

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, January 9, 2008

- **Call to order**
- **Invocation – Chaplain – Lt Vince Hokkanen**
- **Pledge of Allegiance – Howard Wilson**
- **Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s**
- **Reports from:**
 1. **Chairman – Jerry Kyser - Bob Bailey with the Honor Flight Network is transporting WWII veterans to Washington DC in April and May. There will be more information at the next meeting. Vice Chairman - Ralph Donais, The new address book is ready. Please note that Ralph Donias e-mail is incorrect. Edit this to read r.l.donias@izoom.net**
 2. **State Agencies**
 - **MN Dept of Veteran Affairs - Commissioner Clark Dyrud- Next Monday, Jan 14 the Governor will be announcing the budget. On Monday 1/ 14 at 10:30 at the State Office Building in room #5, there will be a joint hearing of the Senate and House Veterans Committees. One report will be from the Commission on Veterans homes. Another report will be on the needs of Veterans in Minnesota. Linda McDonald and Christine Kiel are the legislative coordinators. There has been a nation wide search for over a year and a half to fill the new position of Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Health Care. Clark was happy to introduced Gil Acevedo who was chosen for this position. Gil, originally from NYC comes to us from Southern California. He was a Command Master Chief in the Navy for over 20 years. Gil thanked everyone for the tremendous reception from Minnesota. He is a Health Care Administrator by trade and served as the Assistant Deputy Secretary for the state of Calif to help build five new homes where the construction has already started. He is looking forward to the challenge of his new position. He expressed thanks to Chip Cox for being the interim Dept Director.**
 - **MN Military Affairs – COL Eric Ahlness- Work is continuing on the Military Voting Initiative. Resolution sometime before session. There are approximately 1,000 deployed at this time. Combat Aviation Brigade will begin their deployment. Over 3,000 soldiers about 700 from Mn. Gov’s Initiative is to have a Director of Reintegration for the state agencies. Joint position between Vet Affairs and Military Affairs. Last year there were planners working on this. Beginning of Feb this position will be filled. The Yellow Ribbon task force will come back and become more active. 2,600 returning have made it through the 30-60-90 day training. It has been going very well. Every soldier is still with the Guard. This speaks well for the program. Programs are being developed so that the Soldiers do not slip through the gap.**
 - **MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kara Cornils- New brochures from MACV with contact information. Wrapping up statistics for the end of the year. Standown dates will be announced by the end of the week. One in International Falls, Duluth in August. Looking to expand into the rural area. Building 47 is full.**
 - **MN Secretary of State Office –Todd Pierce – Thanked the UVLC for our help and support with the Military Voting Initiative.**

3. Federal Agencies

- VA Regional Office – Julie Carie-Claims are increasing. The complexity is increasing. 100 new employees over the last year. Normandale Blvd is the location for the new facility. Average day pending is 90 days. Days to completion are 107. The vision and mission is on target. Town hall meeting schedule has begun.
- St Cloud VA Hospital – Cheryl Thieschafer- Staffing, construction and space. Recruiting for expansion of women’s veteran concerns and creating a customer service center. All CVSO reps consolidate all in one area. Now that the budget is approved, Alexandria will have PTSD for women, family and marriage counseling expanding hours and staff. Access for emergency needs as well as on going program.
- Senator Coleman just returned from Iraq. We need to show our gratitude in word and deed. The Senator has a personal commitment to veteran issues due to his father and grandfathers involvement in the military. People are talking positively about the hospitals. There has been a 67% increase in VA funding. Defense authorization was vetoed due to a tech problem. Mn has led the way to reintegration. Went to Camp McCoy and addressed the concern about mandated separation. It is important to recognize the need for the extra help. One soldier commented about the way that the integration services had saved his marriage. He called the Sec of Def about this policy. Mn created a model and it was funded. We’ve led the way. Tri care has made progress. It has been bipartisan and that is a good thing. The General is surrounded by MN nice Army reserve everyday in Iraq. The Senator has made five visits to Iraq. This year he walked through some of the same villages without body armor. There has been much progress and transformation. There is a great commitment to pull back. Head of the supreme Islamic council has consented to accept personal security. 102st Airborne is working with kids and neighborhood. Major push to get out of some of the regions. Our obligation is to make sure that their needs are cared for in this society. A lot of challenges ahead to deal with. We need to do this together. Show that gratitude and continue to pray for our troops. The number of incidents has reduced due to technology and the citizen soldiers that have been trained to protect. Thank you to every service organization for your assistance. Recognition of Greg Gorham for his attention to all veterans’ affairs in the Senator office.
- 88th Regional Readiness Command – MAJ Ann Marie Danker- Thank you Senator Coleman for the visit to Iraq. The Welcome Home Warrior Award Ceremony will take place on Jan 26, 27th at the Mall of America Sunday at 1:00. The 451st band will perform. By the next meeting there will be a definite date for the Military Expo.

- Ft Snelling Cemetery – Art Smith – Director

December 2007		Current FYTD	Total to Date
Total internments	363	1,144	177,709
Caskets	200	547	145,135
Cremations	138	498	32,158
Columbarium	25	99	416

Female Veterans 1,305

December 2007

WWII	123	Peacetime	9
Korea	33	Active duty	2
Persian Gulf	1	Dependent	157

The all-volunteer rifle squad went over 50,000 rifle memorial services. The National Cemetery has received a 95% score on the satisfaction survey. The construction project is ahead of schedule. This is the best project that has been completed. The construction crew is fantastic to work with.

- **Mpls VA Hospital-Steve Kleinglass-Director-** The roof is on the spinal cord injury clinic. The building may be ready for fall of 08, which is ahead of schedule. The pool is being poured this morning. There is a need of 25 million dollars to complete this project. The VA has not opened buildings in quite awhile. A budget is in place 14 % increase for the network. Workload continues to grow. 3-5 % range of growth. Transitional unit is up and running with about 6 patients. Things were not going well. Notice was given to discontinue working with the clinic contractor in Rice Lake and Hayward Wisc. A clinic was created in a motel due to the closing of the clinics. Legal negotiation is under way to renew the contract. \$2,153.55 was presented to Steve Kleinglass from the UVLC for the emergent fund.

4. Federal Congressional Representatives and Senators

- **Senator Amy Klobuchar – Martin Ludden-Busy month, went to the MACV open house.** Present a letter to the foreign legion corps. Amy is in the county tour. She is committed to visit every county every year. Duluth Vet Summit. Rural access to health care. The Senator met with 15 soldiers about their concerns. The academy nominations will be submitted next week.
 - **7th District Representative – Collin Peterson - Al Loehr-Pleased to announce that Congress passed an historic funding bill that gave the VA the largest increase in its history, one that fully meets the needs laid out by the VFW and the Independent budget. 2.9 billion for veteran’s health care and benefits. This will have a great impact on those pending cases. In addition, 3.7 billion emergency funding. Thank all of the organizations for the help communicating the needs of the veterans. The load of casework is extensive in the 7th district.**
 - **1st District Representative – Tim Waltz – Josh Syrjamaki, Chief of Staff-Walz is a veteran who worked hard to get onto the Veteran Affairs Committee. You are the Teachers in this room and across the state. Never hesitate to call the office to raise issues. Congressman Waltz wrote a letter to the members of the UVLC that was distributed to the membership.**
 - **2nd District Representative - John Kline – Katherine Bush-VA military caseworker for Rep Kline. Working on the yellow ribbon project.**
 - **3rd District Representative – Jim Ramstad - Margaret Cavanaugh-the congressman is a member of the MN prayer breakfast that will be held on Wed, March 19th. The theme this year is the power of prayer in the military family. Looking for veterans to be on a video that will be presented at the prayer breakfast. Please call Margaret at 952-738-8200**
 - **4th District Representative – Betty McCollum – Josh Straka- Happy New Year from the congresswoman. Chris Kelly is the new Vet Military Director in Washington DC. Health care newsletter. The numbers have decreased for the military academies. Youth cadets in SW MN received an award for disaster relief. The post deployment respite absence program benefits. Congresswomen Betty McCollum is fighting to improve health care for America.**
 - **6th District Representative – Michele Bachman – Andy Parrish-Director of outreach. She went to churches and received written prayers for the troops and hand delivered them during her trip to Iraq.**
- 5. Announcements – Chairman-** The state of Ohio has just passed the bill eliminating the taxes on pension. The UVLC will put together a report card that will display the public information about how each Representative votes for military issues. – **Vice Chairman-Ralph Donias.** Please take a telephone and address directory. Less than one percent of retired veterans live in MN. This should be 3%. The co pays are increasing for the retired veteran health care.

6. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes

- 7. Old Business --Treasures report as of 1-9-08 \$4,600.53. Request from Ralph for reimbursement of \$103.73. It was approved to reimburse Ralph for the cost to make copies of the address book. We’re trying to get to the bottom of who is for or against the veterans. There is someone in the**

research department that will help Ralph accomplish the goal. The Senate and House have a joint meeting to discuss vet issues. Please encourage everyone to attend the meeting to show their support on Monday, January 14 at 10:30 in room 5 at the State Office building. Jerry, Ralph and Julie will be a subcommittee that will research the membership of the UVLC.

8. **New Business – Election of Officers for 2008 and 2009.** Nominating committee is Jerry Nalapinski, Tom Nesbitt, and Lawrence Dean. Dean Ascheman and Jerry Kyser are nominated for the Chairman's position. Al Loehr moved that a paper ballot be submitted. The Chairmanship is handed over to Ralph so that the election can take place. The Chairman, 2nd Vice Chairman and Treasurer are elected on even years. The Vice Chairman and the Secretary are elected on the odd years

Dean Ascheman spent 40 years at IBM International as their marketing director. Dean became a national officer with the DAV in the 80's. He was also the Adjutant for the DAV. Over all of the yrs he has been very active in Veteran's issues. Big Island was sold for 6 million dollars. A Vets for Vets Trustees was formed and Dean was Chairman of the Fund. \$300,000 has been given to various causes. He is a US Army veteran. UVLC has been the communication vehicle where all of the Vet's Org. come together. The Commanders are not all linked into the UVLC. One of his ideas is that the CTF be invited to come to each of the UVLC meetings.

Questions from members.

What would Dean do to get the commanders task force to come to this meeting? Dean said that He has good relationships with all of the commanders and would encourage them to attend the the communication portion of the meeting. His goals are to continue the relationship with the Legislature that the UVLC has.

Jerry Kyser has been honored to be involved with the UVLC for 10 years. He was the Pres. of the VVA for four years and a member of the Commanders Task Force during those years. He is currently the Executive Director of the MN Vietnam Veterans Charity. He would encourage the participation of the CTF also as he has done for the last four years while in leadership positions in the UVLC. What he wants is to have leadership continuity, continue as the Chairman and enhance the good relationship that we have with the Legislature and Veterans Community. Ralph and Jerry walked the halls of the Capitol to present everything in a professional manner. We have just begun in the Legislative and will press on to success.

Nominations ceased and proceed with the vote. Lawrence Dean passed out the ballots. 1 vote is submitted for each organization. Roll call was taken to determine which Org. were present. There were 21 registered ballots. Votes were tallied and Jerry Kyser won Re-election. The ballots were destroyed. Congratulations Mr. Chairman! There were no other candidates for 2nd Vice Chairman and Treasurer other than the current office holders. Therefore, Lawrence Dean the current 2nd Vice Chairman and Jimmie Lee Coulthard the current Treasurer were re-elected by acclamation.

9. **Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30 am, Wed, Feb 6,2008 – 5th Floor, Veterans Service Buld.** Parking permits will be for the Lot K (east of Veterans Service Building)

There were 58 members, visitors and guests in attendance

Respectfully submitted by Jana Kyser