

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, April 1, 2009

- **Call to order – 09:30**
- **Invocation – Chaplain Capt. Vince Hokkanen**
- **Pledge of Allegiance- Howard Wilson**
- **Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s**
- **Reports from: Chairman, Jerry Kyser-A moment of recognition for all the Women Warriors who are currently serving our country and those Women Veterans who have served our great nation. March has been Women’s History Month and we appreciate all the Women who have supported our Military since we have been on this continent.**
 1. **State Agencies and MN Veteran Assistance Organizations**
 - **MN Dept of Veteran Affairs - Anna Long- There will be an initiative in the month of April that features the military child. Veterans can nominate their children to receive the award and a letter from the Governor.**
 - **MN Military Affairs – COL Eric Ahlness- “New Normal” means that by this point everyone that is in the military has either reenlisted or joined the military during war time. There are many deployment ceremonies that are will soon be underway getting ready to honor the troops. At one time during the middle of June 62,000 members of the National Guard will be going one way or the other. Heavily engaged is the “New Normal”. Legislative Initiative. Vet Designation on the license plate is encouraged by Law enforcement so that they would know the status of the veteran on the license plate. MN has the 5th largest Army National Guard. One half of the people who join the military join the Guard.**
 - **MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)-Kara Cornils- In 2008 MACV served 25% more veterans than the previous year. MAC-V.org is the new website. Duluth project is still on track. Buy a brick for a veteran campaign is underway as a fundraiser. StandDown will be held Tuesday, MAY 19th and Wednesday MAY 20th at Ft Snelling Army Reserve Complex.**
 - **Mn Veterans Initiatives Center and Research Institute – Jimmie Lee Coulthard- Oak Ridge @ Sauk Center proposed that a foundation could be initiated to come up with a plan to develop the property. The buildings are huge, but the rooms are small. It was proposed that it could be turned into a National conference training center which would be an income producing facility. Mayo clinic may decide to take this project on. It will not be a VA hospital; it is something that will come out of National. This is proposed to be an intentional wellness community. This will produce about 200 jobs. If you are not for it, please don’t be against it. Armed Forces Day there will be a fund raiser for the property.**
 - **MN History Center-MN WWII Exhibit and Veterans Discount- Joanna Danks-May 23rd is a landmark interactive exhibition opening at the MN History Center on Memorial Day Weekend. The experiences of everyday Minnesotans will be told through their own stories and will weave together the personal and shared history of an era. www.mnhs.org**

Congratulations to Richard Thill for receiving an honorary high school diploma from Humboldt High School, almost 70 years later.

2. Federal Agencies

- **VA Regional Office-Sue Malley- Assistant Director-** There is work that has been brought in from other states. The office is approaching 700 employees. Julie Carey will be the new support service chief. Tax abatement letter legislation is in process; there will be a letter sent out to all veterans.
- **VISN 23 – Dr Petzel, Director-** There is a regular 10 o'clock call to the people in Fargo due to the flood emergencies. 14 nursing home patients have moved from Fargo to St Cloud. Moved 5 remaining inpatients to Minneapolis. There is a great warm story about this: Fargo made arrangements with NW airlines to transport the patients. All people in first class gave up their seats for the patients. There are three temporary trailer clinics in Fargo. Congratulations to Rob McDivitt for managing the crisis in Fargo. The goal of VISN 23 is to touch every veteran that returns. The issue is always the veterans that the system doesn't know about. Stimulus package: Capital improvement money. 34.7 M in the network for the state of Minnesota. There is an effort that would require an automatic registration with the VA for every person who enters into the armed services.
- **St Cloud VA Medical Center-Cheryl Thieschafer-** Space has been doubled for the lab. Primary care provider positions have been filled.
- **The Roseville Veterans Center outreach van has been in Fargo serving the flood victims.**
- **Ft Snelling Cemetery – Art Smith – Director - February 2009**

Total Internments	348	Current FYTD	2121	Total to date	185,178
Caskets	133		1023		148,643
Cremations	192		905		35,407
Collunariums	23		193		1,363

Female Veterans Total: 1,363

Memorial Day event is scheduled to start at 10:00 AM, May 25th at Ft Snelling Cemetery.

- **Vets Employment and Training Service (VETS) Jodi Bean-** VETS have closed 24 cases so far this year. Last year there were 55 in the entire year. Outreach is being done for employers. "Hire veterans first" month is in May. There will be a Veterans Career Fair Day at the Earle Brown Center in Brooklyn Center April 30th. Wells Fargo and many other companies are conducting a campaign to hire veterans.
- **House and Senate Bills-** Rep Severson and Newton in the house bill 771 has gone through the house. It gives Vets Businesses the opportunity to bid on MNDOT, MET Council and UMN Projects with the same advantage as other targeted and disadvantaged businesses. There are 483 Veteran Owned Businesses and 133 Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses in MN. Less than 13% of those Veteran owned Companies would bid on construction projects.

HF 1881 and SF 1982 are for Vets Preferences in State Agency Employment opportunities. These bills designed to give the top 5 to 10 veterans who meet minimum qualifications a face to face interview and that specific data be gathered reflecting the hiring of veteran into the agency

2. Federal Congressional Senators and Representatives

- **Senator Amy Klobuchar –Kelly Scanlan-** A provision in the President's budget to have services provided by the VA be paid by private insurance companies was proposed. The Veterans community was heard from very quickly and very negatively and the proposal was dropped. A number of Senators introduced A post deployment mobilization bill (PDMRA) The Senator had 16 academy appointments. The Senator wrote a letter to Richard Thill congratulating him for his honorary diploma from Humboldt High School; he enlisted in the Navy when he was 16 and was on the USS Ward. Richard accepted the Letter graciously.

▪ **1st District Representative-Tim Walz- John Pierce- Rep Walz was also not happy about the about the service connected disabilities provision in the budget. He contacted the new VA Administrator, met with White House Chief of Staff and discussed the very bad idea of saving Money on the backs of Veterans. His displeasure along with all the Veterans Organizations Caused the provision to vanish. Congress is proposing to increase to VA budget 10% more than proposed**

2nd District Representative-John Kline-Chaz Johnson introduced Richard Leonard. He is part of the Wounded Warrior Project. Nine veterans have been hired by Congressional offices and are working with veteran cases. Richard is a MN National Guard Soldier (34thID)

▪ **4th District Representative- Betty McCollum- Connie Haddeland-Handout was sent around to describe the bills that passed. Veteran cost of Living Increase (HR 1513) Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Reauthorization Act (HR1171) Veterans Emergency Care Reimbursement (HR1377).**

5th District Representative- Keith Ellison-Mike Siebenaler-(HR1591) Veterans who receive non taxable income. There will a one time \$250 payment between now and June 4th. There is a phone number to call if you do not receive this payment.

6th District Representative-Michele Bachmann-Tara Westby- congresswoman signed off on the three bills that were mentioned previously. Mobile office hours schedule was handed out.

4. Announcements – Chairman –Ralph will not be back from Japan and his Bus Tour until after July 4th. There is a need for volunteers to guard the wall during the June 13 ceremony to honor Vietnam Veterans on the capital grounds. Please contact Sarah Graves and help find organizations that will help guard the wall during this historic event. 651-757-1550

5. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes

6. Old Business – Financial report: balance in checking account \$3938.58. IRS was contacted about 990N and our 2008 e-Postcard report was accepted.

7. Jerry represented UVLC at the MN National Guard Hanger dedication in St Cloud March 14th.

8. Jerry put in the application to the MN Air Force NG for a C-130 flight to Camp Ripley for the Aug 5th or Sept 2nd UVLC meeting.

9. It was moved and seconded that the UVLC support Valley Forge Project presented by Jimmie Lee Coulthard, Chairman of VICTRI.

Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30AM, Wed, May 6, 2009 at Building 9 Auditorium on the Mpls VA Medical Center Campus – Attached to VISN 23 Building