

**Q: Discuss the personal qualities and experience that you possess that you feel qualifies you for this position.**

**A:** Life-long career managing multi-million dollar construction projects combined with leadership positions at every level of VVA have ingrained personal traits of being organized, focused, detailed-oriented, punctual, thorough and accessible at all times. The key is communication at all levels. Being a member of the VVA Talklist keeps me current and in touch with our members. As a national board member, I answer questions or concerns pertaining to VVA policy/procedures. As a team member that drafted the State Council/Chapter handbooks I became intimately familiar with the duties, responsibilities, and procedures required of VVA elected officials. As a member of the Disciplinary Task Force I have an in-depth understanding of the disciplinary code. As Membership Affairs Chair, since 2001, I have worked to make the members experience more accessible, efficient and responsive, as well as



leading the team that provided a development plan for Membership for the next 3-5 years.

**Q: How do you feel you can assist Vietnam Veterans of America in meeting its goals, and do you have any specific goals you would like to address?**

**A:** VVA's legislative agenda and policy initiatives, as presented to the Veterans' Affairs Committees of the US Senate and House of Representatives on 4-14-05 have clearly defined our mission for the next 3-4 years: fully funding Veterans health care activities. I will continue to personally communicate with the legislature within my community, my state and in Washington for their support for an adequate VA budget for healthcare that will properly care for veterans. Of critical importance to me personally will be to continue my initiatives with our elected officials at all levels to provide the fullest range of benefits and services to the new generation of veterans which includes my son (SSgt Chris Meeks, USMC), especially health care, stress and PTSD counseling, educational funding, vocational training, and job placement.

**Q: How do you feel you can encourage teamwork on**

**the national level of this organization, and are you willing to be a team member?**

**A:** Teamwork is accepting and understanding the different points of view given by the national board members on veteran issues, administrative issues and the budget process. At the same time, encouraging communication among the board members, committees and task forces between meetings to insure everyone is working on the same note pertaining to VVA programs or projects results in better effectiveness overall. It is human nature to have personal conflicts, but resolving these conflicts as soon as possible is very important and I will continue to assist those members in conflict. Whether in a leadership role or not, I believe working as a team only enhances the final product and I target always to be a team member as shown in my participation on the CSCP Handbook Committee, Disciplinary Taskforce, Chair of VVA Membership Affairs, and as a member of the VVA National Board of Directors.

**Q: How can you help the states that do not receive assistance for service representation to obtain funding?**

**A:** First, I would use a model VVA State service

# Candidates Q&A

representative program as a guide and then communicate with non-participating states on using proven methods as models for their own program. Knowing service representatives are the key to a successful program, next I would suggest reviewing the current service representatives working in the state to determine whether they are overloaded or under productive, then if more are needed, and finally to began the process of identifying, recruiting, training, retaining, and supporting state service reps. To ensure fiscal support, the states need to be aware of funding sources such as VVAF, and the need for and use of grant

writers to request funding. Finally, I would assist by writing letters of recommendation to the VA (if a hospital location is desirable) and help develop an inventory of office equipment needed to operate the office or program.

**Q: What do you think your main focus for the organization should be?**

**A:** In a nutshell: open, timely, accurate, informative communications. As Secretary, administrative tasks such as meeting minutes, memorandums, current status of motions, current status of disci-

plinary actions, testimony before Congress and representation as an officer of the corporation during other functions will be my main focus. In addition to the principal job responsibilities as Secretary, I also believe other tasks are critical to the effectiveness and efficiency of VVA, namely responsive communication with the membership, problem solving or mediation as required, personal efficiency, and performing the duties of VVA Secretary in punctual, thorough, and professional manner.

## TREASURER Alan Cook

**Q: Discuss the personal qualities and experience that you possess that you feel qualifies you for this position.**

**A:** I have been a corporate controller for twenty-five years. I have been a VVA Treasurer for a period of fourteen years holding the position as chapter, state and national treasurer. I have been on the VVA finance committee for a period of almost fifteen years.

**Q: How do you feel you can assist Vietnam Veterans America in meeting its goals, and do you have any specific goals you would like to address?**

**A:** My main focus as a leader in VVA has been financial. It is important that we maintain a revenue flow to continue our various programs. We

also need to continue our control of the expenses.

**Q: How do you feel you can encourage teamwork on the national level of this organization, and are you willing to be a team member?**

**A:** During the past two years as Treasurer, I was in contact with the officers and finance staff on almost a daily basis. We need to get more information to the Board of Directors and state council presidents.

**Q: How can you help the states that do not receive assistance for service representation to obtain funding?**

**A:** We need to help the states start from the ground to develop a VSO program. There are many states that have successful programs. We



need to share the information to start a successful program. Once we get a program off the ground then we need to look at various ways to fund the program.

**Q: What do you think your main focus for the organization should be?**

**A:** My main focus as Treasurer is the finances of the organization. I need to constantly monitor the revenues and expenses of the organization as well as seeing that our policies are being followed and enforced.