



# World Veterans Federation Newsletter

*In service for veterans since 1950.*

IN THIS ISSUE

## 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**

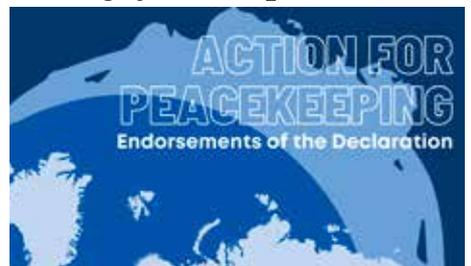
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# Who are we?

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.

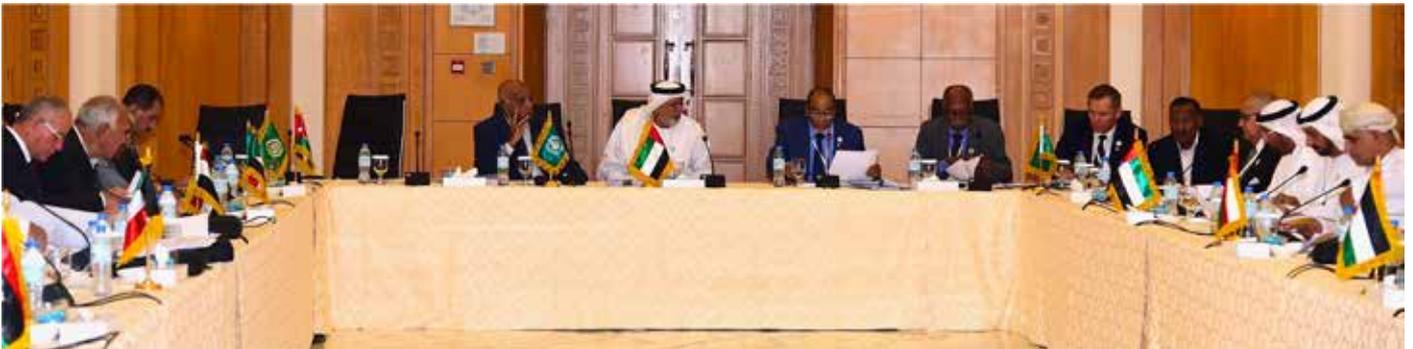
The WVF maintains its consultative status with the United Nations since 1951 and was conferred the title: "UN Peace Messenger" in 1987. The WVF has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 8 times.

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,**

First, we wish all our dedicated volunteers and members of our member organizations a very happy new year. After almost a year during the global pandemic we have all had to find new ways of working. We, who for over 70 years have met each other and discussed progress in the world's veteran communities, have put this on hold until we can meet again. At the same time, it has been demanding to perform the most common work tasks through restrictions and lockdowns. We are today pleased that already in 2018 reduced our staff and introduced a more simplified way of working. This work continues and a new proposal at the strategic level and constitution is underway and will be presented at the next General Assembly, which we have now postponed until the autumn of 2022. We in WVF management, which consists of President (who is also acting Secretary General), Treasure General and Secretariat have experienced 2020 as challenging for the WVF, who also had added additional strain to the already extremely precarious financial situation that we have had for many years.

We are sure many will agree, however, that we had hoped for a little more in the beginning of 2021 in terms of relaxation of restrictions and a beginning of the end of the coronavirus pandemic. In this newsletter we have added greetings from our vice presidents and over the rules of the election committee, which are in full swing. In addition, we have included the membership categories and ask you all to support us with the membership and invite you to upgrade it further.

For now we must remain optimistic that normality will resume soon and do our part by following local guidelines and staying safe.



**- 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





# 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: Bakkebøllevej 12

4760 Vordingborg Denmark

Mr. Bjarne Hesselberg

Chairman of the WVF Elections Committee





## Message from the Deputy President of the WVF

Dear Colleagues, Members of the Executive Board of the WVF, Presidents and Directors of member Institutions and Associations of the WVF,

I would like to warmly thank Mr. DAN-VIGGO BERGTUN, President of the World Federation of Veterans Affairs (WVF) for having kindly invited me to write this message in this issue of the WVF Newsletter which constitutes a platform important communication and exchange of news, information, experiences and expertise between Institutions and Member Associations of the WVF.

As you know, my dear colleagues from the fighting world, we have just lived through a more than eventful year 2020, with the spread of the corona pandemic "Covid 19" which has caused a lot of damage, particularly in the circles of our generations in old age and has deeply shaken and disrupted families, societies and economies all over the planet.

Despite the constraints that we have endured and the burdens that we have suffered since March 2020, with two periods of confinement, we have held up the bar and we are still in the heat of the moment to accomplish our noble missions and exhilarating actions aimed at actively contributing to the defence of the moral and material interests of the community of Veterans and War Victims and their beneficiaries throughout the world.

Of course, this pandemic has shaken up our habits, disrupted our lives and sometimes struck loved ones, but it has taught us to live with it and deal with it.

In this difficult context, the members of the Executive Board of the WVF have clearly demonstrated their ability to successfully guarantee the continuity of their functions and their activities concerning the day-to-day management of the WVF, in a pleasant framework of solidarity, union, understanding and cooperation. They held two important and fruitful meetings namely the 165th and 166th meeting of the Executive Board of the WVF, held respectively, out of committee by videoconference, on Friday June 26 and Wednesday September 23, 2020. Likewise, the WVF Secretariat has maintained all of its administrative activities by adapting to health protection standards and has greatly contributed to facilitating communication and exchange between Member Institutions and Associations and the governing bodies of the WVF.



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Thank you all for your constant commitment and for your relevant initiatives undertaken and your great sustained efforts.

Indeed, from the first confinement, massive recourse to teleworking and electronic management, made it possible to limit the consequences of the health crisis due to Covid 19, on the functioning and the accomplishment of the noble missions of a large number. Member Institutions and Associations that have worked tirelessly to give priority to their most fragile and vulnerable members, so that individualized support is provided for them during this period of forced isolation, and of prolonged and untenable confinement.

Now we all owe a thought to all of those who left us during the year 2020, including Veterans, Former Resistants and Victims of War. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to one of the eminent personalities of the WVF who died in May 2020. It is indeed the late Mrs. June A. WILLENZ, founder and former Chair of the Standing Committee on Women (SCOW), representative of the WVF to the United Nations and a very active and highly regarded member of the WVF. Our heartfelt sentiments go out to all the men and women of the world who have died fighting, in recognition of their precious sacrifices and their tireless dedication to the cause of Veterans Affairs and their remarkable contribution to the defence of the values of the world. social equality, justice and human rights.

I would also like to point out that the year 2021, which lays before us, is still fraught with serious challenges and full of trials. With our great and firm will and with our strong solidarity and community, we will overcome them and realize our shared wish to live together in peace, security and tranquility.

To conclude, I reiterate to all my Dear Colleagues, Members of the Executive Board and Presidents and Directors of the Institutions and Associations that are members of the WVF, as well as to the entire community of Former Resisters, Veterans, Veterans and Victims of War throughout the world, my best and warmest wishes for happiness, health, comfort and full personal and family satisfaction.

**Doctor El Mostafa El Ktiri,  
Deputy President**





# Membership Scale 2021

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

# Standing Committee on European Affairs (SCEA)

As mentioned in my letter to SCEA members, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to all doing their best to overcome the constraints following Covid-19 and continuing their efforts in service of Veteran Affairs.

The SCEA's activities in 2020 were obviously halted, as all our activities have been, by the pandemic. In early 2020, planning and preparation for the Zagreb meeting commenced and I would like to express my gratitude to the colleagues and officials I met with in Zagreb, who were all very supportive, however the registration process for delegates was due to initiate when Covid-19 suddenly and almost totally diverted our attention. It has of course been a great disappointment to me and all of the SCEA to have to put our meetings on hold.

For the time being we all now have to adjust to the 'new normal', which has lead me to suggesting that SCEA members share information on how they are performing their work over email, in an attempt to recreate some of the enriching exchanges we all enjoy at our physical meetings, and to help us stay n touch until we can all finally meet again, hopefully in the not too distant future.

**Birger Kjer Hansen**  
Chairman of SCEA



***“For the time being we all now have to adjust to the new normal!”***



## Standing Committee for Asia and the Pacific (SCAP)

The year 2020 was a very difficult one for almost every country in our world; no country was exempted. The coronavirus COVID-19 has left nowhere untouched. Whether individuals, or even military, no one seems to be able to live freely from the threats of the invisible virus. All plans have had to be changed because of its threat.

By the end of 2019, we, in Taiwan, in the capacity of the chairmanship of SCAP, had completed our plans to host the regional convention of SCAP in mid-June 2020 in Taipei, Taiwan. We even negotiated for President DV Bergtun to come to Taipei as one of the representatives of the international organizations to come to the inauguration anniversary of the ROC President on May 20. But the virus spoiled all these beautiful plans. We had to put our convention plans on hold, and keep in touch with our HQ in Paris for further instructions on our follow-up actions to take to fulfill our duty to convene the SCAP Meeting sometime in 2020. However, our endeavors were again dismayed. Luckily though, we, and most of our veteran comrades survived the year. And, this is the most important on our life journey. We need to remain alive so that we can take the opportunity to join together and help our fellow veterans to promote our wellbeing in the future.

Now that we have entered into the new year 2021. In our official language Chinese in Taiwan, we wish all our friends a NEW year of OX, (pronounced NEW), and the new ox will be strong and sturdy to walk us through the year 2021, safely and prosperously. With the strongness and the sturdiness, we look forward to God's abundant blessings to allow us move on and carry on our plans and life in the coming year.

**Wu, Chi-liang**  
**Chairman of SCAP**



*"We need to remain alive so that we can take the opportunity to join together and help our fellow veterans to promote our wellbeing in the future."*



## Standing Committee for the Americas (SCA)

Dear World Veterans Federation Team:

2020 was a difficult year for all of us due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As most organizations, we were unable to accomplish a lot of our goals that we had previously planned for 2020.

The Americas are still recovering from COVID-19 as we been severely impacted by the Virus.

At the peak of the pandemic, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other hospitals were packed with COVID-19 patients. American Veterans Committee learned that there was a need for hygiene kits and masks at VA Hospitals and delivered masks and hygiene kits to two VA medical centers for use by admitted veterans. We will continue our direct outreach efforts to support our veterans during this difficult time to the best of our ability.

This year, we are closely watching pandemic recovery and vaccine delivery efforts and hope to reengage and connect with our global friends and supporters as soon as it is safe to travel again. During the pandemic, the Standing Committee has remained active to plan future meetings and get organized so we can accomplish our pending goals.

It was a pleasure to join the Executive Board of the World Veterans Federation remotely to discuss important organizational matters, even during the current pandemic. We remain grateful for the updates and virtual support provided by the World Veterans Federation HQ and look forward to our next meeting.

**Saif M. Khan**  
**Chairman of SCA**



***"We will continue our direct outreach efforts to support our veterans during this difficult time to the best of our ability."***



# Standing Committee on African Affairs (SCAA)

## NEWS FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

After a particularly difficult year, marked by Coronavirus pandemic, the Standing Committee on African Affairs began the year 2021 in the hope that this health crisis which has shaken the world population and destabilized the economy, in particular that of the Africa, would be overcome. Despite the many inconveniences and imbalances caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and the existing hotbeds of tension and insecurity, the African Veteran has escaped unscathed and firmly aspires to return to normal life, especially since his life has not always been rosy. In the grip of financial insecurity and a victim of geriatric illnesses, he is vulnerable and asks only to live a peaceful retirement without stress or lamentation.

During the year 2020, the SCAA focused its activity on the preparations for the 16th Meeting of the Standing Committee on African Affairs (SCAA) in Morocco while advocating strict compliance with the barrier measures enacted by governments and the World health Organization. Initially scheduled during the year 2020 in Morocco, this important meeting has been postponed to 2021, subject to the easing of the Covid-19 situation and a high rate of participation being guaranteed by African Member Associations. To this end, several reminder letters were sent to African associations; unfortunately, the latter are slow to react and confirm their participation. At the moment, the President of the SCAA is active with the representatives of Morocco so that this meeting takes place despite the lack of enthusiasm of the African Associations.

On December 29, 2020, as the whole world was getting ready to celebrate the New Year's Eve 2021, Cameroonian Veterans experienced a "Black Tuesday." The boat carrying seventeen veterans and their wives belonging to the same Club, capsized on a local river when they had just taken part in a meeting scheduled in a neighbouring area. This accident had the following results:

- Nine drowned including one wife;
- Eight survivors.

The official funeral of the missing was organized on Saturday, January 30, 2021 in proper military tradition.

The placement in coffin was chaired by the Deputy General Manager representing the General Manager, who was absent. The burial ceremony, for its part, was chaired by the administrative authority in this case, the local sub-prefect in the presence of the mayor of the municipality, administrative, judicial, political, civil and military authorities. The Deputy Director General led a delegation from the General Management of ONACAM there. Among the participants, we could distinguish the bereaved families of the missing, a large delegation of Veterans from the locality and elsewhere as well as sympathizers from the veteran community.

Military honours were rendered by a troop composed of a Battery of the Main Music of the Armies, of the flag of ONACAM, of a squad of Gendarmerie, of a section of the Veterans and of a Group of the National Police. .

The ceremonies were covered by numerous national television and print media. Solemn tributes were paid to these valiant fighters who gave their all to posterity. It was in a very sad atmosphere that the comrades in arms said goodbye to the departed.

This is the place to thank His Excellency the Cameroonian Minister Delegate to the Presidency of the Republic in charge of Defense who covered all the costs related to the organization of the search for the bodies as well as those inherent in the official funerals. The same is true of the Secretary of State for Defense, in charge of Veterans and War Victims for his full involvement in the psychological and social care of the families of the deceased.

In general, the past year has been all the more difficult and sad, as it took away many of our comrades in arms. The SCAA sent on behalf of the great family of Veterans Affairs their most saddened condolences to which it combined the expression of the deep compassion of its President.

Behind us a lot of pain but on the horizon, hope at the end of the tunnel. "Hope gives life", as we say. The SCAA therefore intends in 2021 to do everything possible to restore its image, which is somewhat tarnished by a lack of continental activities. To do this, preparations for the 16thSC are continuing. It is the same for the revitalization of the activities of the regional working groups with a view to raising the awareness of the Governors of the countries of our continent for the improvement of the health and well-being of our former combatants.

The SCAA sees improvement in 2021 and intends to achieve it with the support of the Executive Board of the WVF.

***"Happy New Year 2021"***



**Chairman of SCAA  
é) Col ® Alfred FULLER**





## Report from Georgia

Director General of the Georgian Generals' Club, Koba Kobaladze, met with veterans of war and members of the defense forces. He introduced in detail the social and health care projects from the establishment of the public justice legal entities and strategic partners in Veteran's social and health care projects, which are supported by the government, different organizations and strategic partners, Veteran's and the public sector's social and health care projects. It will implement and plan for their integration.

Koba Kobaladze spoke widely about legislative initiatives and social programs, which are essential to overcome challenges that are still facing veterans.

The Director of the project spoke more about the dynamics of development that the project has experienced in recent years. He emphasized that all challenges, all the necessary evil matters will only be given together. This is why it is the need to engage non-governmental organizations and every veteran in any process that is essential for veterans.





UN Peacekeeping helps countries to achieve lasting peace, supports political processes, protects hundreds of thousands of civilians and helps guarantee cease fires. Yet peacekeeping faces several challenges such as protracted conflicts, elusive political solutions, increasingly dangerous environments, rising peacekeeping fatalities, and broad and complex mandates. To respond to these challenges, the Secretary-General launched Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) to refocus peacekeeping with more targeted mandates, make our operations stronger and safer, mobilize support for political solutions and better equipped and trained forces. A4P represents the core agenda for our action and is a driver of change permeating all aspects of UN's peacekeeping work.

Additional information can be obtained on the UN Peacekeeping website.

**<https://www.un.org/en/A4P/>**



We are happy to share with you that Beersheva's Beit Halochem opened a new "Achiad" Group for Zahal Disabled Veterans suffering from PTSD.

The new Group joins the groups operating in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa's Beit Halochem centers.

"Achiad" support Group creates special activities which include recreational and social gatherings, trips, workshops, lectures and more, to empower and enhance the mutual support amongst its members, and empower the participants within the framework of family and community.

The support group also encourages its members to find activities which make it easier for them to deal with their PTSD.

The "Achiad" Group moderators are themselves wounded veterans suffering from PTSD, alongside professional moderators such as a psychotherapist and a social worker. At the same time the content of its activities is determined by the members themselves.

The launching event in Beersheva was attended by 30 wounded veterans with PTSD and its founder Uri Ehrenfeld, and by moderator Ayala Shiloni who oversees the moderators at the various groups around the country. Chairman of the Beersheva and Southern District, the Chairman of the Board and Manager of Beersheva's Beit Halochem greeted the participants who introduced themselves. Eherenfeld, a former POW from the Yom Kippur War said: "One never heals from Post Trauma, but there are definitely ways to treat it, and this is precisely why these groups are being created. They enable each one of the members to play a meaningful role and determine what seems to work best for them on a personal level, alongside decisions made by the group as a whole which help him feel a part of something much greater.

The groups include members wounded in all of Israel's wars, amongst others, the Yom Kippur War, The First and Second Lebanon Wars, Operation Protective Edge, the Indifadas.

In addition to the "Achiad" groups, the "Liat" group also operates. Its role is to support and encourage partners and spouses of the wounded veterans, within their family as well as social frameworks.



## WVF Peace and Security Summit

***“Veterans have experienced the horrors of war and have to live with the consequences for the rest of their lives. They deserve help, support and recognition from their society. On the basis of this understanding, the Peace and Security Summit in Stockholm opened a new dimension in the discussion of veteran affairs. Veterans can give a lot to their societies having served under severe circumstances worldwide and demonstrated skills that can be of benefit to all parts of their societies. The Summit demands that the countries represented within the WVF and the international community exploit and make best use of these experiences and capabilities, which should come to bear to prevent the use of force, during conflict and thereafter. Veterans should also be involved to prevent ethnic crises and in support of integration processes within their societies. The message of the veterans, voiced individually, through their organisations or the WVF should be listened to in all crisis situations.”***



***WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION PEACE AND SECURITY SUMMIT  
Stockholm (Sweden), 28-30 May 2013***



# Singapore Armed Forces Veterans League (SAFVL) Anniversary



A Branch of SAFRA  
Sharing Experiences, Inspiring Generations



The WVF congratulate the Singapore Armed Forces Veterans' League (SAFVL) for its 30 years anniversary in service for veterans. The SAFVL, member of the WVF, was established on 4 August 1990 to forge links between active service personnel and ex-regulars of the SAF, and to foster camaraderie among ex-service personnel. It is a membership organisation that represents ex-regular personnel in Singapore and at regional and international veterans.

A key objective of SAFVL is to strengthen support for national defence by actively engaging the broader community on National Education and Total Defence.

This is done through the SAFVL's participation in various commemorative events that remember tragic periods of Singapore's past such as the Japanese Occupation in the 1940s, and the loss of lives at the bombing of MacDonald House in March 1965 during konfrontasi.

Specially appointed veterans tell the lessons from such dark periods of our history as Commitment to Defence Ambassadors (C2DAs) who share their personal stories and life experiences with various target audiences including servicemen and students.

<https://www.safra.sg/interest-groups/saf-veterans'-league>



## BNMO, member of the WVF from the Netherlands

“On the eve of the new year we look back at the period behind us. The year 2020, when we thought we could celebrate 75 years of Freedom and the 75th anniversary of the BNMO in an exuberant way, became a year of austerity, uncertainty and loneliness for many. Our wish for 2021 is therefore that we will all be able to return to the old normal again soon.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy 2021!

Keep seeing the bright spots and keep seeing each other! Strong together!”

<https://www.bnmo.nl/>



***Samen Sterk***



## Holocaust Memorial Day 2021

Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27th of January is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust.

The Holocaust (The Shoah in Hebrew) was the attempt by the Nazis and their collaborators to murder all the Jews in Europe. From the time they assumed power in Germany in 1933, the Nazis used propaganda, persecution, and legislation to deny human and civil rights to German Jews. They used centuries of antisemitism as their foundation.

With the outbreak of World War Two in 1939 Germany invaded Poland, subjecting around two million Polish Jews to violence and forced labour. Thousands of Jews were murdered in the first months of the occupation. Shortly after the occupation Polish Jews were confined to particular neighbourhoods that came to be known as 'ghettos'. Living conditions in these ghettos were appalling – a deliberate attempt by the Nazis to cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews. This approach was repeated across Eastern Europe in other countries occupied by the Nazis.

In 1941, the systematic murder of Europe's Jews began – a plan known by the Nazis as 'The Final Solution to the Jewish Problem'. Death squads called Einsatzgruppen swept Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, killing Jews by firing squad. By the end of 1941 the first extermination camp, Chelmno in Poland, had been established, giving the Nazis their method to continue murdering on a giant scale between 1941 and 1945.

By the end of the Holocaust, six million Jewish men, women and children had been murdered in ghettos, mass-shootings, in concentration camps and extermination camps.

On Friday 17 January 2020, WVF President Dan-Viggo Bergtun and WVF Medical Advisor Geir Olav Stamnes visited Babij Jar (Babi Yar) on the western outskirts of Kiev in Ukraine. Babij Jar was the scene of several massacres during World War II. Most famous is the massacre of September 29 and 30, 1941, when 33,771 Ukrainian Jews were shot.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babi\\_Yar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babi_Yar)

Here is a picture from the Jewish memorial taken during the visit.  
A very strong experience. A cruel reminder of human evil.  
Never let that happen again.



# SPIA, France



The World Veterans Federation is very pleased to see its Veteran communities and member organizations, here SPIA in France, pull together and volunteer in times of crisis in society. Thanks to their Military training, Veterans are used to being well organized and ready for action in severe circumstances. We hope this is an inspiration to many and we all do our share, together we are stronger.



## Historical achievement

A former Gurkha has made history by conquering K2 in winter.

Nirmal 'Nims' Purja, a former British Special Forces Soldier, led a team of climbers to become the first to conquer the world's second highest mountain in winter.

The team reached the summit of K2 at midday on Saturday, UK time, singing the Nepalese national anthem as they took their last steps.

K2 is notorious for its perilous conditions. It is nicknamed Savage Mountain.

Until Saturday, reaching the 28,251 ft peak in winter was believed to be humanly impossible and had never been accomplished. It was famously known as the 'last great mountaineering challenge'.

Congratulations, Nims and team. Fantastic achievement.



**Nirmal 'Nims' Purja, Former  
British Special Forces Soldier**

## Pandemic recovery presents historic opportunity to ensure human rights for all: Guterres

The Secretary-General launched his Call to Action just weeks before the pandemic was declared.

The biggest international crisis in generations has exposed inequalities and discrimination, with women, minorities, older persons, and persons with disabilities, among those disproportionately affected.

At the same time, rights and protection systems have been tested, weakened, and even shattered, and emergency measures during the pandemic have even been used as a pretext to crush dissent or criminalize basic freedoms.

“In building forward together, we have a unique and historic opportunity to forge a world where every person is afforded dignity; where every society can withstand crises; where everyone’s future is built upon a foundation of inalienable rights,” said Mr. Guterres.

The President of the UN General Assembly, Volkan Bozkir, underlined that a human rights-based approach is always the right choice, whether in times of crisis, conflict, peace or pandemic.

<https://news.un.org>



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# WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION

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1950 - 2020



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*“Veterans deserve our gratitude and support every day of the year.”*

*- Dan-Viggo Bergtun, President WVF*