

Before I begin my last quarterly report I want to thank everyone on the Board of Directors and our New England members of AVVA as well as our new State Representatives for RI and Maine it has been an absolute pleasure volunteering with you.

It has been awhile since New England had two state representatives. I want to thank them for running for the positions. When elections come up for chapter representatives I encourage our members to consider running. Currently, New England only has three chapter representatives. The procedures of how to run is outlined in our policies on our website.

The last 2 years as everyone knows has been challenging due to the Covid outbreak. We as an organization, have continued our work and meetings continued by teleconference; I attended all the meetings throughout the past two years. We revised and updated many policies and procedures. This was accomplished due to the dedication of our President and Secretary. At each meeting members of the Board reviewed the material and voted on the revisions. I encourage you to read through the policies on our website. We also have put together our convention program and will hold a luncheon. During the convention I will be in the AVVA office please stop by and say hi. Due to the numerous restrictions throughout the year due to covid I was unable to visit with Chapter members throughout the New England states . It will be nice to meet face to face.

As you may know I served as a co chair in updating and revising AVVA Survivors Benefits Brochure. I have begun to distribute the brochures to libraries and senior centers. The brochure is also on our website. Please take the time to review the information as you might be eligible for services and benefits.

I continue to attend our State Counsel meetings. I'm also very proud to serve on Chapter 273 JROTC committee and once again our candidate was selected Nationally .

Though after our Convention in Greensboro I will have stepped down as Region Director I will continue to be an active Chapter Representative and also volunteer at an International Airport in the military lounge greeting current and retired service members. As Covid passes I hope to begin to work with homeless veterans .

Our organizations VVA and AVVA strive to meet the needs of veterans exposed to Agent Orange and their families. Recently, I have learned that some veterans are not able to obtain their medical evaluations at their VA Hospitals. They are being referred to a publicly traded company called QTC. QTC is a subsidiary of a multibillion dollar company called Leidos. QTC currently has a contract to conduct medical evaluations Vietnam Veterans.

However, veterans are sharing that the time frames between appointments is long, that sometimes the facilities they are asked to travel to are not handicap accessible and the distances to the facilities is sometimes hours away from their residences. In the cases that were presented to me the VA Hospital would have been within a short forty mile distance at most. They sometimes are not being evaluated by MD's either. Those who evaluate fly into the state to conduct the evaluations and then they fly out. In the event a veteran comes to you to discuss their frustration over their evaluations perhaps their congressional representatives may want to learn about the shortfalls of having outsourced the medical evaluations and medical discharges for those leaving the service. And that consideration should be made to provide Veterans the choice of being seen and evaluated at a VA Hospital.

Wishing everyone a good year and surrounded by people who are supportive. And please stop by our AVVA booth at the Convention your purchases will help support our veterans and their families.

