



# Vietnam Veterans Of America

## Chapter One

[www.vietnamvetschapter1.org](http://www.vietnamvetschapter1.org)

MARCH 2026



### MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING MARCH 11, 2026

I counted 21 people attending, 10 on Zoom and 11 in person. A new face (on Zoom) was Paul Patten of Fair Haven.

The February newsletter and minutes were approved with one correction. At the February meeting President Bill Ellwood had thanked Don Amorosi of Glens Falls for his continuing donations to Chapter 1. (I had the name wrong.)



**Wally Pratt offered the above design as a possible marker on the VFW building at 15 Wales St., where Chapter 1 has its office. The building will be painted in the spring, and Chapter 1 has the opportunity to identify its presence.**

Bill also clarified a joking remark from the last meeting that someone evidently misconstrued. Riffing on the “First in, last out” motto that Chapter 1 has informally adopted, Bill had jokingly speculated that Chapter 1 “might end up supporting the entire country” of Vietnam vets. “And I said that in jest,” Bill said. “That is in no way, I don’t think, gonna be any kind of reality. I don’t think we’re going to be continuing to be that big or anything like that, but we still are going to reach out, particularly to members in our area that don’t have an active chapter.”

Bill cited thank-you letters from Isabella Alessandrini, outpatient dietitian with the VA Medical Center in White River Junction, and Andrea Murphy of the Josh Pallotta Fund in Colchester. Ms. Alessandrini thanked the chapter for the \$2,000 contribution last month to the Farmacy program of the Vermont Farmers Food Center in Rutland. It provides fresh fruits and vegetables to veterans, among others, who are deemed to need them as part of a healthy diet. Ms. Murphy is executive director of the non-profit that operates Josh’s House, a “veteran-designed recreation and wellness space,” named after a Vermont National Guard veteran who committed suicide after service in Afghanistan. Chapter 1 donated \$2,000 to Josh’s House.

The Building Bridges meals program out of the Brattleboro American Legion is holding a supper March 25, at 4:30 p.m., open free to veterans and a guest. Presentation of a check for \$2,500 from Chapter 1, voted at our February meeting, will be part of the event. No RSVP is required. Chapter 1 member Norm VanCor is active with the group.


Treasurer Richard Reed reported our total cash on hand as of the end of our fiscal year. Net income from sales of break-open tickets for the year “actually puts us below the guideline for paying taxes,” Richard said. The report was accepted unanimously.

Membership continues at about 180.

**ATTENTION  
VVA CHAPTER  
MEMBERS**

There's Always Room At Number 1

If your VVA chapter is closing because of declining membership consider joining ours. We're Chapter 1 and would be happy to welcome meetings in person or join us via zoom. It's a great way to stay involved and keep the VVA brotherhood strong. To join, contact us at \_\_\_\_\_



**Chapter 1 member Abe Leber, a retired ad agency owner and marketing consultant, drafted the above handout as an example of something that could be used in soliciting new members for Chapter 1, particularly from VVA chapters that have closed.**

Stan Clark's February report on his visits to veterans in the Chester area tallied 27 hours and 432 miles traveled. The Chester Committee of Chapter 1 is planning a donut fundraiser in Randolph; the date is pending. The committee's last meeting drew four members.

Vice President Larry Gold, chair of the chapter's social media committee, noted upgrades to the Chapter 1 website. The address is listed atop the newsletter. Larry, Bill Ellwood and Jack Crowther plan to get some training from our web designer, Laurie Musick Wright, that will allow them to add content to the website without calling on the designer. Bill invited members with some background in computer skills to step up to help maintain the website. He also made a pitch for volunteers to help maintain our office at the VFW building and the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Main Street Park, or to help the chapter in any other way.

It was noted that the timing and length of Chapter 1 meetings mean that some members are unable to attend or must leave early. Wally Pratt noted that Rutland's American Legion Post 31 has resumed operations and has meetings on the same night.

Jack Crowther is the contact for Rutland's Loyalty Day Parade May 3 and will submit the entry form to the VFW, which is the sponsor. Last year's Chapter 1 entry featured three vehicles and several marchers. Anyone interested in taking part should contact Jack at jack\_cr2@yahoo.com or call him at 802-775-1182. He needs to estimate participation to fill out the application form.

Wally Pratt offered a design (See front page of newsletter) to be placed on the VFW building when it is painted this spring. Chapter 1 is planning something to identify the building as home to not only VFW Post 648 but also Chapter 1. John Pisanelli, commander of the VFW post, is open to whatever the chapter wants.

However, a decision needs to be made on whether the sign is painted on the building, which will be charcoal gray, or is attached to the exterior wall. The sign will likely be on the north side of the building.

A visit to the Dodge House, a transitional home for veterans in Rutland, will be addressed at the April meeting. Chapter 1 is a longtime supporter.

Observation of the country's 250th anniversary July 4 came up for discussion. Bill Ellwood raised the possibility of collaborating with VFW Post 648 on some sort of observance. Noting that schools will be out so school bands won't be available, VFW Commander Pisanelli noted the focus in Rutland seems to be on a fireworks display. "We can pair up with anything you guys are doing and help out, too," Bill noted, including donating for fireworks. He also suggested doing something to honor the Daughters of the American Revolution, "the relatives of our original veterans." He invited ideas from the membership; suggestions can be brought up at the April meeting or sent in by email at vietnamvetschapter1@gmail.com.

John Pisanelli presented the design for a World War II memorial honoring those Rutland County veterans killed in the war. The memorial will be a granite obelisk 10 ½ feet tall and 3 feet wide, with a bronze plaque listing 159 veterans killed in the war. It will be installed in Main Street Park. Cost is estimated at \$36,000 from a Barre firm. The fundraising goal is \$50,000. Carrara & Sons of North Clarendon is donating concrete, and the city will put in the footings, John said. The committee working on the memorial has collected about \$7,000 so far but has not begun full-fledged fundraising.

"I think it's a good project for us to be involved in," Bill Ellwood said. "It goes along with our (VVA) slogan that one generation (of veterans) will never forget another." John Pisanelli said the front of the monument will say, "In memory of the greatest generation, 1941-1945." The hope is to eventually add benches and, if funds are sufficient, engraved bricks donated by descendants of WW II veterans.

Bill Ellwood proposed a donation of \$5,000, and Wally Pratt made a motion to donate that amount. Seconded by Larry Gold. Following some discussion, Bill said, "I think it (the project) will get carried through, even if it takes longer than they think it will, because I think the veterans in the area will support it — and the families." Lonni Leroux made the point that the supplier of the monument needs to insure that if an additional name is discovered it can be added to the 159 known "killed in action." Those names were obtained from a monument at the Army Reserve Center in Rutland Town.

The motion passed unanimously.

Jack Crowther presented a request from Donald Adams Jr., president of the Evergreen Cemetery Board of Trustees, for a renewal of financial support for the cemetery. Chapter 1 donated \$5,000 to the group in 2024. At that time, a new board had taken over operation of the cemetery, which occupies 45 acres adjacent to Business Route 4 on the west side of the city. At the time, our donation recognized the dire financial position of the cemetery, which holds the remains of many Vermont notables, as well as some 1,400 veterans dating back to the Revolutionary War.

Jack moved to donate \$2,500 to the cemetery, seconded by Wally Pratt. Bill Ellwood has done some research on Evergreen, noting his concern that it is one of numerous private cemeteries in the state, most housing remains of veterans. Evergreen stands out, however, by being a Vermont State Historic Site. The organization in charge of it is also in the process of seeking a spot on the National Register of Historic Places. “So that kind of elevates it from just being a private cemetery,” Bill said. As a result, he supports further financial help for the organization.

Norm VanCor said he was not opposed to the donation but wondered what the purpose of the donation would be. He also wondered if Evergreen would be more difficult to maintain as a national landmark. Jack noted the request from Evergreen could allow for use of the money for general expenses or could carry restrictions. Jack said he viewed the donation as helping the organization get back on its feet and that it did not need to be part of an ongoing yearly commitment.

Larry Gold noted that in 2024 Evergreen had made a presentation to Chapter 1. He suggested that they be invited to do so again. He proposed an invitation to our April meeting to “explain what this money will be used for.” After further discussion, we tabled the motion and agreed to invite Evergreen Cemetery to make a presentation at the April meeting.

Bill raised an issue that Norm Flanders had attempted to bring up at the last meeting. Bill said he had not seen Norm attempting to be recognized. Norm’s issue was why Chapter 1 was not assisting the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington, a state-run facility. Richard Reed noted the home has an active board. He would like to know the home’s status (as a basis for determining its needs). He suggested reaching out to the home’s director, CEO Melissa Jackson, to learn what the home might need.

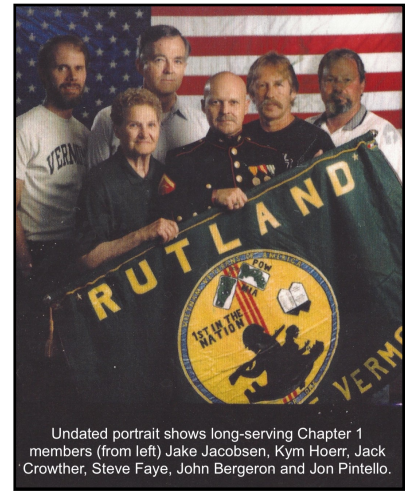
Chapter 1 Chaplain Wally Pratt is planning a visit to the home and said he will sound out Melissa Jackson on the needs of the home. Vietnam vets from Vermont annually hold a cookout for the vets at the home. Norm VanCor noted that his detachment of the Marine Corps League in Brattleboro presented the Marines at the home with lap blankets with the Marine Corps emblem. “Boy, that went over great,” he said. “They loved it.” He suggested that sort of contribution might work better than a cash donation.

Jack Crowther relayed a note from Chapter 1 member Joanne Reynolds, who informed us of an event she organized in Cornwall on March 28 honoring 100 Vermonters killed in Vietnam, including eight women. The event will take place at 1 p.m. at the Ethan and Mary Baker Allen DAR Chapter House, 2706 Vermont Route 30 in Cornwall.

AVVA member Beth Higgins notified us of the passing Feb. 4 of retired Army Col. Kym (Juanita) Hoerr in Zephyrhills, Fla., at age 96. Living in the Rutland area and attending meetings of Chapter 1 for a number of years, Kym later traveled in an RV, ultimately settling in Florida. An obit appears here: <https://www.hodgesfuneralhome.com/obituaries/juanita-hoerr>. The burial site is in Arlington National Cemetery.

March 29 is Vietnam Veterans Day, marking the date in 1973 when the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam. We are not aware of any local events connected to the anniversary, but there could be opportunities in the future.

Secretary Jack Crowther, serving as a nominating committee for the chapter, nominated the current list of officers and directors to serve another year. They are: Bill Ellwood, president; Larry Gold, vice president; Richard Reed, treasurer; Jack Crowther, secretary; and Dick Doyle, Tim Lonergan, Mike Murphy, Carl Baldwin, and Dave Potter, directors. Jack



Undated portrait shows long-serving Chapter 1 members (from left) Jake Jacobsen, Kym Hoerr, Jack Crowther, Steve Faye, John Bergeron and Jon Pintello.

**Chapter 1 has learned of the passing Feb. 4 of longtime member Kym Hoerr, shown above with others in an undated photo.**

moved the slate be nominated. Seconded by Richard Reed. Passed unanimously. Jack pointed out that anyone else interested in serving in one of these positions can be nominated at the April Annual Meeting.

Bill said he would like to encourage as many members as possible to attend the Annual Meeting April 8. He suggested that those who show up could choose a pin from the chapter's collection, which has been gathering dust for a number of years in our storage closet. We may come up with other incentives between now and then.

Bill then broached the subject of the chapter's financial planning. He noted that Treasurer Richard Reed was doing a great job with his monthly financial reports, but it might be good to have included in the report a picture of our total income for the year and the amount of donations given out. "I would like to see that, and I wonder if the other chapter members would kind of like to see, like a running total for the year, how much we've given away." On a separate but related matter, Bill noted Jack Crowther's proposal to establish an "endowment," that is, money to be set aside to support whatever organization might succeed Chapter 1 when the VVA national entity folds its tent. That may occur sometime in the next few years.

Jack said he saw an endowment as a fund to assist a future version of Chapter 1. Richard Reed pointed out that the chapter has already invested \$80,000 in a CD, which has earned over \$3,000 interest, essentially doing what Jack had suggested. "That we can earmark for whatever we want," Richard said. Bill Ellwood said the difference with an endowment would be that it would require management and payment of management fees.

Carl Baldwin, a chapter director with extensive experience in accounting, said he agreed with the concept but warned that "fraud becomes a real issue" if you leave money to an organization and "you don't know who it's going to be, who's gonna run it." Endorsing the concept of setting money aside, he suggested doing so on a temporary basis while the future direction of Chapter 1 is decided. At that point, we can specify how the money is to be used, setting legal requirements as necessary, he said. Bill Ellwood noted that in the past year our cash on hand had increased by \$25,000. "We're operating on probably less than \$50,000 a year," he said.

"Probably our annual meeting would be a good time to discuss it and maybe make a proposal," Bill said.

Abe Leber, looking beyond the present organization, noted members are "not going to be here forever." Money might go for scholarships for grandkids or great-grandkids of Vietnam veterans, he suggested. "But I think the discussion is: what happens if, what happens when?"

Bill Ellwood noted that Chapter 1 has already established two endowments, one for \$50,000 for students from Stafford Technical School to continue training in trade and professional fields, another for \$40,000 for maintenance of the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Jack Crowther encouraged members to read the future options laid out in the latest issue of The Veteran (VVA's magazine) for local chapters. Options include continuing as a veterans advocacy group, with attendant privileges and restrictions, or continuing as a general non-profit open to anyone. The latter would be limited in its ability to lobby for veterans.

Richard Reed said, "Personally I would like to see it (the chapter's money) spent on worthwhile things. And if we can endow the organization that replaces us . . . but what do we envision that organization to be?"

A final thought came from Mark Truhan, an original member of the chapter and its third president. He suggested the chapter and perhaps other chapters might fund "an educational seat" at a university or school of higher education "to teach the history of the Vietnam War and the soldiers who fought it."

"That's a good thought," Bill Ellwood responded. "We've got a lot of possibilities, we've got time. It's going to be a few years before the national (organization) folds up, I'm sure. . . . And again, just so you know, if nothing else we are incorporated in the state of Vermont, . . . so we can continue on as we are. But we're all gonna pass away, so, you know, we gotta do something to secure the future."

Respectfully submitted,  
Jack Crowther, Secretary

**The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 8, at 4 p.m. downstairs at VFW Post 648, 15 Wales St., Rutland.**