



# WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION

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## NEWSLETTER

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

### IN THIS ISSUE

**The World Veterans Federation (WVF)** is an international non-profit, non-governmental 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 45 million veterans worldwide.

The WVF maintains its consultative status with the United Nations since 1951 and was conferred the title of "Peace Messenger" in 1987.

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.

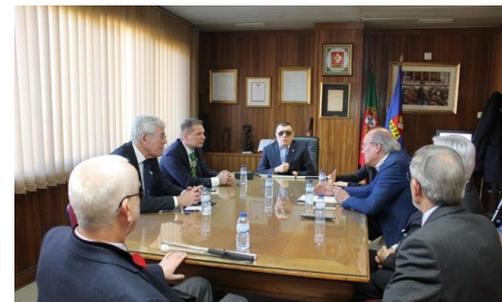
Our **Mission** is to guide and advise our Member Associations so that they can take the lead in supporting initiatives that foster peace and security and to campaign for health and welfare initiatives that will enhance the wellbeing and independence of their members.

Our **Motto** is to encourage Member Associations to forcefully strive for international peace and security and to influence and promote a veterans 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.



World Veteran Congress and 29th General Assembly (Page 3-9)



WVF President visits Portugal for the 45th Anniversary of ADFA (Page 11)



Passing of Commandant José Arruda (Portugal) (Page 12)



## EDITORIAL

Dear Members and Friends,

So far the year 2019 has been a hectic year for us in WVF. While we have gone through a period to reduce costs, restructure operations, we have managed to arrange the first World Veterans Congress in Paris, France.

At the same time, we arranged the 29th WVF General Assembly where member organizations from 29 countries were represented by a total of 141 participants. The UN Secretary General sent a message of support to the Congress.

This time a full day was devoted to providing information about the latest advances that have been made in our core areas, Veterans Health and Welfare, and Veterans involvement in Peace and Security.

9 new member organizations were ratified and new resolutions adopted.

A new Executive Board and a Finance Committee was elected and I would like to welcome all the newly elected members, and at the same time thank those who have been with us for the last 3 years. Some of us would like to continue contributing and I thank you for the confidence you have shown in me by re-electing me as President of the WVF.



*WVF President Dan-Viggo Bergtun at the World Veterans Congress*



*Col Bjarne Hesselberg (Denmark), Chair of the Preparatory Committee for the World Veterans Congress*

I would particularly like to thank the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Col. Ret. Bjarne Hesselberg and his team, as well as our co-host, Soldiers of Peace International Association, for a well arranged Congress. According to the survey we carried out, more than 90 % of participants were satisfied with the congress. Well done.

In this newsletter, on Facebook and on our webpage, we have included more information about the conference. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need more information.

We are still in the process of securing the future of the WVF and will continue to work on this. I hope that the new Executive Board

will find solutions to make the WVF stronger.

I would also like to thank V-Fonds in the Netherlands for contributing to the congress and to our new project, in which we have great faith, the Veterans Peace Initiative.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for the support that you have given us in WVF and we hope for an even better cooperation in the years to come. Together we can be stronger and achieve our mission.

Dan-Viggo Bergtun  
President



*Delegates at the World Veterans Congress*



*Left to right: Laurent Attar Bayrou, President of SPIA, Co-host of the World Veterans Congress addresses the meeting; President Bergtun and Dr El Ktiri (Morocco) declare the congress open; Mr. Edwin De Wolf addresses the Health and Welfare Session*



# WORLD VETERANS CONGRESS

The first World Veterans Congress was held in Paris (France) on 16-18 February 2019. The event incorporated the 29th General Assembly of the World Veterans Federation, as well as a day dedicated to special sessions on Peace and Security and Health and Welfare. 36 Member Associations representing 29 countries were present, as well as many observers and guests.

The Event was co-hosted by WVF Member Soldiers of Peace International Association (SPIA), which is an international organisation based in France. The WVF thanks them for their cooperation.

The Opening Ceremony of the Congress included a procession of flags and speeches by Mr. Dan-Viggo Bergtun, and Mr. Laurent Attar Bayrou, President of SPIA, before a ribbon was cut by Dr. El Mostafa EIKtiri, High Commissioner for Former Resistant and Former Members of the Liberation Army of Morocco to mark the opening. A song written especially for the occasion was also performed by Kjell Arne SUNDE (Norway)



Flag bearers from the Association SPIA during the opening ceremony of the World Veterans Congress

UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
 MESSAGE TO THE WORLD VETERAN'S CONGRESS  
 Paris, 16-18 February 2019

I send warm greetings to the World Veterans Congress and World Veterans Federation.

As veterans and victims of war, you have lived through the incalculable suffering brought by conflict. I commend your efforts to promote international peace and security throughout the decades, and to support veterans and victims of war worldwide.

The best way to honour those who suffered and perished in wars is to ensure no one else endures the same. Indeed, the United Nations was created over 70 years ago to save "succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Peace guides our path – and remains at the core of everything we do.

Thank you for your dedication. The United Nations will continue to count on your contributions as we strive to build a peaceful and prosperous world for all.

Message from the Secretary General of the United Nations to the World Veterans Congress



Dr. El Ktiri (Morocco) cuts the ribbon to mark the opening of the first World Veterans Congress



Kjell Sunde (Norway) performs a song written especially for the occasion



Participants stand for the French National Anthem during the Opening Ceremony



# WORLD VETERANS CONGRESS PEACE AND SECURITY SESSION

On 17 February the Peace and Security session of the World Veterans Congress was held. The session was facilitated by Ms. Eva Lopez from the Barcelona International Peace Centre (Spain).

The Issues covered during the session were:

- The UN project Right to Peace
- Military peace keeping activities
- Cooperation between humanitarian organizations and military peacekeeping
- Peacekeeping in the Middle East
- Experiences from a military peacekeeper
- Global Veteran Peace Training Initiative
- Commemoration activities
- Introducing the World Veterans Federation Peace Prize



Judge Croll, Chairman of the Board of V-Fonds (Netherlands)

The panel comprised the following keynote speakers who gave interesting and informative presentations on the above themes, some of which you will find available on the WVF website: <http://www.wvf-fmac.org/index.php/events-en/29th-general-assembly>

- Mr Christian Balslev-Olesen, Development and Humanitarian expert (Denmark)
- Judge Robert S. Croll, VFonds (Netherlands)
- Mr Remi Praud, MD, Liberation Route Europe Foundation (Netherlands)
- Mrs Irma Specht, Transition International (Netherlands)
- Mr Sergei Samojlow, UN Veteran (SPIA, Ukraine)



Clockwise from top left: The panel at the Peace and Security Session; Mr. Balslev Olsen (Denmark) gives his presentation; Mr. Sergei Smajlov (SPIA, Ukraine) and Mrs. Irma Specht from Transition International (the Netherlands)



# WORLD VETERANS CONGRESS HEALTH AND WELFARE SESSION

Also on 17 February the Health and Welfare session of the World Veterans Congress was held. The session was facilitated by Mr Jos Weerts (Netherlands), Head of the WVF Health and Welfare Division. The session covered the following themes:

- Military psychiatry and the treatment and rehabilitation of veterans' mental illness
- Post traumatic stress disorder treatments / Combat Stress
- Rehabilitation through sports
- Rehabilitation through meaningful projects
- Military veterans support
- Follow up of legislation
- Veterans and their relatives

The Panel for the session included the following Keynote Speakers, the presentations that they made can also be found on the WVF website: <http://www.wvf-fmac.org/index.php/events-en/29th-general-assembly>

- Mr Walter Busuttill, Combat Stress (UK)
- Mr Knut Østbøll, UN veteran (Norway)
- Mr Edwin de Wolf, wounded veteran (The Netherlands)
- Emanuel Jacob, President EUROMIL (Belgium)
- Laurent Attar-Bayrou, President SPIA (France)



*Dr. Walter Busuttill from Combat Stress (UK) speaking during the Health and Welfare Session*



*Clockwise from top left: Mr Knut Østbøll, UN veteran (Norway); Mr. Emmanuel Jacob, Euromil (Belgium); Mr. Jos Weerts, WVF Health and Welfare Division (Netherlands); Mr. Edwin De Wolf, Wounded Veteran (Netherlands).*



# Veterans Peace Initiative

During the Peace and Security Session, Ms. Irma Specht of Transition International announced the World Veterans Peace Initiative (VPI), a project developed, by the WVF in close cooperation with Transition International.

Both governments and international organizations increasingly recognise that veterans deserve recognition and appreciation, and more importantly that veterans can be effective agents of change, drawing upon their experience, skills and extensive networks. The provision of proper capacity development support in the field of *Peace and Security* can equip veterans, and their organisations, to become effective agents of change and thus contribute significantly to the resolution of conflicts in their communities, countries and internationally. In addition, an increased set of skills could facilitate the search for meaningful jobs with positive social impact after the military careers of many veterans; something that remains challenging in many countries around the world.

The aim of the VPI is to foster the desired capacities of veterans and their organisations in the area of *Peace and Security* in its broadest sense. It shall achieve this by organising a series of training courses in 10 countries, followed by tailor made coaching and support to local veterans' organisations. Within this training framework veterans will be regarded as peace messengers.

The objectives of the Veterans Peace Initiative are:

- To prepare veterans for advisory services in the field of *Peace and Security*, in their own countries and abroad
- To create a pool of advanced veteran experts and trainers in the field of *Peace and Security*, which will impact narratives in the countries of the participants and within their veteran's organisations
- To give veterans knowledge of the relevant structures, organizations, processes, a wide range of topics in the area of peace and security, and skills in consultation, advice, training and mediation
- To provide a platform for consultation, knowledge, exchange and especially an entrance to a veteran network in the area of advice on *Peace and Security*
- To coach graduates of the training courses in 10 countries to be effective in their role
- To capacitate veteran organisations to better support their members and to improve their communication, contributing to a more positive perception of veterans and their organisations
- To provide opportunities for veterans to use their unique experience, boosted by knowledge from the courses

The first phase of the VPI has been made possible by the financial support of the Dutch "V-fonds" and it consists of the development of a robust media and communication strategy to disseminate and promote the ideas of the VPI and a Training of Trainers which will take place in October in the Netherlands, aiming to create an international pool of advanced experts and trainers in the field of peace and security. Country plans will then be developed initially for 10 countries.

Member organisations wishing to be involved are invited to contact the WVF for further information.



*Ms. Irma Specht presents the VPI at the World Veterans Congress*



*Left: Ms. Irma Specht from Transition International presents the VPI at the World Veterans Congress*

*Right: A short film is shown to the participants as part of the VPI presentation at the World Veterans Congress*



Transition  
International





# 29th General Assembly

## Elections

The WVF is proud to present the Executive Board elected at the 29th General Assembly. The Board now comprises the following members:

|                            |                                              |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| President :                | <b>Mr. Dan-Viggo BERGTUN</b> (Norway)        |
| Deputy President :         | <b>El Mostafa EL KTIRI</b> (Morocco)         |
| Treasurer General :        | <b>Mrs. Inge NEDERGAARD</b> (Denmark)        |
| Vice President/Chair SCAA: | <b>Col. Alfred FULLER</b> (Cameroon)         |
| Vice President/Chair SCAP: | <b>Lt. Gen. Chi Liang WU</b> (ROC on Taiwan) |
| Vice President/Chair SCEA: | <b>Mr. Birger Kjer HANSEN</b> (Denmark)      |
| Vice President/Chair SCA:  | <b>Mr. Saif KHAN</b> (USA)                   |

The Positions of Secretary General and Vice President/Chair of the SCOW remain vacant and any nominations for these posts should be submitted to the Elections Committee.

The Assembly also elected the three members of the Financial Committee; **Mr. Anders RAMNERUP** (Sweden), **Lt. Col. Lau Kee SIONG** (Singapore) and **Mr Fayez ALENEZI** (Kuwait), as well as three alternate members: **Mrs. Mirabel OPPENHEIMER** (Israel), **Col. Dmitriy BABIYCHUK** (Russia) and **Mrs. Pauline Marlyse NDJENG**



Left to right: Mr. Dan(-Viggo Bergtun, Ms. Inge Nedergaard, Dr. El Mostafa El Ktiri, Mr. Saif Khan, Mr. Birger Kjer Hansen, Lt. Gen. Chi Liang Wu



Delegates vote on the Resolutions during the 29th General Assembly

## Resolutions

Under the Chairmanship of **Mr. Steen Møller Petersen** (Denmark), the Resolutions Committee dealt with the Proposed amendments to the Constitution and the Draft Resolutions in a concise and efficient manner. The following Resolutions were adopted by the 29th General Assembly:

- Preservation and Valorization of the Shared Historical Memory Between Nations: Case of Morocco and Vietnam
- For the Organization of the 8th International Conference on the Legislation of War Veterans and War Victims
- Providing Greater Protection for War Veterans and War Victims
- Fostering a Secure, Regular and Orderly Process of Migration
- Respect for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Nations
- Stopping the Recruitment of Children in Military Forces
- Data Collection on Commonwealth Veterans and Their Dependents
- Addressing the Human Rights Violations aimed at Political Blackmail
- Addressing the Growing Scourge of Terrorism Implemented by ISIS

## New WVF Member Associations

The WVF welcomes once more the following Associations, whose membership was ratified by the General Assembly:

- Namibia Ex-Soldiers Organisation
- South Sudan Veterans Association
- Serbian war Veterans Association
- KLA War Veterans Society (Kosovo)
- Association of the Ex-Combatants of Brazil
- Trinidad & Tobago Legion of the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League
- Soldiers of Peace International Association (Based in France)
- Association of Military War Invalids of Serbia from all Wars
- The MORIS Association of Societies and Clubs (Slovenia)



KLA War Veterans Society (left) and MORIS Slovenia (right)



# Liberation Route Europe

During the Peace and security Session of the World Veterans Congress, Mr. Remi Praud of the Liberation Route Foundation (Netherlands) presented the Liberation Route project.

Liberation Route Europe is a continuously growing, international remembrance trail that connects important milestones from modern European history. It forms a link between the main regions along the Western Allied Forces' advance from southern England, to the beaches of Normandy, the Belgian Ardennes, South Eastern provinces of the Netherlands, the Hürtgen Forest and on to Berlin. The route then continues to the Polish city of Gdańsk, where a democratic revolution for overcoming the division of Europe was launched nearly two generations later. Since 2016 the Liberation Route Europe started the development of the Southern route, starting in Sicily.

Liberation Route Europe provides the opportunity to discover and experience the route that the Allied Forces took during the final phase of the Second World War. It focuses on the liberation of continental Europe from the National Socialist occupation, and specifically, the long-lasting consequences of World War II.

Liberation Route Europe reaches across national borders that have divided Europe for far too long. It deals with individual nation states' selective memories of the war, and calls for an international response, by seeking to examine the complex heritage of the Second World War from multiple historical perspectives. It connects this history with life in modern-day Europe, as well as other parts of the world, underscoring the role of international reconciliation and the promotion of reflection: reflection on the value of our hard-won freedoms.

The aim of the project is to combine the Liberation Route with innovative and sustainable tourism products and special offers, in collaboration with international partners, in order to make this core part of European history more visible and more accessible for visitors from all over the world.

To establish a solid historical and scientific groundwork for the Liberation Route Europe, the Liberation Route Europe Foundation together with her key-partners, developed a Magna Carta written by several European historians, which forms the basis for the organisation's common work.

*Description adapted from <https://liberationroute.com/pages/liberation-route-europe>*



*Mr. Remi Praud, Managing Director of the Liberation Route Foundation was a member of the panel at the WVC Peace and Security Session.*



*Group photos of the delegates at the first World Veterans Congress*



# Decoration Ceremony

During the Gala Dinner of the World Veterans Congress, a decoration ceremony was held and the following honours were given:

## The World Veteran Medallion *Pictured right*

- Mr. Saif KHAN (USA) *bottom right*
- Mr. Hans SONG (ROC on Taiwan) *bottom left*
- Col. Alfred FULLER (Cameroon) *Top left*
- Col. Bjarne HESSELBERG (Denmark) *Top right*



## The World Veterans Support Medal in Gold *Pictured Below*

- Ms. Eva LOPEZ (Spain) *Top left*
- Mr. Teje ENGEVIK (Norway) *bottom left*
- Mr. Viacheslav KALININ (Russia) *top centre*
- Dr. Naim SABIK (Morocco) *top right*
- Mr. Tibor ALBERT (Belgium) *bottom right*
- Mr. Steen Møller PETERSEN (Denmark) *bottom centre*



## The WVF 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Silver Medallion

- Col. Dmitriy BABIYCHUK (Russia)

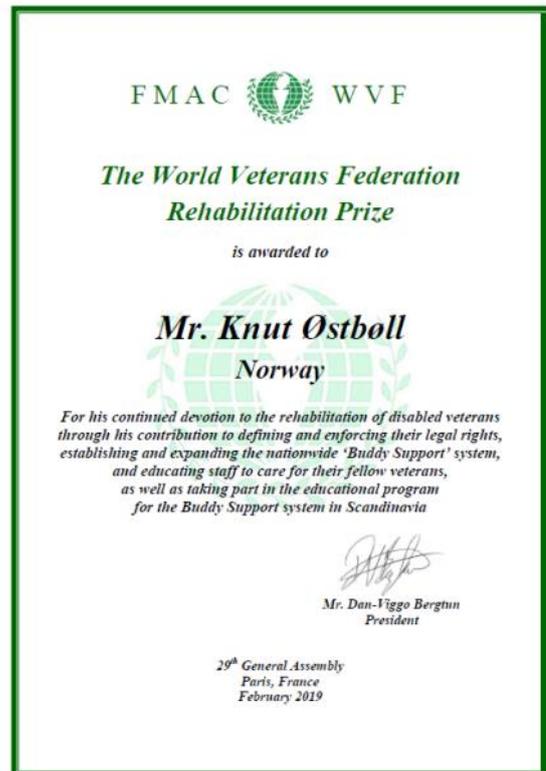




# WVF Rehabilitation Prize

During the Health and Welfare session the WVF rehabilitation prize was awarded to **Mr. Knut Østbøll** of Norway for his continued devotion to the rehabilitation of disabled veterans through his contribution to defining and enforcing their legal rights, establishing and expanding the nationwide 'Buddy Support' system, and educating staff to care for their fellow veterans, as well as taking part in the educational program for the Buddy Support system in Scandinavia.

The WVF Rehabilitation Prize is a distinction awarded at each General Assembly to individuals or organizations in recognition of the international value of services rendered in the field of rehabilitation. The first prize was awarded in 1953 and Mr. Østbøll is the 56th recipient.



## SPONSORS

The WVF is most sincerely grateful to the sponsors of the World Veterans Congress, without whom the event would not have been possible:



# WVF President Visits Portugal

In January, Mr. Dan-Viggo Bergtun, President of the WVF, visited WVF member associations in Portugal accompanied by Col. Bjarne Hesselberg, Chair of the Elections Committee and Chair of the Preparatory Committee for the World Veterans Congress. The delegation attended the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of long-time WVF Member Association ADFA.

The delegation visited the Combatant Museum at the invitation of the President of the Liga dos Combatentes, General Chito Rodrigues and the Central Director CMG Filipe Macedo. The visit began with an explanation of the history of the site. They then visited the tombstones with the names of the ten thousand soldiers who died overseas, the chapel and the combatants memorial, with the tomb of the unknown soldier, passing later to the inside of the fort, where they visited the main exhibition and the temporary exhibitions that are there - exhibition of the centenary of the Great War and the exhibition of the involvement of Portuguese troops in peace and humanitarian operations. They then moved to the office of the President of the League where they signed the book of honour. President Bergtun was very impressed with the visit.



*45th Anniversary of WVF Member Association ADFA (Portugal).*



*Left: The delegation from WVF attends a working meeting with representatives from the Portuguese Member Associations. Right: President Dan-Viggo Bergtun and Col Bjarne Hesselberg visit the Combatants Museum with Gen Chito Rodrigues.*



On the next day the celebration of the 45 Anniversary of ADFA was held. It began with a working meeting and the delegation visited the ADFA headquarters. Then followed an audience with the Secretary of State for National Defense, Professor Ana Santos Pinto, a Conference at the Jorge Mauricio Auditorium, which included a Welcome from the President of MAGN, Dr. Joaquim Mano Póvoas and a presentation by National Councilor, Dr. José Monteiro on the theme "National Defense - Duty and right of citizens - Specificity of the rights conferred on disabled military personnel in the service of the Motherland"

During the formal closing ceremony, a statement was made by President of the National Directorate, Comendador José Arruda. The President of the FMAC, Mr. Dan-Viggo Bergtun, then made a speech and awarded the WVF Medallion to the Presidents of ADFA and the League of Combatants for their contribution to WVF activities concerning veterans and in commendation of the work and efforts of the Associations in supporting veterans and victims of war for the sake of International Peace and Security and the health and welfare of their members.

His Excellency the Minister of National Defense, Professor João Gomes Cravinho made a speech and the Book of Honour was signed. Finally a plaque was unveiled by the Minister of National Defense to commemorate the occasion and the National Anthem was sung.

The WVF President thanks member Associations in Portugal for their kind



*The WVF Medallion is awarded to Gen. Chito Rodrigues, President of Liga dos Combatentes (left) and Comendador José Arruda, President of ADFA (right).*

## In Memorium

It is with profound sadness that the WVF learned of the passing of Commandant José Eduardo Gaspar Arruda, President of the Association of Armed Forces Handicapped in Portugal.

José Arruda was a tireless defender of veterans rights in Portugal. Throughout his life, he was an intrepid fighter in the uncompromising defense of the right to rehabilitation and reintegration of all persons with disabilities. His use of his knowledge and skills for the service of the cause of people with disabilities is a legacy that is indelibly marked in ADFA, the Republic of Portugal and Portuguese Society. Through his involvement with the WVF and other international organisations he also fought for the rights of veterans to full reintegration, rehabilitation and inclusion on a global level.



Commandant Arruda was Chair of the WVF Standing Committee on European Affairs (SCEA) 1989-1994. He was a member of the Preparatory Committee for the 6th International Conference on Legislation Concerning Veterans and Victims of War, which was held in Lisbon (Portugal) in 1994, and for the 7th International Conference on Legislation Concerning Veterans and Victims of War, which was held in Paris (France) in 2010, and since 2011 he was Chairman of the WVF SCEA Working Group on Southern European Countries.



He was awarded the Silver Medallion of the World Veterans Federation in 2010 for distinguished service to the WVF, and the WVF Medallion in 2019 for his contribution to WVF activities and in commendation of the work and efforts of his association in supporting veterans and victims of war.

Commandant Arruda will be remembered at the World Veterans Federation for his passionate devotion to the cause of veterans, for his courage, humility and strength, for his kindness, good humour and generosity. He will be greatly missed by the many good friends that he made in the international veteran community throughout his longstanding involvement with WVF activities. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, colleagues and all those whose lives he touched.

### Photo Credits:

Photos of the World Veterans Congress (page 3-9): Mr. Torgrim Hermansen Halvari (Norway) ; VVESTI (Russia)

Photos of the President's visit to the Combatants Museum (Portugal) (page11): Faustino (Museu do Combatente)

Photos of the 45th Anniversary of ADFA (Portugal) (page 11 & 12): ADFA Portugal

Photos of Mr. José Arruda (Page 12): WVF Archive

**Keep in mind that whenever you would like to keep up with the WVF's activities, you can find us online at <http://www.wvf-fmac.org/> as well as on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/worldveteransfederation/>**