



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vietnamvetschapter1.org

MAY 2025



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING MAY 7, 2025

Approximately 22 persons attended, about eight on Zoom and the others in person. Great turnout!

A nominal meeting of the Board of Directors was held; no business was transacted.

The minutes of the April meeting were accepted as printed in the newsletter.

President Bill Ellwood noted the recent passing of the Rev. Pete Hults, our chaplain. "Pastor Pete," a career Navy corpsman and Vietnam veteran, died of cancer on April 27. The chapter approved a \$100 contribution to Pete's church, the United Church of West Rutland

Vice President Larry Gold reported on an April 30 commemoration at the State House in Montpelier of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. Four people represented the chapter. Following the ceremonial reading of a resolution, legislators applauded the veterans.

Mike Murphy, working on recruitment of VVA "orphan" members, i.e., those without a home chapter due to chapter closings, reported that 238 VVA members in Vermont fell into that category. They were contacted and offered the chance to transfer to either Chapter 1 or the Bennington or St. Albans chapters, the three remaining in Vermont. So far, 34 have filed paperwork to transfer to Chapter 1. Added to the chapter's approximately 130 current members, we should eventually have between 160 to 170 members, an all-time high.

Treasurer Richard Reed reported the total in our bank accounts. The report was unanimously approved.

Members of the chapter and members of the Rutland Historical Society have begun receiving mailed copies of the Historical Society spring Quarterly, featuring a story of Chapter 1, including history, interviews, current activities, future plans, and many pictures. The story was written by Janelle Faignant, who has become an AVVA member, and edited by Jack Crowther, Chapter 1 secretary.

Richard Gallo, a veterans outreach specialist who assists Vermont veterans with a variety of unmet needs, has offered to conduct a ceremony presenting Vietnam War Commemoration pins at our June 14 banquet to Vietnam era veterans who may not have already received them. (A number of chapter members received the pins in March of last year in a ceremony conducted by the Daughters of the American Revolution.) Anyone eligible, by virtue of having served in the military during the Vietnam War, who has yet to receive the pin should contact Richard at richard.d.gallo.ctr@mail.mil or call him at 802-338-4323. He is hoping to obtain some basic biographical information from you for the presentation ceremony.



Military honors for the Rev. Pete Hults, chaplain of Chapter 1, were provided at the family plot of his wife, Jean (at left) on May 3 in Evergreen Cemetery in Rutland. The Revs. John Weatherhogg and Dr. Terrence O'Neill (at right) presided at "Pastor Pete's" services.

Richard mentioned that his outreach program may end on June 28, certainly a loss for Chapter 1, which has relied on him many times for evaluating requests for assistance from veterans.

Brandon is holding a July 4 parade. Dave Currier, who drove his sports car in the Loyalty Day Parade with Chapter 1 signage, expressed interest in taking part. Anyone with a suitable vehicle or wishing to march should contact Bill Ellwood, via the chapter's email, vietvetschapter1@gmail.com. With sufficient interest we'll file an application to join the parade.

Jack Crowther moved and Tim Lonergan seconded a motion for the chapter to allocate \$500 to pay for a supper at the Veterans Town Hall in November at the Godnick Center in Rutland. The chapter did this last year. At the Town Hall veterans are invited to relate their experiences in the service. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Reed reminds members there will be a ceremony on Friday, May 30, the "traditional Memorial Day," starting at 3 pm at the Vermont Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Randolph. The official federal holiday is Monday, May 26.

John Pisanelli, a Chapter 1 member and commander of VFW Post 648, where Chapter 1 has its office, spoke briefly about requirements for joining the VFW, which include foreign military service of various kinds. Chapter 1 members who qualify are encouraged to join the VFW to show support for our "landlord." Application forms are available at the VFW.

President Bill Ellwood said we have 21 reservations so far for our June 14 Banquet at the Franklin Center. The banquet will begin about 5 p.m. at the Franklin Center and will follow the VVA Region 1 Conference at the VFW.

As giveaways for the banquet, we've approved expenditures for both a coffee mug with the Chapter 1 logo and a "challenge coin" with the chapter logo on one side and the VVA motto, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another," on the other side. The mugs, to be purchased locally, will cost about \$800 for 150. The coins will cost about \$775 for 200. Leftovers will be available for new members or special situations as warranted.

Reminder: We need to give our banquet host, Noel's catering, a headcount for the June 14 Banquet. Chapter 1 members and associate (AVVA) members are invited with one guest to attend for free. As soon as convenient, please let the chapter know if you and a guest plan to attend the June 14 banquet. Email us at vietnamvetschapter1@gmail.com. Lacking internet, you may call Secretary Jack Crowther at 802-775-1182 or mail Chapter 1 VVA, 15 Wales St., Rutland, VT 05701. Note: Officers and board members are welcome to invite special guests — in addition to their spouses or "plus ones" — to the banquet at no cost. Just let Bill Ellwood or Jack Crowther know!

We also need a head count for the Region 1 Conference, which runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. earlier in the day of June 14 at the VFW. The conference is being hosted by Chapter 1, with space graciously provided by VFW Post 648.

The Region 1 Conference is a regular gathering of VVA chapters in New England. The agenda will include discussion of resolutions to be brought before the VVA National Convention in August, as well as other issues facing the organization.

Members and associates who wish to attend the Region 1 Conference should notify the chapter through the same means as above.



Participants in the Chapter 1 Loyalty Day Parade May 4 in Rutland included, from left, Tim Lonergan, Mark Truhan, Norm Flanders, Dave Potter, Jack Crowther, Dave Currier, Andy Megrath, and Larry Gold. Bill Ellwood took the photo.

It was noted that two television stations have local offices. Jack Crowther will do some press publicity for the banquet. Jack plans to perform a song he wrote about Chapter 1 but is looking for some supporting singers/musicians. Larry Gold plans to have some 1960s era music as background.

The chapter is still looking for members to join Dick Doyle in representing the chapter at the VVA National Convention Aug. 5 to 9 in New Orleans. It will be an important meeting in which the eventual dissolution of VVA will be considered. The chapter will pay the costs to attend.

VVA State President Perry Melvin, Bob Wheeler and Richard Reed laid a wreath at the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph May 2 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of removal of U.S. troops from Vietnam and to offer a thank-you to those who served.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Crowther, Secretary

The next chapter meeting will be Wednesday, June 11, at 4 p.m., downstairs at the VFW and by Zoom.