

# The 2023 National Convention: Determining Details of Dissolution and VVA's Legacy

#### BY MARC LEEPSON; PHOTOS BY KEN WILLIAMSON

NATIONAL CONVENT

<text>

Top: Delegate displaying their official Convention Inders, provided by U-Haut; Left: VVA NAtional President Jack McManus during the Opening Coremonies. Opposite page, top: Members of the Virginia delegation; Bottom: Presentation of \$7,350 by the FSC to Project Friendship during Thursday SAVA Luncheon.

WA'S LASTING LEP

"Don't count us out yet!" Comment from the floor dury dury dury dury dury Comment from the floor dury dury discussion debate over a resolution to the floor yuy 20 2028, as the dute for VVA's dissolution to the solution of the dury dury dury discussion debate over a resolution to the floor yuy 20 2028, as the dute for VVA's dissolution to charge majority calls for VVA's dissolution to charge reflects the sentiment of one tionage reflects the sentiment of one tionage "Don't count us out yet!"

#### DAY-BY-DAY

DAY-BY-DAY An environmental provides the second se

See CONVENTION on Page 20



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THE VVA VETERAN 16

# 2023 WA Commendation **Medal Recipeints**

Francisco Ivarra Ted Wilkinson Carlton Rhodes Michael Swift Sandie Wilson Adolph Gardner

### WA National Awards

Member of the Year Grant Coates Chapter of the Year Metro Denver Chapter 1106 Chapter Newsletter of the Year (199 members or less) The Listening Post, Chapter 35, Greater Toledo, Ohio Chapter Newsletter of the Year (200 or more members) The Listening Post, Chapter 196, Lynchburg, Virginia State Council E-Newsletter of the Year Florida E-Recon, Florida State Council State Council Website of the Year VVASC.org South Carolina State Council

THE VVA VETERAN

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### CONVENTION

Continued from 17 growing up in Coalwood, West Virginia, and writ-ing Rocket Boys to leave a legacy for the poople who lived and worked in that small coal-mining town during his youth. Discussing his latest book, Don 1 Blow Yourself (Up, Hickan described it as a tribute to the men he served with in the 4th Infan-ty Division in Vietnam. He encouraged Vietnam War veterans to tell their own stories to "keep our leave value"

Whrveternames tell their own stories to "keep our legay alree." After a break, VVA President Jack McManus gave the delegates—and those watching first-ver livesteam of a VVA Convention se-sion on Facebook—a preview of the goals and planned mighementation of the future of VVA Strategic Plan. Following the lunch break, the rest of the alfermoon was devoted to VVA and the evening the Regional Caucuus took place, during which those numing for national offices fielded questions from delegate. The Thursday morning General Session began with singer-songwirer John Fynn performing "Deeper Family," a song he crafted for VVA and Too. News ielecto officers and Board methers

"Deeper Family," a song he crafted for VVA a Tag, Nedy electro d'Iofens and Board anothers folowing the sweatrig-in coremony al Saturday's Awards Baraguet, Art right, from tog: Laurel Schaef Bacoukoft, Miss America 1972, meeting member on Friday: Carafto Rhodes is awarded the VA Commendation Model by National President Lack Molennus, Harvy Prat spokes after Molennus (Harvy Prat spokes after Molennus (Harvy Prat spokes) Molennus (Harvy Prat spokes) Molennus (Harvy Prat spokes) Molennus (Harvy Barty Prat spokes) from top: Homer Hickam, the best-selling author, delivers the Keynote Speecht VM awards Banque Singer-songeritter John Fyrm performing "Deeper Family priot to Hursdry moning Concensio Secasi uet:





ATIONAL COM

performed at the Vietnam War Veterans Day cer-emonics on March 29, 2022, at the Vietnam Vet-erans Memorial in Washington, D. C. Following this, a short recorded address by President Joe Biden was presented by Jennifer Hunt, a com-bat-wounded Irang War veteran and the White House's Director of Veteran Engagement. Next, delegates turned their attention to the proposed VVA constitutional mendments. The aftermoon session was consumed entirely with meeting and antiring on the amorgand and/other

reaching and acting on the proposed resolutions, including setting the date for VVA's dissolution, and additional regional caucuses were held that evening.

and additional regional caucuses was anne-evening. VVA's traditional Friday POW/MA ceremony commenced at 7:00 arin, in the bicel, Delegates began to line up for voting in the biennial nation-al elections well before the doors opened at 9:00 ar. That afferenco, a Chapel of Four Chaplains induction ecremony unfolded on the Convention floor. The Friday night celebration included a See ELECTION on Page 39

**Board Members** President Jack McManus Vice President Tom Burke Secretary Bill Meeks Treasurer Wayne Reynolds At-Large Directors Dottie Barickman Charlie Hobbs Ken Holybee Gumersindo Gomez Dennis Howland Richard Lindbeck Charlie Montgomery Dan Stenvold Steve Williams Sandie Wilson **Regional Directors** Region 1 Justin Latini Region 2 Ted Wilkinson Region 3 Rossie Nance Region 4 Spence Davis Region 5 John Riling Region 6 John Margowski Region 7 Terry Courville Region 8 Francisco Ivarra Region 9 Dick Southern

**Officers and** 

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#### CHAPELLE

#### Continued from 24

spent five weeks, much of it in solitary confine-ment, in a Budapest prison. Her photographs and journalism appeared in *Life*, *National Observer*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Reader's Digest*, *National Geo-graphic*, and many other publications. Chapelle first went to Vietamin in 1961 When the American public was still being reassured the american involvement wine standing in the standing of the american public was still being reassured.

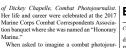
the Amercan public was stull being reassured that our milliary involvement was strictly in an advisory capacity. When she captured the image of a Marine with a machine gun at the ready in a helicopter doorway, later published in National Geographic, it put the lie to the official version that U.S. forces in Vietnam were non-combatant "advisors". "advisers." Chapelle received the Overseas Press Club's George Polk Award in 1962 for her Vietnam War

photos and coverage, and the now-historic im-

age of the door gunner was the National Press Photographer's Association Picture of the Year in 1963.

#### DEFYING THE STATUS QUO

Never famous in her lifetime beyond the world of war correspondents, the last decade has seen IN of war correspondents, the last decade has seen growing recognition of Chapelle's importance. The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains an archive with more than 40,000 of her photographs, letters, and books. Her combat photography can be seen in print and online in many books, archives, and col-lections, soging back to her groundbreaking photos from the Pacific Theatre in World War II. She is the subject of at least two biographies, and the Milvaukee Public Television 2015 doc-umentary. Behind the Pearl Earrings: The Story



nalist, many envision a man looking as weary and sweat-stained as the troops he is embedded with. Few visualize a woman in that role, mainly because women were long locked out of combat photojournalism. These traditional gender attitudes held sway

These traditional gender attitudes held sway for many years, at one point reflected in a ques-tion put to Dickey Chapelle in the midst of a military operation: "What's a woman doing out here?" A Marine commander on Iwo Jima voiced the same idea when he spotted Chapelle shortly after the landing and shouted, "Get that woman the hell off the beach?" The prejudice prevailed for years, dictating women like Dickey Chapelle to defy the status quo, both by insisting on being in the heart of the action no matter the danger, as well as by finding

action no matter the danger, as well as by finding and recording the humanity that persists in the

and recording the humanity that persists in the midet of war's chaos and condition. Dickey Chapelle was intense and dynamic, five feet tall, never without her trademark pearl earnings and carleye glasses under an Austra-lian-style bush hat. She reportedly could out-shout a drill sergent, and was a close friend of several senior commanders in Vietnam, even talking wartime strategy with some of them. But through it all, under the haveo of war. Cha-Pelle always understood her cental mission. It fueled the vitality and mastery in her work and was reflected in her working distum: "The pic-ture is your reason for being." ♠

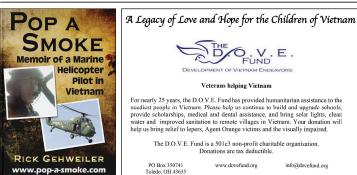
### ELECTION

#### Continued from 19

Continued Jron 19 dinner buffet and a spirited performance by Beatle-manius USA, an early Beatles tribute band. Sattuday moming's final General Session opened with the announcement of the election results by Elections Committee Chair Scott DeArman, Pres-ident Jack MedManus, Vice President Tom Burke, and Steretary Bill Meels were re-elected, while Wayne Reynolds was elected as Treasurer. (Com-plete election results can be found on Page 19). The newly elected Board conducted bits inaugural meet-ing after the short session concluded. The Startudy Night Awards Banquet, co-emced by Meeting Planner Wes Guidry and myself, pro-vided a grand conclusion to the four-dy Corver-tion. VVA bestowed several key honors, including the President's Award for Supporting America's

the President's Award for Supporting America's Veterans to Evan Williams Bourbon for its Amer ican-Made Heroes program, and the 2023 In Ser-vice to America Award to U-Haul International for

its long-standing support of VVA. Jan Scruggs, the Vietnam War veteran who spear-headed the effort to construct the Vietnam Veter-Jain Schuggs, the Vicuani wai Victari won Spear-neaded the effort to construct the Victami Vicer-ans Memorial in the Nation's Capital, was honored with the VVA Lifetime Achievement Award. Har-vey Pratt, an artis, sculptor, and Marine Victnami Vietram renowned for creating the National Native Americans Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC., received the VVA Excellence in the Arts Award Additionally, Laurel Schnefer-Bozoucoff, Miss America 1972, was presented with the President's Award for Entertaining the Troops in Vietnam. The Convention's final official act was the swear-ing-in of the new Board and Officiens, performed by former VVA President John Rowan. With that, the 21st VVA National Convention was in the record books.◆



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