

Region 6 Director Report

The last few months, the elections and communicating with the States in the Region have been the main focus. The 2020 election process has completed for the Chapter and State Representatives as of the end of September. The results show we are in need of more members to come forward to help represent their areas. This is especially important when it comes to voting on the topics that will guide the future of the organization. If you have interest in becoming a representative in your chapter or state, please feel free to contact me for the information to start the process (tallford3@yahoo.com). Unfortunately, I have also been working through having a heart procedure that continues to be ongoing.

After our Board of Directors meeting in July, I reviewed the Board of Director meeting for the VVA that also took place. Our scheduled leadership conference was cancelled due to the covid 19 issues we are all facing. You can go to the VVA.Org website and listen to this meeting as well. During their meeting, I found it very interesting to hear about the new organization that has been getting formed for the past three years. The Veterans Voice of America (VVA) has been getting everything in place to be operating. There continues to be discussion on whether this new organization may become the legacy of our Vietnam Veterans of America. This is a subject we will need to pay attention to in the upcoming months.

On August 8, 2020, I attended the "Open House" at Camp Victory (www.campvictorywi.com) in Willard, WI. Camp Victory is a 501C (3) organization. Their mission is to facilitate in the emotional healing of the veterans. The camp's environment and activities promote fellowship, community and new relationships. They currently hold three separate veteran retreats for men and women. There is hunting, fishing, camping and PTSD related activities held. They hold 2-4 day veteran group archery hunts for turkey and deer. This property has over four miles of easy access roads/trails. The open house held raffles and silent auctions during the day. The funds created throughout the day exceeded \$13,000.00.

August 15, 2020 was the Highground's (www.thehighground.us) "Ride to Remember" event. Motorcycle enthusiasts get together and take rides around the countryside. This is an annual fundraiser to help continue the mission of Honor, Educate and Heal. The event is held to remember our POW's, MIA's and KIA's. The riders rose over \$7,000.00 and a raffle was also held that raised an additional \$3,000.00. The event was a success, even with the lower attendance, due to covid 19.

In September, I participated in the "Suicide Awareness Walk" held at our local Friendship Church. I walked in memory of the 20 veterans a day we lose to suicide. The number is changing slightly here and there as we move forward, but even losing one a day is too much. This event had multiple speakers on hand. A local County Sheriff spoke on the mental health issues that law enforcement officers receive calls on, and the many restrictions they are encountering while trying to help a person at risk. I have spoken to this sheriff in the past about getting veterans on the swat teams for this very reason. A veteran at risk is more willing to speak to another veteran, when in a crisis. This can de-escalate a very serious situation for someone in need of help.

October 3rd, I took part in the Highground Vietnam Veteran Reunion. I helped with a few different areas for the day's activity. There were two groups of legacy stone placements held at separate times. Hundreds of attendees were present throughout the day. A UH-1H Huey was brought in on a trailer from VVA Chapter 331 that anyone could climb up into. There was a second privately owned Huey that flew in for a few hours. This chopper was built in 1962 and flew missions in Vietnam in 1967-68. One activity I was involved with, was securing the landing zone. For some, the sights and sounds of the Huey

can bring back strong feelings of their time in the service. Even as a non-veteran, I have come to enjoy the sights and sounds of this magnificent bird coming in from afar, and landing. We were surprised with a couple fighter jets that were on maneuvers, up in the clouds, high above us in the area. They decided to bring their aerial display down to us at the event. As they topped the trees, doing criss-cross maneuvers, you could definitely tell the large crowd was enjoying their attendance. Many of the veterans gathered during the day for a luncheon that was held in their honor.

I am hopeful that our months ahead will give us the ability to have more activity in our local areas. We have had a year that will be remembered for some time.

Remember that our freedoms we enjoy are served for us, daily by our veterans.

Stay Safe and God Bless

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