



Vietnam Women Veterans

Dear Sisters:

It was great being with many of you at the VVW Conference in Branson. I want to give everyone a recap of the Conference.

First, let me thank you all for making the Conference a success. Everyone there helped out in some way, all I had to do was mention that something needed to be done and someone would jump in and do it. For those of you who did not attend, our Treasurer, Precilla Wilkewitz had to leave before the Conference started, due to an unexpected death. Precilla always does so much for our Conferences that I tend to rely on her. True to form, Precilla had everything prepared and gave me all the points I needed before she departed. Yes, Precilla, everyone missed you. I thank you for all the pointers you left with me.

A good number of the VVW arrived on Wednesday eager to get started and see old and new friends. Our drivers, Frances Crawford (non-VVW) and Jinx, started making the runs to the airport. Frances made what we thought was our last run to Springfield on Wednesday night, unfortunately, one of our women did not arrive at the scheduled time and would not arrive til later. Frances already had several people to bring back to Branson. When Frances called, all I did was mention that I needed someone to ride with me to Springfield, Marsha (Cricket) Holder volunteered to even drive her car to the airport, so she and I motored to Springfield. Cricket had just arrived in Branson after a long drive from Mississippi. Thanks Cricket. Gail Nelson joined the Driving Pool later and was kind enough to take Jinx and Karen to Springfield in the wee hours of the morning. Thank you Gail.

As everyone was busy greeting each other with hugs and hand shakes, Sallie Carroll was busy getting ready for the Silent Auction, collecting items (the attendees were very

generous in donating items) and putting them on the table. Sallie did a great job in handling the Silent Auction. Thank You Sallie. Carol Ogg worked the Registration Desk and sold her book "Fields of Fire" which she donated the proceeds to VVW. Thank you, Carol, for your time and generosity. She also sold Janet Dailey's books that were donated by Aurora Toth. Thank you, Aurora.

When I arrived in Branson, Sallie Carroll had already volunteered to handle the Memorial Service. She and Precilla, had everything ready to go. Again, thank you Precilla and Sallie.

Our first function was a trip to see The Baldknobbers, Branson's first show before Branson became a Show Place. It was a fun evening, even getting everyone in and out of the vans.

The conference opened with the presentation of the colors by the Forsyth High School Marine Corps JROTC. These young women did a superb job. The National Anthem was sung by Brenda Meadows. Our own Lucki Allen gave the Invocation. Mayor Raeanne Presley welcomed us and spoke at length about Branson. The keynote speaker was Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, Director, Center for Women Veterans, Office of the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Trowell-Harris spoke about the initiatives the VA is working on concerning women's issues. She is an excellent speaker and was very informative. There was a good give and take. Dr. Trowell-Harris spent two full days with us, attended meetings, went to the shows, was available for personal discussions, and just mingled with us. Lucki Allen closed the ceremony with the Invocation. Thank You, Lucki.

The afternoon started with a Light Lunch with the Author Janet Dailey, who spoke of her background and how she got into writing. She signed books for those who requested. The women enjoyed mingling and talking to

Janet Daily. Thank you Aurora for arranging and handling Janet Daily's visit.

Friday evening, we were off to the Grand Country Buffet and Jubilee. The food was of variety and I know I certainly overate. The show was fun and entertaining.

Saturday morning started with the Business Meeting. The following officers were elected: President: Nancy Jurgevich, First Vice- President: Nancy Wadley Keough, Second Vice-President: Kathy Kennedy Fontana, 3rd Vice-President: Aurora Gibson Toth, Secretary: Rhynell Stoabs Karr, Treasurer: Precilla Landry Wilkewitz.

Aurora provided information on the Biloxi, Mississippi area for the 2012 VWV Conference. Tentative dates are April 26 - 29, 2012. Susan (Sky) Commons volunteered to put this Conference together. She is already working on it. Thanks, Sky.

A discussion was held concerning the 2014 Conference. Although it is four years from now, some suggestions were: Oklahoma City, OK; Louisville, KY; and the Catskills, NY. Anyone interested in putting the Conference together should show up with materials pertaining to the geographic area they are suggesting for the Conference.

As you are aware costs continue to rise on everything, specifically mailing and printing costs. There are many of us that do not connect with our group through email so we need to send all available information regarding VWV to those ladies by mail. It was voted upon that we would charge an Administrative fee of \$10.00 (which covers mailing costs for two years) and that this amount would defray all of those charges so that we can still reach out to everyone. We have started that process and would ask that you send your money to Mary (Hay) Wilson so that we can insure the continued commitment of communication with all of our ladies from all Armed Forces that we served with in Vietnam. Her address is 11123 Luttrell Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20902.

This is strictly an Administrative Fee and is by no means a membership fee. We will still send out 3-mails and post information on the web. For those who do not have e-mail, you may want to try your local library and set-up

an email address. All VWV are members of our organization, whether you choose to receive mail or not. And you certainly are welcome to attend the Conferences. Mary Wilson has agreed to handle the Administrative Fee. The checks should be made out to: Vietnam Women Veterans and mailed to: Mary Wilson, 11123 Luttrell Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902-3556. With this fee, I intend to get info out a couple of times a year.

Thank you, Jean Stallings, Parliamentarian, for helping me and insuring I followed the guideline in conducting the business meeting.

One of the conference highlights was a very nice lunch buffet in the Keeter Center at the College of the Ozarks. The lunch was tasty and as Pat Jernigan put it, "the home baked cookies were just terrific." The college is very interesting as the students run many of the campus facilities and literally work their way through college.

The program included a presentation by two students who accompanied two WWII Iwo Jima Marine veterans on a return trip to that bloody battlefield. Now a Japanese Naval Base, and normally closed to visitors, the group was allowed to visit for a couple of hours. The trip was very obviously a sobering experience for them and their presentation was very moving. They gained a tremendous insight into the experiences of these Marines.

Following the Student Presentation, we had our Memorial Service organized by Sallie Carroll. Our own Faye Conaway, sang the Star Spangled Banner and as Pat Jernigan said, it was one of the very best renditions she has ever heard. Thank You, Faye. Sonia Gonzalez read a Remembrance Poem, followed by Sky Commons Laying the Wreath. Thanks, Sonia and Sky, Pat Jernigan, Army, Penny Adams, Navy, Betty Ann Patterson, Air Force, Cricket Holder, Army represented the Marines, read the names of 144 sisters who have died since they served in Vietnam. Thank you all for representing the Services. Along with reading the names of our deceased sisters, we placed rose pedals in a symbolic fountain in their memory. Frances Crawford provided the bugle for Taps. Thank you, Frances. Once again, Lucki Allen closed the Service with a prayer. Thanks, Lucki. Thank you, Sally Carroll for conducting the Memorial Service. Patty Babcock Schmauch brought her own computer

and printer and spent a lot of time in her room updating the deceased list. Patty has been very helpful in trying to make me computer-literate. Thank you, Patty, I really appreciate your help and patience. Aurora Toth and Tish McCullough conducted the POW/MIA Ceremony. Aurora did the reading while Tish pointed to the various items. Thank you, Aurora and Tish.

Saturday evening we started by having a photo shoot of the VVW and Guests, followed by the auctions and a Pizza Party. The Auction was super fun. Amazing how some of us bid. Can you imagine a person from Wisconsin bidding on a Superman Cow - I thought Wisconsin had plenty of cows!!!

Our own, Laura Pariseau was the Auctioneer, assisted by Rosie Tinsley, for the separate auction that was held for a handmade quilt that displayed VVW Logo in the Center and each of the Services displayed in the corners. Sallie Carroll brought this quilt that two friends of hers in Arizona made. Yvonne Gorniak did the computer pattern and Lucy Kreutz did the quilt. Yvonne also did a bead panel that we displayed at the entrance of the Conference Room. We will keep the bead panel for future conferences. The bidding for the quilt was fun, someone even made a bid against herself!!!! We owe Sallie and her two friends a big Thank You. The auction got better as the evening went on. A pair of glasses was found in the ladies room and they were auctioned off. Another item of interest, a \$2.00 bill was found and that was auctioned for \$40.00. Thanks to all who brought items for the auction and thank you all for your generosity. Cricket Holder and Rhynell (Rhyn) collected the money from the auction and tallied it up. Thank you, Cricket and Rhyn.

The rest of Saturday evening was spent socializing and playing cards. I think the Hospitality Room was unlocked till the wee hours; at any rate everyone appeared to be having a good time.

In addition to Dr. Trowell-Harris, we had three other guests who were professional in their fields of interest and were great to socialize and fit right in with VVW. They were: Matt Clausan, Membership Director, National VFW, Tish McCullough, Chairperson National VFW. It was a pleasure to meet and spend time with these two individuals. Tish is a vibrant young woman with lots of

energy and is a great asset to women veterans. Tish promised to be at our next conference. Both Tish and Matt are two young people that have a positive influence in VFW recruiting. This is the Fifth Conference that the VFW has supported. We owe them a big thank you. Karen Etzler, Women Veterans Coordinator, State of Missouri was there to help women get enrolled in the VA System. I think that everyone at the Conference is enrolled in the VA and if not enrolled, they have info and Karen has them started. Thanks to Karen for all the good things she does for women veterans.

Christie Parker-Williams, Women Veterans Coordinator, VA Regional Office, St. Louis, Missouri spent Friday with us and briefed us on her office. We even had her husband volunteer to operate the Technical Equipment for Dr Trowell-Harris. We appreciate both Christie and her husband, Percival, for their assistance.

We had individual guests that were a joy to have with us. The guests all volunteered to help in many different ways, from running errands to helping with transportation. They gave very generously of their time, contributions and assistance to the VVW. Thank you for all your help.

Everyone always likes the Goodie Bags. An anonymous VVW donated the patriotic bags. We all owe her a Thank You. Frances Crawford, a non-VVW contributed many items for the bags along with contributions by Precilla and Connie Fauver. Our own Merline Loveless, Author, New York Times Best Seller List, donated two autographed books for each Goodie Bag. Thank you all for the donations for the great Goodie Bags.

Note from Precilla, she finally got to give Nancy Jurgevich "orders" for the VVW conference - the orders were about what to do at the VVW conference while Precilla was away. Precilla thought that was "cool" because Nancy always was the one to give the orders in Nam. And guess what - I appreciate those orders, as they made the conference run smoothly.

The conference went well because of everyones help and participation. If I have failed to mention your name, I assure you, it was not on purpose.

I want to thank those VVW for having faith in me to be your President. I will give it my best for the next two years. I do

want to remind you that VVW is your organization and that I am always open to suggestions and recommendations to better our organization. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sunday morning came very early for departures. With memories of good times and now a time for a bit of sadness as we went our separate ways, with hope we will meet again in two years.

A bit of news since the Conference. The Department of Defense is setting up the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Commission. This commemorative program will thank and honor all veterans of the Vietnam War. I attended the initial planning meeting on May 11th in Washington, DC. Not a lot of details are available yet. Pat Jernigan has agreed to be our representative on this Commission. I am sure Pat will keep us up to date on the activities as information becomes available. Thanks Pat for agreeing to do this for VVW.

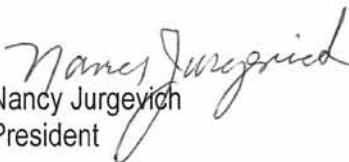
Mary (Hay) Wilson is looking for funny stories from our time in Vietnam. This request comes from Mary and it is a great idea. We have stories that need to be preserved and not all of our time in Vietnam was sad or blighted - we did have some funny moments that are worth cherishing. It is Mary's intent to see if she can get your stories published. Mary has a couple from that time - she hopes you do too and that you will share them with her. You can send them by email - mhwilson1@gmail.com or by mail to her home 11123 Luttrell Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20902. It can be short or long! It can have as many details or as few - just tell Mary the story so that she can gather our "funny history"! !! She wants stories from everyone - PLEASE!!! Mary cannot do

this without your contributions. If you do not want your name attached to the story - just say so and she is honor bound to comply. But share your funny story with her - and hopefully with other service members from the Vietnam Era and our Nation. Mary thanks you from the bottom of her heart - - and looks forward to hearing from each and every one of you.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is doing a comprehensive study of women Veterans, who served in the military during the Vietnam War, to explore the effects of their military service upon their mental and physical health. They are in the first phase: Recruiting Participants. To enroll in this study you should call 1 888 831 3325. There is also a website which you can visit. It is www.research.va.gov/programs/csp/csp/579.cfm. I am told that you will be compensated for your participation. I would encourage you to register. I registered last week and it only takes a few minutes. The Recruiting phase closes in July.

Nancy and Jim Keough have been working very hard to put together a Memory Book, however the project has come to a halt due to the lack of funds. We may have a donor from our organization, but I will not commit the money until it is in the bank.

I look forward to hearing from you. Remember this is your organization and newsletter.


Nancy Jurgeovich
President