

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION  
75<sup>th</sup> HISTORIC YEAR

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FISCAL YEAR 2020  
(JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS</b>	<b>5</b>
National Chaplain	6
National Sergeant-at-Arms	6
<b>COMMITTEES, REPRESENTATIVES AND DELEGATES</b>	<b>6</b>
Executive Committee	6
Audit Committee	6
Life Membership Fund Board of Trustees	6
Government Relations & Legislative Committee	6
Investment Fund Board of Trustees	6
Scholarship Committee	6
BVA/BRS Committee	7
Membership/Regional Group Committee	7
Fundraising/Publicity Committee	7
Veterans Service Committee	7
Education and Training Committee	7
DOD VA Vision Trauma & Research Steering Committee	7
OPS Committee	7
Communications & Social Media Committee	8
Website Subcommittee	8
Ombudsman	8
Female Veterans Committee	8
Assistant National Treasurers and Assistant National Secretary	8
<b>BVA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND OFFICE</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>MEETINGS AND ACTIONS OF NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>	<b>9</b>
Board of Director's Meeting March 11-13, 2020	9
Board of Director's Meeting August 11-13, 2019	11
74 <sup>th</sup> Convention Minutes August 12-16, 2019	12
Post-Convention Minutes August 16, 2019	15
<b>BVA'S OPS PROGRAM EVENTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>REGIONAL GROUPS</b>	<b>18</b>

<b>DIRECTOR DISTRICT ELECTIONS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT RELATIONS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>VETERANS SERVICE</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>BVA Bulletin</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>BVA Social Media</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>BVA Website</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Public Service Announcements, Podcasts, and Tracking Services</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Public Relations Team Personnel</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>BVA Monthly Newsletter</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Membership Communications and News Releases/Announcements</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>KATHERN F. GRUBER AND THOMAS H. MILLER SCHOLARSHIPS</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>FINANCIAL OVERVIEW</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>31</b>



**BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION  
75<sup>th</sup> HISTORIC YEAR  
ALEXANDRIA, VA  
AUGUST 10-20, 2020**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Blinded Veterans Association National Board of Directors and the National Headquarters presents this report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. The National Board is pleased to report that BVA's financial position remains very stable thanks to sound financial management.

Below are some highlights over the past year.

- 1) BVA's milestone 75<sup>th</sup> National Convention scheduled to take place at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill Hotel in Washington, DC in August 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis. The Board made this decision to protect the health and safety of ourselves and others.
- 2) BVA Headquarters' moved into its new office location at 1101 King Street, Alexandria, VA the beginning of October 2019. The property consists of 3-separate suites for a total of 11,314 Sq. Ft.
- 3) Currently, active membership of the Association stands at 7,478. We had 318 members to join during this past fiscal year and reporting 481 deaths. Membership statistics will be appended to the hard copy version of this report as Appendix A.
- 4) Spring 2020 elections were held in Director Districts 5 and 6. Ballots were opened and counted on July 16, 2020. Darryl Goldsmith was elected in

**District 5, and Kevin Jackson was re-elected in District 6.**

**5) The House of Representatives passed two important bills that BVA had been working to get passed for more than a decade. H.R. 3504, the Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act, and H.R. 4920, The VA Contracting Preference Consistency Act, the bill will protect meaningful employment opportunities for a great deal of blind and severely handicapped individuals across the country.**

**6) BVA's 76<sup>th</sup> convention will be held in St. Louis, Missouri at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel during the time August 23-27, 2021.**

**7) We currently have a total of twelve (12) full-time employees and two (2) contractors.**

**8) Dr. Ron Lester from Tucson, Arizona was appointed as BVA National Chaplain on May 8, 2020.**

**9) Donald Overton was appointed as BVA's Executive Director on June 18, 2020, due to the retirement of Joseph Bogart. Mr. Overton brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the organization in the areas of government relations, development, and human resources.**

**10) James Vale was appointed as BVA's National Service Director on July 6, 2020. He will be overseeing both government relations and veterans service. He possesses a great deal of knowledge with the veterans' claim process, and the legislative initiatives.**

**NATIONAL OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS  
August 2019 – August 2020**

**National President and Chairman, Dr. Thomas Zampieri, Pearland, TX  
National Vice-President, Joe McNeil, Columbus, GA  
National Secretary, Daniel Wallace, Martinez, GA  
National Treasurer, Elizabeth Holmes, Midland, GA  
Director District 1, Dennis O'Connell, Long Beach, NY  
Director District 2, Timothy Hornik, Lawrence, KS  
Director District 3, Monaca Gilmore, Knightdale, NC  
Director District 4, Jhennicea Morrow, Gilbert, AZ  
Director District 5, Paul Kaminsky, Middleburg, FL  
Director District 6, Kevin Jackson, Austin, TX**

**Immediate Past National President, Joe Parker**

**National Chaplain, Johnny Busch, Atlanta, GA**

**National Sergeant-at-Arms, Kennan Horn, Edmond, OK**

## **COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES**

The following appointments has been made by BVA National President

### **Executive Committee**

**Dr. Thomas Zampieri, Chairman; Joe McNeil, Daniel Wallace, Elizabeth Holmes, and Kevin Jackson**

### **Audit Committee:**

**Daniel Wallace, Chairman; Elizabeth Holmes, Monaca Gilmore, and Kevin Jackson**

### **Life Membership Fund Board of Trustees:**

**Daniel Wallace, Chairman; Joe McNeil, Thomas Miller, Elizabeth Holmes, Monaca Gilmore, Paul Kaminsky, Donald Overton, HQ Staff, and Sunny Patel, CPA**

### **Government Relations & Legislative Committee:**

**Dr. Thomas Zampieri, Chairman; Joe McNeil, Daniel Wallace, Col. Robert Mazzoli, Russell Nelson and HQ Staff, Donald Overton, and Erin McConnell**

### **Investment Fund Board of Trustees:**

**Daniel Wallace, Chairman; Joe McNeil, Thomas Miller, Elizabeth Holmes, R. Garret Bolks, Donald Overton, HQ Staff, and Sunny Patel, CPA**

### **Scholarship Committee:**

**Rosalind McQueen, Joe Amerling and Dr. Mike Gandy**

### **BVA/BRS Committee:**

**Joe McNeil, Chairman; Jhennicea Morrow, Kevin Jackson, Dennis O'Connell,**

and Wade Davis, HQ Staff

**Membership/Regional Group Committee:**

Paul Kaminsky, Chairman; Elizabeth Holmes, Monaca Gilmore, Dennis O’Connell, Kevin Jackson, Joe McNeil, Carlos Pere, Tracy Ferro, and HQ Staff, Maria Ingegneri, and Charles Reynolds

**Fundraising/Publicity Committee:**

Dr. Thomas Zampieri, Chairman; Danny Wallace, Joe McNeil, Elizabeth Holmes, Monaca Gilmore, and HQ Staff, Kylie Fitzgerald, Andrea Malmer, Donald Overton, and Joe Lynn Bailey-Paige

**Veterans Service Committee:**

Timothy Hornik, Chairman; Elizabeth Holmes, Monaca Gilmore, Daniel Wallace, Joe McNeil, Richard Lane, Scott Scieszinski, and HQ Staff, Donald Overton, and Wade Davis

**Education and Training Committee:**

Timothy Hornik, Chairman; Paul Kaminsky, Dennis O’Connell, Elizabeth Holmes, Kevin Jackson, Larry Bustetter, and Charles Reynolds, HQ Staff

**DOD VA Vision Trauma & Research Steering Committee:**

Dr. Thomas Zampieri, Chairman; Col. Robert Mazzoli, and HQ Staff, Donald Overton, and Charles Reynolds

**OPS Committee:**

Kennan Horn, Chairman; Steve Baskis, Lonnie Bedwell, Tina Lemus, Scott Scieszinski, Brian Harris, Eric Martz, and Danny Wallace, voting members; Dr. Thomas Zampieri and Joe Amerling, non-voting members, and Charles Reynolds, HQ Staff

**Communications & Social Media Committee:**

**Elizabeth Holmes, Chairperson; Scott Scieszinski, Paul Kaminsky, Dr. Thomas Zampieri, Eric Marts, Kevin Jackson, and HQ Staff, Stuart Nelson, and Kylie Fitzgerald, and Chuck Baker, Reporter**

**Website Subcommittee:**

**Scott Scieszinski, Chairman; Cheryl Gajadhar, Kevin Jackson, Joe McNeil, Paul Kaminsky and Kylie Fitzgerald, HQ Staff**

**Ombudsman:**

**Paul Mimms, Chairman; Kennan Horn and Ron Lester**

**Female Veterans Committee:**

**Monaca Gilmore, Chairperson; Michaun Harrison, Marlene Davis-Lilly, Elizabeth Holmes, Jeanie Murphy, and HQ Staff Erin McConnell**

**Assistant National Treasurers and Assistant National Secretary to the Board:**

- **Donald Overton, Executive Director/Assistant National Treasurer**
- **Stuart Nelson, Director of Public Relations/Asst. National Treasurer**
- **Brigitte Jones, Administrative Director/Asst. National Secretary**

**BVA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OFFICE STAFF**

**Position**

**Incumbent**

**Executive Director**

**Donald Overton**

**Administrative Director**

**Brigitte Jones**

**Administrative Specialist**

**Laureen Bowles**

**Bookkeeper**

**Yvonne Preston**

**National Service Director**

**James Vale**

**Government Relations Specialist**

**Erin McConnell**

**National Service Officer**

**Charles Reynolds**



**Appeals & Claims**

**Loreal Hamilton**

**Public Relations Director**

**Stuart Nelson**

**Public Relations Specialist**

**Kylie Fitzgerald**

**Membership Coordinator**

**Maria Ingegneri**

**Andrea Malmer**

**Development Coordinator**

**Contractor for Finance**

**Smith-Bucklin**

## **MEETINGS AND ACTIONS OF NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Board of Director's Meeting March 11-13, 2020**

- **BVA's 75<sup>th</sup> Convention is tentatively scheduled for August 17-21, 2020 at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.**
- **BVA has signed the contract for 2021 Convention, to be held in St. Louis, Missouri.**
- **BVA plans to host the 2020 Veterans Day ceremony on November 11<sup>th</sup> at Patton Hall – Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Ft. Myer, Virginia.**
- **The House Veterans' Affairs Committee passed bill H.R. 1199, the VA Website Accessibility Act of 2019. This bill would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to report to Congress regarding the accessibility of VA websites to individuals with disabilities.**
- **The House Veterans' Affairs Committee passed bill H.R. 3504, the "Ryan Kules Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019". This bill assists blind veterans who have not lost use of a limb in acquiring Specially Adaptive Housing.**

- **BVA urges Congress to fund the FY21 Department of Defense Vision Research Program at \$30 million. This program was established to fund military vision research that could considerably improve the healthcare and well-being of service members, veterans, their family members, and caregivers.**
- **BVA President Dr. Thomas Zampieri testified before a joint session of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs on February 26, 2020.**
- **BVA's Scholarship program is entering its 37<sup>th</sup> year for the Kathern F. Gruber Scholarship and the 8<sup>th</sup> year for the Thomas H. Miller Scholarship.**
- **Currently we have 45 regional groups. Measures remain ongoing to improve support and services to our regional groups to ensure they are working effectively, efficiently, and being productive. Most importantly, we want our regional groups to remain in a "good standing status".**
- **BVA has \$12.1 million in net assets. The Investment Account value as of February 2020 was \$8.26 million. The Life Membership Account (LMF) value as of February 2020 was \$1.07 million. The LMF apportionment for disbursements this year to regional groups will be a little over \$42,000.**
- **BVA has developed a strategic plan with a set of four goals to achieve as we work towards building a successful future. Four regional groups will be selected to assist in raising \$10,000 each annually.**
- **The Board discussed the request for Long Beach Charles Register Regional Group to change their name to Charles Register Regional Group, dropping the words "Long Beach". The boundaries of Long Beach are in the greater LA County, which is part of Southern California R.G. Orange County does not extend to Long Beach VAMC geographically.**

**Board of Director's Meeting August 11-13, 2019**

- **Board approved minutes for Board of Directors' meeting held March 13-15, 2019, previously distributed by e-mail.**
- **As of June 30, 2019, BVA's Investment balance with Morgan Stanley sits at \$9.6 million. We received multiple bequest payments this year, with the largest being \$296,000. For FY19 mid-year forecast, we projected \$1.86 million in revenue and \$2.48 in expenses. At year end, we finished with \$1.9 million in Revenue (\$30,000 more than forecasted), and \$2.44 in Expenses (\$36,000 less than projected).**
- **In the Fall we will be trying a new company called Directmail.com for direct mail initiatives. This will be for a 90-day trial experiment to see if we want to sign an agreement for a year. Postage and paper will be included in the cost. They will do a White Cane Appeal in September and a Veterans Day Appeal in November.**
- **Direct Mail Revenue in FY19 was \$916,543. Expenses were \$608,868. Leaving a net Revenue of \$307,655. The new mailing house, Directmail.com is promising to lower our expenses and increase revenue. They will also provide better data analysis.**
- **Currently we have 50 regional groups. Numerous groups are in a not in good standing status for either delinquent meeting minutes or financial reports or both. Talks are underway for Maine to merge with Massachusetts Regional Group.**
- **New charters were mailed to both Heartland and Louisiana/Mississippi Regional Groups.**
- **Active membership as of August 8, 2019 was 7,399. This is 53 more than the report dated on June 30, 2019 (7,346). Last year this time we had 7,487 active members. We anticipate that numbers will become fewer as we continue to scrub the member database.**

- **BVA received a total of 20 application packages for the 2019-20 academic years. Six winners were chosen for the Kathern F. Gruber scholarship at \$2,000 each and one for the Thomas H. Miller scholarship at \$1,000. Three were previous award winners. Two alternates were also selected.**
- **Spring 2019 elections were held in Director Districts 3, 4 & 6. Monaca Gilmore won in District 3 and Jhennicea Morrow was re-elected in District 4. And Kevin Jackson won by default in District 6.**

### **74<sup>th</sup> Convention Minutes August 12-16, 2019**

- **Board approved all minutes from 73<sup>rd</sup> BVA National Convention previously distributed by e-mail.**
- **Board approved Annual Report for FY 2019 previously distributed by e-mail.**
- **Board approved the proposed BVA budget for FY 2020 and financials as of June 30, 2019.**
- **As of June 30, 2019, the fiscal year ended with a total of \$363,380 in cash and cash equivalents. Total liabilities ended the fiscal year with \$260,532. The total budget deficit was \$554,000. Total Net Assets ended the fiscal year with \$12.1 million. The overall, proposed budget for FY 2020 shows a surplus of \$50,000. Operating Expenses are \$331,000 higher than the FY19 forecast due to an increase in staff salaries and filling vacancies. BVA is projecting an overall bottom line deficit of \$490,000 in FY20.**
- **The LMF Fund ended the year with a balance of \$1.1 million. The Investment Fund ended the year with \$8.5 million.**
- **Welcome remarks were made by the Honorable James Byrne, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Kevin Stitt, Governor of Oklahoma; Amy**

**Brown, Deputy Mayor of Tulsa, and a video by Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma.**

- **Welcome remarks were given by Mrs. Sandy Krasnodemski, President of BVA Auxiliary.**
- **There were roughly 165 registrants in attendance at the convention. This included two-third members and guests, 12 OPS members and 9 staff. We had over 48 Exhibitors. There were more than 100 VA personnel in attendance. Total Revenue was \$82,610 of which \$57,900 was in sponsorships.**
- **Guest speaker for the Father Carroll Memorial Luncheon was Mr. Joe Galloway, Military Correspondent & Author. He was one of America's premier war and foreign correspondent for half a century, and recently retired as the senior military correspondent for Knight Ridder Newspapers.**
- **The convention voted unanimously to pass Resolution 1-19 which supports the Ability One Employment Program.**
- **Four proposed bylaw amendments were presented for consideration with the following results:**
  - **Proposed Bylaw Amendment No. 1 - PASSED. Article XIV (Regional Groups). Added paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) to Section 13 b. (2). Addressing regional groups which is placed in a "Not in Good Standing" status.**
  - **Proposed Bylaw Amendment No. 2 – POSTPONED. Would modify Section 1. of Article III (Qualifications for Membership, Associate Membership and Honorary Membership). Maker will re-write and present during the convention in 2020.**
  - **Proposed Bylaw Amendment No. 3 – FAILED TO PASS. Would add a new Article XXIII to the National Bylaws. "Removal of Director/Officer". Against – 4923 (93%). For – 212 (4%).**

- **Proposed Bylaw Amendment No. 4. – Withdrawn by the maker. This would have added a new Article XXIV to the National Bylaws. “Tape Recording of Meetings”.**
- **Nominations for elections of National Officers were held with the following results:**
  - **National Secretary: No challenges for said election. Daniel Wallace was elected as National Secretary of the BVA with the approval of the convention.**
  - **National Treasurer: Roll call taken. Elizabeth Holmes – 59.5% votes and Richard Lane – 31.5% votes. Ms. Holmes was elected as National Treasurer of the BVA with the approval of the convention.**
  - **National Vice-President: No challenges for said election. Joe McNeil was elected as National Vice-President of the BVA with the approval of the convention.**
  - **National President: Roll call taken: Dr. Thomas Zampieri – 66.1% votes and Wayne Allen – 6.1% votes. Dr. Zampieri was elected as National President of the BVA with the approval of the convention.**
- **The Major General Melvin J. Maas Achievement Award for 2019 was awarded to Dr. Norman Jones of Union City, Georgia. This award is presented to the individual for his/her outstanding achievements.**
- **The David L. Schnair Volunteer Service Award for 2019 was presented to Johnny Busch of Atlanta, Georgia. This award recognizes and individual for his/her extraordinary volunteer work on behalf of blinded veterans.**
- **The Irving Diener Award for 2019 was presented to Elizabeth Holmes of Midland, Georgia. This award is presented to the individual for**

his/her outstanding contribution to the growth and development of their regional group.

- **Certificates of Appreciation was presented to Maria Grimes from Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and Christopher Bosley from Waco, Texas. The award recognizes individuals, groups, employers, etc., who have provided outstanding services to blinded veterans and/or to BVA at the national level.**
- **The 2019 Award of Excellence for Blind Rehabilitation Services was presented to Lebanon VISOR Clinic in Lebanon, Pennsylvania.**
- **Vernon Richmond of Haw River, North Carolina received a service award for his years of dedicated service and commitment to our blinded veterans and their families.**
- **The Gold Gavel was presented to the Heartland Regional Group for having the largest numerical increase in membership for the past fiscal year.**
- **The Silver Gavel was presented to the Illinois Regional Group for having the largest percentage increase in membership for the past fiscal year.**

### **Post-Convention Minutes August 16, 2019**

**The following appointments and resolutions were adopted without objection from the Board:**

- **Appointed the Executive Director as Assistant National Treasurer and the Administrative Director as Assistant National Secretary and appointed the Public Relations Director as Assistant National Treasurer to have sufficient signatories.**
- **Adopted a resolution that at least one of the two signatories required by the BVA National Bylaws for the withdrawal of BVA financial**

**deposits should be either the Executive Director or the Administrative Director.**

- **Adopted a resolution that the Assistant National Treasurer and the Assistant National Secretary are empowered to roll over investments in T-Bills, certificates of deposit, and money market accounts at their discretion, and to invest surplus funds in high-yield financial instruments without the prior approval of the National Board of Directors.**
- **Adopted a resolution that the Board appoint the Executive Director/Assistant National Treasurer and Public Relations Director/Assistant National Treasurer, and Administrative Director/Assistant National Secretary, as officers of the Association for the purposes of executing registration forms required by the various states in compliance with those states' laws for the registration of BVA as a charitable organization engaged in direct-mail fundraising.**
- **Adopted a corporate resolution as required by the brokerage firm authorizing the Executive Director and the Administrative Director to make appropriate transactions of the BVA Life Membership Fund (LMF) negotiables as required.**
- **Adopted a corporate resolution as required by the brokerage firm authorizing the Executive Director and the Administrative Director to make appropriate transactions of the BVA Investment Fund negotiables as required.**
- **Adopted a resolution that appoints the Executive Director as the Benefits plan administrator of the Blinded Veterans Association for all employee benefits.**
- **Agreed to maintain the blanket bond coverage with a limit of \$2,000,000 for Board of Directors, BVA employees and any non-compensated officer.**



- **Board made a unanimous decision to appoint Kevin Jackson on an interim basis as Director District 6 until spring 2019 special election to fill the remainder of the term left by Dr. Thomas Zampieri who became BVA National Vice-President.**
- **Board made a unanimous decision to appoint Kennan Horn as the BVA National Sergeant-at-Arms, and Johnny Busch as the BVA National Chaplain.**

### **BVA'S OPS PROGRAM EVENTS**

- 1) Under the BAT Program, three blinded veterans along with their safety guides walked a 91-mile portion of the Appalachian trail starting at Blue Ridge Gap in Northern Georgia and ending at Fontana Dam in North Carolina from September 24-29, 2019 in honor of BVA's former President Chief Joe Parker.**
- 2) Project Gemini which is a collaboration between the members of BVA and the BVUK hosted an event in Birmingham, Alabama from October 13-19, 2019 for five BVA members and five BVUK along with their sighted guides. There were adaptive sports for the blind during the week with a variety of events, they also made visits to nearby sites and had a tour of the Southeastern Blind Rehabilitation Center. This program was established in May 2011, where each year they get to learn from one another and share their experiences in the areas of blind rehabilitation, adaptive technology, and recreational sports.**
- 3) The Major Charles R. Soltes Jr. OD, Memorial Golf Tournament, held its 15<sup>th</sup> annual golf event in Irvine, California at the Tijeras Creek Golf Club on Monday, October 14, 2019. This event hosted 3-members of our association, to include, BVA's President Dr. Thomas Zampieri. The event marks the annual competition to honor Major Soltes who became the first U.S. Army Optometrist to be killed in action while serving on active duty in Iraq. The tournament raises money to support eye care services for veterans who suffered eye injuries during combat. The annual golf tournament supports various events of the OPS program.**
- 4) In January 2020, the OPS Program together with Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports (STARS) in Colorado hosted eight members of BVA with two sighted guides as they participated in adaptive skiing. The**

**objective of STARS is to empower, encourage, and enrich the lives of all participants through adaptive sports.**

**5) The OPS Program with the support of Heroes New Hope Foundation hosted a turkey hunting trip for two blinded veterans with the assistance of professional guides in April 2020. The foundation was formed in 2016 by Scott Goodman.**

**6) The OPS Program took part in the Congressional Advocacy & Vision Research Conferences in Washington, DC in March 2020. Five members of the association advocated on behalf of BVA and the Department of Defense Vision Research with members of Congress.**

## **REGIONAL GROUPS**

**We have 45 active regional groups, some with the risk of becoming unstable. We are constantly looking at ways to keep our groups engaged and being more efficient and effective. Regional groups that have formed chapters, or who are planning to form chapters in the future, are reminded that it is the policy of the BVA National Board of Directors that such groups amend their bylaws to include guidelines for controlling and administering their subordinate chapters.**

**Notices and forms for the submission of regional group financial reports are mailed around June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year to regional group treasurers. The fiscal year covers the period July 1 through June 30. These reports are due at BVA National Headquarters by no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Delinquent regional groups are subject to being placed in a “NOT-IN-GOOD-STANDING” status in accordance with Section 13a and b of Article XIV (Regional Groups) of the BVA National Bylaws, as amended.**

## **DIRECTOR DISTRICT ELECTIONS**

### **Director District 3 Election:**

**Nominations for the office of Director District 3 were solicited by BVA National Headquarters memorandum dated March 18, 2019 for members in good standing residing in said district. The election is for a three-year term of office.**

**Member’s Monaca Gilmore (NC) and Vernon Richmond (NC) were nominated for the office of Director District 3.**

**Around 934 ballots and biographical sketches of the candidates were mailed to Members and Associate Members residing in District 3. Ballots were opened and counted on July 12, 2019. A total of 133 ballots were received at Headquarters for a .14 percent return rate. Ms. Gilmore was determined to be the winner of this election.**

#### **Director District 4 Election:**

**Nominations for the office of Director District 4 were solicited by BVA National Headquarters memorandum dated March 18, 2019 for members in good standing residing in said district. The election is for a three-year term of office.**

**Member's Jhennicea Morrow (AZ) and Scott Scieszinski (CA) were nominated for the office of Director District 4.**

**Around 1,162 ballots and biographical sketches of the candidates were mailed to Members and Associate Members residing in District 4. Ballots were opened and counted on July 12, 2019. A total of 155 ballots were received at Headquarters for a .13 percent return rate. Ms. Morrow was determined to be the winner of this election.**

#### **Director District 6 Election:**

**Nominations for the office of Director District 6 were solicited by BVA National Headquarters memorandum dated March 18, 2019 for members in good standing residing in said district. The election is for a three-year term of office.**

**Member, Kevin Jackson (TX) was nominated for the office of Director District 6. There were no candidates to challenge Mr. Jackson for Spring 2019 election. Mr. Jackson being the sole candidate for the office of Director District 6, was thereby declared the winner of subject election by default.**

### **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**BVA's Government Relations team remained a consistent presence on Capitol Hill. They worked to educate congressional leaders on the needs of our blinded veterans, their families, and caregivers. The resolutions adopted by BVA members during the annual National Convention drove our legislative advocacy – ensuring the federal laws, regulations and policies governing the Department of Veterans Affairs – and other federal agencies – were continually improved.**

The team consistently sought the support of legislators in enacting policies that would assist blind and visually impaired veterans, monitored favorable legislation, and kept members apprised of new information regarding legislation. Our members were represented on the Hill during congressional committee meetings, leadership roundtables and with individual congressional members and their staff.

BVA successfully deployed the *“OneClick Politics”* grassroots advocacy tool throughout the year. The tool enabled the organization to engage our membership and stakeholder communities throughout the legislative process. Pre-populated form letters were custom tailored and loaded within the tool, followed by website, social media and direct messaging campaigns announcing the *“call to action,”* and finally with the click of a mouse our members overwhelmingly reached out to their elected officials encouraging them to support legislation that mattered to our organization – and it worked. Connecting with your elected officials played an important role in building relationships between decision makers – helping us stay relevant and in the forefront of an elected officials mind – and showing our strength in numbers.

BVA supported numerous legislative initiatives during the 116<sup>th</sup> congressional session – focusing on ensuring the protection and improvement of blind and visually impaired veteran rights. The government relations team championed a wide array of bills during its advocacy efforts – representing the needs of BVA members, their families, caregivers, and various other relevant stakeholder communities.

BVA accomplished two major legislative victories during the 116<sup>th</sup> congressional session. First, H.R. 3504 modernizing VA’s Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant program – mandating eligibility criteria be inclusive of legally blind veterans. Second, H.R. 4920 protecting current AbilityOne federal VA contractors enabling them to continue their current contracts – ensuring hundreds of blind and visually impaired veterans remain employed. President Trump signed both bills into law on August 9, 2020 and specifically mentioned blinded veterans during his press conference.

BVA secured \$20M in appropriations for the FY21 Department of Defense Vision Research Program. This program is critically important in improving the care and treatment of our military and veteran communities experiencing various ocular trauma and vision conditions. Although we sought an increased appropriation of \$30M for this program, we built a solid coalition of Military and Veteran Service Organizations within The Military Coalition – enhancing our posture when championing our FY22 efforts. Additionally, we engaged and educated record numbers of congressional offices, which should benefit our subsequent advocacy.

We continue our efforts toward achieving enactment of S.3587

**(previously H.R. 1199 / S.746), legislation mandating VA’s compliance with website accessibility as required by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 United States Code §794d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220). As of the writing of this report, we are working with both chambers of Congress in an effort to have the bipartisan legislation placed on the suspense calendar prior to the impending congressional recess.**

**BVA worked alongside our advocacy partners toward ensuring that the VA implement caregiver benefits for catastrophically disabled veterans of “ALL” war eras – while mandating that eligibility criteria be inclusive of caregivers for blinded veterans. Unfortunately, VA’s recently released final regulations were far too restrictive, basing eligibility on one’s ability to perform Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). Essentially, these rules require personal care services each time an individual performs one or more of the specified ADLs, thereby excluding blinded veterans and servicemembers who need alternative forms of caregiver support in attaining independence. BVA plans to challenge these restrictive mandates during the upcoming 117<sup>th</sup> congressional session.**

**BVA continues working closely with other Military and Veteran Service Organizations on major concerns involving the Defense Health Agency proposed billet reductions affecting 45% of military ophthalmologists and 50% of optometrists. We succeeded in inserting legislative language within the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act placing a temporary hold on those reductions, while requiring detailed reports to congressional committees on subsequent readiness and care.**

**While the Government Relations team successfully supported several key pieces of legislation – we look forward to continuing to fight the good fight for blind and visually impaired veterans in the post-COVID-19 year ahead.**

## **VETERANS SERVICE**

**Following BVA’s 74th National Convention, the organizations President established the Veteran Services and Resource Center (VSRC) Committee, with an intended focus on cultivating Volunteer Veterans Service Officers (VVSOs) and evaluating the Veteran Services Resource Center (VSRC) adherence to impending strategic plan mandates. A comprehensive analysis of VSRC workflow processes and implementation of industry best practices were undertaken, and subsequently resulted in major organizational transitions**

**VSRC operated via a centralized claims processing model. Staffing**

consisted of; Chief of Veterans Services (1); National Veterans Service Officers (NSOs)(4); Administrative Assistant (1); Volunteer Veterans Service Officers (VVSOs)(11); and Cross-Accredited Veterans Service Officers (VSOs)(180+). BVA was contacted by the VA Office of General Counsel (VAOGC) and ordered to conduct a comprehensive review of Cross-Accredited Veterans Service Officers (VSOs). All VA-recognized VSOs are required to recertify their representatives every five years (see 38 C.F.R. § 14.629(a) [requiring recertification not later than five years after initial accreditation or most recent recertification]). The VAOGC had mailed this request (via certified mail) on or about October 24, 2019. VA OGC followed up on the original letter via email on or about November 20, 2019. VSRC staff alleged the letter had never been received. BVA faced 60 days from the original date of notice to comply.

During the VSRC analysis, staff discovered the absence of a viable client/claim tracking system. A request was submitted to the Veterans Benefits Administration for all BVA corporate claims data. That data revealed an extremely low volume of claims. There appeared to be major operational weaknesses within the VSRC. Standard operating policies and procedures were non-existent, resulting in little to no accountability. Performance was hampered by a multitude of factors – most important of which – appeared to be the centralized claims processing model. A tertiary review of the data demonstrated that BVA’s claims inventory was driven by its forward facing “boots on the ground” VVSO’s, not NSO’s.

BVA tasked the Director of Government Relations with drafting Standard Operating Procedures for the VSRC, while the committee embarked on restructuring plans. Ultimately, the Board of Directors were presented with a comprehensive plan resulting in major organizational transitions. First, the Government Relations and VSRC teams were combined. Several staff members departed BVA and new members joined the team. The VSRC is now known as the Veterans Service Program (VSP) and is led by Mr. Jim Vale (National Service Director, Veterans Benefits & Policy). Jim will also lead BVA’s government relations efforts. Erin McConnell (Government Relations Specialist) supports the team administratively, while Loreal Hamilton (National Service Officer) and Charles Reynolds (National Service Officer) support the VVSOs. Over the coming months the VVSOs will be transitioning to an Ambassador title, expanding their role within BVA.

The “right-sizing” of VSP staff has resulted in significant deficit reduction for the organization, while allowing for technological enhancement and automation of the woefully antiquated service-delivery systems. BVA purchased and deployed a fully integrated client management system (VetPro) allowing for increased staff productivity, claim automation/tracking,

**client engagement/case management and digital processing (eliminating printing, mailing, postage, and various other expenses).**

**While the Veterans Service Program team has been delayed in their deployment and engagement with the VVSOs (future Ambassadors) due to COVID-19 restrictions, they are poised and ready to guide BVA forward in providing superior claims assistance, empowering our veterans and their families through acquisition of their earned benefits.**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Our organization has experienced a multitude of transition over the preceding year. Most notably, our Executive Director chose to retire after several years leading BVA's mission. Joe Bogart literally removed his military uniform and assumed leadership of the organization during an extremely challenging time. Joe accomplished much during his tenure, and we wish him success and relaxation during his well-deserved retirement.**

**BVA was forced to cancel all planned annual events due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Those cancellations included the Light up the Darkness event, 75<sup>th</sup> National Convention – and as of the writing of this report – Veterans Day 2020 appears poised to experience a similar fate. Not only did those cancellations hinder our ability to engage with membership, but also adversely impacted annual revenue. Operation Peer Support was sidelined, along with all external fundraising events. We continued to engage with sponsors and vendors exploring virtual opportunities to connect, resulting in the virtual Zoom meetings and education sessions.**

**The global COVID-19 pandemic forced an evaluation of BVAs headquarters staffing levels. The need to lower operational deficits resulted in a “right sizing” of the national staff. There were numerous staff transitions, but we remain confident the resulting team comprises passionate, competent, and dedicated individuals – strategically aligning our organization for success. Additionally, an ongoing analysis of external contractors and vendors is further diminishing our operational deficit.**

**Currently, the greatest challenge plaguing operations involve the post-data migration. BVA was encouraged to “streamline” and “upgrade” their various database systems. Those systems consisted of membership and donor relationship management systems. Unfortunately, the migration resulted in myriad data corruption, requiring ongoing staff and external contractor resources to resolve. Those challenges adversely impact our member and donor engagement initiatives. This situation, along with COVID-19 restrictions, crippled our fundraising and donor engagement opportunities, resulting in additional contractor terminations. We hope to have the data**

populated and validated in the near future, allowing us to strategically posture BVA for post-COVID-19 fundraising success.

BVA has placed one of its three office suites for lease in an effort to offset operational deficits. COVID-19 has demonstrated an ability to deploy a remote workforce, so additional consideration will be given to leasing a second suite and relocating staff to free federal office space BVA has at its disposal. Should the economy turn around and physical office operations resume, we will begin exploring those opportunities.

National staff have exhibited tremendous adaptability and motivation throughout extremely difficult and challenging times. Their sense of mission and quality service-delivery are commendable, and a testament to their passionate professionalism. Our organization is fortunate to be in such competent and qualified hands. We look forward to assisting the membership and Board of Directors in the years ahead. Keep fighting the good fight, together we are unstoppable.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM**

### **BVA Bulletin**

At the heart of BVA's communications and public relations efforts for 75 years has been the BVA Bulletin. The traditional publication, an icon among BVA members and their families, uses the same name as it did at its inception in 1946. In several cases the same section references are even used after three quarters of a century. Over the years the number of Bulletin issues published during a given year has varied. For a short time early in its history it was a monthly publication but, in most cases, it has functioned as a bi-monthly piece. From the autumn season of 2003 until the same time of year in 2015 the Bulletin was produced quarterly but returned to bi-monthly circulation beginning with the September-October issue of that year. The BVA Board of Directors voted for a return to a quarterly 36-page publication average in the summer of 2020. There will be no July-August 2020 issue of the Bulletin and the issues will once again become known by the seasons of the year. The next issue will be the Summer 2020 issue that will cover July, August, and September.

As a quarterly publication, the Bulletin will now reflect a more thematic approach than it has in in the past. This will allow for the publication to coincide more directly with BVA's fundraising strategies in the monthly newsletters and appeals on the BVA website.



The artistic layout and design of the Bulletin are carried out by Karen Smith, an independent contractor incorporated as Karen Smith Design. Printing and mailing services are performed by Master Print, a local operation in Lorton, Virginia, with Vomela as the parent company. Vomela is one of the largest printing conglomerates in North America with diverse capabilities. With a 36-page issue the cost of printing and preparation for mailing some 5,500 Bulletins is approximately \$4,000 while the cost of design is \$1,000. The cost of producing an audio version that is uploaded to the BVA website and duplicated onto 125 compact disks is approximately \$1,100.

The Bulletin continues to be produced in five formats: paper copy print version, audio-described version uploaded to bva.org, audio-described version on compact disk, email version sent as a Word document, and email version sent as a PDF document. The PDF is also utilized for purposes of uploading to the BVA website. It is a replica of the hard copy with all graphics, photos, and colors included. The Word version is much like the audio version's script, complete with photo descriptions and other narration. The only format not now available, which was available in the past, is an HTML version that featured on the BVA website. The Public Relations Team is studying the possibility of restoring this version since it allows Internet users and Bulletin readers to conduct a Google or Yahoo search to locate Bulletin content using key words. Such searches are not possible at present. To read the issue online, it is necessary to access the content in a PDF file and this content is not web-based.

More Bulletin readers than ever before now depend on one of two email versions of the publication or they access it online. The Public Relations Team also continues to professionally narrate each Bulletin through a narrator, Vietnam veteran John O'Leary of Bethesda, Maryland. John was recommended by previous narrator Bruce Moyer. The PR Team produces the compact disks for BVA members who have difficulty accessing the recordings online. The \$1,100 cost of this production includes narration, editing, uploading the edited content to the website, and duplication of the CDs.

### **BVA Social Media**

Social media postings and their subsequent responses, comments, and reactions have multiplied during the past two years and especially during FY 2020. Although visibility and exposure on social media have increased as a

result, some of the postings have been subject to criticism due to lack of relevance, less than appropriate use of photos and graphics, and at times even bordering on insensitive messaging. At the end of the fiscal year BVA terminated its relationship with JoshMeah, the marketing enterprise that took on BVA's social media scheduling and messaging. EastMain Company was originally contracted to do this work and was subsequently bought out by JoshMeah just two months after BVA finalized the informal agreement/arrangement. From all appearances, both JoshMeah and EastMain had an inadequate knowledge of blinded veterans and the culture/history of the Blinded Veterans Association. With considerable input and direction from the Executive Director, the Public Relations Team has again resumed full responsibility for social media with Kylie Fitzgerald serving as the go-to individual for social media posting, editing, and responding. In the process, the Instagram account has also been eliminated entirely. Facebook, the most interactive BVA account, remains active, as do the Twitter LinkedIn accounts. A YouTube account continues to exist but is not currently active. Because of Facebook's popularity with the BVA audience, it will remain the primary focus of social media efforts.

BVA aims to be highly interactive, engaging, and organization-specific with its social media activity. Efforts will now increase even further in that regard as the Public Relations Team strives for increases in the cross-tagging of relevant individuals and companies along with the use of relevant hashtags.

A slight uptick has occurred during the final four months of FY 2020 in the number of Facebook likes—from 5,302 to 5,646. Followers increased from 5,711 to 6,100. These figures use early March 2020 and the end of June 2020 to measure those increases. Twitter grew from 4,663 followers to 4,668 during that same time span. LinkedIn grew from 450 followers to 488 from March to June.

## **BVA Website**

In October 2018 BVA contracted with Eastmain, Inc. to create a new website design and maintain that design for one year. Some 11 months later, Eastmain, Inc. was sold to JoshMeah.com. BVA continued to use the services

of JoshMeah for website updates and the previously referred to social media postings until June 30, 2020.

Keeping the website accessible, updated, and accurate proved to be impossible under both Eastmain and JoshMeah. Efforts to drive visitors to the site via social media and Search Engine Optimization were largely unsuccessful. In October 2019, a website subcommittee of the main Communications Committee was organized to repair longstanding problems with the site. BVA South Carolina Regional Group President Chery Gajadhar was instrumental in making many of those technical changes and worked closely with Colleen Castellano of JoshMeah (she worked formerly with EastMain) in making them happen.

On March 13, Colleen resigned from JoshMeah to support her husband in a private business. She was replaced by William Cooper, who worked for JoshMeah as an intermediary with the Public Relations Team and third parties making the updates and with whom the PR Team had no contact. The results of this change were unacceptable and many of the very important pieces of the website as designed began to deteriorate. Not helpful either were the cancellations of “Light Up the Darkness” and the 75th National Convention, which left the Public Relations Team with content that needed to be immediately eliminated or changed with new content also needed. It was in this quandary that JoshMeah was replaced officially on July 1 with Cheryl Gajadhar as BVA Information Technology Specialist/Webmaster.

As FY 2021 began the website was set to pass through an intense period of significant change and revolution that included re-designing many pages, massive updating, and a move to make it a vehicle for the driving of potential donors to webpages through which revenue could be generated. It is the goal of the Public Relations Team to make the website an instrument of significant revenue generation. Some improvements have quickly been made, most notably to the Homepage, the Women’s Veteran Group page, the Operation Peer Support page, and the News blog, to name only a few. Many more improvements are on the immediate horizon.

### **Public Service Announcements, Podcasts, and Tracking Services**

At the beginning of FY 2020 (August of 2019) the then BVA Executive Director and the Chief of Public Relations met with Amy Sestito of PSA3. They determined to produce three radio Public Service Announcements with a

general appeal to help blinded veterans after a reference to what it is like to be blind. Each of the three announcements was developed with the same objective and theme but in differing lengths: 15, 30, and 60 seconds. The spots were produced in late August and began running in mid-September. They were to run for six months with the possibility of renewal in mid-March, which the Board of Directors approved at the mid-winter meeting. PSA3 maintains records of the trackable airings based on Nielsen ratings. PSA3 contends that this release has had outstanding results with a much stronger media value than average during the past 11 months of approximately \$275,000. This means that had BVA purchased the airtime for purposes of advertising, the cost would have been at least that amount as a minimum. PSA3 emphasizes that reported airings are only those that are officially tracked by Nielsen Ratings and do not include many of the airings that still occur. The PR Team verified this assertion at least to some degree during the early months of the pandemic when the BVA 60-second announcement was picked up on WMAL-105.9 FM in Washington, DC almost by accident. The radio markets of Mobile-Pensacola, Fort Wayne, Charleston (South Carolina), and Tulsa have been particularly strong. Airings during the mornings are twice as frequent as they are during the PM hours. The spots were aired an average of approximately 160 times per month during the first six months of their release, but the average climbed to nearly 210 beginning in March and saw the largest total during the month of May. Amy attributed the increased airings to PSA3's own efforts in pitching the releases. She also indicated that the pandemic itself and the additional airtime available to stations across the country was also responsible for this outstanding performance.

The PR Team expressed optimism that it could initiate podcasting at some point during FY 2020 and regularly schedule the productions, either in-house in a small office converted into a studio in Suite 315 at the Alexandria National Headquarters, or through outside assistance. Pricing for the necessary equipment was researched. Although prices were not beyond the proposed budgeted amounts for FY 2020, the Team became overwhelmed with other projects and priorities. Additionally, the staff member originally tasked to play an instrumental role in the podcasting effort left the organization and was no longer available to assume that role. For the present time, podcasting equipment will not be purchased until a determination is made that such equipment will be cost effective and that it will be utilized.

The Meltwater public relations platform available for tracking BVA's presence in the public arena was deemed to be considerably less than cost

effective at the end of FY 2020. The subscription, which would have cost the Association more than \$8,000, was therefore not renewed for FY 2021.

### **Public Relations Team Personnel**

At the end of Fiscal Year 2019 the Public Relations Team consisted of Chester Curtis, Jr., Danielle Petty, and Kylie Fitzgerald. Chester left the organization on August 30, 2019 and Danielle's last day was April 24, 2020. Stuart Nelson returned to BVA on January 13, 2020 as the Director of Public Relations.

### **BVA Monthly Newsletter**

Kylie Fitzgerald is the current editor of the BVA monthly electronic newsletter. The newsletter is distributed to email recipients on the fourth Wednesday of each month to an audience of approximately 2,000. The size of the reading audience has remained constant during the past fiscal year, increasing slightly with one month and then decreasing slightly again in a subsequent month while retaining the roughly 2,000 average. Mailchimp, an all-in-one marketing platform, is the service used to distribute the newsletter. The format of the newsletters consists of a series of 5-6 entries on topics of relevance to BVA stakeholders, particularly financial supporters. Only one or two paragraphs for each entry are visible in the newsletter. Readers with interest in reading the balance of an article or blurb can click on a link to go to the entire article, which is most often located in the blogs of the BVA website. In consultation with and at the direction of the Executive Director, the e-newsletter will become more thematic and more organizationally focused moving forward, consistent the goals and objectives for the BVA website and the BVA Bulletin.

### **Membership Communications and News Releases/Announcements**

The Public Relations Team in early March compiled an email distribution list consisting of the National Board of Directors, regional group presidents, and other active members of BVA who are active in their regional groups and engage with National Headquarters on a fairly regular basis. Largely in response to the global pandemic and resulting developments within the blinded veteran community, the recipient data has been subsequently used for additional advisories, events of general interest, and news from the Department of Veterans Affairs on COVID-19 and a host of other topics. Of

particular note is the use of this medium for advising the membership of the closing, or the impending closing, of the Blind Rehabilitation Centers and the directive from the National Board of Directors to hold either conference call meetings or video conferencing meetings. Feedback from the membership to the PR Team regarding these email announcements has been rather vague and limited. The small amount of feedback that the members have been provided has been largely positive.

### **KATHERN F. GRUBER AND THOMAS H. MILLER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The Blinded Veterans Association awards seven (7) scholarships each year. There are six (6) scholarships for \$2,000 each available through the Kathern F. Gruber Scholarship Program and one (1) for \$1,000 offered through the Thomas H. Miller Scholarship Program.

The scholarships are open to dependent children, grandchildren, and spouses of blinded veterans to include Active Duty blinded service members of the U.S. Armed Forces. The blindness may either be service-connected or non-service-connected and membership in BVA is not a prerequisite. A BVA Scholarship Committee comprised of three volunteers, none of whom is a blinded veteran, reviews the scholarship applications and chooses the seven primary recipients based on “best qualified”. The Committee also selects two alternates.

### **EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE**

We purchased six computers and peripherals for office staff, along with docking stations for laptops. We also ordered new office furniture and fixtures for new Headquarters property.

### **FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

From an investment and reserves standpoint, BVA’s remains in a stable financial position for FY20. The investment balance at Morgan Stanley for BVA sits at \$8.26M. BVA is projecting an operating deficit of (\$281K). The operating deficit of (\$540K) is an improvement of \$259K in comparison to FY19’s budgeted operating deficit of (\$554K). BVA continues to work year over year in cutting its operating losses.

Operating Revenue for the FY2021 is budgeted to be \$1.69M. The FY2021 amount is lower compared to the budget FY2020 amount due to BVA not

hosting the events for Annual Convention, OPS-Soltes Memorial Golf Tournament, and Light-Up the Darkness. BVA will be down (\$266K) in revenue collections compared to the FY2020 budget for not hosting these events. BVA is also expected to see a (\$175K) drop in Fundraising revenue and OPS revenue due to reductions in Contributions and Online Giving. BVA's goal for FY2020 is to increase fundraising via Direct Mail and Major Donor Giving. The staff will utilize outside resources to begin working with corporations and individual donors to help increase development revenue.

Total Operating Expenses budgeted at \$1.97M are \$800K less than the FY20 budget due to the elimination of multiple staff positions related to Veteran's Services, Development, Public Relations, Convention, and Administration programs. Staff Salaries cuts across these programs account for a savings of \$334K. With the staff salary cuts, BVA has also managed to cut outside vendor costs with Public Relations and Development to help bring back the investment for these programs internally. BVA has worked to eliminate the use of outside contractors for website design and fundraising management. BVA will continue to use Direct Mail.com to support in the postage and printing of all appeals. The costs for this will be less in FY2021 compared to FY2020 by \$142K. For FY2020, the amounts budgeted were higher than what we expected BVA to spend.

The annual BVA audited financial statement for FY 2020 and the approved budget for FY 2021 will be appended to the hard-copy edition of this report as Appendix B and the approved Budget for FY 2021 as Appendix C after audit the end of September, 2020.

## **CONCLUSION**

Given the numerous changes that have been made within BVA Headquarters over this past fiscal year, the National Board of Directors continue to look for ways to strengthen BVA's financial position and has been acting very prudent and responsible in their decision making and oversight since the adjournment of BVA's 74<sup>th</sup> National Convention. The BVA investment program remains consistently strong. BVA would like to see more regional group involvement with the representatives as we work towards rebuilding and strengthening our organization. Your National Board of Directors deeply appreciates the support of the membership along with the National Headquarters staff and looks forward to serving you during the coming year.

**For the National Board of Directors,**

**Dr. Thomas Zampieri  
National President and  
Chairman of the Board**

**TZ:bj**

**APPENDICES:**

**A - Membership Statistics**

**B - Audited Financial Statement for FY 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)**

**C - Approved Budget for FY- 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)**

**D - Composition of six Director Districts**