



# World Veterans Federation NEWSLETTER

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

## THE WVF CREDO

“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**

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*The WVF Executive Board and the Secretariat  
sending you the best wishes for peace and prosperity  
in 2021*

# Who are we?

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 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.





# Editorial

## Dear members and friends,

We are now approaching the end of a year that we had not dreamed of leading into a protracted pandemic. We at WVF have been and are concerned about the many members of our affiliated organizations who have underlying illnesses as well as have reached a respectable age. We have tried to keep in touch with most of you in other ways than the many regional and congresses we have had in the past. It's a miss for us who are a close-knit dedicated veteran gang. The friendship we have built up over the years is being put to the test during this time. Let us all follow the rules that are imposed on us to limit further infection so that we can all meet again, healthy and proud veterans as we are. In this newsletter, we cover some areas where I think the Swedish veterans have been very skilled, namely to set premises for politicians how they can or should treat veterans. This is a positive example of how to use a similar initiative in any organization. We must not let others control how we are to be treated, but here we must take responsibility to participate loudly for the good of all our veterans.

At this time, the secretariat is keeping full pressure on simplifying the organization to become more efficient. We are now working on a proposal to make the constitution simpler and the operation more oriented at other types of conferences and operations. The new membership category is well working and we have now one Honorary Lifetime membership and one Honorary membership and I do hope many of you will be able to upgrade your membership to secure the WVF for the future.

During the first half of the year, we want to present a new strategy for future international veteran work. And then we hope to hold a World Veteran Congress where we can meet and hold a General Assembly during the fall of 2021. We ask you to read the post from our appointed Chair of The Election Committee, Mr. Bjarne Hesselberg, to give him some ideas on future trustees who can contribute to the process we do to keep the veterans' cause more important than ever. Furthermore, we have chosen to postpone our 70th anniversary until next year so that we can hopefully meet to discuss important issues for veterans along with also honoring our many tens of thousands of trustees through 7 decades.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the work you do and hope that you all have a peaceful time at this end of the year and that you get a good start to the new year.

- President Dan-Viggo Bergtun, WVF

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





*The first elected President of the WVF was Mr. Albert Morel from France .*

## Glimpses from the past

The WVF began on Sunday, 9 June 1946 when six Belgian and French veterans of the First World War gathered around a table at the “Maison du Peuple” in Brussels, Belgium to discuss the possibility of setting up a world association of war veterans. Present at the gathering were two Belgians, Mr. Joseph Neves and Mr. Jules William from the Democratic Union of Veterans, Disabled and War Victims, and four Frenchmen, Mr. Albert Morel from the French Union of Veterans and War Victims Association (UFAC), Mr. G. Imbaud, Mr. G. Jerram and Mr. B. Meunier from the French Workers and Peasants Federation of Veterans.

Following the discussions in Brussels, veterans’ organisations in other countries were contacted. On 23 October 1948, a congress attended by representatives from seven countries, namely Belgium, Brazil, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the Union of South Africa and Yugoslavia, adopted a resolution entitled “Setting up of a Provisional Body”.

The resolution opened the way for the founding member associations to convene a constitutive assembly which was held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, from 23 to 27 November 1950. Forty-three delegates and observers were present. The delegates were from Belgium (6), France (14), Italy (4), Turkey (2), the United States (9) and Yugoslavia (4), and the observers were from Denmark (1) and Finland (3). The founding member associations of the Netherlands and Luxembourg were unable to send their representatives but declared their agreement with the creation of the federation. There was no participation from countries from Africa, Asia and South America, although the Union of South Africa attended the congress in 1948 prior to the constitutive assembly in 1950.

On the final day of the assembly on 27 November 1950, the constitution of “The International Federation of War Veterans Organisations” was adopted. The name of the federation was changed to “The World Veterans Federation” at the 2nd General Assembly, held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia from 27 to 30 November 1951. It was the first amendment to the WVF Constitution.



## A veteran policy for Sweden

Swedish Veterans Federations (SVF) goals and priorities for Sweden's veteran policy today and into the future.

The Swedish Veterans Association proudly presents:

### **VETERAN POLICY FOR SWEDEN.**

A political program of ideas.

This is a summary of the SVT's view of which political issues and goals should be prioritized within Swedish veteran policy and other relevant policy areas from 2020 onwards. The idea program has been developed by SVF's associations and the federal board in 2020.

Sweden's veterans today are a bit of a popular movement because about 100,000 Swedes have completed international service in various forms, and as these have a low number of up to 500,000 close relatives who have been greatly affected by the often risky and stressful assignments. The goals and priorities presented are well-balanced and realistic and aim to improve the situation for the country's veterans and streamline an important activity for Sweden.

SVF's starting point is that a responsible veteran policy, with the individual at the center, is good for Sweden!

Decisions on initiatives with Swedish staff are made by the Swedish Parliament.

This means that all political parties are directly involved in and responsible for the formulation of our veteran policy.

SVF's political issues have been divided into 25 points.

Here are five of them:

**Develop veteran policy:**

All political parties should have a basic veterans policy with clear goals, priorities and funding.

**Appoint political representatives:**

All political parties should have veteran policy representatives and contact persons. This is especially important at national and municipal level.

**Keep the policy together:**

Veterans policy should constitute a coherent policy covering all three political levels, ie national, regional and municipal level.

**Anchor the policy:**

Veterans policy should be pursued, developed, financed and communicated precisely on the same way as any other policy.

**Support our veterans:**

Yellow ribbon, which is sold for the benefit of Sweden's veterans and their relatives, can be advantageously and suitably highlighted by political representatives at all levels and of all preferably in connection with Veterans Day on 29 May.

Read their suggested policy here presented by Mr. Sverker Göranson President in Swedish Veterans Federation.

<https://www.sverigesveteranforbund.se/files/691d4ac910e18d37abe1f1ad4607efbe.pdf>





# United Nations Secretary General's message – 2020 on UN DAY

*"Dear friends,*

*The 75th anniversary of the United Nations falls in the middle of a global pandemic. Our founding mission is more critical than ever.*

*To promote human dignity.*

*Protect human rights.*

*Respect international law.*

*And save humanity from war.*

*When the pandemic hit, I called for a global ceasefire.*

*In our world today, we have one common enemy: COVID-19.*

*Now is the time for a stepped-up push for peace to achieve a global ceasefire. The clock is ticking.*

*We must also make peace with our planet.*

*The climate emergency threatens life itself.*

*We must mobilize the whole world to reach carbon neutrality -- net zero emissions of greenhouse gasses by 2050.*

*A growing number of countries and companies have already pledged to meet this goal.*

*Around the world, we must do more to end human suffering from poverty, inequality, hunger and hatred -- and fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender or any other distinction. The months of pandemic have seen a horrific rise in violence against women and girls.*

*We must build on progress. A remarkable global collaboration is under way for a safe, affordable and accessible COVID-19 vaccine for all.*

*The Sustainable Development Goals give us an inspiring blueprint for recovering better.*

*We face colossal challenges. With global solidarity and cooperation, we can overcome them.*

*That's what the United Nations is all about.*

*On this anniversary, I ask people everywhere to join together.*

*The United Nations not only stands with you...*

*The United Nations belongs to you and is you: "we the peoples".*

*Together, let us uphold the enduring values of the United Nations Charter.*

*Let us build on our advances across the decades.*

*Let us realize our shared vision of a better world for all."*



*Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres, Portuguese, born 30 April 1949.*

## Antonio Manuel De Oliveira

He is a Portuguese politician and diplomat serving as the ninth secretary-general of the United Nations. He was member of the Portuguese Socialist Party, and served as prime minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002. Guterres served also as secretary-general of the Socialist Party from 1992 to 2002 and he served as president of the Socialist International from 1999 to 2005. He was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 2005 to 2015. In both a 2012 and 2014 poll, the Portuguese public ranked him the best prime minister of the previous 30 years.



**United Nations  
Secretary-General**

# THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The need for international solidarity and multilateral cooperation is more conspicuous than ever. The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2020 to the World Food Programme (WFP) for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict.

With this year's award, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to turn the eyes of the world towards the millions of people who suffer from or face the threat of hunger. The World Food Programme plays a key role in multilateral cooperation on making food security an instrument of peace, and has made a strong contribution towards mobilising UN Member States to combat the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict. The organisation contributes daily to advancing the fraternity of nations referred to in Alfred Nobel's will. As the UN's largest specialised agency, the World Food Programme is a modern version of the peace congresses that the Nobel Peace Prize is intended to promote.

The World Veterans Federation congratulate the work of the World Food Programme to the benefit of humankind is an endeavour that all the nations of the world should be able to endorse and support.



# WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

By Mr. Joe Falzon, former Secretary General of the WVF.

“I thought you would appreciate me sharing this with you. I am now halfway through my tenure as the National Vice Chairman of The Royal British Legion. Remembrance Day will be different, here in UK, and elsewhere in the Commonwealth, to any other we have experienced in our lifetime.

On November 7th, 1920, in strictest secrecy, four unidentified British bodies were exhumed from temporary battlefield cemeteries at Ypres, Arras, the Aisne and the Somme.

None of the soldiers who did the digging were told why.



The bodies were taken by field ambulance to GHQ at St-Pol-Sur-Ter Noise. Once there, the bodies were draped with the Union flag and sentries were posted. Brigadier-General Wyatt and a Colonel Gell selected one body at random. The other three were reburied.

A French Honour Guard was selected and stood by the coffin overnight of the chosen soldier; can you possibly imagine the privilege, the proximity to the loss, the raw emotion of standing guard to a man who gave his all, and that of his family.

On the morning of the 8th November, a specially designed coffin made of oak from the grounds of Hampton Court arrived and the Unknown Warrior was placed inside. On top was placed a crusaders sword and a shield on which was inscribed:

”A British Warrior who fell in the GREAT WAR 1914-1918 for King and Country”.

On the 9th of November, the Unknown Warrior was taken by horse-drawn carriage through Guards of Honour and the sound of tolling bells and bugle calls to the quayside.

There, he was saluted by Marechal Foch and loaded onto HMS Verdun bound for Dover. The coffin stood on the deck covered in wreaths, surrounded by the French Honour Guard.

Upon arrival at Dover, the Unknown Warrior was met with a nineteen-gun salute - something that was normally only reserved for Field Marshals.

A special train had been arranged and he was then conveyed to Victoria Station, London.

He remained there overnight. On the morning of the 11th of November, the coffin was placed, by the bearer party from the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards, on a gun carriage drawn by six black horses of the Royal Horse Artillery, and finally taken to Westminster Abbey. There he was met by a very special group of women as guests of honour. The guests of honour were a group of about one hundred women, chosen because they had each lost their husband and all their sons in the war. "Every woman so bereft who applied for a place got it".



The idea of the unknown warrior was thought of by a Padre called David Railton who had served on the front line during the Great War. The Union Flag he had used as an altar cloth whilst at the front, was the one that had been draped over the coffin. In 1920 he wrote to the Dean of Westminster – Herbert Edward Ryle proposing that an unidentified British soldier from the battlefields in France be buried with due ceremony in Westminster Abbey "amongst the kings" to represent the many hundreds of thousands of Empire dead. The idea was strongly supported by the Dean and the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George.

It was his intention that all of the relatives of the 517,773 combatants whose bodies had not been identified could believe that the Unknown Warrior could very well be their lost husband, father, brother or son.

The coffin was interred in the far western end of the Nave, only a few feet from the entrance, in soil brought from each of the main battlefields and covered with a silk pall. Servicemen from the armed forces, including one hundred who were awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery in the Great War, stood guard as tens of thousands of mourners filed silently past. The ceremony appears to have served as a form of catharsis for collective mourning on a scale not previously known.

The grave was then capped with a black Belgian marble stone (the only tombstone in the Abbey on which it is forbidden to walk) featuring this inscription, composed by Herbert Edward Ryle, engraved with brass from melted down wartime ammunition."



**BENEATH THIS STONE RESTS THE BODY  
OF A BRITISH WARRIOR  
UNKNOWN BY RANK OR NAME  
BROUGHT FROM FRANCE TO LIE AMONG  
THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS OF THE LAND  
AND BURIED HERE ON ARMISTICE DAY  
11 NOV: 1920. IN THE PRESENCE OF  
HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V  
HIS MINISTERES OF STATE  
THE CHIEFS OF HIS FORCES  
AND A VAST CONCOURSE OF THE NATION**

**THUS ARE COMMEMORATED THE MANT  
MULTITUDES WHO DURING THE GREAT  
WAR OF 1914 - 1918 GAVE THE MOST THAT  
MAN CAN GIVE LIFE ITSELF  
FOR GOD  
FOR KING AND COUNTRY  
FOR LOVED ONES HOME AND EMPIRE  
FOR THE SACRED CAUSE OF JUSTICE AND  
THE FREEDOM OF THE WORLD**

**THEY BURIED HIM AMONG THE KINGS BECAUSE  
HE  
HAD DONE GOOD TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD  
HIS HOUSE**



CARING FOR  
VETERANS IN  
CRISIS... NOW!



## Presenting our newest member in UK, Veterans Aid

Veterans Aid provides immediate, practical support to all ex-servicemen and women who have served in HM Armed Forces who are homeless, facing homelessness or in crisis. The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees and enjoys the Patronage of The Dowager Viscountess Rothermere. Since 2007 the charity has dealt with 611 Foreign & Commonwealth individuals and 67 nationalities. In 2016 107 visa applications were submitted on behalf of veterans and serving personnel.

These individuals (and their families) are often overlooked when people think of the veterans' community. Ministry of Defence data reveals that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) personnel accounted for 7.6 per cent of the UK Regular Forces (10,950 personnel), at 1 October 2018. 53.5% of BAME service personnel were from the UK, with the remaining 46.5% from Foreign & Commonwealth countries. See more on [www.veterans-aid.net](http://www.veterans-aid.net)

### VETERANS AID & COVID-19



#### WORKING DIFFERENTLY

We are still dealing with urgent and complex cases.

# COMBAT STRESS

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## FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

### WE ARE **COMBAT STRESS**

#### THE UK'S LEADING CHARITY FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

For over a century we've been helping former servicemen and women deal with issues like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. Today we provide specialist treatment and support for veterans from every service and conflict, focusing on those with complex mental health issues related to their military service.

We offer a range of treatment programmes, therapies and support to help you with your mental health problems. Everyone is unique and our highly skilled medical and clinical teams work with you individually to find the right support for you.

This could be attending a group workshop or individual session with one of our community teams, attending a programme at one of our treatment centres or being put in touch with another organisation who is more suitable to help you.





# Extract from the terms of reference for the elections committee

During its 156th meeting, the World Veterans Federation Executive Board decided to establish an Elections Committee, in order to ensure that the best possible candidates for posts on the Executive Board are identified in advance of the General Assembly and to ensure that members are properly informed about background, experience and qualifications of the candidates in advance of the Elections.

Col. Bjarne Hesselberg (Denmark) was nominated by the Executive Board to Chair the Committee in 2017 and re-nominated in 2020.

Col. Hesselberg will produce Terms of Reference for the Committee and a Working Plan which will be submitted to the Executive Board for approval. The Elections Committee will then work independently of the Executive Board, Standing Committees and General Assembly to carry out its research and make proposals. The Chairman of the Elections Committee will choose the members of the Committee. The Chairman will ensure that all regions are represented. As a principle, the Elections Committee will be impartial, independent and not influenced by the Executive Board or Member Association delegations. Also the members of the Election Committee will not be available for election to any functions on the Executive Board.

As the Secretary General is appointed by the Executive Board, the Election Committee will report and recommend candidates for this post to the Executive Board. As the Vice-Presidents/Chairmen of the Regional Standing Committees and the Standing Committee on Women elect their Chairman and Vice-chairman from among their members, the Elections Committee will have a consultative role and offer support to the Standing Committees to find and recommend candidates. As the President, the Deputy President, the Treasurer General and the members and alternate members of the Financial Committee are elected by the General Assembly, the Elections Committee will submit its report and recommendations to the General Assembly.

The Elections Committee shall have as its task:

- To receive proposals for candidates for elections and research the background, experience and qualifications of those candidates.
- To carry out inspections from among member associations to identify possible candidates for positions on the Executive Board.
- To inspect the performance of serving members on the Executive Board and report on activity and results
- To provide a report on each candidate standing for election to the General Assembly for information purposes

## NOMINATIONS

The WVF Elections Committee welcomes applications from all suitably qualified persons regardless of their race, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age. The job description for Members of the WVF Executive Board is listed in the Constitution. Member Associations are asked to study this very carefully before considering nominating a candidate. The WVF is a large, complex and multi-faceted organization. Member Associations are therefore advised not to nominate a candidate unless it is certain that the proposed nominee has all of the attributes required to carry out the very onerous duties involved in this high profile position. Nominations are to be submitted to reach the Chairman of the Elections Committee not later than 2 month before the General Assembly. Nominations received after this date will not be considered. Each nomination must be accompanied by:

- o · The written and signed consent of the nominee.
  
  - o · Curriculum Vitae
  
  - o · A recent, passport-style photograph of the nominee.
- d) The different qualities that the Elections Committee will look for in candidates will be:
- They must be representative of many countries (not focused on their own country)
  - They must have the support of the Member Associations in the country that they represent
  - Background, experience and qualifications relevant to the role
  - Ability to work in at least one of the working languages of the World Veterans Federation (English and/or French. Preferably English)
  - They must be available (have time to commit to the Federation)
  - They must be able to financially support their activities either through their own funding or the organisation that they represent.

Further information concerning the Elections committee can be obtained through the WVF Secretariat or by contacting the Chairman of the Elections Committee:

Col. Bjarne Hesselberg e-mail: [lilibjarnehesselberg@outlook.dk](mailto:lilibjarnehesselberg@outlook.dk)

Phone: +45 21 45 64 48

Mail address: Bakkebøllevvej 12

4760 Vordingborg Denmark

Mr. Bjarne Hesselberg  
Chairman of the WVF Elections Committee





# Membership scale for 2020

At the 28th WVF General Assembly, the Executive Board was tasked to introduce an adjusted dues scale and at its 164th meeting a new scale was adopted. The dues scale has for many years not been aligned with the constitution but has now been corrected. The scale has been adjusted to ensure that any association can be a member, however, to become a full member with all rights members must pay their membership dues. We have already seen some members who are willing to become Honorary Lifetime member and we welcome all to study these terms and upgrade your membership. After all, we are a worldwide veteran organization and this year the WVF will celebrate its 70th Anniversary in the service of veterans.

## WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION MEMBERSHIP SCALE FROM 2020



### Honorary Lifetime Member of the WVF

Ordinary and Associated 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**. (Members of the Honorary Members Club will also be on an advisory board for the WVF with a yearly meeting)



### Honorary Member of the WVF

Ordinary and Associated Members of the WVF can become an Honorary member and member of the Honorary Members Club for a **5 000 Euro** yearly fee. (Members of the Honorary Members Club will also be an advisory board for the WVF with a yearly meeting)



### Ordinary Member (every member organization)

Ordinary Members shall pay a yearly fee of **1 800 Euro**. This should be paid by 1st of January of the year in question at the latest.



### Associate Member (nonpaying members)

This category is open to new applicants who are not able to contribute financially to the Federation. Associate Members have no voting rights and can participate at WVF meetings as observers for a set fee.

Member organizations remain responsible for paying any outstanding dues prior to 2020.

Any association wishing to change its category of membership should contact the WVF Secretariat

# The Sustainable Development Goals: Our Framework for COVID-19 Recovery



**“We need to turn the recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future.” – UN Secretary-General António Guterres**

COVID-19 is spreading human suffering, destabilizing the global economy and upending the lives of billions of people around the globe.

The pandemic is an unprecedented wake-up call, laying bare deep inequalities and exposing precisely the failures that are addressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Leveraging this moment of crisis, when usual policies and social norms have been disrupted, bold steps can steer the world back on track towards the Sustainable Development Goals. This is the time for change, for a profound systemic shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

