

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT
Polish Legion of American Veterans, USA
CHARTERED BY ACT OF CONGRESS

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Unity with Heritage

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The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) program was founded in 1946 to provide support and services for Veterans while they are cared for by the VA health care facilities. VAVS volunteers are a priceless asset to our Nation's Veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The **Polish Legion of American Veterans, USA** is one of the hundreds of organizations that support the VAVS by providing volunteers at VA Medical Centers Nationwide. The National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) was established by VA Circular No. 117, May 17, 1947, and became a federally chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1975. The Committee advises the Under Secretary for Health on matters pertaining to the participation of volunteers in VA medical facilities, assists in recruitment and orientation of volunteers, and keeps the officers and members of participating organizations informed of volunteer needs and accomplishments. The National Commander and VAVS Director attended the 70th Anniversary of the VAVS at the NAC meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The three long days of meetings, extensive training and networking with VAVS staff and other organizations was extremely informative and fruitful.

Day one began with the meeting of the NAC Executive Committee (EC). This committee consists of twenty of the thirty-six Service Member Organizations (The PLAV was a member of the NAC EC until we had fallen below serving at 35 VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) when the VA combined facilities). With the appeal of the PLAV, the required number of facilities served was lowered to 25; we are presently serving at 27. The committee reviewed proposals from the Ad Hoc committee and submitted six recommendations for enhancing VAVS (summarized):

1. Extend the life span of the volunteer ID badge from one (1) to three (3) years.

Standardize volunteer ID badges at all VAMC's.

2. Develop and implement procedures to ensure that volunteers, hours, and donations provided at Vet Centers are accurately documented.

Acknowledge and recognize dedicated volunteers and community partners who serve at Vet Centers nationwide.

Expand the VAVS system to include service code for Vet Center volunteers.

3. The Department of Veterans Affairs ensure that all volunteers and hours are recorded when volunteering at national cemeteries. The VAVS will serve as the subject matter expert on guiding the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) developing parameters for tracking volunteers and hours, as well as encourage recognition events.
4. Expand the VAVS NAC membership categories to include Post 9/11 to include Veterans' Groups and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) whose Mission Statement and/or Charter include provisions to serve Veterans.
5. Approve VAVS to proceed with publishing and updated Position Classification Guide for VAVS Officers/Program Managers in concert with the HR Classification Workgroup.
6. Revise/Amend the VA Directive 0004 to reflect that volunteers be permitted to complete privacy training outside of the Talent Management System (TMS).

Training sessions included:

- VAVS Representative/Deputy Training
- Maximizing Collaboration
- Managing Volunteer Resources
- Reducing Volunteer Wait Times
- Utilizing Social Media

The week allowed for networking with other VAVS Staff and Veteran Organizations. The interactions with other VSO and NGO's enabled me and Commander Hentkowski the opportunity to gather some ideas and processes that can be incorporated to improve the way the PLAV tracks and encourages our volunteers that serve VAMCs.