



Vietnam Veterans Of America Chapter One

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MAY 2017



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING MAY 10, 2017

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors took place. Directors present included President Andy Megrath, Secretary Jack Crowther, and Dick Doyle.

Richard Reed of Leicester, who has agreed to serve as treasurer, also attended.

The secretary's report was approved. Later in the meeting, however, a small correction was made. It was noted that in the April minutes, a mention of a postage stamp from Oct. 17, 1997, was a memento of a visit of The Moving Wall to Enosburg, Vt. in 1997. The minutes had not made that clear. The Moving Wall's visit to Rutland was in 1991.

Andy Megrath reported that there was a total of \$63,804.98 in all our accounts. The report was approved unanimously.

In accordance with action at the April meeting, all of the chapter's financial dealings will be with the Heritage Family Credit Union. In the days following the meeting, we began the process of establishing a credit card account with Heritage. Our previous card had been with Chase Bank.

Mention was made of the annual June cookout at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington, sponsored by the VVA State Council. The cookout will be Saturday, June 17. Those wishing to attend and help out are asked to be there by 10 a.m.

Jack Crowther moved to accept the proposal of Don Ramey, a sculptor from West Rutland, to replace the marble carving of the prone soldier at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. As discussed in previous newsletters, the new carving would replace the original that was begun by John Reno and completed by Ramey for the dedication of the memorial in 2000.

The problem with the original is that the stone was of poor quality to begin with. One of the feet has had to be glued back in place. Another crack from below and smaller cracks threaten the overall sculpture. As Chapter 1 has tried to anticipate a time when we will no longer exist, we decided that replacing the sculpture with a new one carved from a better grade of marble would ensure the centerpiece of the memorial would be secure for years to come.

The motion to sign the agreement with Don Ramey was seconded by Dick Doyle and approved unanimously. The total cost is \$9,100, including \$6,100 for the stone and \$3,000 for Ramey's labor, offered at a 30 percent discount. Completion is expected by the end of September and promised in time for Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

Don Ramey has said it may not be necessary to remove the old sculpture in order to carve the new one, as the new one won't be an exact replica. He has thought about raising the head slightly and making small changes to improve the drainage of water from the carving. There was some discussion of other changes Don might make in the sculpture while maintaining the overall theme of a prone soldier. Don has raised the issue of changing the headgear from a helmet to a hat, or having no headgear and simply showing a bare head.

We discussed this question and agreed to have members weigh in before the June meeting, about the time Don is expected to start work. Following the meeting, Jack Crowther talked to Ramey, who agreed to come to the June meeting with sketches showing several treatments of the head, with or without headgear. The most likely choices seem to be 1) bare head, 2) helmet, as with the current sculpture, and 3) "boonie hat," a soft-brim hat commonly used in daily duty in Vietnam. The baseball style of hat is probably out of the question because its thin projection would pose a risk of breaking.

Although the price for the new sculpture does not include removal of the old sculpture and placement of the new one, Andy Megrath has contacts that he thinks will be willing to donate those services.

Also up for discussion was what to do with the old sculpture, which may suffer further damage on removal. One option would be to convert it into chips to be given out at the dedication to the new sculpture. When the memorial was dedicated in 2000, marble chips from the sculpture were offered as souvenirs.

Members who have thoughts on the question of the hat-or-helmet or no-headgear question and what to do with the old statue may get in touch with the chapter before the June 14 meeting or attend the meeting. You may contact Andy Megrath at vtvogman@gmail.com or write to the chapter at VVA Chapter 1, 15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701

In other business, Brian Perry sent us a request that his brother, Thomas G. Perry Jr., who died in 1990, have his name added to the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. As Brian noted in a letter, Tom grew up in Fair Haven and joined the Army in 1968. He served as an air traffic controller at a firebase in Vietnam. As Brian recounted, the VA determined that Tom's death was related to his service in Vietnam. Brian Perry sent his brother's DD 214 form, establishing his eligibility for inclusion on the memorial.

We had a short discussion about membership on the Board of Directors. Jack Crowther had discussed this with Andy Megrath. Jack said he agreed with Andy that at nine members, the board was large enough but that he felt that something needed to be done to increase participation. We will look for someone who is interested in serving with an eye to increasing involvement and attendance.

Jack reported that the Rutland Board of Aldermen has still not acted on Chapter 1's request to set up a fiduciary trust to pay for maintenance of the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Jack has

spoken to the new city attorney, Matt Bloomer, who is aware of the need to review the outline of the trust and make a recommendation to the board.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, secretary

**THE CHAPTER WILL HOLD ITS NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14,
AT 6 P.M. AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND.
A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL PRECEDE THE REGULAR MEETING.**