



THE WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION

Newsletter - April 2023



« None can speak more eloquently for peace than those who have fought in War »
Ralph Bunche, Nobel Peace Prize, 1950

Editorial

The present issue of the WVF Newsletter is dedicated to the event of the 30th General Assembly of the prestigious The World Veterans Federation, which took place in Belgrade, Capital of SERBIA, on 6-10th of March 2023.

Thankfully, this event was one of the most significant events in the history of The World Veterans Federation and served to highlight the strong presence of the esteemed organization, despite the international context still marked by the Covid pandemic, which has deeply affected humanity.

In a spirit of communication, dialogue and sharing, representatives from 68 institutions and organizations coming from 28 countries discussed all the issues and challenges that face their respective institutions and organizations, leading to an open, frank and friendly debate on the present and future of the WVF.

Over 4 days of intense and continuous meetings and plenary sessions, the 30th General Assembly worked on an agenda structured around 25 equally important points; Moral and financial reports presented by the Executive Board, introducing draft resolutions, report on health and welfare as well as on peace and security, electoral operations of the Executive Board and members of the standing committees, all these issues and matters were included in the 30th General Assembly deliberations gathered under the motto "Respect for Diversity."

We congratulate ourselves for these important results and achievements of the WVF obtained through the sustained commitment of all the good wills among all its members.



Docteur El Mostafa El Ktiri
President

World Veterans Federation is a proud supporter of Global NGO Executive Committee and United Nations Department of Global Communications Civil Society Unit.



Who are we?

The World Veterans Federation (WVF) is an international non-profit, non-governmental humanitarian organization. Established in Paris, France in 1950 by founding members from 8 countries, namely: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Turkey, USA and Yugoslavia, the WVF is now a Federation of 172 veteran organizations from 121 countries representing some 60 million veterans worldwide.

The WVF maintains its consultative status with the United Nations since 1951 and was conferred the title: "UN Peace Messenger" in 1987. The WVF has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 8 times.

Our Vision is to be at the forefront of promoting and defending international peace and security and to be proactive in ensuring the health and wellbeing of all veterans and victims of war worldwide.

Our Mission is to guide and advise our Member Associations so that they can take the lead in supporting initiatives that foster peace and security and to campaign for health and welfare initiatives that will enhance the wellbeing and independence of their members.

Our Motto is to encourage Member Associations to forcefully strive for international peace and security and to influence and promote a veteran's health and welfare culture in their communities.

Our Core Values are to guide and inspire our members to be impartial, responsive, committed, accountable, collaborative, resourceful and act with respect, dignity, compassion and integrity.



Opening of World Veterans Congress 2023



The opening ceremony of the Congress was held in The Guard House, in Belgrade.

Located in the beautiful, forest ambience of Topčider Park, The Guard House is situated in one of Belgrade's most attractive and popular picnic areas. More than 300 delegates, officials and guests attended the formal opening of the Congress which was marked respectfully by performance of Serbia's National Anthem. Attendees later had an opportunity to meet, mingle and greet one another.





Mrs. AnnaLee Bergtun opened the congress by presenting the WVF's credo written by Mr. Ralph Bunche, Nobel Peace prize, 1950

"None can speak more eloquently for peace than those who have fought in war. The voices of war veterans are a reflection of the longing for peace of people the world over, who within a generation have twice suffered the unspeakable catastrophe of world war. Humanity has earned the right to peace. Without it, there can be no hope for the future. And without hope, man is lost. The voice of the people must be heeded. They aspire to a richer life in freedom, equality and dignity, as in things material; they pray for peace.

Their will for peace and a better life can be, must be, crystallized into an irresistible force against war, aggression and degradation. The people have had to work and sacrifice for wars. They will work more willingly for peace. Let there be a dedicated effort, a greater crusade than history has ever known, for a world of peace, freedom and equality."

*Ralph Bunche
Nobel Peace Prize, 1950*

Extract of the President of the WVF's opening speech.

Your Excellencies, Veterans, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great satisfaction to be here in Belgrade to arrange the second World Veterans Congress for the World Veterans Federation, in partnership with SUBNOR and the Government of Serbia.

I am particularly happy to see that we have more than 100 participants, representing nearly 70 countries. Indirectly and directly, their presence here gives them the opportunity to exchange experiences of the challenges facing veterans and examples of co-operation across national borders. In the tradition of the 59 previous general assemblies, we will stand today for a moment of silence, to honour the many victims, over time, of war and conflicts.

It also gives me great satisfaction to see how at a time when world opinion is so dramatically polarised, this congress gives we veterans an opportunity to come together and exchange opinions about respect for diversity and what it means to us as ex-servicemen and women.

I have to mention that the second General Assembly of the World Veterans Federation was also held here in Belgrade, in 1951. In his opening speech General Tito said:

"I think that is precisely ex-service men and war veterans who have the rights to raise their voices against new aggression, new war."

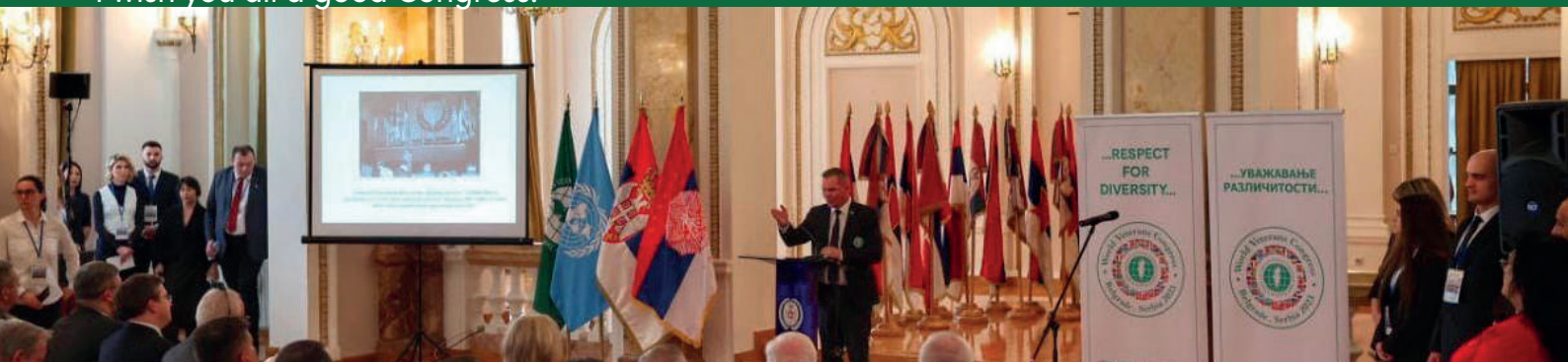
This completely accords with what we, in the Federation, stand for and have done so throughout history; namely to fight the aggression that leads to new wars and conflicts.

At the same time, we must strive to understand and respect each other's opinions, even if the powerful propaganda, in the world today, attempts to divide us. It is now doubly important for us veterans to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, united in our mission to take care of our veterans and avoid the creation of more victims of conflicts and war.

Remember, dear friends: THAT IS OUR MISSION, namely to take care of our veterans and avoid more victims of war.

Finally, on behalf of the Federation and its Executive Board, I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard for veterans in the national and international societies - especially to all volunteers in SUBNOR for making this Congress possible.

I wish you all a good Congress.



Extract from the speech of the President of SUBNOR, Serbia, General-Major Vidosav Kovačević

We wish you very warm welcome to Belgrade. Under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Serbia I can confirm that President Aleksandar Vučić is the sponsor of the World Veterans Congress.

The theme of our Congress, entitled Respect for Diversity, aims to emphasise that, regardless of the regulations of the States that are members of WVF, and all the other ways in which we might differ, we have one in common goal - a great and bright goal; to see humanity enjoying peace and economic prosperity. Our guiding principle is that it is better to negotiate for topics in which we are not like-minded.



Part of the opening speech of Minister of Labour, Employment and Veteran and Social Affairs, Mr. Nikola Selakovic.

You all are very welcome, and we are pleased to once again, after 70 years, hold the WVF General Assembly in Belgrade, hosted by your member organisation SUBNOR Serbia and the Serbian Government.

We are all descendants of veterans, and it is a great honour and pleasure that this international Assembly is being held in Belgrade and hosted under the patronage of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

Serbia is proud of its history and the fact it has always been on the right side of history. Its consistent internal and foreign policies have identified Serbia as an ideal host for the Federation's General Assembly and Congress meeting of which we are very proud. I hereby declare the World Veterans Congress for open.



In the end of the opening ceremony, Dr Hugh Milroy presented the Stockholm declaration from 2013 from the WVF Peace and security summit.

"Veterans have experienced the horrors of war and have to live with the consequences for the rest of their lives. They deserve help, support and recognition from their society.

On the basis of this understanding, the Peace and Security Summit in Stockholm opened a new dimension in the discussion of veteran affairs. Veterans can give a lot to their societies having served under severe circumstances worldwide and demonstrated skills that can be of benefit to all parts of their societies.

The Summit demands that the countries represented within the WVF and the international community exploit and make best use of these experiences and capabilities, which should come to bear to prevent the use of force, during conflict and thereafter.

Veterans should also be involved to prevent ethnic crises and in support of integration processes within their societies.

The message of the veterans, voiced individually, through their organizations or the WVF should be listened to in all crisis situations."



Peace and Security session

WVF on the subject of Respect for Diversity

Why did we select the slogan for the congress to be Respect for Diversity?

A broader definition is:

“A deep interpersonal skill, respect for diversity, can be defined as the understanding that people are equal participants, women and men, in a common world, while recognising each individual’s uniqueness and differences. Respect for diversity goes beyond tolerance and understanding to recognise and promote equal worth of people without condescension.”

Respect for diversity is an essential part of building strong and tolerant veterans societies. Respect for all human beings, regardless of their differences, is an important value that allows us to peacefully coexist with each other. It helps us foster understanding between individuals, cultures and nations, even in disagreement.

In a democratic society, we should be tolerant and accepting of opinions that don’t agree with our own – even if we don’t like them. Instead of creating conflict, we can ‘Agree to disagree’ – but what does that have to do with veterans?

Through our military service we are often forced into action as a result of an imposed political imperative.

The Federation is not a political organization, although many people think it is and have tried to use its weight to support particular opinions. There have been many attempts to do this but all have been but politely rejected and the individuals or organisations concerned referred to our statutes. These state that we are a veterans’ organisation dedicated to working for peace and security and the prevention of more veterans becoming victims of conflict and war.

It is important for us to condemn all parties in a conflict and war, but if we take sides, we destroy the integrity of the Federation.

Not long ago I spoke with a soldier in Ukraine, whom some of you know from the last congress in Paris, who said the following: *‘It is important that we condemn war and conflicts, but we are there for the veterans and we should be ready to take care of them when freedom comes again’.*

This is so well expressed; we must look ahead and see the many tasks we face. It is vitally important that we do not take anyone's side or burn bridges that can be used in our important work for future work for veterans?

Racism and racist opinions seem to have become more widespread in recent years and become politicised through election manifestoes that exploit them. This situation has become stronger since the pandemic and the increase in global unrest and conflict.

We, who are veterans, have probably seen many times how strong opinions can escalate and provide fuel for wars and larger conflicts. We must avoid that.

The WVF and this Congress provides an opportunity for former enemies to meet in an environment of mutual respect; where that is lacking, we should be concerned because we know how dangerous disagreements can develop and escalate. We must straighten our backs and focus on what we can agree on – by exchanging experiences for the good of all veterans.

A few years ago, I witnessed a meeting between Russian and American veterans who came together after being enemies in Afghanistan, often in close combat. I was on tenterhooks as they all sat, but instead of aggression there were tears and many apologies were humbly made. This is respect for diversity.

We should never forget that, ultimately, we all belong to the same race – the human race – and we have a common responsibility, namely, to take care of one another.

– President Dan Viggo Bergtun



Speech of President Emmanuel Jacob, EUROMIL

The links between veterans and reservists is important and should be reinforced, but so too should links with other uniformed workers and first responders.

I will talk about the Armed Forces because this is the first step to becoming a veteran or reservist. The values we talk about continue throughout the rest of people's lives however, from being a veteran, as an ambassador for peace and security, to being an ambassador for inclusiveness and diversity in the Armed Forces and society.

And this brings me to the issue of respect for diversity – an element that EUROMIL considers to be a fundamental human right. EUROMIL worked under the 'citizens in uniform' principle from its foundation in 1972. This is still a key principle in our daily work and goals.

Dr. Franz Josef Jung, Former German Defense Minister stated once that the 'Innere Fuehrung' with its corollary of 'citizen in uniform' greatly contributed to the fact that the Bundeswehr became not only a self-evident part of our society but also a reliable instrument of German security policies."

'United in diversity', is also the motto of the European Union and first came into use in 2000. It signifies how Europeans have come together, in the form of the EU, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages. It stipulates that the peoples of Europe, while remaining proud of their own national identities and history, are determined to transcend their former divisions and, united ever more closely, to forge a common destiny. This is a concept that should be applied also to the Armed Forces.

Bishop Garrison, a veteran who as Director of National Security Outreach, is Human Rights First's chief ambassador to the national security community, said in Feb 2022 : "It's diversity to make sure we have the most capable teams and leaders ever to address issues in the 21st century. What I want people to understand is that diversity makes for a stronger fighting force, it makes for a more capable force, it makes for a force multiplier across the board."

Let's look at some issues that are related to respect for diversity in the modern Armed Forces.

Continue of the speech by President Emmanuel Jacob, EUROMIL

Recruitment: Fewer young boys and girls of prime recruiting age, qualify for military service. Therefore, we must find ways of reaching a broader talent pool and broader interest groups in order to bring those highly qualified, talented individuals in.

Equal opportunities in the Armed Forces can help us to bring and keep them in. Retention is much too low, influencing Armed Forces investment in human resources directly and other resources indirectly.

It would be very helpful if we could make the Armed Forces a good, diverse and tolerant employer. A workplace where everybody can feel home in a multicultural environment.

The Armed Forces can only gain from inclusion of minorities with a diversity of skills. But as early as 1999, Paul Klein (founder of the Impakt Foundation for Social Change) argued that this kind of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity would require specific policies, actions and programs to effect such changes.

But where are we more than 20 years later? Much has already been done, but much more needs to be done! Specialised courses, campaigns, and awareness programs within the Armed Forces on the issue are needed. For example, through The European Security and Defence College (ESDC), and with input from EUROMIL, a useful pan-European training week could be held, to inform and train high-ranking military leaders.



In some countries, the Armed Forces have a long history of responding to ethnic diversity, while elsewhere it has come up only recently as a policy issue – one more box to tick! An even-handed representation of ethnic minorities in the military is recognised as crucial for enhancing its social legitimacy and professional quality. The same can be said about the integration of women in the military, which during a few decades across the board has grown into more than just another issue of personnel policies. Indeed, with regard to gender, the symbolism and sensitivities surrounding core identities are at stake – as with the presence of gays and lesbians in the military.

Gender, LGBTi rights, racism, tolerance, ethnicity, respect for minorities ... and there are many more issues to deal with in our military, veterans, and reserve community. We must investigate possible inequalities in career opportunities and promotions of military personnel.

Already in 2000 a report from Winslow, Heineken and Soeters showed the need to work on the image of Defence Forces when comparing numbers of minorities in society, the general workforce and recruitment for military career.

I'd like to quote from the Irish Defence Forces on diversity:

'Raise awareness of the variety of jobs and opportunities that are available within a modern inclusive military force. In order to reflect the society we serve the Defence Forces aims to attract future members from all backgrounds. Managing diversity and promoting inclusion in response to a more diversified society is vital. In an increasingly complex security environment, a diverse military force is required to tackle unforeseen events and threats. Other benefits include having personnel who feel included and are empowered to contribute in a positive manner. Demonstrating a respect for difference helps create a more innovative problem-solving culture with new approaches and fresh perspectives that benefit the organisation by creating an environment where all employees can contribute fully. To be more reflective of our society, the Defence Forces strongly encourage people from minority backgrounds to join, in order to assist us in becoming a more effective military force.'

Great words and so true, but we all know that the road from words, regulation and legislation to a changed mindset, proper behaviour and a new culture, is long! Let that be a goal and a challenge for defence forces supported by military associations and trade unions as well as reserve and veteran associations. I'm sure that the WVF and my own organisation, EUROMIL, will make sure to be the best possible promoters and defenders of these values.

As said by your President at his introduction, and I quote: 'Respect for diversity is an essential part of building strong and tolerant veterans societies. Respect for all human beings, regardless of their differences, is an important value that allows us to peacefully coexist with each other. It helps us foster understanding between individuals, cultures and nations, even in disagreement.'

Dear colleagues, thank you for your attention. I wish you all a fruitful and successful congress and a nice stay in Belgrade. I thank the WVF, its leadership and every single one of you for your efforts defending and taking care of veterans and avoiding more victims of war.



Health and welfare session.

Speech of Dr Hugh Milroy, Chair of SCEA and CEO of Veterans Aid.

"I have been working with veterans in crisis for 28 years and I always applaud any genuine moves to eradicate issues that bring veterans to our door. In doing this work I have been fortunate enough to have engaged with veterans and veteran support organizations around the globe.

However, as time went on, the universality of veterans' problems dawned on me and the presentation of them as victims, deserving what can only be described as "top-down" support and pity, which only ever allowed people to survive life as opposed to thrive. What is worse, it seemed to be targeted at only the obvious few. The impact of seeing ex-servicemen and women from such a narrow perspective spectacularly fails to address the complexity of veterans' lives and almost always ignores the wider context that is responsible for so many problems.

The result is that some veterans remain invisible. Their needs remain unmet, and they fall through the cracks.

In every country with which I have had dealings the highly visible issues, such as combat related injuries, have been dealt with. But in all my years of experience I have never met a veteran with a single issue! No-one has single issue problems, so why should veterans?

The public understand damage caused as a direct consequence of military service and feel comfortable rewarding obvious heroism, but most of the veterans we see in adversity don't fall into either category – despite the fact that they were equally committed to laying down their lives for their country.

Sadly, in many places, the current approach to veterans' issues is that while some are addressed, a great many others are not.

This creates an under-class where veterans end up in a needs-driven dead end. The so-called safety-nets often just make matters worse creating resentment, despair and frustration. But what is devastating is that they stop the veteran flourishing.

Let me put this to you from the perspective of our own model called, Welfare to Wellbeing®, which has a validated success rate of 90%. While it may be an inconvenient truth, my overwhelming observation over the past 28 years is that poverty – which is of course relative – is a huge underlying problem, but virtually no one in authority addresses it."

CARING FOR
VETERANS IN
CRISIS... NOW!



"I have seen thousands of clients whose ages are between late-30s to mid-40s. Most served for just a few years, in their late teens to early-20s. They are not defined by their military service nor are their post-discharge problems necessarily caused by it – yet the stereotypes persist. I cannot understand why, when we come to talk about veterans, everyone seems to be ignoring the societal context (e.g. poverty), which is more often the real issue. I understand that this perspective is "inconvenient", complex and most problematic: It is also enduring.

So, what can be done for the invisible veteran?

If we accept that the way forward for our invisible veterans is that prevention is better than cure, then the WVF must start to tell Governments that this excluded group actually exists and has wide-ranging problems that may not be obvious but should be addressed.

What I see, when it comes to the world of veterans, is that everything is reactive, to single issues, and therefore ineffective in the face of multi-faceted crises. My belief – which is supported by Veterans Aid's results – is that in the modern world, it is critical to be able to intervene swiftly and comprehensively if bad situations are to be prevented from turning into comprehensive disasters.

Each nation I have engaged with seems to have a version of "welfare" as a top-down approach to their veterans' problems – and I recognize that inconvenient and enduring realities are not easily dealt with.

Welfare to Wellbeing© offers an alternative; a proven, working approach to the wider issues facing our invisible veteran family in crisis. It can be adapted to accommodate many more veterans under its banner. In pioneering this new model, I believe our charity has taken veteran care to a new level. Many veterans' problems were going unmet but our success rate in resolving them confirms our operating model's success.

At Veterans Aid we have a revolutionary, person-centered approach to dealing with crisis among veterans that actually works, in microcosm, within the veterans' world. It works to the extent that there are now very few genuine veterans on the streets of Britain. It is a methodology that can transform the lives of veterans in crisis, to prosper in a measurable and long-term way. It represents the vision of a good life for all veterans. It generates social change for veterans by creating possibility. Actions based on clients' actual needs provides them with the best chance of success. That must be the way forward to support veterans who are just surviving; to prevent their lives going from bad to worse. Welfare to Wellbeing© is a working model that embraces what works for the veteran and abandons what does not.

Our aim is to prevent, by working at the intersection between vulnerability and resilience. Lower one and raise the other. Many will say "You don't understand our veterans or our country" but if we accept, just for a moment, that problems can be solved by empowering the individual veteran to solve their issue before it has a major impact on their lives, then location becomes irrelevant.

This methodology talks about wellbeing. What do I mean by this? I mean that the answer is to help the veteran move to the point where they can cope well in adversity. And adversity means different things to different people, so we should listen – and ask veterans what they need rather than tell them what we have to offer."



"Welfare to Wellbeing© is a genuine post-modern working model of veteran support which places the veteran centre stage and allows clients to move forward and flourish on their terms.

We want to build their capacity to sustain their own lives with dignity and not be objects of pity. Context is relevant, but the methodology accepts that everyone is unique – by looking at the emotional, physical, psychological and financial needs of the individual. We must move forward and away from a top-down 'issue-fixated' approach that suits a welfare methodology. We can't change history, and we can't remove contextual problems in the future, so our aim must be to allow the veteran to flourish regardless. So, for this methodology the key to looking after a much wider group of struggling veterans is to ensure that individual veterans get into a wellbeing position regardless of issue and context. I am not claiming that it will solve all problems in all scenarios, but I am saying that it can work for some whose problems were previously unmet. Imagine if we the veteran family took this approach in our dealings with Governments around the globe!

I believe that the WVF must embrace a wellbeing approach for the future. This will allow us to grow, which in turn will allow us to include, support and be a more meaningful global voice for more veterans. Welfare to Wellbeing© represents hope for tomorrow for invisible veterans across the world. Their actual needs must come first; we must put practice before policy and process.

Now is the time to move forward. The WVF must become the global voice that says that all veterans must be allowed to thrive. Surviving isn't good enough for those that were willing to sacrifice all!"

VETERANS AID IS AWARDED THE WVF REHABILITATION PRIZE 2023.



On behalf of Veterans Aid, CEO Dr Hugh Milroy has accepted the World Veterans Federation Rehabilitation Prize 2023 at The World Veterans Federation Congress in Belgrade, Serbia.

“It was an honor to receive this award, not for myself, but as acknowledgment of all that the VA team has achieved over the years. We operated throughout the pandemic and, through the exercise of our unique Welfare to Wellbeing© model, have an unparalleled success rate in turning around the lives of veterans in crisis. Receiving this global affirmation of our tried and tested prevention model from our peers was a significant moment in our 90-year history. I feel so proud that Britain is leading the way for veteran care across the globe.”



Female delegates in the 30th General Assembly



During the WVF 30th General Assembly, women were strongly involved and many good discussions, especially about veterans' families, were promoted and all delegates were satisfied with the proportion of women throughout the congress.

“In organizing recognition, appreciation and support for veterans, it is important not to forget their closest social ties. Veterans' family members have their own experiences, needs, and strengths. First, they are an important source of support for the veterans. Second, they have an important signaling function if things may not go well. And third, for their efforts and support, they deserve recognition and appreciation as well, and they may also need information and support.”

--Ms Manon Andres, Phd, Netherlands.

Contribution from Manon Andres, PhD (Netherlands) to the Health and Welfare session.

“In the Netherlands, military personnel become veterans when they have participated in a mission that contributed to promoting and protecting the international rule of law and stability, or when they have served in a war or similar situations. The veteran population is diverse, consisting of veterans being older or younger, male or female, active duty or post-active. They have diverse experiences and different needs; they also have their strengths. For their service, they deserve recognition, appreciation, and support.

In the Netherlands, recognition, appreciation and care for veterans and their families is regulated by law, the Veterans Act, which guides veterans policy and veteran-related initiatives. The purpose of the veterans policy is to provide care (by a good care system) and to increase recognition and appreciation, by the government and by society, for veterans and their families.

Multiple stakeholders have a role in developing and implementing policy and making sure veterans and their families receive the recognition, appreciation, and care they need and deserve, which include (but are not limited to) the Ministry of Defense, the Netherlands Veterans Institute, the national veterans care system, the Veterans Platform, and the Veteran Ombudsman. Collaboration and coordination are important to make things work. Furthermore, the BNMO (the union for Dutch military victims of war and service) and multiple foundations are committed to the welfare of those who have served or got wounded, and their families.

Because of the multiple stakeholders involved and the variety of (often multiple) needs of veterans and their families, it is important that they know where to reach out for information or assistance. The ‘Veteranenloket’ was established for this purpose, which can be reached 24/7 by telephone or e-mail, and provides clear and easy access to the network of support providers, all being coordinated for the veterans and their family members by a care coordinator. For veterans who are still serving in the armed forces, care and assistance are provided by military health care institutions, because the employer’s responsibility of the Netherlands Ministry of Defense applies to these individuals.”



"Information and medical, psychosocial, and reintegration support are available during the military career, before, during, and after deployment, and after leaving military service. Recognition and appreciation are promoted in different ways, including (but not limited to) awarding decorations (medals, a veterans commemorative badge), providing a veteran's ID card (that enables veterans to identify themselves as a veteran in the Netherlands and abroad and entitles them to certain facilities and benefits), organizing a national Veterans' Day, organizing local activities, increasing knowledge in society about war and deployment-related experiences and the effects on veterans and their families, giving attention to veterans in media and education, and organizing memorials and commemorations.

Social networks are an important source of support. These can include (former) colleagues, companions, other family members of (ex-)military personnel. Those networks can be facilitated, for instance by organizing meetings and reunions, and having local meeting places.

In organizing recognition, appreciation and support for veterans, it is important not to forget their closest social ties. Veterans' family members have their own experiences, needs, and strengths. First, they are an important source of support for the veterans. Second, they have an important signaling function if things may not go well. And third, for their efforts and support, they deserve recognition and appreciation as well, and they may also need information and support.

To conclude, it is important to acknowledge the support veterans and their families may need and at the same time to focus on empowerment and appreciate and use their strengths, experiences, and knowledge."

Visit to Josip Broz Tito's memorial

As part of their programme WVF Assembly delegates were given the opportunity to visit the Museum of Yugoslavia and House of Flowers where Josip Broz Tito is laid to rest.

The visit provided a unique insight into his life and an opportunity to sign the Guest Book

Josip Broz Tito was born Josip Broz on 7 May 1892 in Kumrovec, Austria-Hungary, and died on 4 May 1980 in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. He was a Yugoslav partisan, Marshal and communist politician. During World War II, he led the Yugoslav partisans who fought against the Axis occupation of Yugoslavia. After the war, he became Head of State of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for life, formally in the roles of Prime Minister (1945–1963) and President (1953–1980).

After the break with the Soviet Union in 1948, he pursued an independent communist policy, and a foreign policy based on freedom of alliance.



The opening of the 30th GA took place on the 8th of March 2023, at the M-Hotel, Belgrade, Serbia



Opening of the 30th GA.

The President of the WVF, Mr. Dan-Viggo Bergtun, welcomed delegates to the 30th General Assembly and invited them to mark International Women's Day by applauding the women in the audience.

He went on to thank SUBNOR for its role in organising the event and hoped that everyone had enjoyed the previous day's morning tour and sightseeing. The President then declared the GA open.

Roll call and presentation of guests.

The President drew everyone's attention to the roll call and invited delegates to stand and identify themselves. He pointed out that Mr. Tut Gatwech had been approved as the representative for Cameroon by the Executive Board (EB) and apologised to the delegate from Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) who had been described as coming from Republic Srpska (RS). The delegates from Ukraine and the United States were unable to attend.

The President explained that, for security reasons, the list of participants would not be distributed, however he was happy to confirm that that close to hundred delegates were in attendance, directly and indirectly representing 68 countries.

Designation of three scrutineers

The President suggested that three scrutineers from SUBNOR's invited young diplomatic students should be elected. The suggestion was unanimously approved by the GA.



Rules of procedures of General Assembly

The rules were delivery out and the President explained that only those delegates with “green country cards” were able to vote as they were the only ones who had paid their fees. He briefly referred to the complexity of the General Assembly rules and invited comments from the floor. None were coming forward.

The rules were then unanimous approved by the GA.

Election of Vice Chairman of the GA.

The President then announced that the General Major Vidosav Kovačević of SUBNOR had been proposed as vice Chair of the General Assembly. There were no objections from the GA so the proposed candidate was unanimous approved as chair of the GA.



Designation of rapporteurs for the plenary sessions

The President suggested two reporters and they was: Ms Glyn Strong from UK and Mr. Louis Assi from Lebanon. Both suggested candidates were unanimous approved by the GA.



Adoption of the agenda.

The GA unanimous approved the agenda.

Application for membership



The President presented the new members applications carefully approved by the EB.

NIGERIA-Veterans of Hope Initiative

During the 162th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

CHAD-Future of Free France in Chad

During the 162th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

FRANCE-National Union of Veterans

During the 162th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

UNITED KINGDOM-Veterans Aid.

During the 162th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

GEORGIA-Georgian Generals Club

During the 163th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

RUSSIA-Kunduz 149 Afghanistan Veterans

During the 165th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

IRELAND-Irish Defence Force Association

During the 166th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

MONGOLIA-Association of Mongolian Warriors

During the 166th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

SWEDEN-Swedish Wounded Veterans Sport Association

During the 167th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

CYPRUS-Pan-Cyprian Organisation of War Disabled & Victims

During the 167th Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

KUWAIT-New Kuwait Association of Retired Officers

During the 173rd Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board accepted this application for membership, pending ratification from the 30th General Assembly.

All organizations were welcomed, and GA unanimously approved all new members.

Presentation of the election process



Delegates were reminded that the GA, by secret ballot, would elect a President, Deputy

President, Treasurer General and three Finance Committee members as well as three alternative members of the Finance Committee. Standing committees were required to elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Rapporteur in separate meetings.

To nominate and vote, candidates had to be paying members or companions. The democratic process of the election would be overseen by scrutineers.

The Deputy President of the General Assembly said that, as a host and under the aegis of SUBNOR, he had invited all anti-fascist groups from the former Republic of Yugoslavia who were not currently members of the WVF. These included members from BiH and RS. He suggested that they be invited to join the discussion if they pay their membership for 2023.

The President said that they had already been invited to become members of the WVF, but had not responded. He emphasised that they were still welcome to do so at any time.

The GA unanimously approved the election process.

Report of the EB

The EB Report covering the period from 2019 to March 2023 was presented. The President also gave delegates a 160-page Newsletter package that covered most of the activities that had taken place during that period. There were no comments or observations on the EB Report which was unanimously approved by the GA.

The Newsletter will appear in full on the WVF Homepage.



Newsletters 2019-2023

Rue de la Cité 1, 1204 Genève, Switzerland
www.theworldveterans.org
post@theworldveterans.org

Report of the Financial Committees

The President presented the reports from the Financial Committee for the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

All reports were unanimously approved by the GA.

Adoption of the Accounts for the years 2018,2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The Accounts and Auditors Report were then presented. The President explained that many difficulties that had arisen, as a result of the pandemic, and that it had been necessary to take dramatic steps to reduce costs. He told delegates that because payment of membership fees had fallen sharply compared to past years past new measures would have to be introduced to achieve a more stable financial situation.

The Accounts and Auditor's Reports were unanimously approved by the GA.



Approval of the forecast budget for the years 2024, 2025 and 2026 unanimously approved by the GA

The President pointed out that the WVF was committed, by its Constitution, to put up a budget. This presented challenges largely related to the transfer of premises from Paris to Geneva. The President thanked all who had paid their fees and reported that the Slovenian delegation had a 'one fee per country' system which was introduced to them by the WVF as a test. It was a great success.

The Croatian delegation pointed out that 1800 Euros for eight organisations in Croatia would be burdensome.

Slovenia's delegation believed that if the membership fee had to be shared, it would make for better cooperation between the country's various organisations.

The President reflected on how organisations could encourage their respective Governments to pay for membership fees. He also suggested that the EB should be given the authority to create a 'one fee per country' system for next year. This was unanimously approved by the GA.

Amendments to the constitution

Suggested amendments to the Constitution were made by the EB. All amendments to the Constitution and Rules were adopted by the GA can be found here:

<https://theworldveterans.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/WVF-Constitution-2023.pdf>



THE WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION
CONSTITUTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL RULES
Updated March 2023

Draft Resolutions



All draft resolutions was presented by the Deputy President from High Commission for Former Members of the Resistance and the liberation Army in Morocco.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 1.

“Corruption is a threat to the stability and security of nations” The draft resolution was unanimously adopted by the GA.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 2.

“Environmental protection: An essential approach in sustainable development process.” The draft resolution was unanimously adopted by the GA.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 3.

“Preserving and promoting national history.” The draft resolution was unanimously adopted by the GA.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 4.

“Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and Non-Interference in the internal affairs of States” Adopted.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 5.

“Fighting intolerance based on religion or belief.” After initial discussion and objections, the Deputy President agreed that the wording should

be softened with rephrasing of certain elements and deletion of words like ‘fighting’. It was subsequently agreed to remove all references to individual religions and references to Islam and Islamophobia. Instead, words like ‘tolerance in religion or belief’ etc. should be inserted.

After deletion of paragraphs 5,6 and 7, 8,13,15,17,22 and 26 the draft resolution was unanimously adopted by the GA.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 6.

“Tolerance and appreciating cultural diversity in our world.”

The draft resolution was unanimously adopted by the GA.

DRAFT RESOLUTION 7.

“Safeguarding and promoting intangible (?) cultural heritage.”

The draft resolution was unanimously adopted by the GA.

All adopted Resolutions can be found here:
<https://theworldveterans.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Resolutions-2023-Word-Veterans-Federation.pdf>

Standing Committees meetings

All Standing Committees were required to meet to elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Rapporteur - then report back to the secretariat.

The results are as follows:

SCEA election:

Chair - Dr Hugh Milroy, United Kingdom.

Vice Chair - General Andrej Kocbek, Slovenia.

Rapporteur - Mr. Zoran Jakovljevic, Serbia.

SCME election:

Chair - Major General (ret) Faisal M. Al Jazzaf, Kuwait.

Vice Chair - Mr. Louis Assi, Lebanon.

Rapporteur - Staff Lieutenant Colonel, Rakad Al Dhfairi, Kuwait.

SCAA election:

Chair Mr. Tut Gatwech, South Sudan.

Vice Chair - Hon. Major Derek Oduro (Rtd.), Ghana.

Rapporteur - Mr. Methat Abdelaziz Fhawy Ahmed, Egypt.

Members of the SCAP, SCOW and

Members of the SCAP, SCOW and SCAmericas were not able to present candidates.

Election of members of the EB and Finance Committee

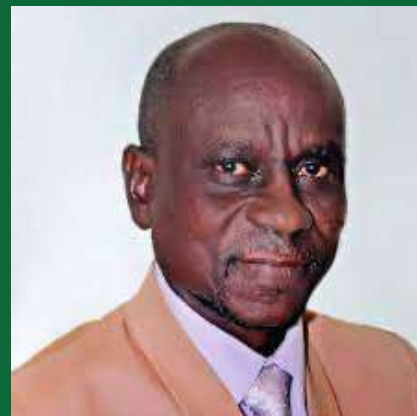
Excutive Board



WVF President, Dr El Mostafa El Ktiri, Morocco



WVF Deputy President, General Major Vidosav Kovacevic, Serbia



WVF Treasury General Hon. Major Derek Oduro (Rtd.), Ghana

Finance Committee

Mr. Milos Tisma, Serbia
Mrs Olga Trifunovic, Serbia

The GA approved the election and also approved that the EB appointed one more member and 3 alternative members of the finance committee.

Ratification of the appointment of the Vice President from chair of committees.



Vice President, Mr. Tut Gatwech, South Sudan.



Vice President, Dr Hugh Milroy, United Kingdom.



Vice President, Major General (ret) Faisal M. Al Jazzaf, Kuwait.

The GA approved the election and also approved that the President appoint members of the committee that missing candidate.

Honorary titles

Honorary President - Mr. Dan-Viggo Bergtun
Honorary Trustee - Mr. Bjarne Hesselberg
Honorary Trustee - Mrs. Inge Nedergaard

The EB congratulated the new titleholders and thanked them for their service over many years.

The GA approved the honorary titles.
Date and place for the next General Assembly.

South Sudan took the floor and invited the WVF to hold its 2024 GA in Juba. The President expressed thanks for the invitation and confirmed that the EB would discuss it at the following month's meeting.

The President thanked all delegates present and wished the new EB good luck with its work for veterans worldwide. He closed the GA by formally handing over the role of WVF President to his successor.

Closing of the GA

The President gave thanks to all delegates and wishes the new EB good luck with their work for veterans worldwide. He closed the GA by given over the federation to the new President.





Farewell evening

After the long hiatus caused by the pandemic, it was clear to see that the delegates had a lot to talk about - which they did, from morning until late at night. The event closed on a warm and friendly note with WVF members experiencing a renewed spirit of unity. The farewell dinner ended with greetings, thanks and gratitude that the organisation had survived and maintained its integrity.

Once again special thanks must go to SUBNOR, Serbia, and all who worked so hard to organise such a welcoming and well-executed event.

We all look forward to the next time we meet.

The WVF Membership scale for 2024



Honorary Lifetime Member of the WVF.

Ordinary and Associate Members of the WVF can become an Honorary Lifetime Member and member of the Board of the Honorary Members Club of the WVF for a total fee of 50 000,- Euro.



Honorary Member of the WVF:

Ordinary and Associate Members of the WVF can become an Honorary member the Board of the Honorary Members Club of the WVF for a total fee of 5000,- Euro yearly fee.



Ordinary member (every member organization):

They should be paying a yearly fee of Euro 1 800. If they fail to pay after due they will be reduced to Associate Member.



Associate Member (nonpaying members):

This category is open to new applicants who are not able to contribute financially to the federation. Other members who have outstanding membership dues for former years will also see their status reduced to Associate member, with membership rights revoked, until their outstanding dues for the membership are up to date.



Companion

International Organizations, companies and private persons who support or sponsor the WVF will have companion agreements, the terms of which will be drawn up on a case by case basis.



Rue de la Cité 1, 1204 Genève, Switzerland
www.theworldveterans.org
post@theworldveterans.org
+41 - 02256 - 18407

