



VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.

www.battleofthebulge.org

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Bowling Center

Fort George G. Meade

8 January 2013

PRESENT:

Douglas C. Dillard	Ruth L. Hamilton	Robert G. Rhodes	Demetri Paris
Ralph W. Bozorth	Alfred H. M. Shehab	J. David Bailey	Sally Lung (Guest)
Mike Levin	John D. Bowen	George Chekan	

ABSENT:

Doris Davis	Thomas Chambers	Bert L. Rice	Stanley Wojtusik
Alan Cunningham	Robert Bowles	Louis Cunningham	Kevin Diehl
Hope Kirkendall	Mary Ann D. Bowen	John J. Dunleavy	Tracey Diehl
Madeleine Bryant	Gary Patucci	William P Tayman	

Prior to the meeting, John D. Bowen distributed Annual Conflict of Interest Forms for signature by Executive Council Members.

President Douglas Dillard called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. in the Ft Meade Bowling Center Lounge.

Acting Chaplain John Bowen gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag led by Alfred Shehab. Recording Secretary Ruth Hamilton then took the Roll Call as indicated above.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: The Minutes of the last meeting, 13 November 2012, were previously emailed, or mailed, to all Executive Council members. Ruth Hamilton stated that there were some minor corrections noted on the minutes that were provided to John Bowen who served as the past Secretary. President Dillard made a motion to accept the minutes with corrections which was seconded by Alfred Shehab and after a vote, the motion carried without dissent.

PRESIDENT'S GENERAL COMMENTS & STATUS REORT: President Dillard thanked everyone for their past participation. He pointed out that the position of Executive Vice President is vacant due to John Schaffner's declination of nomination for the position. Ralph Bozorth, who has agreed to help with the 2013 Annual Reunion is interested in the position. Alfred Shehab made a motion that Ralph be nominated as Executive Vice President. Past President Demetri ("Dee") Paris seconded the nomination and the vote carried without dissent. President Dillard said that he mailed letters to State Chapter presidents in December with several objectives, such as: To stimulate a dialogue between the National and State Chapters; to stimulate a nationwide Associate Member effort; for State Chapters to send data for the Bulge Bugle (some do); to advise directly the arrangements with/donation to the Infantry Foundation; and to encourage state representation at the reunion with Chapter participation during the business meeting. He received several responses to his letter via phone, email and letters (congratulatory comments and an overall desire to work with him). He also provided additional information about the Holocaust Museum events, etc.

Alfred Shehab asked how many Chapters currently are in the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. (VBOB) organization. (There are 51 Chapters; some Chapters are not part of the National organization.) He made a motion to have VBOB fund the travel expenses of the VBOB President. A discussion ensued about the maximum amount of the expenses and an amount of \$5,000 was recommended. Alfred amended the motion to give the VBOB President an expense account of \$5,000 to fund travel expenses. Past President George Chekan seconded the amended motion; a vote was taken and the motion carried without dissent. Past President Dee Paris discussed a previous suggestion for computerized accounting of Chapter members. Sally Lung stated that in order to incorporate non-National members into the National VBOB, they need to send the \$15 fee in addition to their Chapter fee.

President Dillard mentioned that Alan Cunningham had sent a letter to members regarding the dissolution of VBOB; we don't want to give the impression that we are not a viable organization. We would rather push for associate members. Sally Lung said that we are getting new members each month; however, we need to stimulate members to get them to renew each year.

Alfred Shehab recommended that those trustees who do not attend meetings should be eliminated; either by attrition upon expiration of their term or by letter. Past President George Chekan stated that our membership is older; the average age is 89. It is difficult for many to get to meetings. It takes him over an hour to get to meetings. Past President Dee Paris said that we would have to change the bylaws if we were to eliminate trustees simply because they did not attend meetings. Alfred talked about interest in VBOB shown at an Army Reserve meeting, so there still is interest in continuing the organization. President Dillard pointed out that in reenergizing the Executive Council, we need to look at younger Associate Members who can carry on the organization and can get involved in marketing, membership, etc. Mike Levin suggested that several copies of the application form be provided to Executive Council members. Bob Rhodes quickly provided a copy of the application form, which has a letter to prospective Associate Members. Ruth Hamilton said that the application form is also readily available on the VBOB Website.

MEMBERSHIP: Mike Levin read the membership figures from 1 September 2012 to 31 October 2012--there are 2728 Regular (Veteran) Members and 1500 Associate Members for a total of 4228 Total Members. We had 119 new members within the past two months (112 Associate Members and 7 Regular Members). Three members upgraded from Regular to Lifetime Memberships. Our net gain for the period was 12 members. Past President George Chekan requested the number of paying members. Ralph Bozorth said that he can get that information from the database. President Doug Dillard commented that the Associate Member Program is going well, thanks to Bob Rhodes.

Bob Rhodes said that for the first time in history we have more Associate Members account for 55% of the Regular (Veteran) Memberships; this is 35% of the Total Memberships; we need to keep in touch with these members. A letter was sent to all Regular (veteran) Members soliciting memberships of family members and friends; we got 302 new Associate Members from the first mailing. He sent out a second letter (2812 letters were mailed in November 2012) and, as mentioned earlier, we got another 112 new Associate Members. The advantages of sending these marketing letters are that we may get some new veteran members, we get people to pay their dues, we get notification of deceased members, and we got 18 donations in the amount of \$535.

Bob Rhodes intends to step aside as the "go to guy" for Associate Membership. His replacement must be able to accomplish certain tasks (use of iPad, uploading and downloading JPEG images and YouTube videos, knowledge of Twitter, Facebook, blogs, etc.). This is the way to go with young people today. He has asked a few Associate members, who were somewhat reluctant to take on the task, but there are a number of Associate Members who may be encouraged to step up to the plate as the job can be done using the Internet and other social media means. There is an opportunity to encourage others to join, too. Alfred Shehab reiterated that there is a 14 June Army Birthday/Flag Day event held here at Fort Meade and he suggested that we get a VBOB table at this event; we can possibly get some new Associate Members at that event. Bob added that we need to be cognizant about giving out email address on email--make distribution using the Bcc: address to avoid this.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Sally Lung, Accountant, provided Executive Council members with copies of the Profit & Loss Statement from 1 December 2012 - 7 January 2013 and the Balance Sheet as of 7 January 2013. The Profit & Loss Statement shows Total Income of \$6,573.38, Expenses of \$8,281.29 (Bugle \$2,074.64 + Operations \$6,206.65) for a Net Income as of \$-1,707.91. Total Assets on the Balance Sheet are \$171,446.95. Copies are attached.

Sally indicated that we are \$1700 in the hole with an overall \$10,000 loss on revenue. A lack of membership dues renewals, the donation of \$25,000, and reunion fees put us into a negative balance. Alfred Shehab made a motion to accept the financial report; the motion was seconded and carried by a majority vote. Past President Dee Paris opposed acceptance.

TREASURER'S REPORT & ANALYSIS OF NEW ORLEANS REUNION EXPENSES. Ralph Bozorth, provided a report on the 2012 convention: Income - \$41,945.50, Expenses - \$52,137.09. VBOB lost \$10,191.59 on the reunion. The organization broke even on sightseeing tours, but lost \$2400 on food and drink. Miscellaneous expenses & registration income was \$4,541, but expenses were nearly \$13,000 (including approximately \$2700 paid to the hotel for rooms and \$1800 in printing and postage as well as \$2400 to Kevin and Tracey Diehl for work at the reunion). Donations have been made to help compensate for reunion expenses. We must keep an eye on anticipated costs. A discussion ensued pertaining to registration fees and suggestions about how to gauge prices. President Dillard has prepared guidance on how to conduct a reunion for future conventions. Alfred Shehab asked if VBOB uses a local Chapter to help support reunions. Past President George Chekan recounted past reunions that made profits. Past President Dee Paris suggested that we should not aim to make a profit on reunions due to members' health, income, etc. Past President J. David Bailey said he was not familiar with having to pay for breakfast at convention hotels. Past President Paris stated that there were some conflicting stories about the restaurant at the hotel and the proximity of other local restaurants. Other attendees added comments.

BULGE BUGLE. Past President George Chekan discussed the next issue of the *Bulge Bugle* with a photo of the Executive Council on the front. Alan Cunningham will have the keynote portion of the next issue. Past President Chekan said that he received the obituary on Charles Durning and said that it is largely untrue; the name of his unit was never recorded. It is questionable whether or not it will be included in the *Bulge Bugle*. Ruth Hamilton mentioned that the *Washington Post* published a correction to the article in the 27 December 2012 issue indicating that Charles Durning was never at Malmedy during World War II as implied in the original obituary notice.

2013 REUNION. Ralph Bozorth said that the reunion will be held in Kansas City, MO this year. He received responses from 11 hotels in the area and whittled the possible options down to 3 hotels (one located downtown, one near the airport, and one 25 miles outside the city limits). The two sets of dates are 3-8 September or 23-28 September; the second date being at the hotel outside the city. Room rates range from \$103-123. The downtown location favors the 3-8 September dates. What is more important-location or dates? Sally Lung suggested that the proximity of other conveniences (shopping and restaurants) be checked. Excelsior Springs is the location of one of the proposed hotels (Past President Dee Paris was born there and recommended against that location. Suggestions on location preferences from others were voiced. Sally suggested contacting hotels in Kansas City, KS. Downtown locations offer more options for members. Alfred Shehab, from previous experience, said that he likes hotels near the airport. President Dillard said that he authorizes 3-8 September. John Bowen made a motion to hold all comments and allow Ralph to work out the details; the motion was seconded and the vote was carried. President Dillard said that clearly coordination is essential for reunions. Past President J. David Bailey said that when he traveled to Kansas Ted Pritchard of Topeka, KS was very "gung ho" on this reunion. Ted is a Korean War veteran. He is sure that some members of the Chapter will be there. Ralph is aware of this. Sally recommended that some free time be built into the schedule.

2014 REUNION. The South Carolina Chapter volunteered to host the reunion in 2014. As far as we know, no action has been taken. Past President J. David Bailey reminded all attendees that 2014 will be the 20th annual reunion. A group may go to Bastogne for remembrance 16 December 2014. Past President Bailey made a motion to hold the 2014 reunion in Columbia, SC; the motion was seconded and discussion occurred. A vote was taken and it carried with one non-acceptance by Past President Dee Paris.

FINAL COMMENTS. John Bowen has been the Recording Secretary for more than 19 years and he was recognized by the group for his untiring effort.

Alfred Shehab mentioned that he had a plaque for Person of the Year; he believes that it was taken to a meeting and may have been picked up by someone. (The engraver he uses does not have the plaque as previously thought.) He asked that Executive Council members inquire around in an attempt to get it back. If it cannot be found, Alfred said that he feels responsible and will replace it. The problem is that we need to identify the past recipients of the Person of the Year Award.

President Dillard received a Christmas card from Roy LeJune especially designed for VBOB members who signed the certificate in New Orleans, LA.

Regarding the book of veterans' stories, Ralph Bozorth received release forms from 180 people who wrote stories. He also contacted a lawyer who said that we might not need release forms. He stated that it's a shame that of the 550 veterans solicited, only 180 responded.

A Nazi flag captured in Fulda, Germany on display at the meeting was provided by Bob Rhodes. It was given to him by a friend and it is to be forwarded to James E. ("Jim") Triesler, VBOB Person of the Year for 2012, who works with high school students in Richmond, VA. He spoke about his program at the Reunion in New Orleans, LA.

The meeting was adjourned at 1200.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruth L. Hamilton, Recording Secretary
1045 N. Utah Street, Apt. 408
Arlington, VA 22201-5753
703-527-8235
ruth12345@aol.com

Chapters that have had changes in officers or meeting dates/times to Ruth Hamilton ruth12345@aol.com. These changes will update information on the VBOB Web Site at [www:battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org). Please note that John D. Bowen is no longer the Recording Secretary for the organization.

2013 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS:

**10:00 a.m. Fort Meade Bowling Center
(Between PX and Commissary)
Fort George G. Meade, MD
Tuesday, 5 March 2013
Tuesday, 7 May 2013
Tuesday 9 July 2013
Tuesday, 27 August 2013
Tuesday, 12 November 2013**