

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 Website – www.mnuvlc.org

UVLC Minutes –Wednesday, Sept 10, 2008

- **Call to order**
- **Invocation – Captain Mark Thompson, Chaplain**
- **Pledge of Allegiance- Howard Wilson**
- **Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander's of VSO's**
- **Reports from:**
 - **Chairman, Jerry Kyser- Next UVLC meetings –Wednesdays — Oct 8- 5th Floor, Veterans Service Building, St Paul Capitol grounds.**
- 1. **Federal Congressional Senators and Representatives**
 - **Senator Norm Coleman- Andy Davis-DOD Authorizations. A troop traveling reimbursement amendment to the 2009 National Defense Authorization Act will be offered. 12.5 Billion for a 3.9% Military pay increase is going through the Senate. The bill rejects a \$1.2 Billion increase in Tri-care fees and an amendment to exempt the 37 year age limit to enable retired military to go into law enforcement. The Senator is also sponsoring troop travel reimbursement amendment. The military is putting out the new GI Bill info that goes into affect next year. Not much is getting done because of the election politics. This is Andy's last UVLC meeting as he moving to the east coast. Good Luck Andy!!**
 - **7th District Representative Collin Peterson- Al Loehr- There are rumors that the Administration may contract out certain parts of the new GI Bill. More information may be forthcoming. Congressman Waltz was Honored as the VFW Veteran of the year. The House Veterans Affairs committee will meet soon to consider the Construction bill and the Cost of Living bill.**
 - **1st District Representative –Tim Waltz- John Pierce, Jr. - Congressman Waltz working hard to get passage of pain care act. He is also supporting a mileage increase, COLA Cost of Living increase, and a pilot program for rural veterans. John will get answer to a question about updating the GI Home Loan Program for the next meeting 10-08-08**
 - **2nd District Representative – John Kline- Chaz Johnson-Kline and Peterson is sponsoring the Rural Veterans Care Act. It has not passed yet. The Chairman thank Rep Kline's office in Wash DC for getting a Police escort for the WWII Honor Flight Busses from Regan Airport to their WWII Memorial.**
 - **4th District Representative- Betty McCollum- Josh Straka –Talked about the GI Home Loan Bill was still in process in the US House**
 - **5th District Representative –Keith Ellison – Mike Siebenaler – Jerry Kyser thanked Rep Office and Mike Siebenaler for setting up the Reyburn Congressional office building For a meal for the WWII Veterans on 9-13. Unfortunately the cost for the meal was to much and we went elsewhere.**

2. State Agencies

- **MN Dept of Veteran Affairs - Commissioner Clark Dyrud-** The legislative session starts in January. The Governor should make announcements on this session's initiatives as early as Veterans' Day. Korean 10th anniversary at 1 PM Sunday Sept 14th with the Governor in attendance. Next summer, Saturday, June 13, 2009, there will be a Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Celebration on the Capital grounds .
- **MN Dept of Veteran Affairs- Deputy Commissioner Mike Pugliese-** A new case management program is set to roll out soon. The Department received \$500,000 dollars last session to create the program, which will coordinate resources within the state, county, and local communities to get veterans the best service possible. Counseling services, including mental health, financial, and marital, will be a particular consideration.
- **MN Dept of Veteran Affairs-Deputy Commissioner Gil Acevedo-** Thank you to all the volunteers that have spent time in the homes. It has made a lot of difference. The Minneapolis home is in the process of hiring a new Administrator. Pam Burrows is filling in the interim. Building 9 has been condemned, and is set to received a 1/3 match from the Federal VA for construction of the new building. The total cost of demolition and rebuilding will be \$29 million, including the federal match. Laverne has recently had a ribbon cutting for its new building. The patient who was beaten by another patient at the Hastings home has since died. The DA has changed charges to attempted murder. A study and strategic plan is in the works on the best location for future veterans homes. A state wide task force is also being created on the best design for future veterans homes.
- **MN Military Affairs – COL Eric Ahlness-** The Republican National Convention is now complete. Police did a great job. Throughout the fall, the Yellow Ribbon community will be looking for communities to come together to make sure returning veterans have resources. The Military Appreciation Fund Foundation Founder, Gene Sit, who recently passed away will receive the National Guards Patriot Award for his efforts to support, with financial grants, the Military serving in the War on Terror. 10 AM Capital Rotunda. Both 133rd and 148th MN ANG Units are being deployed for the 4th time in three years. Col Ahlness thanked the MN Legislative Members of the US and State bodies for their support for the appropriations needed to run the MNNG.
- **MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kathy Vitalis / Kara Cornils)-** The last two Stand Downs took place in International Falls and Duluth. Both were very successful. The next one will be in Mankato on November 18. Volunteers are appreciated. A Comedy Show fundraiser will take place at 7:30 on Thursday, Sept. 18 at the Holiday Inn East. Tickets are \$30 for general seating and \$45 for gold seating. Call 612-379-3580 for more information.
- **MN Veterans Initiatives Center and Research Institute – John Baker-** A target date of Nov. 11 has been set for opening a center for assisting Veteran entrepreneurs to start new businesses and initiatives. On the research side they are doing some National Research on Domestic Violence on returning Veterans from Combat. They excited about the Center and they are getting some national attention on the program.
- **MN Vietnam Veterans Charity – Jerry Kyser - TWIN CITIES HONOR FLIGHT**
Sat 9-13-08 a US Airways Charter of 150 souls comprised of 95 WWII Hero's and Heroines and 55 Guardians will do a One day trip starting at 5AM and return at 10:45PM to their WWII memorial. The 15 Woman and 80 Men will have the time of their senior lives in Wash D C. We will be taking 50 wheelchairs to make the trip a little easier.

3. Federal Agencies

- **VA Regional Office – Julie Carie – The VA has an inventory of 8390 claims that they are working on. It is going up and they have hired more people to do the job. They have 546 Employees to do the work in the claim dept. It takes about 163 days to complete a claim. As of April 07 –MN vets that receive Pensions 14834 – MN widows and children receiving Death Pensions- 6888,MN Widows, Parents and Children receiving dependency Compensation 4130.**
- **VISN 23 – Steve Kleinglass for Dr Petzel - The next out patient clinic will be in the Elk River, Ramsey, Hwy 10 corridor with solicitation of bids in the late fall. There are 7 Clinics in the area. The end of year info is that the Mpls VA has spent \$500,000,000, employs over 3000 employees, has 800,000 out patients' visits, 12,000 discharges, and 5300 prescriptions a day given out. Were Busy!!**
- **Mpls VA Hospital – Steve Kleinglass - Dedication of the new spinal cord injury building will take place on Oct. 23 @ 1:00 pm. Access to the hospital has improved. .5% of those who apply will have to wait. A Solicitation for Bids has been sent out for new outpatient corridors. The original design was for 11 new suites. However, this was determined to be a fire hazard. A meeting between the Fisher Foundation and architects will take place within the next week to come up with a new design, presumably with 10 suites. Groundbreaking should happen sometime this year. 1400 C and P exams in July. A big month prior to that would be 300 or 400**
- **St Cloud VA Hospital – It is construction season. A second floor is being built at the hospital for outpatient surgery. Patients are being diverted while this is happening. A new lab and outpatient care area is also in the works. A project for wind generation and geothermal energy is in progress. J-14 visited the facility on Sept. 9. Staff was prepared, and the hospital received a favorable evaluation. Staff has been deployed for Hurricane relief. Upcoming events: Sept. 22, Warrior to Citizen Leadership Conference; Sept. 26, Balance for Women Veterans; Nov.11, Veterans' Day**
- **Ft Snelling Cemetery – Art Smith – Director- Funding for ground renovation for the first few years. An informational video on National Cemetery History. Some cemetery volunteers were featured in the video. The video is part of a new Public Information Center at the cemetery, which will have information for visitors on the cemetery's history. Total internments for fiscal year – 4344,(1944 caskets and 2400 cremations)
Total at Ft Snelling 180,909 (146000 caskets – 34909 in the columbarium)
Total of Women Veterans at Ft Snelling - 1331
Ft Snelling Cemetery will have open space until 2050**

4. Announcements – Chairman –

5. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes

6. UVLC has \$3805.41 in the bank - \$2000.00 was given to the Twin Cities Honor Flight

7. Old Business –General business, Report card for Legislature- Motion was made to hire part time help to publish the report card while Ralph Donais hand recovers at the rate of \$30/hour for 3 hours/week. Motion carried.

8. New Business –Website Management- cost-Jerry's wife knows somebody who can help redo the website.

9. It was moved and passed to give an additional \$250.00 to publish the Leg Report Card.

Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30AM, Wed, Oct 8th on the 5th floor of MN Vets Service Building, St Paul Capital grounds