

Minutes: General Membership Meeting, Reno, NV

This is a summary of the Annual General Membership Meeting, held at the Eldorado Hotel and Casino, Reno, Nevada, on October 25, 2007. This Summary is subject to confirmation when the "Verbatim" court recorder record becomes available to the Secretary.

Call for the Meeting

KWVA Website and The Graybeards, July-August 2007

Call to Order

President Dechert called the meeting to order at 0907 hours.

John Sonley, Sgt-at-Arms, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chaplain Emeritus Leonard Stegman gave the invocation.

- Administrative Announcements:
- Annual business meeting this morning
- Special presentation before we get to the agenda
- Fund raiser auction for some original designed cups from Don Struhar

• Director Dauster will be presenting information on another fund raiser later

• Receiving line this evening at 1800- Ambassador Lee from the Korean

Embassy will be greeting you and will have a gift for all veterans.

• Early departure, before 0600, sign up at registration desk for transportation

Award of Charter to Department of California

• President Dechert commented that we are going to do something that we have never done before at an Annual Convention and Membership meeting. We are going to present a charter to the most populous state in the country, so far as the Korean War veterans are concerned, and that is the newly formed Department of California. Commander Mike Glazzy was asked to come forward and bring all of the California members in attendance for presentation of the charter. Following the presentation, Commander Glazzy presented President Dechert with the official Department of California patch signed by Joe Velasquez, the designer of the patch.

• While the new Department was taking time for pictures, President Dechert introduced Art Sharp, Editor of The Graybeards, and asked Art to be sure and get the presentation of the Charter in the magazine.

• President Dechert also introduced Kevin Secor, US Department of Veterans Affairs Liaison Officer. Kevin will be one of the guest speakers at the banquet tonight.

Special Presentation for Father Stegman

• President Dechert commented that of all the men he has known in his life, the least fearful one was Father Stegman. He is not afraid of anything. He certainly was not afraid of bullets. He has his Purple Hearts and Silver Stars. He has his 90 years of age and 63 years of priest ministry behind him. He is the Chaplain Emeritus of the Korean War Veterans Association and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

• Director Dunn presided in the introduction of the Special Program for the Chaplain.

This included a special video presentation of the Father prepared by Angelique Herran, who came all the way from Colorado to make the presentation.

In conclusion, President Dechert presented a copy of the proclamation within the Korean War Veterans Association as a remembrance and commendation to the Father. There will be more information on this special presentation on our web site, www.KWVA.org

• President Dechert introduced Leonard Speizer, an Assistant Sergeant at Arms from NJ, and recognized his birthday today.

Verification and Declaration of Quorum

• A physical count was made by John Sonley, Sergeant –of-Arms, and his assistants. The count was 94. Since 75 are required for a quorum, the Secretary declared that there was a quorum.

Adoption of Supplemental Meeting Rules

• Director Mac Swain commented that the rules were handed out this morning, that the rules notice was in the July/August *The Graybeards*, and they are out of Robert's Rules of Order. A motion was made by Eugene Tinberg from Kansas to approve the rules as presented. The motion was seconded by Ed Buckman from Texas and approved without objection.

Roll Call and Introductions

• President Dechert commented that there are some names that are not on the agenda. He then introduced Eugene Tinberg, Commander of the Chapter in Johnson County Kansas, probably one of the largest chapters in America, Department Commanders Mike Glazzy, Department of California and his wife Lis, Marvin Dunn, Department Commander of Texas and his wife Joanne, George Bruzgis, Department Commander of New Jersey, Charles Lusardi, Department Commander of Oregon and his wife Sarah, Bob Balzer, Department Commander of Florida, and the representative from Department of Illinois, Sal Amati and his wife Diane.

• The President also explained the absence and circumstances concerning Commander and Mrs. Clyde Hooks from South Carolina, asking for prayers for Mary Hooks.

• The roll was called by Secretary Cohee. Present were:

Louis Dechert, President
 Byron Dickerson, 1st Vice President
 Jim Ferris, 2nd Vice President
 Frank Cohee, Secretary
 Richard Hare, Treasurer
 Charlotte Ayers, Director
 Robert Banker, Director
 Jeff Brodeur, Director
 Lee Dauster, Director
 Michael Doyle, Director
 Marvin Dunn, Director
 Tom Edwards, Director-Temporarily Absent, excused due to an emergency.

James Fountain, Director
 William Mac Swain, Director
 Tom McHugh, Director
 Warren Wiedhahn, Director
 Chris Yanacos, Director

Introductions by President Dechert

- Leo Agnew, Judge Advocate, Parliamentarian
- Stephen Szekely, Chairman, Ethics and Grievance Committee
- John Sonley, Sergeant-at-Arms-Previously introduced
- JD Randolph, National VAVS Director
- Larry Kinard, Tell America Operations Director

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- Edwin Buckman, National Co-Director of Legislation
- Jake Feaster, Assistant Secretary
- Jimmy Faircloth, Attorney, Assistant Parliamentarian, General Attorney
- Vicki Lee-Garza, Recorder
- Jim Doppelhammer, Webmaster
- Annelie Weber, Membership Executive assistant
- Bill Hutton, Past National Secretary

Minutes of Previous Meeting

• Secretary Cohee referenced minutes of previous General Membership Meeting, printed in *The Graybeards*, Nov-Dec 2006. Richard Brown made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Louie Espinoza. Motion passed without objection.

Financial Report

• Treasurer Hare presented a 12-month financial report, from October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007.

§ The balance sheet shows total assets in checking, savings and investments of \$452,252.58 as of September 30, 2007. As for income, the significant differences from the previous year are an increase in dues of approximately \$40,000.00, primarily due to the efforts of Jim Doppelhammer, Jake Feaster and Annelie Weber and their “we miss you and want you back campaign” and the increase in annual membership dues from \$20 to \$25. The other significant income item is the fundraiser that netted \$84,000.

§ In the expense area, insurance costs are down by almost half, primarily due to Director Dauster’s efforts, professional services are up because of the three audits in one year, meeting costs are up and lastly, the costs for printing, publication and postage for *The Graybeards* are up.

§ Mr. Hare further commented that as of Sunday, October 21, 2007, the balances for all accounts of the association were \$12,835.76 in the checking account, \$4,454.44 in the savings account, and \$428,585.68 in the A. G. Edwards mutual fund account, for a total of \$445,875.88.

§ He also pointed out that, from the activation date in December 2005 until the end of September 2007, the association has realized a 9.36 percent gain in our assets from the A.G. Edwards account.

§ Mr. Hare also noted that while the association has had a good gain this is the slowest time of the year for income from dues and so we have a period right now where we have a serious cash flow problem, just due to the timing of things. Because of this cash flow problem, he reported that he has recently had to withdraw funds from the mutual fund account in order to pay bills.

§ With respect to dues, he pointed out that out of the approximately 17,000 members, 7,000 are life members and contribute nothing on a yearly basis anymore. If they all contributed at the \$25 rate, that would bring in another \$175,000.00.

§ In conclusion, he commented that the proposed budget for 2008, to be presented later by Director Dunn, is a “status quo” budget and we must now start looking at how we can handle our expenses and not go into a deficit situation to the point where we will be out of business in five years.

A motion was made by George Bruzgis and seconded by JD

Randolph to accept the Financial Report, and the motion carried with no objections.

Audit Reports

• Doyle Henderson, CPA, reported that 2006 was the third year for an audit under President Dechert’s administration.

§ The first year, 2004, covered half of the previous administration and half of this administration and there was a very, very qualified audit report because we received very poor records from the previous administration.

§ For the second audit, 2005, the auditors now had a basis established for preparing the audit and the results were much better.

§ The 2006 audit was an absolute clean audit and the auditors stated that “In our opinion, the financial statements...present fairly, in all material respects, the financial positions of Korean War Veterans Association, Inc. at December 31, 2006, and the changes in net assets, statements of functional expenses and cash flows for the year ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America”. This is the highest level of service that is issued and it is the opinion that everyone sees because it says basically everything is okay and there are no exceptions.

§ The organization is in good shape. Auditors said everything is fine, but the expenses are exceeding the income from dues. Therefore, fundraisers are a necessity, or the KWVA has got about a four- or five-year life span.

Report of Tell America Program

• Prior to the report, President Dechert presented the following awards to the Tell America Group:

Larry Kinard, Operations Director
Chris Yanacos, Chairman

James Yaney, Committee Member

John Pequinot, Committee Member

Gilwood Hoepfner, Committee Member

Bill Parish and Bill Hollinger (Volunteers)

Irving Breitbart, representative at West Point

• Larry Kinard reported that many of the Chapters who have grown are in the program and are doing a wonderful job. This is one of our best programs. It is one of the things that helps, hopefully, or partially erases that “forgotten” out of that Forgotten War thing, because the war is still going on.

Report of Reunion/Convention Committee

• 2nd VP Jim Ferris noted that Virginia Beach had previously been selected and approved by the Board for 2008. However, after further review it was decided that the Norfolk, VA area would be more appropriate. For the Convention and Annual Meetings in 2009 and 2010 the sites proposed are San Diego, CA and Hartford, CT respectively.

• A motion was made by Bob Balzer, Department of Florida, and seconded by George Bruzgis, Department of New Jersey, to accept the report. The motion was carried with no objections.

• Dick Hartung, Chapter 191, Tidewater, VA announced that Chapter 191 would be the host chapter for the convention in 2008, and he pledged the chapter’s support to help the reunion committee.

Report of Bylaws Committee

• The Bylaws Committee Chairman presented to the membership changes that had been approved by the Board of Directors and published in The July/August *The Graybeards* for notification per the existing Bylaws. The Bylaws Chairman made a motion to accept the changes, with only those areas the Regular Membership might have objections too brought up for discussion and amended before the next Bylaw change objected to is discussed and amended. This motion was seconded and passed with no objection.

One Bylaw was amended to place the word "OR" in capital letters and in bold print to aid in the clarification as to whom was eligible for membership under the Bylaws, Article I, Membership, Section 1. Qualification of Members, A. Regular Members, 1. Service in the United States Armed Forces.

• The eight additional changes were then presented and no objections to them were made. Director Mac Swain, as the Bylaws Chairman, made a motion that the changes discussed and amended be ratified by the regular membership and placed into effect. The motion was seconded by John Crossley, from Carson City Chapter 305, and was carried by a two-thirds vote of a quorum as required.

Legislative Matters

• Director Bob Banker reported on the status of Federal Charter Bills, HR 2852 and S. 1692. On September 13, 2007, the Senate passed S. 1692 by a unanimous vote and the bill has been sent to the House. The House bill was introduced by Representative Hoyer, the number two member in the House. Mr. Buckman, a Co-National Legislative Director, commented that Congressman Sam Johnson attended a recent meeting where he stated that he has been in contact with Representative Hoyer with regards to this matter and that it will become a reality this year.

• Director Banker encouraged everyone that when they go home to contact their Congress person and ask them to co-sponsor HR2852.

Proposed Fund Raiser

• Director Dauster proposed to donate a Hatfield 50 caliber Kentucky rifle, with red maple from the tip to the butt, for a fund raising effort. The rifle has never been fired and its estimated value is from \$1500 to \$2000. This offer is contingent on five more members, out of approximately 17,000, donating an item of a minimum value of \$1000 to provide a drawing for six items.

• President Dechert thanked Director Dauster for the offer and referred it to the Budget and Finance Committee for action, with a suggestion that Director Dauster head up the fund raising sub-committee.

Report of Budget and Finance Committee

• Director Dunn, Chairman, presented a budget of \$428,000 for 2008 compared to \$398,000 for 2007. Most of the projected income is \$250,000 from dues and \$125,800 from fund raisers. Most of the projected expense is \$172,000 for *The Graybeards*, (postage alone is \$35,000), \$53,800 for the Membership Office and activities, and \$53,000 for Meetings and Conventions. This budget had been discussed and approved by the Board of Directors at the July 25, 2007 meeting in Gaithersburg, MD. Director Wiedhahn made a motion that the budget be approved as presented and Director Edwards sec-

onded the motion. The budget was approved unanimously or by an abstention approval and is so noted in the minutes.

• There were two other budget action items that required consideration by the membership. The first one was an increase in the Associate Membership dues of \$4.00, from \$12.00 to \$16.00, effective for 2008. This increase had been discussed and approved by the Board of Directors at the July 25, 2007 meeting in Gaithersburg, MD. Director Wiedhahn made a motion that the proposed increase in the associate dues be approved and it was seconded by Doyle Dykes, Chapter 270, and Bob Balzer, Department of Florida. The motion carried unanimously or by abstention.

• The second action item was a proposed fund raiser to buy and resell a new book released in September by Pulitzer Prize winner David Halberstam, entitled *The Coldest Winter*. Director Wiedhahn recommended the KWVA explore putting this book and others on a website link to a seller of books from which we would realize a profit. The motion was seconded by Edward Dauster, and was approved unanimously. NOTE: A review of this book appears on pg. 69 of this issue.

Report of Resolutions Committee

• Director Wiedhahn reported that there are no new resolutions to present at this time. This is because the Board of Directors did not finish their meeting yesterday, and the resolutions must be presented and acted on by the Board before they are presented to the general membership.

Report of the Revisit Program Committee

• Director Wiedhahn reported that the revisit program is alive and well due primarily to the efforts of President Dechert going to Korea several times and negotiating for more slots authorizing more veterans to go back. Approximately 350 will be going back this year, and the same number, or maybe more, in 2008. In addition, due to the negotiations, spouses and other dependents can now go if the eligible veteran has passed away, dependents can go if the eligible veteran is incapacitated and can not travel because of health reasons, and lastly, if an eligible veteran can not travel by himself and his spouse or children can not go, a buddy (even if he has been before) can accompany the eligible veteran back.

Report of the Membership committee

• Director Brodeur reported that the KWVA has 17,185 members as of 10.25.2007. At this time last year there were 17,093 members, which is an increase of almost 100. Considering the age of most Korean Veterans and the fact that many of them are now passing away at a dramatic pace, an increase of 100 is very good. At the end of 2008, the Chapter which has recruited the most members will receive a National Plaque.

§ There are pins and posters available on the website, www.kwva.org, that can be used for recruiting efforts. We are working on direct recruiting of the younger veterans now serving in Korea. Both General Bell, CG of all UN Forces in Korea, and Lt. General Valcourt, CG of Eighth Army, are KWVA members and are our allies. When we get our Charter, the KWVA will definitely realize some gain from those relationships.

§ President Dechert commented that when we get our charter, the Military Order of the Purple Heart may consider including the

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KWVA in the club which they are considering establishing in Korea.

§ Past Director Jake Feaster, Assistant Secretary, Supervisor of Management Information Systems, and a member of the Membership Committee, provided some interesting statistics of the active and inactive membership and Departments and Chapters. As indicated previously, there are approximately 17,000 active members, 16,000 inactive members, and 4,000 deceased members, for a total of 37,000 members. There are 15 Departments and 231 Chapters.

§ Mr. Feaster's presentation was accompanied by Jim Doppelhammer, who demonstrated, live, on the big screen, how the website database may be utilized by authorized users.

Report of the Library and Museum Liaison Committee

• Director Mac Swain reported that the building for the museum, an approximate 4 million dollar project, was initially supposed to begin construction in Springfield, IL in January 2007. Subsequently, however, the Board met and decided to wait until more money was raised to preclude borrowing at a high interest rate. They are now still collecting money.

§ The city of Springfield has offered a grant of \$570,000. Another \$250,000 has been donated by the CEO of a large corporation, who is a Korean War veteran. He promised to recommend to some of his Korean veteran friends that they support the project also. These friends are also CEOs of other large corporations.

§ The Museum Executive Director, Larry Sassorossi, recently made a trip to Korea. While he was there he received donations of \$30,000, with a pledge to get companies in Korea to provide additional backing. The museum is on track and, hopefully, construction will begin in early 2008.

§ The KWVA has still not extended support for the museum project due to the previous stops and starts and relocations of the developers. This will be considered again when actual results are available to consider. The KWVA certainly wants this project to be successfully completed.

Report of the National Ceremonies Committee

• Director McHugh stated that the KWVA has not had any control and little input for the July 27th Ceremony at the Korean War Veterans Memorial on the Mall in DC because another organization not affiliated with the KWVA has always sought and obtained the permit from the National Park Service. That organization falsely claims they already have the 2008 permit.

Director McHugh made a motion to approve what the Board has already approved, that the KWVA request a permit for the July 27th, 2008 ceremony. The motion was seconded by Eugene Timberg, Chapter Commander, Johnson County, Kansas, and passed without objection.

Awards and recognitions

• President Dechert recognized two members of the Board who are term limited out in the next election. These members, Director Mac Swain, from Fort Worth, and Director Wiedhahn, from Arlington, VA, have served for two terms and they have served the Board quite well. Further, President Dechert commented that this is the last time that you will see this Board as you see it today. They have done a good job, so please stand up and recognize them.

§ This has been the most successful convention that we have ever had. "We go forward together." That is the only way you can go forward is together. Otherwise you got another catch somewhere else. I thank you for your applause and hard work. I was just handed a news flash that the Koreans today agreed to stay in Iraq with the Americans, while everyone else is pulling out. **God Bless America!**

Comments from Chaplain Stegman

• I would like to also put my word in as far as what this organization has meant, what the organization has tried to do, and what they have done. We had ups and downs, and I think too often it was a question of there being misunderstandings. Sometimes it was ego. Whatever it is, I think we are back on the road to where we should be. Each one of us is an individual. We have our own ideas and we also know that we have those ideas we can go without. But positive is the word: positive—and not negative.

And remember that, as I say again and again, we only have one day to give God and to give this organization, and that is the day we have and where we are. The Commander-or the President—is not God, and he has made mistakes. I have made many of them too. We all have, but the point is, what is our goal?

We make mistakes. We disagree, but the point is to come back together and know there is one thing we all want to do is to be true to God and Country and the Good of the Order. So I submit to all of you, let's continue to advance.

Auction of Designer Cups

• Noted artist and KWVA Member Don Struhar, the designer of several Super Bowl rings and other noted works, donated a set of six personally designed cups to Mrs. Dechert and the ladies at the convention to use in their fund raising effort on behalf of *Operation First Response*, serving wounded service members arriving at Walter Reed and Bethesda hospitals in the Washington, DC area. Don is a KWVA member.

§ The ladies believed the cups should be offered to the entire membership at the Annual Meeting and asked Director Bob Banker to conduct an auction at the close of the Annual Meeting.

§ There were six cups, one each for the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and Seabees. The Army mug drew the most amount, over \$300.00. The Marines were a close second. For all six cups the auction raised \$1207.00, and the Ladies raised \$200 more at their meetings.

§ A contribution of \$1407.00 was sent to OPERATION FIRST RESPONSE. This is the first time that such an outreach activity had been conducted at the Annual Convention.

Closing Prayer

• Chaplain Emeritus Stegman conceded the benediction to National Chaplain Leo Ruffing.

Motion to adjourn

• Doyle Dykes made a motion to adjourn. This motion is undebatable and passed unanimously at 1604 hours.

Respectfully Submitted

Frank Cohee, National Secretary