

UNITED VETERANS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA

Veterans Service Building

Second 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 Minutes January 10, 2007

Next meeting will be held on February 7, 2007

- Call to order by the Chairman-Jerry Kyser
- Invocation –Jerry Kyser
- Pledge of Allegiance was led by Steve Kleinglass
- Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s
- Reports from:
- Chairman-Jerry Kyser announced the importance to go to your legislators and express your support for the initiatives.
 1. 1st Vice Chairman –Ralph Donais handed out the master list of all of the names to edit for the UVLC listing.
 2. Mpls VA Hospital-Steve Kleinglass: Great accomplishments this past year based on the hospitals quest for performance. There has been an employee forum called “Why we do what we do”. There was a 12-minute film presented that is a documentary about the care that is given. Permission to show this film at the February meeting. Improvements: 24/7 security at the front door, floor and wall coverings, replacing old beds. The spinal cord injury to begin next March. The staff has researched facilities throughout the US to find the best possible equipment and set-up for this VA hospital facility. Any success we have is your success. The workload is up 3 ½%. \$2,069.89 was presented to Steve Kleinglass from Jerry Nalipinski on behalf of the UVLC for the Fisher house. In 1994 the Fisher house was established in New York. Recently a private benefactor donated \$80,000 to the Fisher house. There are plans for a second facility. This house provides lodging for families whose loved ones are being treated at the VA hospital.
 3. Representative Lynn Wardlow from Eagan stopped by to introduce a bill for an act relating to property tax refunds; exempting from the definition of household income the amount of any military disability pay received by a veteran from the federal government.
 - MN Dept of Veteran Affairs-Deputy Commissioner Pugliese distributed a hand out that outlined Governor Pawlenty’s Military and Veterans Support Package. They read as follows: complete details can be found on the Governor’s Office website at www.governor.state.mn.us
 - 16.5 million: 100%exemption from state income tax for military pay and pensions.
 - \$30 million: MN GI Bill
 - \$2 million: Enhancing the State Soldier Assistance Program
 - We have to market what we provide. Work with the CVSO-create an 800 number-website-newspaper-billboards. We don’t want to hear “I Didn’t Know.”

Infrastructure and Resources: MN Military Affairs-COL Eric Ahlness

- \$1.5 million one-time expenditure: Additional Support for our returning veterans. Establishing the State Reintegration Program-Beyond the Yellow Ribbon. Ensuring firearms certification for returning veterans. Preferred state contracting veteran-owned business.
 - \$4 million: Better service for those who have served. Veteran affairs communication and outreach.
 - \$1.8 million-\$500,000 one-time expenditure. Expanding higher education offices.
 - \$2.8 million-\$500,000 one-time expenditure. Increase county veteran service officer grants.
 - \$500,000-Increased funding for veteran organization
 - \$200,000 improving information technology at the MN Dept of Veteran Affairs.
 - \$3.5 million: Armory Maintenance Program
 - \$560,000: General support appropriation increases. \$185,000 special assessments.\$150,000 State veteran cemetery increase.
 - Quality care at Minnesota's veteran homes: \$1.3 million increased rent and utility expenses. \$8 million repair and betterment.
 - Morale, welfare, and recreation fund at Camp Ripley. Incentive refinement. Declaration of 148th fighter wing fire fighters as essential employees. "Support our Troops" license plate refinement.
 - \$469,000 increases funding for Minnesota military museum. \$308,000 preservation of historic flags. The total amount is \$74.8 million. Thank you to all elected officials for making the effort to visit the Walter Reid hospital. It makes a difference. There will be a fundraiser for Sgt. John Kriesel on January 19th. Mn National Guard was extended in Iraq for another 129 days.
 - MN Veteran Home- Jeff Johnson-We are an agency of five homes. The agency itself is moving forward with few deficiencies. The transition team is in place for excellence. There is a dedicated team that has accepted ownership to accomplish its goals. There will be a lot of benchmark comparisons in the industry. January 18th at 3:00 there is a hearing strongly supported by Senator Vickerman. Tom Shaw suggested that the new executive director should not have to be a veteran because it reduces the field of qualified applicants. The commanders' task force has already endorsed this change. The new web site is very user friendly. www.minnesotaveteran.org
 - MN Assistance Council for Veterans –Kathy Vitalis is very excited about the one million dollars that is designated for the program. MACV has filtered 9,500 phone contacts. 450 clients. There have been 700 eligible for funding that we did not have the money for. In 2006 110 veterans were provided permanent employment. In Mankato 8 of the 11 apartments are filled. They have hired a full time case manager. The standdown will be May 17-18, 2007 at the Fort Snelling Readiness Facility.
 - Ralph wanted to express his pride in being a veteran when he is at the capital. The representatives are open to listen to the voice of the veteran.
4. Federal Agencies
- VA Regional Office - Sue Ihrke - Mr Alger is at the VA Academy in Baltimore. He is one of the instructors for the Assistant Director Development Program. Kay Anderson, Veterans

Service Center manager is on a detail to central office. Compensation and pension service, lending her expertise for 30-60 days. This is our busy season for our pension workload including 22,000+ eligibility verification reports and thousands of claims for unreimbursed medical expenses. We are actively involved in the Reintegration program, seamless transition and getting information to family members of our returning soldiers making them aware of VA benefits for the veteran and his/her dependents. 1-800-827-1000

- VISN 23-Paul Bockelman is the acting Deputy Network Director for the VA Midwest Health Care Network. New Clinic updates: Williston ND outreach clinic is now open, Dickinson, ND will open this winter, Jamestown, ND opening expected Feb/March 2007, Bemidji, MN opening in late spring, Western Wis. Opening expected summer 2007, Holdrege, Neb opening summer 2007, spirit Lake, Iowa opening summer 2007. Serving returning troops remains a priority for this Network. VA Medical Centers throughout the Network conduct ongoing outreach activities to provide returning servicemen and women information on VA benefits and services. Over 12,000 returning combat veterans have enrolled in VISN 23. We continue to work closely with State Dept of Veteran Affairs and DOD to coordinate activities to troops that are returning. There are 168 new enrollees waiting for an appointment. Our goal is to “Offer patients an appointment for a problem, urgent or routine, on the next time the clinic meets or the date requested. For more information, call VA Midwest Health Care Network Office at 612-725-1968 or visit www.va.gov or www.visn23.med.va.gov
- St Cloud VA Hospital-Cheryl Schaffer- Al Loehr is not present today due to being an honorary pallbearer for Merrill Hanson, past State Commander. Dental care is a high priority. Hospice suites will provide accommodations for end of life care. The hospital is still in need of two internists and one psychiatrist. An orthopedic provider will come in April. The survey teams in the facility received a three-year accreditation. The moving wall will be in Saint Cloud in September 2007.
- St Paul Vets Center-Jennifer Iveland-The center is reaching out to female veterans. 10-11% of veterans are female. The current war has claimed 72 women. Vietnam lost 8 female veterans. There is an opportunity for support and growth. The first and third Monday nights from 6-8 p.m. female combat veterans are invited to meet. At the St Paul Vet Center 2480 University Avenue in St Paul 651-644-4022.
- Ft Snelling Cemetery-Art Smith- Dec2006 Total interments 334,caskets-192, cremations-142. Current FYTD-1090, caskets-547, cremations-543. Total to date-173, 091,caskets-142, 948, caskets-142, 948,cremations-30, 143. The staff is involved in a training academy to teach and train cemetery directors. They are currently involved in winter training.
- 88th Regional Readiness Command USAR-Ann Marie-The Army Reserve is in six states. 22,000 are assigned, 4852 are in MN, and 1,805 have been deployed from six states. Welcome Home Warrior Citizens, January 27th at MOA. Military Expo will be on May 19, 20. There will be exhibitors, traveling wall, and aerial demonstrations. Jan 27th winter carnival parade.
- Other Organizations-LTC (retired) Joe Repya -MN Mil Appreciation Fund. In 15 months there have been 3,957 applications and 3,174 grants have been given out. On February 15th there will a fundraiser for this 501 3 C.
- Federal Congressional Reps

Senator Coleman-Greg Gorman reported on their trip to Iraq. They met with the Prime Minister. Marines are insistent that they are winning this battle. Morale was high, they believe in what they are doing. The senator brought over letters from students at Turtle Lake School. The Senator is meeting with Kriesel at Walter Reid hospital.

Senator Klobuchar – Zach Rodvold-Policy outreach 612-727-5220 or Zah-Rodvold@Klobuchar.senate.gov

6th District – Bachmann-Sean.Nienow@mail.hous.gov

5th District – Ellison-Brian Elliot-brian@elliottpolitical.com

4th District – McCullum-Josh Straka- Happy New Year from Congresswoman McCullum. Title 1-Sect 101- Parameters for attorney representations, before the VA. We'll be in touch with the VA and the UVLC. Sec 3B related to the fees. 5% of the amount for fees, not to exceed \$100.

3rd District – Ramstad-Margaret Cavanaugh

2nd District – Kline-Larry Johnson has the same amount of case work and staff. There will be an information night on March 14 for students who are interested in the Military Academies.

1st District – Walz- Nate Arch-507-206-0643 Work will be done on the Agricultural and Educational Committees.

Announcements – A Certificate of Appreciation was given to Bob Smith for his service to the UVLC Board in the past years. Veterans Day at the Rotunda in the Capital at 12:30, Tuesday January 30, 2007.

5. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes

Old Business- Meeting was called to Order by Jerry Kyser.

Election of Officers was held. Jim Hesselgrave erroneously informed the members that the election was illegal because the Chair and the 1st Vice were not members of the Veterans of an approved UVLC membership listing. Discussion followed with the by-laws being suspended to allow the election of the 2007 officers. Nominating committee nominated for Chair Jerry Kyser, 1st Vice-Chair Ralph Donais and 2nd Vice-Chair Lawrence Dean. Since no further nominations from the floor new board was elected by acclamation.

Next were the nominations for Secretary Jana Kyser and Treasurer Jim Hesselgrave. Having no additional nominations from the floor, both were elected by acclamation. It was found that the election of Hesselgrave was not necessary per the bylaws of 5-14-2000 which states “The Treasurer shall be elected by a vote of the Board (during even years in Hesselgrave’s case, 2006), and serve for a period of two years or until removed by the Board for cause or upon voluntary resignation.”

Discussion was then held on the By-Laws. A copy of the current by-laws will be sent out as soon as possible to all of the members. By-law committee report from Jerry Nalpinski. By-laws were discussed prior to the meeting, but due to the lack of a current copy recommendations would have to be presented at the next meeting.

Treasurer’s Report: The treasurer’s report showed that we have \$4,167.71. Dues paid for 2006 was \$1,425.00. Dues are \$25.00 if the organization has 100 or less membership. The dues for organizations larger than 100 is \$50.00. Motion was made by Roger Ball and 2nd to accept report. Discussion was held and motion carried. Jerry presented a rough draft of a budget for 2007. Discussion was held with the VSO conference being objected to on the budget. Jerry stated that he felt it was important that we attend this conference and that there were several items not on the budget that he handed out. It was stated again that this is a rough budget and that it would be worked on. Motion by Roger Ball and 2nd was made by Lawrence to hold off until the next meeting. Motion Carried.

A motion was made by Jerry Nalpinski to send a letter from the UVLC in support of the Governor’s Veteran’s Support Package. The motion was seconded, discussed and was passed. The letter is to be sent to the Governor, all of the Legislators at the Capital, MNDVA Commissioners and the Commander’s Task Force members

Discussion was held on support for the Commander's Task Force. At this time we don't know what they are going to present. Once we have that information it is planned to support the items that we agree with. Motion to adjourn was made by Roger Ball and seconded. Motion Carried. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 7, 2007.