

Connie E. Jones

I am running for the position of  
Region 3 Deputy Director.



I became a member of AVVA in July 2006; and, I became a Life Member in February 2009. In 2007, I was elected to the position of AVVA Chapter Representative affiliated with VVA Chapter 860 in Beckley and stepped down from that position in 2016. During my 10 years as Chapter Representative I was involved with the following projects:

1. "Run for the Wall" Patriot Program at Midland Trail High School. This program provides lunch for the Motorcycle Riders heading for "Rolling Thunder" who pass through West Virginia before Memorial Day.
2. Worked with my local VA Hospital on many projects to honor and recognize veterans and staff.
3. Helped with a project to award the VA Hospital "Woman of the Year" to one of our many deserving volunteers.
4. Helped with all VVA Chapter 860 Fund Raisers and events during each year.

I was elected in June 2009 as AVVA West Virginia State Representative; and, in February 2011, West Virginia became the 13<sup>th</sup> Incorporated State. I have served as the State President since 2011. AVVA in West Virginia has a great working relationship with the WV VVA State Council. We have AVVA programs and projects as well as numerous projects and programs that the VVA and AVVA have developed together. During my tenure as President of the West Virginia AVVA Association, I have been working on the following projects:

1. Operation Sweet Dreams is a project that we have developed with the help both financially and in man-power hours with the WVVA. We have been able to provide a "Build-A-Bear" Teddy Bear with a voice recorder implanted to every child of a member of the military who has been deployed from West Virginia. These Bears are given out at the family Deployment gathering a few days before the military is sent overseas. This gives the deploying parent a chance to record a message for their child that is then placed in their bear. This is a very emotional and important project.
2. It has been my policy to attend any election for the AVVA Chapter Representative which I have been invited to attend to either help with the election, swear in the officers (we have one incorporated Chapter) or the Chapter Representative.
3. We have a very active involvement with the West Virginia National Guard and it has been a wonderful opportunity to work with the Guard on the following:
  - a. Gold Star Family Weekends at Camp Dawson, West Virginia. This project on the last weekend in September included serving meals and helping with activities for the families of our most recent fallen heroes.

- b. Helped U.S. Senator Manchin and General Hoyer of the WV National Guard arrange and sponsor a "Motorcycle Run" to raise money for the Gold Star Families projects in our state.
- c. Attended every Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting in West Virginia and helped with serving refreshments.
- d. Currently West Virginia AVVA, with our partners, the WV VVA State Council, has developed an AVVA Service Officers Program and we have been successful in developing a program that will continue to serve veterans and their families for many years to come.

As some may know and some may not know, in June of 2016, West Virginia was hit by heavy rain and flooding that destroyed lives in the central part of our state. Fayette County, where I live, and all of the surrounding counties suffered devastation that was sudden and tragic. My husband and I along with family members, were able to reopen an old, abandon, High School building and turn it into the main Distribution Center for all eight (8) counties that were affected by the floods.

I continue to work with the WV National Guard, FEMA, VOAD, the Fayette County Commission, Fayette County 911, Emergency Management and the WV United Way on the "Flood of 2016". Our goal for the future is to stream-line response on future disasters whether it is a flood, snowstorm, power outage, fire, or any other disaster in our county or state. A part of my current efforts is to stay in contact with people who are still displaced and identify their current needs.

I have also recently become involved with a program sponsored by local churches and local Football leagues to provide "Weekend Backpacks" for low income children in elementary, middle and high schools. These Backpacks will provide 3 meals and 3 snacks a day on weekends that can either be eaten uncooked or heated in a microwave. Teachers identify which of their students come to school on Monday hungry because of situations at home beyond their control.

In April 2019, I will be celebrating our 52<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with my Vietnam Veteran, John. We have 2 children, 6 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Thank You,

Connie Jones