

UNITED VETERANS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA

Veterans Service Building

2nd Floor • 20 West 12th Street • St. Paul, MN 55155-2079



Army



Air Force



Marine Corps



Coast Guard



Merchant Marines



Navy

“A Consortium of Veterans, Military, and Auxiliary Organizations to exchange information and support issues relating to entitlements for Veterans, Military Retirees, the National Guard and Military Reservists, their dependents and survivors.”

UVLC Minutes –Wednesday, February 6, 2008

REMEMBER THE MARCH 5, 9:30 AM

UVLC MEETING IS AT MPLS VA CAMPUS, BUILDING 9 AUDITORIUM

- Call to order
- Invocation – Chaplain – Captain Morse
- Pledge of Allegiance led by Howard Wilson
- Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s
- Reports from:
 1. Chairman – Jerry Kyser-
 - Jerry put forth the veterans’ initiative at his neighborhood caucus on Super Tuesday.
 - There is a work in progress for the honor flight out of Dayton Ohio to encourage as many WWII veterans to take the journey to Washington DC. There are 180 seats available through an application process. Guardians will need to pay for their flight at the rate of \$350. The qualified WWII veterans will have the flight be complimentary. Sun Country is involved with the details. April 26th is the possible date for the first flight.
 - Next month we will be back at Building 9. The renovation did not occur yet.
 - Vice Chairman - Ralph Donais- Corrections are in progress for the updating of the mailing list.
- 2. State Agencies
 - MN Dept of Veteran Affairs - Commissioner Clark Dyrud- Both the Deputy Commissioner Programs and Services and Health were both present at the meeting. Veterans’ homes are now under the supervision of the Dept of Vet Affairs. Tuesday Feb 19. The Governor is going forward with his initiative. Feb 28th is the next budget announcement. Veterans Legislative Day will be held March 11, 2008. If you wish to attend rsvp to Linda McDonald. Best Buy is sponsoring Black History Month with a tribute and presentation by the Tuskegee Airmen Wed, Feb 13, 2008 10:45a.m. To 1 p.m. Best buy Corporate Campus Theater at 7601 Penn Ave South in Richfield, MN. The guests will be Harold Brown, Lt Col USAF (Ret), Larry Brown, Staff Sergeant, USAF (Ret) and Charles McGee, Col USAF (Ret). Col McGee holds the record for the highest three-war total of combat missions of an U.S. pilot in Air Force history- 409 Missions. The group will share their unique stories of how they succeeded “Against All Odds” Jerry Kyser will attend the presentation at Best Buy
 - MN Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Health Care – Gil Acevedo- Over the past month he has received so much support from everyone. The VA hospital is a model hospital. He has visited 4 out of the 5 homes. Silver Bay and Laverne have just completed their health services survey. They did very well. The Minneapolis staff has a new director of nursing. There is a new direction for the future. There are consultants that have done an initial survey to determine the direction for the future. The new communications director’s name is Anna Long; she was a Capt. in the National Guard.

- **MN Military Affairs – COL Eric Ahlness-Mn continues to lead the way for integration for the troops. There is a new initiative launching the yellow ribbons effort. Local communities will deliver service to their local veterans. Community leaders are coming on board. It is a way to get into the fabric of MN. Don Cure is the Director of Integration. Don comes to this position with experience in Army National Guard and the Regular Army. He was a deployed soldier himself, along with having his son deployed. He also just assisted his 94-year-old father register with the veterans' administration.**
 - **MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kathy Vitalis- There is extra funding earmarked for outreach. In the first 6 months they have hired a full time position out of Duluth. 7 CVSO's have called to thank for the help. Served over 600 veterans and their families last year. Mpls dates May 12 and 13. New standdown is in International Falls on Aug 21 and Aug 22 in Duluth. Bemidji and Brainerd's dates have not been determined. Other standdowns are not multiple days. Mankato is Nov 11. Duluth housing project has acquired the parking lot in between three parcels of land. Received money from the city of Duluth. There will be rehab work with some of the areas. The applications will begin. It is in West Duluth. There will be a fundraiser at Canterbury Jun18-21. MACV is the key organization. There will be a Moving Vietnam wall. One example of their casework this past few months is for a veteran who came back from Iraq 2 ½ years ago. He just couldn't land anywhere. He ended up in a Mankato shelter. Everything that is supposed to work has been working. The VA in Minneapolis has been there for him.**
 - **MN Veterans Legislative issues – We are working on the Legislatures Report Card**
- 3. Federal Agencies**
- **VA Regional Office – Sue Malley - talked about the hiring increase due to the increased workload. Because the Regional office does so well in Minneapolis and St Paul they help other areas with their claims. Regional loan center has moved to Bloomington.**
 - **VISN 23 – Cynthia Breyfogle - National Defense Authorization Act Extends Eligibility: On January 28th, the Pres. Signed the Act. To learn more, log on at <http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/> Beneficiary travel reimbursement rate increases to 28.5 cents per mile. People wishing to receive e-mail from VA with the latest news releases and updated fact sheets can subscribe to the VA @ http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opa_listerv.asp**
 - **Mpls VA Hospital – Steve Kleinglass – Director- Next week, specialists are going to do an evaluation for space alignment at the hospital. OIF team will be housed in a modular building. There have been many new staff members. Feb 14, come over to recognize and visit our hospitalized veterans. The spinal cord unit is 4 months ahead of schedule. Hiring will be active in June. It will be in the process of activation in 2009. The construction of the new Fischer house is fully funded. Thank you for your support.**
 - **St Cloud VA Hospital – Rose Blesener-The Hospital is growing and there is no waiting for care. Thursday February 14: VAVS committee sponsors Valentines Day prime rib dinner for all patients. March 2nd Ralph Donias sponsors a Karaoke event. New WOW campaign: Working on Wonderful is a new customer initiative. Theme: Good NEWS: G-Grow N-No waiting E-excellence W-WOW working on wonderful customer service campaign. S-Spend-funding for projects, equipment and staff. They present employees with a WOW pin. Catching your employees doing something wonderful is the policy.**
 - **88th Regional Readiness Command –SGT MAJ Janet Jones-The MOA hosted Government on display with 280,000 in attendance. One thousand messages were written and mailed to the troops. Proclamation was read to tribute Army Reserve Day. May 16-18 Military expo at Fort Snelling. High school students' introduction to the military. There have been 18,856 soldiers in the reserve and 90,252 mobilized since 9-11. Benefit of early retirement. 3 month early retirement at the age of 60 for deployments in combat areas.**

- **Ft Snelling Cemetery – Art Smith – Director-** Scouts and Sea Cadets came out to the cemetery to clean up all of the holiday wreaths. Most people are choosing the under ground site for the urn instead of the columbarium. Only about 20% are using the columbarium.

Jan Total internments: 351	Current FYTD Total internments: 1,495
Caskets 188	Caskets 735
Cremations 128	Cremations 626
Columbarium 35	Columbarium 134
Total to date: 178,061	Female Veterans – Total 1,305
Caskets 145,323	Jan 2008: WWII-136
Cremations 32,286	Persian Gulf-1
Columbarium 451	Korea-33
	Vietnam-37
	Peacetime- 11
	Dependent-133

4. Federal Congressional Representatives and Senators

- **Senator Norm Coleman – John Halverson-** Defense authorization bill was passed. '09 budget 5.9% increase in total spending for veterans. Congress will be working very hard for veteran's issues. Visited veterans homes during the month to become aware of all of the local needs. Service academy nominations have been concluded. Extraordinary individuals for this competition. Thank you for your participation. Coleman is a co sponsor of the Merchant Marine bill.
- **Senator Amy Klobuchar – Martin Ludden-Duluth and Moorhead** doing veteran summits getting a pulse on the local communities. Attended the Warrior citizen ceremony. St Cloud visit on Friday. MN Nat Guard family program. The Senator has not yet signed on to the WWII Merchant Marine Compensation Bill.
Howard Wilson and the UVLC encourage her to so. These Men Earned It just like the rest of the WWII Veterans.
- **7th District Representative – Collin Peterson - Al Loehr-**Proposed reductions in the'09 budget request proposed reductions include a proposed cut of \$13 million for National cemetery Administration to \$181 million in fiscal 2009, and a proposed cut of \$80 million for state extended care facility grants to \$85 million. The budget request also includes legislative proposals to increase prescription so-payments by some veterans and to institute enrollment fees for higher income veterans receiving VA medical care. This increase would only apply to higher income veterans with no service-related disabilities. The proposed enrollment fees, which range from \$250 to 700 based on a sliding scale of family income, would apply to veterans with a total family income of \$50,000 or more.
- **3rd District Representative – Jim Ramstad - Margaret Cavanaugh-**Thank you to Ralph for being of great help in several different matter.
- **4th District Representative – Betty McCollum – Connie Haddeland-**A letter was distributed to the membership concerning the delay in implementation of the Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) program as it applies to the reserve components of the US Armed Forces. Create interest in attending academies/ summer programs/active website. It is not a commitment but it is a promotional. It is a great opportunity to create interest. It is a privileged to go to the VA on behalf of the congresswoman.

5. Announcements –Vice Chair, Donais - JROTC award ceremonies are in your local areas. The Legislators need to be aware of a few issues that are occurring for returning veterans that go to apply for a loan for a home with the last year of a military pay. Is there something that can be done? There are 4-hour slots available to volunteer at the airport at the Vets Service Centers. Please contact 612-726-9156 if you would like more information about donating to AFSC (Armed forces Service Center) or volunteer your time.

Chairman Kyser- Please give a written report from your office to provide the UVLC Secretary with the information needed for more accurate minutes.

- **Atomic Veterans Atomic Service metal has been proposed. The National Association of Atomic Veterans (NAAV) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the cause of the Atomic Veterans who seeks no special favor...only justice? For additional information on how NAAV can help please contact: John Hamann 16420 Dayton Ave. PO Box 172, Dayton, MN 55327 Phone # 763-428-2046.**

6. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes

7. Old Business –General business, Report card for Legislature -Ralph and Jerry are working On the process

8. New Business-Treasures report-Jimmie Coulthard- Univ. Bank \$4,642.50 Please send your 2008 dues to Jimmie Lee Coulthard @ 201 West Roosevelt Street, River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

The Chairman has the right to choose the parliamentarian. The UVLC Parliamentarian is Tom Fjerstad of the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Welcome Tom!

There was a rough draft of a budget that was handed out for review. There is not a definitive amount for the cost of the legislative report card

It was approved for a representative to attend the CVSO yearly conference and banquet at Grandview Lodge in September .

The membership list was evaluated to update the active members. Web site www.mnuvlc.org

Request granted to waive the dues to the Military Historical Society

We need to modify the by laws for the purposes of voting procedure. Only one Vote per Member is to allowed even if they represent more than one organization.

9. Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30 am, Wed, March 5, 2008 at Building 9 Auditorium on The Campus of the Mpls VA Hospital)

There were 48 of guests and members in attendance

Respectfully submitted by Jana Kyser, Secretary

