

# UPDATES

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Enewsletter

Volume 5 Issue 4

July 2010

## EDITORS COMMENTS

Deadlines have come and gone, hours of hard work has been performed by many and the time draws near. In less than one month we will be gathered in Orlando making decisions for this organization's future. The membership's voice will be heard in the form of delegate votes on bylaws, policy/procedures and election of the board of directors.

There will be games to help raise funds for the scholarship program on Tuesday, August 10, 2010 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Winners will be announced by the registration area at 6:00 pm along with prize presentations. Look forward to everyone supporting the scholarship fund and having a good time doing it.

We have an extremely full schedule for this biennial meeting and encourage all delegates to read their material prior to the start of the meeting. This will give you a chance to become familiar with items that are on the agenda and help move things along smoothly. Seek out your Regional Director if you need clarifications or have questions regarding the business at hand.

I also encourage both the delegates and the attendees to spend time together prior to the meeting. This is a great opportunity to meet members and widen your network of fellow members that are making a difference for our veterans and their families. Share ideas and projects

that your local chapters are doing and take some ideas back to your area from around the country.

On a local note, there will be information in your registration bags about what to do during your free time in Orlando. Should you have any questions or need assistance, look for the Florida AVVA members, we will all have on turquoise t-shirts on registration day (trust me you won't be able to miss us). And don't forget to bring you colorful clothes, as that is the norm for Florida!

Suzanne Blohm-Weber  
Updates Committee Chair/Editor

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of  
America, Inc.  
8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 585-4000

### Officers

President: Elaine Simmons  
esimmons@avva.org

Vice President: Mary Yeomans  
myeomans@avva.org

Secretary: Patsy Varnell  
pvarnell@avva.org

Treasurer: Bill Williams  
bwilliams@avva.org

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The Election Committee would like to inform you that the Candidate/ Delegate Registrations for the election process of the 2010 Biennial Meeting has ended as of Saturday July 10, 2010 11:59 PM PST.

We have:

- 29 - registered and verified Delegates
- 10 - registered and verified Alternate Delegates
- 11 - registered and verified Candidates seeking the office of their respective Regions
- 07 - registered and verified Candidates seeking Officer positions

A Candidate Forum is planned for:

- August 12, 2010
- 2:00 PM Room to be determined
- Each candidate will be allotted 3 minutes
- Candidates that have opposition will be the only ones speaking during the forum (this is in the interest of time)
- We will have a time-keeper

Elections are planned for:

- August 12, 2010
- 3:00 PM Room to be determined

We will have 2 tellers from the Orlando League of Women Voters.

Time approximate: 1 hour 45 minutes.

- Candidate Forum - 30 minutes
- Explain voting process
- Elections - 30-45 minutes at the most

One candidate has been added since our last posting.

- Donna Anderson Region 1 Director Connecticut Unopposed

It is the Elections Committee hope that this will be a positive experience for all involved.

We look forward to seeing you in Orlando. Travel safely.

AVVA National Election Committee

Elayne Mackey, Suzie Meeks and Linda Pavkovich

## **2010 Biennial Meeting *TENTATIVE* Agenda**

From Elaine Simmons on July 6, 2010 via email.

The final agenda will not be available for at least another week.

However, the sequence of events will be very close to the following:

### **Tuesday, August 10, 2010**

Games, Registration, etc.

### **Wednesday, August 11, 2010**

Opening Ceremonies with VVA

Lunch (On your own)

Opening of Biennial Meeting

Guest Speaker Gold Star Mothers Representative

Rules Committee

Roll Call of States

By-Laws (this is expected to take the rest of the day)

### **Thursday, August 12, 2010**

By-Laws

Policies and Procedures (IF TIME PERMITS)

Luncheon

Elections

### **Friday, August 13, 2010**

New Board Meeting



## Support The Troops Inc.

**WESLEY CHAPEL, Florida - Every morning at 4 a.m., while the world outside sleeps, Bob Williams is inside a warehouse packaging boxes.**

**It's quiet. He sips Starbucks coffee as he carefully weighs and labels each parcel.**

**On the other side of the world, American soldiers are getting ready for bed. Some of them e-mail Williams.**



### About Bob Williams

Williams, 60, was a sailor in the 1960s. One of his motivations for sending packages to service members is his memory. "I sure didn't like the way we were treated when we got home," he said. His sons now handle the two successful businesses he once owned so he spends his time working for the troops. He sends about 215 boxes of stuff each week to some 200 combat-zone bases from his warehouse near Tampa, Florida. He arrives at the warehouse at 3 a.m. most days to start reading his e-mails.

When Bob Williams returned from Vietnam, he didn't feel the warmth of his fellow Americans. He vowed that if he ever had the means, he would make sure future soldiers were not treated the way he was.

"It's the least I can do to try and make things a little bit better for them," Williams said.

Williams does now have the means, and he has the organization too. It's called 'Support Our Troops' and is based in Wesley Chapel. He has a warehouse full of food, hygiene products, refrigerators, coffee makers, toys and anything else soldiers have requested.

We sometimes have as much as 40,000 lbs. of items to ship. At about \$1.00 a pound, it costs nearly \$40,000.00 just in postage fees to get these items where they need to be.



## Thank you for your program to send us goodies while we are away from home

Hi Mr. Williams,

I received a bag of bacon cheddar flavored hot fries the other day and they reminded me of home. Thank you for your program to send us goodies while we are away from home and our families. It was a welcomed respite from daily deployed life. Such a small gesture but a great impact. I've been here about a month and I started getting really homesick the second week. Your donation is much appreciated!

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### Donate by Mail

#### Support The Troops Inc.

Attn: Bob Williams  
P.O. Box 7560  
Wesley Chapel, FL, 33544

#### Or you can visit us.

29807 SR 54  
Wesley Chapel, FL 33543

#### Phone:

1 (800) 367-3591

#### Website:

[ourtroopsonline.com](http://ourtroopsonline.com)



ABC July 4, 2010 interview

[http://www.abcactionnews.com/dpp/news/region\\_pasco/wesley\\_chapel/shipping-costs-keep-food%2Chygiene-products-from-troops-](http://www.abcactionnews.com/dpp/news/region_pasco/wesley_chapel/shipping-costs-keep-food%2Chygiene-products-from-troops-)

Hi Bob!

I just wanted to say thank you to Joe, Ski, Ken, and Rachel. We really appreciate the two boxes we received today. I'm making sure this reaches as many Air Force and Army guys here. The books, the razors, the toothpaste, the sweets, the cigars they were all very appreciated. But the thing that really stands out is the personal note you sent. I cut it off the box and put it on top my room door. I'll see it every day when I go out to face the daunting challenge that is Iraq. Your efforts have a ripple affect I think. Camp Taji is a pretty good size place, but as we drawdown, there are less support facilities. But with your help, we are able to bring a smile to a lot of people. I really think it's more than just getting some shampoo, it's like when I was in Houston IAP before I left for my deployment. Me and my coworker were getting some breakfast and a civilian came up and quietly paid for both of us. We both thanked him and it really made us feel good. I mean, the food was great, but it was that they were proud of our service and knowing that they have our back. I know that kindness has stayed with me even though I'm far from home. Like I said, receiving shaving cream is nice, but it's the thought that really boosts us. I've attached a picture of the message you sent (on my door). In addition to us, we work with about 50 other advisors. I've been passing out the snacks to as many Soldiers and Airmen I can. Thank you again.

TSgt Erick

## About SUPPORT THE TROOPS, INC and Our Troops Online.com

Bob Williams started Our Troops Online out of his respect for what our U.S. troops do to protect our freedom. He is a retired owner of two successful businesses which his sons now run, but he isn't sitting on the beach sipping margaritas....

Bob Williams goes to his warehouse early in the morning while most of the country sleeps, to read through the many emails that he receives from the troops. Many of the items requested are simply every-day items which we are used to and accustomed to; items such as shoe-sole inserts, coffee, tea, cigars, and personal hygiene items. So why is Bob working so hard to supply the troops with these items?

Think about how easy it is to supply ourselves with items that we need here in the states via Wal Mart, local gas stations, perhaps Home Depot or various other retail chains conveniently located within only a few miles of where we are when the realization hits that we need something. The troops stationed at the ends of the earth, do not have an ounce of convenience when it comes to getting something they need in a timely manner.

Bob has visited bases where troops are stationed in these remote and dangerous places. On his visit he noticed there were things missing that the troops needed to do their jobs, or at least things that would help to make their jobs a little easier, like spotlights, flashlights, red dot scopes, and knives.

It is not just the lack of places to buy these items that hinders acquisition, but it's the sheer distance to the nearest store from some of these bases.

From one soldier's letter: "We are located 17 kilometers west of [Forward Operating Base] Salerno, it takes me 40 minutes to get there one way and requires a combat convoy. We do not have a store (or) a means to buy the items you have sent. Our [Afghan army] friends enjoy the coffee since all they (used to) drink is tea."

Here in the States we don't have to risk our lives to send items to the troops overseas, but in many cases they risk theirs to acquire them by their own means.

We can move about freely in our own nation and we don't even think about it, while those protecting our freedom struggle to receive items they need. Services like Bob Williams' Our Troops Online, not only help to encourage our troops and thank them for our freedom while bringing a bit of home to them, but this service has also literally saved some of the brave men and women's lives.

Bob's gifts of pens and stuffed animals have been given to children who then became good intelligence sources. One soldier told him in an email that an Iraqi girl who received a Beanie Baby later kept Marines from driving over a roadside bomb.

"She saved the lives of six Marines," Williams said. "Things like that you don't think of. This means a lot to me."

# Three Ways to receive information from AVVA

## National Information Distribution List (NIDL)

In an effort to get National information out to the membership as quickly, efficiently, and economically as possible, AVVA implemented a National Information Distribution List as of October, 2008. It is our hope that all members who have e-mail capabilities will join the NIDL. The NIDL database is being maintained and updated regularly. People who want to join that list, should send me an e-mail requesting that they be added.

They need to give me their:

- A) First and last name
- B.) Mailing address, including city, state, and zip
- C) Telephone numbers, including area code,
- D) Membership number and whether they are a Life Member or not
- E.) Their e-mail address

The members are asked to provide this information for a variety of reasons:

1. So we know who we are adding to the NIDL
2. We have alternate methods of contacting them if their e-mail start bouncing back
3. We can periodically check to see if they have renewed their members and qualify to be on the list
4. We need this list of their e-mail address so we can send them information. Very few members have their e-mail address on the membership database.

The NIDL is confidential and is neither sold nor shared. Thank you for your participation

Patsy Varnell, AVVA National Secretary  
pvarnell@avva.org

## UPDATES

Sign up to receive this enewsletter by  
sending your email address to:

1. avvaupdates@yahoo.com
2. Membership at national
3. State Representative/President
4. Regional Director

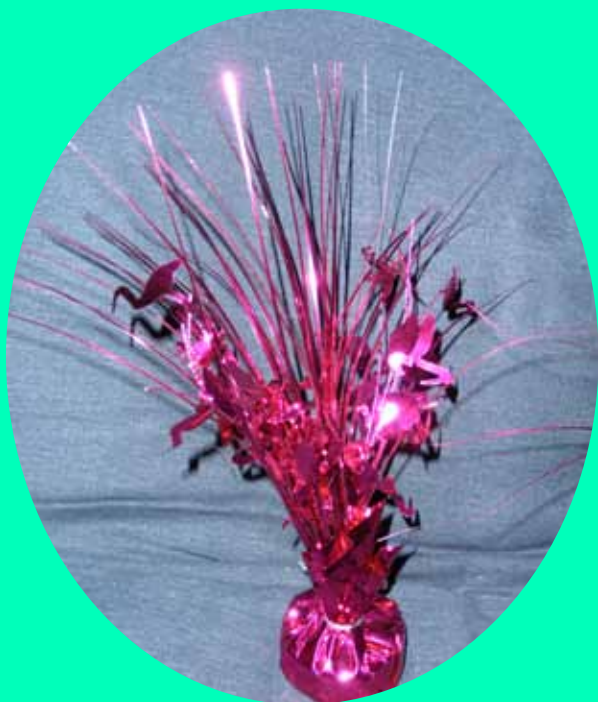
## Join the AVVA Talklist!

Send an email to:

southern@lodelink.com

and request to be put on the talklist

Look for this marker!



They will be located at the gaming stations for both the Poker Walk and the Hula Hoop Contest.

Tuesday, August 10, 2010  
from 1 PM to 5 PM  
at the registration area there will be sign up stations for the games and a list of prizes that you may win.  
See any AVVA Regional Director for assistance.

## UPDATES DEADLINES

From April 2010 to September 2010 there will be an issue sent out the first of every month. Feel free to submit at any time, it will be published in the next issue.

Please send submissions and email changes or requests to:

[avvaupdates@yahoo.com](mailto:avvaupdates@yahoo.com)

All submissions will be considered, screened for content and edited if necessary. "Letters to the Editor" are strictly the opinions of the author and not that of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America. All chapter, state and regional reports are the responsibility of the writer and must contain name and contact information in order to be published. Content must be verifiable, accurate and appropriate for this newsletter. Thanks for your support.

*Together  
Always*