

# UNITED VETERANS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA

Veterans Service Building

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor • 20 West 12<sup>th</sup> 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 Website – [www.mnuvlc.org](http://www.mnuvlc.org)

---

## UVLC Minutes –Wednesday, Nov 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008

- **Call to order – 09:30**
- **Invocation – Elk River VFW Chaplain**
- **Pledge of Allegiance – Howard Wilson**
- **Recognition of visitors, guests and Commander’s of VSO’s: Bernard Beamon is the new Team Leader of the New Brighten Vets Center. Sid Schmuchler of the Jewish war veterans. October 29th the Jewish War Veterans had their annual banquet. Tom Shaw was given special awards from the UVLC and the Mn Dept of Veteran Affairs. Tom wrote a letter of appreciation to the UVLC. Sid gave a word of appreciation to Chairman Jerry Kyser and Commissioner Clark Dyrud for participating in the program.**

### 1. State Agencies

- **MN Dept of Veteran Affairs - Commissioner – Clark Dyrud. : Next year is a budget year. Dec 4 the budget forecast will be released. Nothing has been announced yet at this point. Veterans Day, November 11,2008 - 8-9:30 Breakfast. The program begins at 10:00 at the Veterans Memorial Community Center 8055 Barbara Avenue Inver Grove Heights,, MN 55077. Gil Acevedo Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Health Care gave updates on the veteran homes. Over the past two years they have been without a permanent administrator. Judy Coleman is starting November 13. She has a tremendous amount of experience and enthusiasm. Director of Nursing, Jill Smith, has taken over the nursing department. She is also serving as the Assistant Administrator of Clinical Services. The 2<sup>nd</sup> administrative administrator will be hired soon. Critical positions were vacant for quite a time. The morale is heightened and they are adding color to the physical facility. The central office for the homes is in building 10. Gil will still have an office in St Paul during the legislative session. FY2009: Demolish Bldg 9 at the Mpls Vets Home and reconstruct it. Project for bldg 4 to do an adult day health care. Hastings project will have a 2/3 water project. Fergus Falls: made it to the priority one list. It does not look like Wilmar will be funded. Hastings supportive housing project just got approved. This is a transitional housing project and a 501C3 project. Mn Veterans Home Veterans Day program will be at 2:00. There are two studies that have been organized to determine where the new veterans home will be located.**
- **MN Veterans 2008 Legislative Info – Communications Director - Anna Lewicki Long: Introduced Sarah Graves who will do work with media. Flyers for the Veterans Day event were handed out. A Veterans Affairs newsletter signup was placed at the back of the room for everyone to sign up if they are not already receiving the newsletter.**
- **MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kathy Vitalis: Standdown November 18, 2008 at the Alltel Center in Mankato 9-3 Free lunch at 11:30. Annual Holiday Open House is Friday, December 5, 12-4 Building 47 Minneapolis VA Medical Center Campus. Kathy requested support for the 501© 3 from the organizations that are represented within the UVLC.**

- **MN Air Guard Museum – Dick Wiessner – Board Member-The Gov has appointed a task force to have 4 meetings from Oct –Dec to resolve the situation for the upper bluff . Move 90 yr old museum to the upper golf course area to have more exposure to the public. Who should manage the land and the park? Now it is Hennepin County. It will be a museum of aviation history for the state of MN. 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. They are looking for the support so that we can support veterans.**
- **Other MN Veteran Organizations-Jerry Kyser - The Twin Cities Honor Flight has secured two more honor flights for May 30, 2009 and October 17, 2009. The May 30<sup>th</sup> flight is filled with 96 WWII Veterans, however we need more Guardians to apply.**

## 2. Federal Agencies

- **VA Regional Office – Jeff Alger, Director-VA is going to a paperless processing for claims. This will be spread throughout the country. Recently there were claims that were found in a shredder bin. There is an investigation going on at the current time. Phones are handled at a central location. All pension work west of the Mississippi will be processed in the regional office. 580 employees soon to be at 650 by mid spring.**
- **VISN 23 –Cynthia Breyfogle, Deputy Director- Hayward, WI will expand services three days a week beginning Nov 24. Outreach to returning service members. November is Warrior Care Month. [http: www.warriorcare.mil/](http://www.warriorcare.mil/) Minneapolis VAMC receives 2008 Carey Award. Don't forget to get your flu shot. Fifty new mobile counseling centers for the Dept of Veteran Affairs (VA) Vet Center program will be activated over the next three months. [www.va.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.va.myhealth.va.gov) The great smoke out-November 20, 2008**

- **Mpls VA Medical Center – Steve Kleinglass – Director-There were 500 people at the spinal Cord Injury and Disorder Center dedication ceremony. Press release was handed out: VA Honors Quality Achievement Award Winners Minneapolis VA Medical Center Lauded for Top Quality. The Mpls Center was this year's recipient of the Robert W. Carey Quality Award. The department's top honor for quality achievement. Suicide awareness and prevention has taken a top priority to train and equip their staff.**
- **St Cloud VA Medical Center – Joan Vincent-Public Affairs Officer-Selected a new site for the Brainerd out patient clinic. Hired a new psychiatrist. Nov 9<sup>th</sup> will be a Veterans Day parade. Last year there were 3-4,000 people. 1:30 On Nov 11 Vet Day Program at the center.**
- **New Brighton Vets Center – Bernard Beamon-The vet's center is hiring, they are looking for counselors, office administrator. Another new Vets Center is in Hennepin County. They are hiring a Team Leader, office leader and new adjustment counselors. A Mobile Vet Counseling Vehicle will help the staff to go throughout the state. Next year is the 30th anniversary for the counseling center for veterans. The relocated Vets Center is west of 35W at 550 County road D West, New Brighton MN 55124 - Phone # is 651-644-4022 There have extended hours for veterans and their families on evenings and weekends.**

- **Ft Snelling Cemetery – Art Smith – Director-**

Total internments	384	total to date	181,669	WWII	113	Active Duty	0
Caskets	149		146,880	Korea	43	Dependent	168
Cremations	197		33,986	Vietnam	36		
Columbarium	38		803	Persian Gulf	2		
Female Veterans			1,340	Peacetime	23		

**There are 10 companies that volunteer their time on Veterans Day. They are arborists who volunteer their time. If the work were paid for it would cost approximately \$100,000.**

- **Vets Employment & Training Service [VETS] –Jodie Bean, Assistant Director- Career fair on Oct 9. had over 100 employers. Within the first hour there were 500 veterans who passed through the door. Federal contracts are now required to hire veterans. Wells Fargo is hosting an employment fair for veterans.**

### **3. Federal Congressional Senators and Representatives**

- **Senator Norm Coleman- John Halverson-Academy interviews will be in November. Secured several medals for veterans in November. There will be someone who will be hired to deal specifically with veteran's issues.**
- **7<sup>th</sup> District Representative Collin Peterson – Reelected as Representative - Al Loehr- Al has been with Collin Peterson since 1990. Representative will continue to review the basic issues for veterans, backlog for pensions and disability in the new congress.**
- **1st District Representative –Tim Walz – Reelected as Representative - John Pierce- Representative Walz is committed to work with and for veterans in Washington.**
- **4<sup>th</sup> District Representative- Betty McCollum- Reelected as representative - Connie Haddeland- Betty will continue in her commitment to the funding level of veteran's issues. Veterans Benefits and Improvement act has a provision in it for home mortgages. This bill will allow the VA to refinance a VA guaranteed loan.**

**4. Announcements – Ralph Donais, Vice Chairman – Vets on the Lake (Ely location) brochures were available. Veteran Service Center at the Airport is a great volunteer opportunity. Ralph encouraged volunteerism to veteran's causes. Hastings home has an excellent wood shop for anyone to use. Flag boxes are made at Hastings. Thank you for your support.**

**5. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes**

**6. Old Business –Finances, \$3689.50 in checking account. Expenses: \$166.for website, \$35 for the plaque \$100 for Tom Shaw. All dues have been paid for 2008.**

**7. General business, Report card for Legislature: Listed each bill and where it died. Ralph will put this information in an e-mail to send out. It is recommended that a committee be organized and assign each person a committee or a bill to follow. This committee would report back to UVLC. When February appointments are made, then people will be assigned to a committee. The concentration is on three or four issues to support.**

**8. Tom Nesbitt, Don Rask, and Tom Fjerstad have volunteered to help put together a legislative agenda. They will meet with Jerry Kyser And Ralph Donais this month to come up some legislative ideas to support for the next session. There will be a new website that will let everyone know what the committees will be. Tom Shaw will continue to call. There needs to be a concentration on the major issues. Veterans Homes/ Retiree/Widows/Disabled. There will be a list for the next meeting that will come from this committee. If we are going to act as the UVLC, it has to be the voice of the entire organization.**

**9. New Business –**

**10. It was moved and passed that the UVLC support MACV.**

**11. It was moved and passed to give a letter to the ten arborists in appreciation for the volunteerism at the National cemetery.**

**12. It was moved and passed that the UVLC acknowledges and supports the moving of the MN Air National Guard Aviation Museum and establishing a New MN Museum of Aviation and Aviation Learning Center on a portion of the underutilized Fort Snelling Upper Bluff.**

**13. A recommendation to send a card to Bernie Melter was given.**

**Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30AM, Wed, Dec 3 at Building 9 Auditorium on the Mlps VA Medical Center Campus – Attached to VISN 23 Building**

