

# VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (VAC)

Minutes of Regular Meeting

**Monday, April 21st, 2014 @ 6:30 P.M.**

American Legion Hall  
12 Freestone Avenue, Portland, Connecticut

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Members in attendance: R. Farrington-Chairman, R. Cote, T. Dickerson, W. Willinsky, J. Sterry, P. DeRing, W. Petras, D. Hutchins

Absent: K. Burke, R. Walton

Guest(s) in attendance: J. Mill (Middletown Press)

Meeting called to order at 1830.

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes from prior meeting: J. Sterry moved to accept the minutes of the March 17th meeting. R. Cote seconded. Two spelling errors were pointed out. "Father" was misspelled "farther" in paragraph three and "Willinsky" was misspelled "Wilinsky" in paragraph four. All in favor as amended? Minutes accepted as amended.

Parade update from W. Willinsky:

Father Paul will do the invocation and be the keynote speaker.

Pastor Jim Reemts will do the benediction.

William Stocking Research:

Elsie Hale remembered him as her old iceman but did not remember him serving in the military.

Contacted either Cliff Robinson or Peggy Tierney who have a map of Center Cemetery. They found the grave and there was no military marker there.

T. Dickerson reported that a search on Ancestry.com came up with no Stocking members in the military from Portland.

The town clerk, Bernie Dillon, had nothing on Mr. Stocking to indicate that he served in the military. Conclusion is that it was not a Stocking from Portland.

A purchase request was submitted to the town to purchase 800 new flags for the graves from Quonset Surplus. The town sent the request out for three bids with Quonset Surplus being slightly higher than another bid. The VAC discussed this issue (with R. Farrington abstaining) and felt that the town should try to keep business in town even if it was a little more expensive. The VAC also wondered if the bidders both bid on providing the same quality of flag (Made in USA) and if the shipping costs were included or not in the comparison. The VAC voted (with R. Farrington abstaining) to make the purchase from Quonset Surplus even if it was a little more expensive. However, the final determination will be made by the town's purchasing policy.

Tentative plan to put out flags on May 10<sup>th</sup>. (Hopefully only one day will be needed.) R. Farrington will work with Ms. Karch and the Key Club from Portland High School to arrange volunteers. R. Farrington hopes to have at least one other adult chaperone participating. R. Farrington will try to get plastic spikes and an installation tool to put in the ground at each military grave to make flag installation and removal easier.

Discussed a veteran from another town who had a stroke and is not doing well. The family cannot find his DD-214 and was looking for suggestions on where they could obtain one. It was suggested that they try the town hall. If the veteran is getting a tax break, there is probably a DD-214 on file. Another option is to search for the form on the internet to fill out, print and mail it in to get another copy.

W. Willinsky reported that so far, they only have two names to add to the monument. The contractor that adds the names said it may not be worthwhile for him to come out to put on only two names. It was suggested that we set a minimum amount to ensure we get the names on every year instead of waiting multiple years until we have more names. While more names could be added to the list in the last two weeks the VAC agreed that a minimum should be set. T. Dickerson made a motion that the VAC pay the engraver the quoted price per letter with a minimum of \$200. J. Sterry seconded. All in favor? Motion passed.

W. Petras said another name that might not be on the wall is Mr. Caffrey (1<sup>st</sup> LT who graduated from West Point.) It was mentioned that permission from the veteran or parents of the veteran should be received before the name is added to the wall.

Another person whose name may not be on the wall was described as a member of the Coast Guard, whose father is a fire fighter in Hamden. Name unknown at this time.

W. Petras provided an update on the Wreathes Across America. He also mentioned that he received an e-mail from Ms. Laurie Boske (Principal of Brownstone Intermediate School) stating that she wants to get more involved with gathering wreathes. Last year the State cemetery received about 800 wreathes, which was only enough to do the outside rows. The Bow Lane Cemetery has about 8000 graves and adds about 1 to 5 more graves per day. This year is also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arlington Cemetery so interest is very high.

W. Petras also stated that Ilene Hurst, from the CCSU History Project, wanted everyone to save the date for the Vietnam 50<sup>th</sup> Celebration at the Bradley Airport July 12, 13 & 14 2015.

J. Sterry, Veterans Service Officer – No current cases.

A motion to adjourn was made by W. Petras. Seconded by R. Cote. All in favor? Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 1945.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 19th, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

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Timothy Dickerson