

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, August 5, 2009

- Call to order – 09:30
- Invocation – Ralph Donais
- Pledge of Allegiance – Howard Wilson
- Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s
- Reports from: Chairman, Jerry Kyser- On August 5th at Fleming Field in South Saint Paul a P-51C Fighter of the famed WWII Tuskegee Airmen returned from its 5 year, 1.2 million dollar rebuild. The rebuilding called the “Red Tail Project” was started by the MN Commemorative Air Force. The Mustang crashed and killed the pilot in May of 2004. Col Ken Wafford, a Tuskegee Airman and WWII P-47 fighter pilot talked about the dedication of the MN CAF and their rebuilding efforts. The aircraft and its traveling education program will go to schools for the purpose of delivering the message of what perseverance and dedication can accomplish.
- Ralph Donais sent around the contact list to be updated by those attending.

1. State Agencies and MN Veteran Assistance Organizations

MN Dept of Veteran Affairs – Pam Barrows-Sr. Dir MN Veteran Homes: A state wide study directed by the MN Leg. will be completed in August to find where new Veteran Homes might be built. There are lots of construction projects going on at the five homes. Over \$60 Million of the State and Fed money is going into projects. The Fergus Falls CBOC is being upgraded. The MN Vets Home is reorganizing the dining facilities.

MN Veterans 2009 Legislative Info – Communications Director - Anna Lewicki Long: Discussed the free metro and outstate bus transportation of disabled veterans The veterans must have a VA ID with the words Service Connected written on the ID to get free rides. The ID’s can be issued at Mpls and St Cloud Medical Centers. The Purple Heart Trail that include parts of Hwy 94 in Maple Grove is being dedicated by Commissioner Dyrud the week of August 10th.

MN Military Affairs – Officer Candidate Davin Fisher: There were five funerals for National Guard and Regular Military in MN for servicemen killed in action. There are over 2,000 MN Nat. Guardsmen deployed around the world. There are over 1,000 in Iraq and 200 in Afghanistan. The 148th fighter Wing in Duluth was given Air Force recognition for excellence in operations. MN Army National Guard Helicopter units will be training in Canada for future deployment with the Canadians.

MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kathy Vitalis: MACV was given a major grant for their homeless programs by the Vets Employment and Training Program. The numbers from 2007 to 2008 increased by 58%. 2008 to 2009 in the first quarter are up 22%, however the funding is down. Outreach is being stepped up. Comedy show fundraiser flyers were handed out to the member.

MN Veterans Initiatives Center and Research Institute (VICTRI) – Jimmie Lee Coulthard: The VICTRI Center is helping entrepreneurs set up their military contract numbers so that they can bid on contract jobs. The center is meeting the needs of many of those who are trying to set up small businesses in the community. They are putting together workshops that can be broadcast overseas so that many can begin this process while they are still in the service. Discussed Valley Forge Village and it's potential ability to support both the Vet's Homes and the Regional VA. This is viewed as a National Project.

Ralph Donias announced Retiree Activity Days: August 28th at Rosemount; August 29th at Camp Ripley; September 18th at Black Bear Casino in Cloquet; September 26th at Mystic Lake. Encourage the retirees in your community to attend so that they can get the latest information on retirement benefits.

2. Federal Agencies

VA Regional Office –Dr Carol Fillman, Director: As of Sept 23, 2008, service connection for ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease can be established on the basis of presumption regardless of when the veteran was in service. Post 9-11 GI Bill: this was signed into law June 30, 2008, it provides educational assistance to individuals who served an aggregate of 90 days of active duty service after 9-10-2001, or served a minimum of 30 continuous days and was released for a service connected disability. The Henry Whipple Federal Building redevelopment is the largest General Services Administration (GSA) project in MN that's part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. GSA plans to update the 630,000 sq ft building is planning for a seamless transition and anticipate the GSA will have a final selection for new space in the summer of 2010.

VISN 23 –Cynthia Breyfogle, Deputy Director: VA Partners with DOD and the Dept of Labor on National Resource Directory. Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) updates can be seen on www.visn23.va.gov or email sharyl.schaepe@va.gov The VA Health Care Overview Now available. You can view the book online at www.va.gov/healtheligibility To obtain a copy of the book, contact your local VA health care facility's Enrollment Office or the Veterans health Benefits Service Center at 877-222-VETS(8387)

Mpls VA Medical Center – Steve Kleinglass, Director: The Fisher House with accommodations for 22 Veterans is under construction and has been fully funded. A new VA Parking lot should be done by this fall. A new Chief of Medical Services has been hired. Dr Nichols has been a researcher at Mpls VA and now will in a Leadership role. The Mpls VA has a booth at the State Fair for recruiting and giving out services information. Mpls VA volunteers scraped and painted a St Paul Veterans home who was about to be fined by the city and did it one day.

St Cloud VA Medical Center – Joan Vincent –PAO: Work continues on the Day Surgery Center, which is on track to open in the spring of 2010. Alexandria CBOC is on schedule to open on Sept 21. Homeless Veterans Program is in the final stages of the hiring process for a program manager to manage veterans who might access one of 35 HUD/VA supportive housing. Extended Care Rehabilitation Service is in discussions with the MilleLacs Band about providing Home and Community Based Care for members of the Band who live on the reservation. On Aug 12 Sen. Al Franken and Rep. Tim Walz visited the St Cloud VA. St Cloud continues to grow and continue to recruit for providers, particularly primary care and internal medicine.

New Brighton Vets Center – They are still hiring. Jennifer Iveland has resigned and is returning to school to get her Doctorate in counseling so they are recruiting to replace her. A Brooklyn Center office will be open next month.

Vets Employment & Training Service [VETS] – Kevin Nagel-There is a new Assistant Secretary that has been approved. MACV got a new two year grant. It is a pleasure to continue to work with them. There has been an increase in discrimination of returning Veterans by employers which not helping the reintegration process. The Earle Brown job fair had fewer employers and the results have not been calculated because unfortunately only 50% of those in attendance report the statistics of those who were hired.

3. Federal Congressional Senators and Representatives

Senator Amy Klobuchar –Greg Swanholm- She supported the supplemental monies for both Iraq and Afghanistan to assure that our nation’s soldiers are properly taken care of. Increased mental health care for veterans in country and returning from deployment. There was a question about volunteers receiving more money for mileage. The current rate is .14 per mile.

Senator Al Franken – Nichole Ly introduced herself to her first UVLC meeting. Their office is in the Federal Courthouse in Saint Paul. Phone number is 651-221-1016.

7th District Representative - Collin Peterson- Al Loehr-The house passed four bills. One included funding for female veterans issues for \$1.8 million. GI Bill is in effect as of August 1, 2009. It was suggested that the new CBOC in Alexandria be named after MSgt Max Beilke due to his heroics in US Army. Al requested that the UVLC support the naming of the CBOC after him. Beilke was the last Combat Soldier to leave Vietnam on March 29, 1973. He was killed at the Pentagon Attack on 9-11-2001

2nd District Representative – John Kline - Chaz Johnson-Cong. Kline is on the education committee which enables him to put approve legislation that would enhance veterans educational benefits. Put forth legislation for VFW 110th anniversary to be recognized. Working on the veteran’s health care budget and recognizing Armed Forces Recognition

4th District Representative- Betty McCollum- Connie Haddeland-She mentioned the physical disability review board. There is a new directive for VSO’s to help veterans appeal their DOD disability rating to a higher rating. House support for a \$14.5 billion increase which is a 58% from previous years for veterans health care. There is a strong commitment from all members of Congress.

5th District Representative –Keith Ellison – Mike Siebenaler-Star base program at the 133rd Air National Guard was awarded 1.9 million dollars for elementary school children to participate for Number of days to learn about science and math incorporating this into aviation. GIBill.va.gov will have the condensed version of the information. It will answer many of the questions that participants have about this new benefit. A new bill was sponsored so that images of deceased soldiers cannot be used without the family’s permission.

6th District Representative- Michele Bachmann – Tara Westby-Congressman voted for the defense authorization bill. Congresswoman Bachmann will be holding Town Hall meetings in September.

4. Announcements –If you have anything that you wish for members to have send to Ralph Donias so that he can forward information to all members.

5. Meeting in Recess for 7 minutes

6. **Old Business –Treasures report; \$4482.91 Jerry Kyser has been invited to participate at the CVSO Fall Gathering and Banquet at Grandview Lodge in Nisswa, Mn. Discussed dues owed by members from six different organizations. Oct Flight to Camp Ripley has not been approved. –**
7. **New Business – Twin Cities Honor Flight requested support for the November 7th flight to take WWII veterans to Washington DC. Julie Jensen of MOAA moved to give \$1,000. Lawrence Dean AMVETS seconded the motion. There was a discussion and the vote was unanimous. Jerry Kyser thanked the UVLC for the generous contribution to the Nov 7th flight for the 100 WWII Vets.**
8. **A motion was made, seconded, discussed and passed to support the naming of the Alexandria, MN CBOC after MSGT Max Beilke. Vice Chairman Ralph Donais will compose the letter and get it to Al Loehr of Congressman Peterson’s office.**

There were 49 people in attendance

**Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30 AM - Wed, Sept 2, 2009 Building 9 Auditorium
Mpls Medical Center Campus, Mpls, MN**

UVLC OFFICERS

**Jerry Kyser – Chairman
Ralph Donais – 1st Vice Chairman
Lawrence Dean - 2nd Vice Chairman
Jimmie Lee Coulthard – Treasure
Jana Kyser - Secretary**