



## VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.

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

### MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Bowling Center

Fort George G. Meade

7 May 2013

#### PRESENT:

Ralph W. Bozorth	Madeleine Bryant	Robert G. Rhodes	George Chekan
Mike Levin	Alfred H. M. Shehab	Mary Ann D. Bowen	Sally Lung (Guest)
Ruth L. Hamilton	John D. Bowen	J. David Bailey	John Schaffner

#### ABSENT:

Douglas C. Dillard	Thomas Chambers	Louis Cunningham	Stanley Wojtusik
Doris Davis	Robert Bowles	John J. Dunleavy	Kevin Diehl
Alan Cunningham	Gary Patucci	Demetri Paris	Tracey Diehl
Hope Kirkendall	Bert L. Rice	William P. Tayman	

Executive Vice President (EXVP) Ralph Bozorth called the meeting to order at 10:00 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 5 March 2013 meeting were emailed to all Executive Council members with email addresses. Printed copies of the minutes were available at the meeting. Ruth Hamilton cited one typographical error not noticed beforehand. Alfred Shehab made a motion to accept the minutes with the correction. The motion was seconded and it carried without dissent.

**PRESIDENT'S GENERAL COMMENTS & STATUS REPORT:** EXVP Bozorth acknowledged George Chekan's 90th birthday on 29 April 2013. Then he read comments from President Douglas Dillard. President Dillard regretted that he could not attend the meeting due to his need to remain in Germany with his wife. He asked that the Executive Council table any significant items pending the next meeting, excluding any emergency item(s). He also addressed ongoing areas of concern to be noted by the Executive Council pertaining to nominations, the 2013 and 2014 Reunions, and the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

After coordinating with Executive Council members, he requested that Ruth Hamilton and Alfred Shehab chair the 2014 Nominating Committee. Both the EXVP and Treasurer positions will need to be filled (both are two-year terms). As we approach 2015, we must make critical decisions regarding the VBOB Executive Council membership, particularly since VBOB veterans have aged over time. We have rotated VBOB veterans among the positions and it is now time to consider Associate Members to eventually fill the VBOB President's position.

The 2013 Reunion will be covered in detail later in the agenda. The 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge requires that we start planning for the events that will occur in 2014. The stateside 2014 Reunion in Columbia, SC was approved and the South Carolina Chapter has volunteered to work local events and programs. The EXVP will coordinate with the South Carolina Chapter and measures will be taken to keep down costs at that reunion without cheapening the event.

The VBOB Historical Foundation will plan and schedule the annual commemoration event in the Washington, DC area in December 2013 and we want to publicize this one-time event to attract a good turn-out of members and friends.

President Dillard plans to participate in the 70th Anniversary events in Belgium and Luxembourg (especially at locations where his Parachute Infantry Battalion fought). He will appoint a joint VBOB and Belgian/Luxembourg 70th Anniversary Planning Committee to consider potential events for 2014, including a group trip to Belgium/Luxembourg. He has written to the respective Ambassadors requesting a designee from each of their embassies to work with VBOB personnel to identify, plan and coordinate events in 2014. President Dillard recently had lunch with the Ambassador for Luxembourg (at a U.S. Army Historical Foundation event) at which a joint donation pledge was made by VBOB and the Luxembourg Embassy. At this event, the Ambassador said he wishes to hold an open house at the Embassy on the commemoration day for invited veterans, families and friends. President Dillard expressed that VBOB will do whatever it can to make the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge a successful event. The VBOB Executive Council can address the degree of participation VBOB would assume. At this time, we do not know what the Belgians have in mind for the 70th Anniversary event(s).

President Dillard's activities during the St. Patrick's Day Parade were captured in the *Bulge Bugle*. On 15 March 2013, he attended a reception at the Irish Embassy. He met retired ADM Mullen, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Parade Marshal for the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Washington, DC. President Dillard was the Marshal of the "C" (3rd) Division in the Parade; John Bowen and Mike Levin also participated in the parade and the VBOB flag was proudly displayed. He issued two VBOB coins during the event.

President Dillard continues to receive communications from VBOB Chapters, some with significant activities, which he forwards for possible inclusion in the *Bulge Bugle*.

Past President J. David Bailey stated that he was asked to represent President Dillard at the Veterans Day Committee Meeting at the Veterans Administration (VA) on 16 May 2013. He also announced that on Victory in Europe (V-E) Day, 8 May 2013, at 9:00 a.m. a ceremony commemorating the 68th Anniversary of the Allied Victory in Europe was scheduled. Special honorees include World War II veterans who served in Europe and Holocaust survivors. (He was unable to attend the V-E Day event because of a conference call with VA regarding a discussion on implementation of VA joint outreach initiatives.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Sally Lung reviewed the VBOB Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet through 6 May 2013. She indicated that VBOB is doing well; we received 191 donations for a total of \$9356. Regarding membership, we had 15 lifelong members join and 1300 renewals since December 2012 with the peak month being February 2013. Our total worth is \$178,000. Mike Levin moved to accept the reports. His motion was seconded and carried without dissent.

**STANDING RULES & BYLAWS:** Mary Ann Bowen stated that the Standing Rules have been done and passed; the Bylaws have been revised and approved. A periodic review of the Bylaws should be accomplished periodically.

Past President Demetri (Dee) Paris, at one time, asked if the Treasurer has been in the position for three years, does he need to give it up? EXVP Ralph Bozorth said, "No." The concern is to prevent someone from serving in a single capacity for too long, which prevents their learning about the entire organization.

**2013 REUNION:** EXVP Ralph Bozorth explained that the President of the Northeast Kansas Chapter, Mark Collins, met with Alan Cunningham. The dates of the 2013 Reunion are 3-8 September 2013, but rooms will be available a few days before and after those dates. The Embassy Suites rate is \$126, which includes a free shuttle, breakfast and complimentary Manager's Reception daily. It is close to the airport. If members provide flight arrival times, the shuttle service should work out well. The registration fee for the reunion is \$35. A trip will go to Independence, MO including a visit to the Truman Library, Ophelia's for lunch, and the Frontier Trails Museum for a cost of \$61. Another trip will be to Fort Leavenworth where they will roll out the red carpet for our veterans. There will be a welcome by the Commanding Officer, lunch, a visit to the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, the Frontier Army Museum and the Buffalo Soldier Monument for a cost of \$47. There will be a morning trip to the World War I Museum that is more than just a museum followed by lunch at Harvey's at Union Station. Then, in the evening, Mark Collins has made arrangements for a trip to the Harley Davidson Factory; after a tour of the factory, there will be a BBQ at the Harley-Davidson showroom for a cost of \$57. The Harley-Davidson company has been very enthusiastic about our visit; they want to provide lanyards and identification cards for the group. The Color Guard from Fort Leavenworth will be present at the banquet at the Embassy Suites. Members can register online for the hotel. The hotel has three flag bases and a large American flag John Bowen will bring the VBOB flag and we will need one additional flag base. VBOB has a room block of 60 rooms. EXVP Bozorth recommended that members register early; they can cancel, if necessary. He also recommended getting flights and rental cars soon as rates can go up quickly. Details are in the May issue of the *Bulge Bugle*. John Bowen said that he will advertise the event within his local Chapter.

**BULGE BUGLE:** Past President George Chekan mentioned that full details of the reunion are found on pages 16 and 17 of the *Bulge Bugle*. The May issue lists 62 members who have bid us farewell (page 7) and there is a page of donors on page 28. He showed the Executive Council members a proof of the *Bulge Bugle* cover with information on the 2013 Reunion tours.

Past President J. David Bailey complimented Past President Chekan, Kevin and Tracey Diehl on the wonderful job they are doing on the *Bulge Bugle*.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Bob Rhodes discussed Associate Member Recruitment, which is approaching the 500 member mark established 2 years ago. We are currently at 440 Associate Members. He said that he did not know how the recruitment would work, but he is happy with where we are now. However, we have to be concerned about losses of members and any suggestions are welcome because memberships will be down greatly in several years. We had 151 net members in January/February 2013. With approximately 900 losses per year, in 4 years the organization will be gutted.

Bob pointed out an email from Past President Tom Chambers with a detailed approach to connect with other Associate Members. Mike Levin said that reunion dates should be scheduled to allow children and grandchildren of veterans to attend them and encourage younger members to join us. Ruth Hamilton suggested that current members sponsor new members, keep in touch with them, and encourage them to renew their memberships when they are due. Past President George Chekan said that of the recent 100 new members, 92 are Associate Members and only 8 are veterans. Bob indicated that the real problem is renewals; that system needs the most work to retain members. Past President J. David Bailey reiterated that we also have talked about changing the name of our organization to "Friends of VBOB." Alfred Shehab suggested affixing a multi-year membership rate at a slightly reduced price for Associate Members, e.g., 4 years for \$50 (versus \$60). Several members said they like the idea and it would reduce administrative work for the organization. Alfred moved that we implement a 4-year membership for \$50 for Associate Members. The motion was seconded; then discussion ensued.

Mary Ann Bowen emphasized that Associate Members are gained through the Chapters; we need to do more to get Chapters involved. Ruth Hamilton asked if we have surveyed our Chapters to find out what they are doing to get Associate Members. She also asked about lifetime memberships, which Associate Members cannot presently obtain. EXVP Ralph Bozorth said a problem with membership renewal is that we depend on members to look at the back of the *Bulge Bugle* to find their dues date; other organizations and renewal notices with envelopes and we have never done that. Additionally, we have sent notices after the fact, but we should do it before the due date. Sally Lung suggested that everyone's dues notices should be due at one time for everyone; we can prorate the amount for the first year, if necessary. EXVP Bozorth said that consideration was discussed before. Mary Ann Bowen pointed out that things have changed over the years and perhaps it is an option now.

Alfred Shehab, again, made the motion again for a 4-year membership for \$50 for Associate Members. The motion was seconded and carried without dissent. He also pointed out that the plan to get more Associate Members laid out by Tom Chambers was never carried out. He recommended that the VBOB President visit Chapters and get them to seek more Associate Members. If we can tie in better with our 55 Chapters, visit the Chapters, and promote the organization through articles in the *Bulge Bugle* it should help. We also need to reimburse our leaders who go to visit Chapters.

John Bowen suggested that we need to have an agenda for such a concept and create an opportunity for Chapter Commanders to get together and share ideas. We also need to recognize them. Bob Rhodes asked, "What role does Doris Davis have in this as Vice President for Chapters?"

Mike Levin reported that from 1 March to 30 April 2013 we had 64 new members: 48 Associate Members, 15 Regular (Veteran) members, and 1 Lifetime Member. For the period 1 January to 30 April 2013 we have over 100 new members. Mike suggested that we advertise our reunions to get better attendance. Others commented that we used to do this, but it proved costly. We can, however, publish one-line ads in magazines of various Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs). John Bowen said he thought that would be a good idea. Bob Rhodes said that he sent email requests to publish reunion notifications in the past and some VSOs accepted them; others did not.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** EXVP Ralph Bozorth explained that we need to formulate a committee of five members to come up with a slate of officers for 2014. The Executive Council members who agreed to participate are: Ruth Hamilton, Alfred Shehab, Madeleine Bryant, Past President J. David Bailey, and Past President George Chekan. Information on the slate of candidates and trustees will be published in the *Bulge Bugle*. At a minimum, we need a new EXVP and Treasurer. Whoever is the EXVP in 2014 should be President in 2015. The slate needs to be determined by 15 July 2013 for publication; work must be completed before the 9 July 2013 meeting—ideally, by 15 June 2013. Neither the President nor the EXVP can influence the committee members. Mary Ann Bowen made a motion to approve the Nominating Committee members. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent.

**FUTURE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:** EXVP Ralph Bozorth provided attendees with a document pertaining to the Future of the Executive Council. All attendees reviewed the document and considered the implications of it. Several veterans considered whether they will be able to continue to serve on the Council. A number of Associate Members cannot attend meetings because they work. If the council is extended beyond the Washington, DC/Baltimore, MD area, teleconferencing is essential. Teleconferencing arrangements and facilities were discussed.

**FINAL COMMENTS:** Alfred Shehab, President of the Battle of the Bulge (BOB) Historical Foundation, mentioned that we will have MG James A. "Spider" Marks, USA (Ret) as our guest speaker at the December event at the Crystal City Doubletree Marriott. Alfred said that there will be a new Fort Meade Garrison Commander arriving this summer, too. The Battle of the Bulge Room will remain, but we need to confirm with Bert Rice if it will stay in the same location (Post Library) or move to another location. He said that he will meet with the new commander to discuss the relationship between the BOB Historical Foundation and Fort Meade.

John Bowen explained that the Belgian and Luxembourg Embassies will have new attaches coming in this summer; the Belgian Ambassador will also change this year in November. He then went on to discuss the plans for the upcoming BOB Historical Foundation Meeting. The hotel will be the Doubletree Hotel in Crystal City (Arlington, VA); room rates will be \$99. The arrival date will be 14 December 2013. On 15 December 2013, there will be a trip to the Luxembourg Embassy with lunch and a movie on Queen Charlotte; in the evening, we will have the banquet at the hotel. On 16 December 2013, there will be wreath layings at Arlington National Cemetery and a visit to the World War II Museum with lunch at the hotel. That evening, we anticipate that the Belgian Ambassador will host a reception at the Belgian Embassy.

Past President George Chekan moved that the meeting be adjourned. His motion was seconded and carried without dissent. The meeting was adjourned at 1145.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruth L. Hamilton, Recording Secretary  
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**Chapters that have had changes in officers or meeting dates/times to Ruth Hamilton [ruth12345@aol.com](mailto: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, 27 August 2013**

**Tuesday, 12 November 2013**