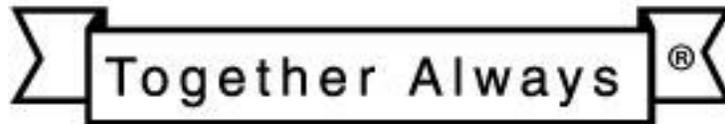


***Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.***

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**AMERICA**



***AVVA OFFICERS 2015-2017***

*President ~ Sharon Hobbs*

*Vice President ~ Elayne Mackey*

*Secretary ~ Joanna Henshaw*

*Treasurer ~ Kathy Andras*

***BOARD of DIRECTORS***

*Region I ~ Vacant*

*Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut*

*Region II ~ Nancy Rekowski*

*New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware*

*Region III ~ Beverly Pounds*

*West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland,  
District of Columbia*

*Region IV ~ Jeri Wallis*

*Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands*

*Region V ~ Cecilia Essenmacher*

*Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois*

*Region VI ~ Diane Nicholson*

*Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wisconsin*

*Region VII ~ Percilla Newbury*

*Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma*

*Region VIII ~ John Birch*

*Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alaska*

*Region IX ~ Casey Farrell*

*Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah, Guam, Philippines*

## **AVVA MISSION STATEMENT**

***To provide support to Veterans and their families through programs, projects, and education.***

## **AVVA VISION STATEMENT**

***To create a better everyday life for Veterans and their families.***

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Our strategic plan represents a shared vision of what Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America seeks to become and the details of the needed strategies to accomplish Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America's vision of its future.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America?**

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) are a group of people who are dedicated to advancing the work of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., (VVA) through cooperative projects and/or programs, to facilitate, enhance and improve communication with our members and the general public, and to continue legislative efforts to ensure the rights of, and benefits for, all veterans and their families. AVVA is dedicated to the aggressive advancement of realistic goals with integrity and in the spirit of unity that reflect its commitment to Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., all veterans, their families, and communities.

### **Who may be a member of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America?**

Any person who holds true the purposes of AVVA regardless of their age, race or creed may apply for membership. Persons who qualify for membership in Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. are accepted as non-voting members.

### **When did Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America begin?**

- AVVA was incorporated in January 1999.
- AVVA is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization.
- AVVA is a tax-exempt organization.

### **Where did Associates originate?**

The Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. began as a group of members within Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. (VVA). In 1999, it was determined that large numbers of non-veteran members within a Veterans organization did not meet the criteria of a 501(c)(19). Thus the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. was established as an independent membership and service organization. VVA (Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.) pledged its support to this adjunct organization.

- The logo for VVA is copyrighted. Since the AVVA logo is a derivative of it, a special license and memorandum of agreement between VVA and AVVA is required for its use. In 2015, the phrase “Together Always” was copyrighted and now belongs to AVVA.
- Due to this special license agreement that exists between the two organizations that permits AVVA to use the derivatives of the VVA copyrighted logo and name, anyone who wishes to use the name or logo for monetary gain must first get permission to do so from National AVVA.

### **How is Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America structured?**

- AVVA membership is divided into nine (9) regions. (Those regions are listed on page 1.)
- In each region are States, Chapters, and At-Large members.
- Unlike VVA, AVVA members have the choice of incorporating or remaining unincorporated at the State and Chapter levels.
- One of the responsibilities of being incorporated is to be fiscally accountable for filing all the required documents to the National organization, State in which the incorporation is filed, and to the IRS.
- An AVVA incorporated chapter must maintain a minimum number of members.
- An AVVA incorporated chapter may be affiliated with a VVA chapter or they may be a free-standing incorporated chapter.
- AVVA members may be affiliated with a chartered VVA Chapter and remain unincorporated, or they may choose to remain At-Large, with no Chapter affiliation.

### **How is Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America management selected?**

- At the time the Associates moved into AVVA, Inc. all positions were appointed.
- The title “Liaison” was changed to: Regional Director, State Representative, and Chapter Representative. (Later, as States and Chapters began to incorporate, the incorporated ones elected a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.)
- Power to make decisions and manage the assets of the corporation was vested in the interim Officers and Board of Directors.
- The interim Officers and Board of Directors appointed people to chair essential committees, as well as those who would serve on those committees. (Today, Committee Chairs are appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors. The Committee Chair chooses its members.)
- By August 1999, the first Policy and Procedures Manual was released to the States. The appointed State Representatives were responsible for distributing the manual to their individual affiliated Chapters.
- The first election of the National Officers and Board of Directors (Regional Directors) was held at the Buffalo, New York AVVA Biennial National Convention in August 2000.
- The appointed State Representatives made a decision that each state would have one vote in the national election.
- In April 2000, the Associates affiliated with VVA Chapters elected their first Affiliated Chapter Representatives. For this first election, there were no criteria for being qualified for the position other than the candidate holding Regular membership in the Corporation. The most important

issue at that time was for the AVVA members affiliated with each VVA Chapter to have elected representation.

- The first State Representative elections were held between January and June, 2001.
- AVVA members in a state who are not affiliated with a chartered VVA Chapter may elect an At-Large Representative to speak on their behalf at the state level.
- To this day, AVVA elected Officers receive no salary in compensation for their service.

#### **How is Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America Funded?**

- At the time AVVA was organized, VVA transferred the annual, three-year, and life membership revenue into AVVA's bank account.
- AVVA operates almost entirely on its membership revenue. Efforts continue to locate and implement additional sources of funding.
- The National Treasurer, one of the elected Officers, an appointed Finance Chairperson, and an appointed Finance Committee oversee the distribution and investment of funds for the Corporation.
- Budgets are produced annually and carefully monitored by the AVVA Finance Committee.
- At the request of the general membership at the 2003 Convention held in St. Louis, Missouri, an outside Certified Public Accountant firm was hired to review the books and accounting practices employed by AVVA.

#### **What Programs and Projects has Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America implemented?**

To comply with governmental requirements, as well as to establish itself as a bona fide service organization and to be able to seek outside sources of funding, AVVA must actively operate a number of programs. Some of those programs are:

- **AVVA Service Officer Program:** As a veteran service organization (VSO), Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) has a dual and equal obligation to provide both community and veterans benefits and representation activities. The National Board and Veterans Benefits Committee of AVVA share the responsibility of providing effective veterans benefits representation. To ensure the delivery of meaningful representation to veterans and their families, these policies have been enacted to provide consistency and structure for representation by AVVA.
- **Paper Safe:** This document was designed with Veterans in mind, but is a great tool for anyone. It is intended for you to easily contain all of the information that your family will need in a stressful time. If you already have a Will or Trust, the Paper Safe can allow you to put all of that information, along with all of the other details that someone would need, in one easy-to-find place.
- **Homeless Grant Program:** Each budget year, monies are set aside to help with homeless projects during the year. The grant application can be found on the AVVA website.
- **Actively coordinates and participates in Faces of Agent Orange Town Hall meetings:** Bringing awareness to the affects that exposure to Agent Orange has had on our children,

grandchildren and generations to come is one of AVVA's passions. These meetings are coordinated through local VVA and AVVA chapters.

➤ **Educational Brochure:**

- ✓ **Survivor Benefits:** Helps to guide surviving spouses/children to monthly, tax-free compensation through the VA.
  - ✓ **Toxic Exposure:** Bringing awareness to the affects that Agent Orange has had on our children, grandchildren, and generations to come.
  - ✓ **Secondary PTSD:** Bringing awareness to the existence of the condition by recognizing symptoms and related conditions associated with it.
- **V.I.S.T.A, or “Volunteers in Service to America”:** A new program which affords AVVA the ability to keep realistic and accurate records of the 1000's of hours that our AVVA Members spend volunteering in their communities and elsewhere. This program will help AVVA to fulfill our informational obligations for our tax records.
- **PTSD ‘2’:** A program for family members and friends who are dealing with a veteran who has PTSD. The Secondary PTSD Program is designed and intended for the spouses and families of the Veterans who may return home a changed person—one that his/her family does not recognize. It is envisioned to bring awareness to the existence of secondary PTSD and to recognize the symptoms associated with PTSD, and hope for recovery.
- **Condolence Program:** The AVVA National Chaplain works monthly with the VVA National Chaplain to send sympathy cards to the families of the reported deaths of both VVA and AVVA members. The average of cards sent in 2016 has been 68/month.

**Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America Projects:**

- **Project Friendship:** The VVA Chapter and its affiliated Associates that host National meetings are asked to select a local non-profit organization that could use assistance. VVA and AVVA members who attend the meetings donate goods and money to benefit that organization. The AVVA Officers and Board of Directors may also select a recipient.
- **In Memory Plaque Project:** Working with the appropriate governmental agencies to repair the Plaque and ensure that it is an honorable memorial for those who lost their lives because of their service in Vietnam.

**Is Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America involved with Legislation?**

Like VVA, the legislative issues will vary from session to session; however, the following are some of the issues AVVA has been involved in:

- AVVA actively participated in legislation to help the plight of homeless veterans with its endorsement of the Heather French Act of 1999.
- AVVA actively participated in H.Con.Res.4, a resolution to create a postage stamp to commemorate the bravery of Gunnery Sgt. John Balisone during World War II.

- AVVA testified before the Institute of Medicine Committee in review of the health effects of Veterans and their exposure to herbicides. (2012)
- AVVA actively promotes health studies for Women Veterans.
- AVVA actively participates in legislation for Agent Orange benefits; including trans-generational effects that plague a veteran's children/grandchildren.
- AVVA actively participates in legislative efforts for the many illnesses suffered by our veterans. A primary focus of Associates Vietnam Veterans of America is the procurement of entitlements through our Veteran Service Officer (VSO) program, education, and grassroots legislative advocacy for our veterans and their families.
- AVVA supports The Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015 and the Military and Veterans Caregivers Service Improvement Act of 2015.
- AVVA's 2016 Legislative Priorities and the latest updates can be found on the AVVA website. AVVA corresponds regularly with Congress regarding issues that affect veterans' health, their families, and benefits.

### **Who is eligible for membership in Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America?**

Membership in AVVA is open to everyone. We are veterans from all eras, spouses, parents, children, neighbors, and friends of Vietnam Veterans. **AVVA veteran members/Dual members who served during the Vietnam era (February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975) are non-voting members.**

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

There are two types of membership in AVVA:

- Regular Members, who can vote, hold office and chair committees.
- Dual Members, or members who qualify for VVA membership but have joined AVVA. These members may not vote, hold office, or chair committees within AVVA.
- There are no age limits for membership. (However, the member must be 18 years of age to vote in Chapter elections.)
- There are no requirements that the potential member be related to a veteran or active duty military person.
- AVVA membership is not limited to citizens or residents of the United States.

### **DUES STRUCTURE**

- One year: \$20.00.
- Three years: \$50.00.

- Life membership dues are based on age at the time of Life Membership application:

- \*Age 59 and below \$175.00
- Age 60 and above \$100.00

\*Paying less than \$175 requires proof of age.

### **How can dues be paid?**

- Check, Money Order, Credit Card
  - Life membership may be paid in full or in monthly installments. A \$50 down payment is required; followed by monthly installments of \$25.00 until paid in full.

### **When are dues renewable?**

- By the end of the anniversary month. A notice is sent from the National Office of impending expiration.
- Memberships not renewed by the end of the anniversary month are removed from the roster the following month.

### **Where are dues to be sent?**

- Applications and renewals accompanied by checks, money orders, or credit cards should be mailed to:

Monument Bank • AVVA Lock Box • 8602 Colesville Rd. • Silver Spring • MD • 20910

### **Who issues membership cards?**

- The National Office issues all membership cards.

### **What Communication tools does AVVA use?**

- AVVA has a national website that can be accessed by any individual with Internet capabilities. Many of our documents, programs, photos of activities from all levels of the organization, reports, and forms are posted there. Members are urged to share their activities through this venue. Over 100,000 visits have been made to our website since 2013.
- AVVA operates a Talk List similar to the one used by VVA. Persons wishing to join the AVVA Talk List should contact: [southern@lodelink.com](mailto:southern@lodelink.com)
- The AVVA Officers and Board of Directors may be reached electronically by using their first initial and last [name@avva.org](mailto:JSmith@avva.org). i.e. ([JSmith@avva.org](mailto:JSmith@avva.org))

- As a courtesy, AVVA sends the VVA Veteran magazine at no cost to those members who have no VVA member living in the household. This courtesy is only done by a request sent to the National Membership Chair. Name, address, and membership number are required with the request.
- AVVA issues a quarterly newsletter; The UPDATES. All regions, states, and chapters are asked to send pictures, articles, and any news that they would like included. Articles of interest and AVVA news are also included in this E-Newsletter.
- National Distribution List. The National Secretary sends out announcements, Press Releases, etc. to our state-level and chapter-level Representatives and Presidents for distribution to our membership.

**Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America web site:** <http://avva.org/>

**Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America Membership Forms:**

Membership forms can be found on the AVVA Website on the Forms page, <http://avva.org/forms.html>. Forms such as Membership Applications, Change of Information Forms, Membership Renewal Forms, Deceased Member Notifications, as well as forms related to Chapter and State incorporation and other forms related to membership are linked from this web page. These forms are designed so that you can fill them out on your computer and print them, or you can print them blank and fill them out by hand.

**Governing Documents:**

**Policy & Procedures Manual**, <http://avva.org/documents.html>.

Download Individual Sections of the Policy & Procedures Manual for quick and easy printing.

- Section 1** - National Positions: Responsibilities & Qualifications
- Section 2** - Incorporated Subsidiaries: State & Chapter
- Section 3** - Committees
- Section 4** - Accounting
- Section 5** - Elections
- Section 6** - Administrative
- Section 7** - Membership
- Section 8** - Programs
- Section 9** - Disciplinary Code
- Section 10** - Forms
- Section 11** - Committee Policies
- Appendix 1** - Corporate Purposes
- Appendix 2** - Removal of National

**BYLAWS:** <http://avva.org/documents/Bylaws.pdf>

**Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America Products:**

**Military Best:** AVVA logoed products, patches, pins, and miscellaneous items can be purchased through Military Best. ([www.militarybest.com](http://www.militarybest.com))

**Ideal Images:** Women's logoed clothing can be purchased through their online store. Enter through the portal on the AVVA website. [www.avva.org](http://www.avva.org)

**Agent Orange Pins & AVVA flags:** Visit our website for purchases (they can only be purchased through AVVA).



### ***Core Values***

As Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, we are passionate about our work and the real-life issues facing Veterans and their families. We strive to create a positive impact on our Veterans and their families by making life better. Our achievements are built on a solid foundation of core values that inspire action, integrity, teamwork, and outstanding results. Our values form the basis for decision-making and all actions of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America – both as individuals and as a Veterans Service Organization.

### ***Commitment***

In everything we do as Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, our perspective is based on the view of our members, Veterans and their families, ensuring that we understand their needs and expectations, and can prioritize and problem-solve for their unique challenges.

### ***Ethics & Integrity***

As a National Veterans Service Organization, we expect all conduct to be rooted in integrity, mutual respect, and civility. We value ethical behavior in our members and leaders at all levels of AVVA. We believe in the dignity and worth of all people, strive to foster an appreciation of and respect for diversity and differences among our leaders, members and peers.

- We are committed to a teamwork environment where every Associate is a valued member, treated with respect, encouraged to contribute, and recognized and rewarded for his/her efforts.
- Everyone at AVVA is responsible for considering the ethical implications of each decision or action, and is urged to challenge assumptions, raise alternatives, and seek out diversity.

### ***Relevance***

Our expertise and progressive, proactive atmosphere yield a powerful combination that continuously sets us apart. It is an approach that translates into timely decisions and executions, a constant quest for solutions, rapid responses to the media on issues facing Veterans and their families, legislative advocacy on all bills pertinent to the wellbeing of Veterans and their families, and any issue that may make a tangible difference in the world around us for the better.

- We anticipate opportunities and challenges, and are quick to confront complex or ambiguous situations. While we work with a sense of urgency, we always consider the impact of our actions before we proceed.

### ***Teamwork***

We believe knowledge is power and we support our Members' right to access information that impacts their roles as Veteran advocates. We also recognize everyone's right to be listened to and heard regardless of their point of view.

- AVVA members are a team, loyal to one another, caring for each other both personally and professionally, while being supportive of each other's efforts.
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- Our system of teamwork inspires people to make their best contributions, provides them with the support they need to be successful, promotes communication, and celebrates their shared accomplishments.
- We present a unified image, both visually and in behavior, so that we may ensure the integrity of the organization while building a recognizable reputation as a service organization.

## 2016 AVVA Organizational Chart

