

2016 Leadership & Education Conference Report to the Membership



The 2016 VVA and AVVA Leadership and Education Conference was held July 19th – 23rd at the Hilton El Conquistador, in Tucson, AZ. The following report is a composite of happenings submitted by the Conference Committee members. This report is a narrative designed for those members not in attendance and a review for those members present. All Board Members and two Deputy Directors played an active role in the success of the convention. Planning meetings began six weeks before through our online conference calling. All Board Members and Deputies were invited to participate in the planning; those not limited by work schedules took the opportunity to join in. Although AVVA's role in the Conference was somewhat limited, this report is a full accounting of our involvement.

Registration:

Official registration opened on Tuesday, July 19th, but the task of stuffing Conference bags began early Monday morning. VVA and AVVA bags contained a 3" binder with handouts for the seminars. Workers included Sharon Hobbs (National President), Elayne Mackey (National Vice President), Kathy Andras (National Treasurer), Casey Farrell (Region 9 Director), Charlie Hobbs (VVA Director-at-Large), Steve Mackey (CA State Council President) and Dennis Andras (VVA Region 7 Director).

Conference registration began at 9am on Tuesday morning. A total of 73 AVVA members registered for the Conference. VVA and AVVA registrations were combined. AVVA's registration worker in the VVA booth was Jeri Wallis (Region 4 Director).

AVVA Office

AVVA manned the office every day of the Conference. Visitors dropped by to discuss issues, pick up brochures and Paper Safes, introduce themselves, and/or just to visit. Nina Schloffel, Secretary Pro Tem in Joanna Henshaw's absence, was the overall manager of the office; however, it took a several other people to make it happen. Workers included Jeri Wallis (Region 4), John Birch (Region 8), Kathy Andras (Treasurer), Elayne Mackey (Vice President), and Sharon Hobbs (President).

Luncheon

The AVVA Luncheon was held on Thursday, July 21st. There were approximately 100 in attendance. Former Army nurse, Kate O'Hare-Palmer was our guest speaker; she spoke on "Women Veterans: The Long Way Back Home". She is the current VVA Women Veterans Committee Chair of VVA's national organization. American flags were donated by Woodman's Life Insurance Chapter in Dickson, TN. Each attendee was given a flag, flag stand, and an umbrella compliments of AVVA. Beverly Pounds (Region 3 Director) and Diane Nicholson (Region 6 Director) were assigned the



Member of the Year:
Teresa Rangel (center)

2016 Leadership & Education Conference Report to the Membership

Luncheon. Nina Schloffel (Secretary Pro Tem in Joanna Henshaw's absence) assisted by creating and printing the Luncheon Program.

During the Luncheon, AVVA awards were presented.

Member of the Year Teresa Rangel (TX Chapter 574)

Fellowship Award Mabel Foreman (LA Chapter 632)

AVVA Commendation Medal Suzanne Blohm-Weber (FL)
Joyce Koprowski (FL)
Steve Mackey (CA)
Bobbie Morris (PA)
Bernie Rekowski (PA)

VISTA Volunteer Hours Individuals: 1st Place: Rose Wright (TN Chapter 240)
2nd Place: Jeff Metheny (IL Chapter 984)
3rd Place: Rita Clifton (GA Chapter 772)

Regional: Region III (9,194 hours reported)

State: Tennessee (7,098 hours reported)

Chapter: TN 240 (4,152 hours reported)



Fellowship Award:
Mabel Foreman (R)

Product Sales

During the Conference, our vendor table included AVVA flags, challenge coins, Agent Orange pins, and other numerous AVVA logoed pieces purchased from Proforma. Bobbie Morris, PA State Association President, donated numerous beaded items for our table. Cash and credit card sales totaled \$2,355.42. Cecilia Essenmacher (Region 5 Director) and John Birch (Region 8 Director) were in charge of making sure that the table was covered with adequate help during the entire Conference. Workers included Cecilia Essenmacher (Region 5 Director), John Birch (Region 8 Director), Casey Farrell (Region 9 Director), Percilla Newberry (Region 7 Director), Susan Henthorn (GA State Rep), Nancy Rekowski (Region 2 Director) and Bobbie Morris (PA State Association President). A detailed report will be available before the October Board meeting.



Project Friendship

The 2016 Project Friendship was **Esperanza En Escalante (EEE)**. **EEE** is a non-profit organization (501c3) formed in 1989 by the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 106 of Tucson, Arizona. On Monday afternoon, sixteen people visited Project Friendship; our entourage included AVVA members, VVA members, and National Office Staff. We toured the grounds and met with the leaders and staff. On Saturday morning, we presented them with a check for \$11,016 which was \$1,016 above our goal.



2016 Leadership & Education Conference Report to the Membership

NOTE: After returning home, thank you letters were sent to all who contributed. AVVA and VVA received a very nice “thank you” letter from Phyllis Russell, Executive Director of Esperanza en Escalante.

Visitors to Project Friendship:

Sharon Hobbs	Kathy Andras	Casey Farrell	Jeri Wallis
Charlie Hobbs	Dennis Andras	Pat Farrell	Kayla Dispain
Elayne Mackey	Marsha Four	Cecilia Essenmacher	Sharon Hodge
Steve Mackey	Sandy Miller	Susan Henthorn	Kate O'Hare-Palmer



Educational Seminars

AVVA offered two educational seminars during the Conference: “*Recognizing and Living with Secondary PTSD*” and “*Proud of our Past; Poised for our Future*”. Both seminars were well attended.

The first mentioned, was the official rollout of our newest program. Interest in facilitating at the local level was very positive. Seven people signed up for our online facilitator classes before leaving Tucson. Forty-seven people took facilitator applications. Approximately 500 educational brochures were distributed during Conference week.

The second seminar was designed to bring refreshed awareness to the existence and purpose of AVVA’s ongoing endeavors; and, all got a glimpse into AVVA’s future planning and implementing of new programs and projects. The handout is available on the AVVA website.

Business meeting

The Annual Business meeting was called to order at 2:00pm PST on Thursday, July 21st. Officer and Board reports, *National Foundation for Veterans & Families* update, *In Memory Plaque* project update, and a Financial Report were on the agenda. After the official business was completed, a time of questions and answers was offered to the attendees.

Conclusion

The Conference was well attended, the food was good, and overall it went very smoothly. With the unified effort of our Board of Directors, the AVVA seminars, luncheon, vendor table, and our Project Friendship were all huge successes.

The minutes of the business meeting and the Board of Directors meeting are posted on the AVVA website. www.avva.org

A very special “thank you” to our Historian, Steve Mackey for the great pictures of every detail of the Conference.

Friday was “Support Our Active Troops” Day. Everyone was asked to wear red.