

# 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, Oct 8th, 2008

- **Call to order – 09:30**
- **Invocation – Captain Mark Thompson, Chaplain MNANG**
- **Pledge of Allegiance – Howard Wilson**
- **Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s- Sid Schmuckler, Jewish War Veterans Commander – Dean Ascheman, DAV Commander**
- **Reports from: Chairman, Jerry Kyser- Next UVLC meetings will be at the Building 9 Auditorium on the Mpls VA Campus– Twin Cities Honor Flight DVD from 9-13-08- was shown. The six Minute Documentary will be used to promote the next Honor Flights in the spring and fall.**
- **4<sup>th</sup> District Representative-Congresswoman Betty McCollum- Congressional Offices recently worked together to have reception for WWII veterans visiting in Washington DC. Medical Association- Dr. Hale MD came forward in a Committee meeting to say that regular Physicians/ Nurses have not been adequately trained in their Continuing Education classes to be better informed and knowledgeable about Veterans Health Issues. Reps. John Kline and McCollum voted for both rescue packages- People who are really affected are those who are retired or close to retirement. Congress questioned AIG on Tuesday, Oct 7 about their spending of Bailout Money for a \$440’000 Retreat/Spa for their Senior Mgt. - AIG responded, “this has been a very stressful time.” This was Outrageous behavior and the outrage was bipartisan. Social Security and Military Retirement Payments should be okay. USA is FINE but there is a panic in the market. The first priority is homeowners who were ripped off.**

### 1. State Agencies

- **MN Dept of Veteran Affairs - Commissioner – Clark Dyrud**  
Veterans’ Day November 11 will be at Inver Grove Heights Community Center, just off Hwy 52 and 80<sup>th</sup> St. Breakfast is at 8am with the program starting at 10 am.  
Effective on Monday Oct 13th, there will be a new administrator at the Minneapolis Veterans Home: Julie Kurki-Coleman. Next Monday, Oct 13th at 11am, room 123 Capitol; Senator Linda Berglin will hold a hearing on the Veterans Home. There has been another break-in at Building 10 on the Mpls Veterans Home Campus. Gil Acevedo will maintain an office at the Central Office, but some staff will be moving to Building 10 at the Mpls Veterans Home.  
**Upcoming Legislative Session: There is a possibility of 10% cuts, but there is no official information yet. More will be known as the process starts.**
- **MN Military Affairs – Deputy Director of Communications- 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Belden**  
Several Homecoming events- This Sunday at Camp Ripley, Oct. 19-347<sup>th</sup> attachment will have homecoming event  
Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> in Duluth-Deployment ceremony

- **MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kathy Vitalis-**  
The Comedy Show fundraiser was very successful. Men's Warehouse is offering discounts for new suits if you bring in your gently used suits for underprivileged veteran. MACV received another grant to continue their work.
- **MN Veterans Initiatives Center and Research Institute – Jack Scharrett Pres. & CEO**  
VICTRI is building a center to help veterans start small businesses- Center will provide education and support to increase the success rate of Veterans opening small businesses. They also have a research institute that focuses specifically on veterans' issues. They will be doing a national brief at the end of the month on reintegration at Wash DC Form. Since September, VICTRI has received donations from non-profit and first Corporate Donors. They are hoping to reach their goal of a Veterans' Day week ribbon cutting ceremony at Building 11 on the Mpls VA Campus.
- **MN Air Guard Museum – Dick Wiessner – Board Member-**  
On Monday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of four meetings of a task force to decide whether to move the aviation center onto the golf course. A decision should be made in the next few months, and then fundraising will start. Organizations are welcome to visit the museum any time. Call Dick @ 651-271-1759 Cell

## 2. Federal Agencies

- **VA Regional Office –All are out of town or unavailable**
  - **VISN 23 – Cynthia Breyfogle – Deputy Network Director-**  
Fiscal Year finished on Sept. 30- 34 case managers were hired this year. \$99 million dollars has been spent on medical equipment, second highest amount in the country. The total for VISN 23,2008 Budget was \$1.89 Billion. The totals for the 09 budget are known, but the details of how to implement them are not known. As of Aug 08, MN VA Medical Centers enrolled 10,828 combat vets, Including 5872 NG, 3118 Reservist; and 1838 active military. VISN 23 has enrolled a total of 26,920 Combat Vets. Staff have been deployed to assist residents in Florida and Texas to provide care to hurricane survivors. Mental Health staff In Mpls is 187, St Cloud 168, Fargo,41.  
Women Vets Programs are growing. Women Vets in the VA system will double in the next 2 to 5 Years. Women make up 11% of Veterans of OEF/OIF. Women make up 15% of Active Military,17% of NG/Reserves and 20% of new recruits.
  - **Mpls VA Medical Center – Steve Kleinglass – Director-**  
Mpls VA has a \$500,000,000 Budget and over 3000 employees. They run a 1<sup>st</sup> rate operation. An announcement of dedication for spinal cord injury center is set for Thursday, Oct. 23 at 1pm. Year ends at the end of September- a new 30-day standard for care has been set (emergent care is instantaneous)
  - **St Cloud VA Medical Center – Barry Bahl – Director-**  
First time that they had budget at the beginning of the fiscal year. About 140 people are in the alcohol/substance abuse unit, many of them Iraq veterans and are also having marital problems. A lot of construction is going on- a new parking lot is being put in, lab will be put in, and new surgical unit. 3 new outpatient doctors have been hired; a neurologist just expressed interest in joining staff. Barry is pleased with the operation at the VA but always is looking for improvement of services to the Veterans.
  - **Ft Snelling Cemetery – Art Smith – Director-**
- |                                       |               |         |                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------|-----------------|
| Total interments FYTD Sept 08 –4720 - | Total to 9-08 | 181,285 | SEPT 2008       |
| Caskets 2143                          | -----         | 146,731 | WWII --108      |
| Cremation 2129                        | -----         | 33,789  | Korea -- 43     |
| Columbarium 448                       | -----         | 765     | Vietnam -- 40   |
| Female Veterans – Total               |               | 1,339   | Peacetime – 21  |
|                                       |               |         | Persian - 2     |
|                                       |               |         | Dependents -161 |
- 20 million dollar expansion project is wrapping up.

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

- **Senator Norm Coleman- John Halverson**

**A lot of the Federal Budget has been pushed off to next year- NDAA includes 3.9% increase**

- **Senator Amy Klobuchar – Martin Ludden**

**Focus has been on bailout so not a lot new Legislation. Veterans of America, an Iraq/ Afghan War Veterans Group came out with report card -VA got an A+**

- **7<sup>th</sup> District Representative Collin Peterson- Al Loehr**

**Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Bill –authorizes training of 2000 new adjudicators for VA backlog. A request for Spanish-American report was submitted- was initially turned down, but will continue to get it done**

- **1st District Representative –Tim Walz- John Pierce**

**Support the Troops Rally was a great success. Omnibus Vets Bills were passed- Veterans Health Care act is waiting on President’s signature. Benefits Legislation is going through process.**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> District Representative – John Kline- Chaz Johnson -**

**A woman interviewed by channel 4 is a former Army Veteran and will be promoting TBI care.**

### **4. Announcements – Vice Chairman – Ralph Donais**

**Look out in the next Session for Legislation to give resident fees for college to active duty service members stationed in Minnesota.**

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

- 6. Meeting was called to order: Treasures report stated that there was \$ 3400 in the bank. Jimmie Lee Coulthard, Treasure, reported that the VFW had just given him their 2008 Dues of \$100.**

- 7. Old Business –General business, Report card for Legislature, Website Management- Report Card to the Legislature will be out before the election-Hopefully newspapers within the state will publish it. Website management- Our Webmaster is going to update to the site**

### **8. New Business –**

**Al Loehr- A motion was moved and passed to honor Tom Shaw with a plaque for all his work, including a stipend of \$100 for a meal. The motion included that the award would be given in Tom Shaw’s name and will be presented as is.**

**Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30AM, Wed, Nov 5th at Building 9 Auditorium on the Mlps VA Medical Center Campus – Attached to VISN 23 Building**

**There were 52 people in attendance**

**THANKS TO BRIANNA WERKET, MNDVA, FOR HER ASSISTANCE**

**Jerry Kyser – Chairman, UVLC**

