



Mike Healy Umpqua Valley

VVA Chapter 805 Newsletter

“Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another”



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July 2011

Vol 4 Issue 7

Next Chapter Meeting

Monday July 11th 7:00 PM

VA Auditorium , Building 16

Independence Day 2011



News From the Flight Deck

By Rob O'Brien

Prez Notes

VA Central Office Officials visit Roseburg

There have been some major developments in our fight to restore our VA facility.

State Legislature passes resolution to restore our hospital to full service.

On June 6th, the Oregon State House passed a resolution in support of our fight to get our Roseburg VA restored to full hospital services.

On June 13th, the State Senate passed this resolution as well, HJM-26.

Both houses of our state legislature passed this measure unanimously. When was the last time something like this happened anywhere. See, miracles can happen.

VA officials come to Roseburg

On Monday, June 20th, 3 high ranking officials from the Department of Veterans Affairs came to

Roseburg to evaluate our hospital. They met with representatives of the Douglas County Veterans Forum and other veterans organizations (American Legion, VVA, VFW, Warbirds and others) to hear our concerns. I was there representing the VVA, so I got my 2 cents in as well. They seemed to be receptive to our concerns.

I asked John Gingrich, who headed up these officials, when would a final decision be made. He said possibly in 2 weeks or so. I hope we will have some great news by our July meeting.

Veterans home coming to Roseburg

The State House also passed a resolution to build a veteran's home on the grounds of our VA Campus this last month. It needs to be passed by the State Senate and

Chapter President Tom Johnson

Independence Day is just around the corner. We celebrate the founding and Independence of our nation, and those men and women who sacrificed and gave their all that we might have freedom. Since that day we have had to fight to maintain that freedom. As Veterans we can hold our heads high knowing we have had a part in maintaining that freedom.

We now need to be prepared to carry that fight one more time. We need to continue the fight for the rights of all Veterans in Southern Oregon. Thousands of young men and women from Southern Oregon have deployed over the past ten years to battle grounds all over the globe. The day for them to really need those services is still out in the future

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CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Rick Freund

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Don Hegele

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Valerie Williams



Scott Munion

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Jack Miles

AVVA Rep



Linda Mooney



Chair Rob O'Brien

Board member



Rick Sciapiti

Flight Deck

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signed by the governor. The federal government will put up at least 65% in funding, but the rest must come from the state and/or local sources. So it will still be awhile before we see it.

The city of Roseburg has proposed a bike path to be built, with a large portion of it coming through the VA hospital campus.

The city spent over \$80,000 to do a study of this. They have over \$800,000 set aside for this project. The previous head of the facility, Susan Yeager, had approved of this, but the current interim head, Dr Max McIntosh, has rejected it. He and the veteran's organizations have expressed concerns about a public path through the campus, with skateboarders and so

forth possibly disrupting the care of the patients here, such as triggering episodes of PTSD and other illnesses.

A sore spot here is, if the city could spend nearly a million dollars on this project, why can't they come up with the money to fix the parking lot next to the cemetery, which is in a disgraceful state of disrepair - a dirt lot? The city said it would maintain this path, but if the cemetery parking lot is an example of their maintenance, well, you do the math.

The VVA National Convention

Our Board of Directors has appointed Jim Little to be our delegate to the VVA's National Convention in Reno in August. This would be a perfect opportunity to get the message about our fight to restore our VA hospital out nationwide. We think Jim would be the best man for this.

The Veterans Awareness Ride

over

Chapter Office Hours

Monday-Wed-
Thurs 10-Noon

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 805 is a tax exempt organization under the provisions of the IRS Code Section 501 (c) (19) Exemption # 3202 . The Newsletter is published monthly.

Chapter Committee Members

- ✓ Fundraiser : Chair Jack Miles, Gary Baxman
- ✓ Communication:
- ✓ Membership: Chair Gary Baxman, Stephen Dickinson, Valerie Williams
- ✓ Office Manager: Gary Baxman
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- ✓ Avenue of Flags: Fred Becker
- ✓ Southern Oregon Stand Down : Rick Freund
- ✓ Women Veterans: Chair Jane Johnson
- ✓ AVVA Secretary: Patti Sciapiti
- ✓ AVVA Treasurer: Christy Mooney

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On May 17th Terry Mooney and other motorcycle riders set out across the country. They made numerous stops along the way, dodging tornadoes and other storms, to visit veterans in hospitals across the country, many of whom rarely get any visitors at all. To see the patients faces light up when telling their stories was very gratifying.

There were about 119 riders who went on this journey. They also carried cards featuring the names and faces of POWs and those missing in action during the war, to be placed at the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C.

At one point in the Mid-West, they were asked to park their bikes along the wall of a school and help get the kids inside for safety, as a tornado was bearing down on them. They did, and the tornado luckily jumped over them and landed 4 miles away, creating destruction in its path.

Meeting highlights

We had our membership meeting June 6th, the anniversary of D-Day in WWII.

There are 2, maybe 3 new members joining our chapter. The Board signed off on Mike Ardito's application before the meeting. I also introduced Mike Parent when he came, about halfway through the meeting. I had talked with him after the Memorial Day ceremony at the VA Cemetery.

We also have Victoria Sonnenberg, who just recently moved here. She is a veteran, who was in the Woman's Army Corps. We sincerely hope she joins as well.

Jim Little spoke of the efforts to get HJM - 26, the State legislatures resolution supporting our fight to get our VA hospital restored to full services, which they did pass, along with the State Senate, unanimously.

Simone Becker wrote a paper refuting the Booz - Allen - Hamilton report, in which they recommended against restoring our hospital to full services."

Linda Mooney talked about the Vets Awareness Ride (or, The Ride) from the west coast to Washington D.C., May 17th to Memorial Day, May 30th. We also spoke about the lack of national media coverage for The Ride. She talked about what happened and what the riders did on this incredible journey. Media coverage for The Ride was 541radio.com, Carrie Booth provided day-by-day coverage, the only media to cover it.

Linda also spoke about the Traveling Wall, a replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall in D.C. coming to Sutherlin July 26 - 31. She spoke about the Field of Flags that will be there as well. There are 3 proposed sites for this, but the idea is to get one as close to the Traveling Wall as

possible.

Much of the meeting discussion was on our focus, our purpose as an organization. I mentioned that this largely depends on the level of participation by our members. There are those who volunteer at the VA. There is also Living History Days and Take A Veteran to School Days, where veterans tell their stories.

Linda suggested a local version of The Ride, where we visit patients in our own VA facility and help them where we can, few patients get visitors. We could work with other vets organizations.

Gary Baxman said that practically no one mans our office anymore. At our office, we give military surplus gear to homeless and other vets in need. We help Tom Rapant, who helps vets find work or other help.

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Fundraiser

SHERM'S THUNDERBIRD

MARKET

Saturday July 2nd

8:00 AM to 4:00 PM



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Service Position opening

The Chapter is looking for someone with computer skills who is willing to commit to becoming the Publisher of the VVA 805 Newsletter. Tenure begins in January of 2012

Contact Rick Sciapiti 541-670-1057

or email: vietnamveteran68@msn.com

Must be a member of VVA or AVVA Chapter 805

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Flight Deck News



Pat Coffey said that 2 members of our chapter went to the Vets Powwow in White City on June 4th - 5th.

There will be an election for new chapter officers in January 2012; we hope to get some new people in there, Fresh Blood as you will.

Gary suggested membership drives at malls next year.

At the Memorial Day Ceremony there were 500 programs handed out. They ran out of them as more people than anticipated attended. I was privileged to carry our colors in and post them. Patti Sciapiti carried and posted the AVVA colors.

Rick Sciapiti won the 50/50 drawing, \$40 and donated it to the Veterans assistance fund. There will be a Veterans Powwow in Grand Ronde on July 8th - 10th. Coos Bay is having a 1 day Stand Down on Sept. 9th. It will be held at the Empire Fire Hall, 189 S. Wall St. (corner of Wall St & Michigan) in Coos Bay. It will be their 2nd Annual Veterans Stand Down

Next meeting is July 11th, as the 1st Monday is the July 4th holiday. See you all then.

Operation Homefront

Caryn O'Brien

While watching KPIC news I saw a story about Operation Homefront and then after reading the story about Operation Homefront I decided to check them out.

Operation Homefront is a national organization that helps out the families of deployed service members. This 501 (c)(3) non-profit group was set up after 9/11. Most of their clients are families of E-1 to E-6, the lowest paid service members.

The key services that they provide are financial assistance, emergency food, emergency home repairs, emergency auto repairs, critical baby items (formula, food and diapers), furniture and household items, Wounded Warrior Transitional Family Housing and a lot more.

Not all states have offices, but Oregon is lucky to have 2. The main office is in Albany, headed by Chapter President David Walker and a Roseburg area contact, Rita Bennett.

Rita Bennett got involved with Operation Homefront when her husband was deployed with Charlie Company (the 1st of 2 deployments), that was 4 years ago. You can find Rita at the Winston VFW, and that is where I found her and her husband Dan, when she isn't on the road to and from Albany getting supplies and distributing them to the families.

This organization is supported by Holly Petraeus, wife of General David H. Petraeus, as well as the First Lady Michelle Obama.

Replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial



July 27-31

Sutherlin City Park

[sutherlintributewall](http://sutherlintributewall.com), site

Notes From the Prez

for most of them. The hospital in Roseburg continues to be gutted. As Vietnam Veterans we must fight to maintain this hospital for future generations. I know we have been the ugly warriors of South East Asia and have had to fight for every benefit we have, but by the time the 18 to 40 year olds of today reach our age, the facilities for their deserved medical needs may be another welfare facility. The fate of many excess VA Facilities these days is to be turned over to a developer for a \$1 and that buys them a 75 year lease.

“NEVER AGAIN WILL ANOTHER GENERATION BE FORGOTTEN”

The Vietnam Veterans of Southern Oregon may have to rise up to make a statement that the bureaucrats in Washington DC can understand. I urge you all to keep an eye on your email for a warning order should it come down to that.

The VVA National Conference is up coming in August. It is being held in Reno at the Silver Legacy. The Conference will be from August 15th through August 21st. The board of Directors Voted to send Jim Little as one of our two delegates to Reno. The State Council is making enough funding available to send one delegate. Jane and I will be going as well. If you have anything you would like us to do at the National Conference, please let us know. I feel this will be an opportunity for us to send a message to National about the plight of the health care for the Veterans in Southern Oregon.

We have a fundraiser at Sherm's on Saturday July 2nd. I will be there from 10 to noon, so stop by and say hello. We still have a good supply of pins and patches for you to look at and try not to buy.

I know Rick has a lot to get in the news letter this month, so I will close this out. Thank you all for your support. Tom Johnson



Department of Veterans Affairs Chief of Staff John Gingrich (center) speaks to Douglas County Veteran Leadership at the VARHS on Monday June 20th. Gingrich was accompanied by Assistant Secretary Joan Mooney (L) and Deputy Under-Secretary for Health and Operations and Management William Schoenhard.

Fourth of July Veterans Dinner 7 Feathers Casino



By reservation and
invitation only