

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 Minutes August 1, 2007

- Call to order by the Vice Chairman, Ralph Donais
- Invocation – Chaplain Joel Severson –MN Nat Guard
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s
- Reports from:
 1. 1st Vice Chairman, Ralph Donais announced that Jerry Kyser was not at the meeting because his best friend, Gerry Beck died when his P-51 crashed at the Oshkosh Wisconsin Air show.
 2. State Agencies
 - **MN Dept of Veteran Affairs** - Pat Turgeon gave the MDVA Report- House passed omnibus veterans’ health measure, new pension benefit for WWII Merchant Marine Veterans Passes House.
 - MDVA and the Governor at a News Conversance Aug 1 will offer a LinkVet call center provided by trained staff. During business hours, MDVA staff will provide information on veterans’ benefits, health care, education, and reintegration. The line will roll to Crisis Connection counselors for 24-hour, seven days a week coverage (including holidays) for immediate crisis intervention and psychological counseling. **PHONE # 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838).**
 - MN legislative Report –State Senator Tarryl Clark (St Cloud)-Warrior to Citizen Campaign-Chaplain Morris’ work is the basis of this program. The Humphrey Institute works to inspire citizen engagement. The group meets every other week at the Institute and is involved with training for Capital Staff, statewide roll out with regional centers, working on raising the profile for veterans coming home. Senator Sharon Erickson-Ropes -discussed laws that went into affect today including veterans and consumer contracts, legislative update, author of MN GI Bill. Please call her with any concerns about Veterans.
 - MN Veterans Home Board –Sandy Larson- Thanked the Senator for touring the Silver Bay Home. Check out the board meeting dates schedule on the VHB website. They would like veterans to attend the meeting. The Home Board will be represented at the State Fair. Thank you to the MDVA for the medallions to all WWII veterans in the state homes.
 - MN Military Affairs – Terry Palmer thanked legislature for all of the energy and activity that it takes to take care of the veterans. 2600 MNG members have returned home. They will attend reintegration activities. 1000MNG members deployed or are waiting to be deployed.
 - MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kathy Vitalis-Stand down is August 24th. Rochester and Bemidji are possible sites for future stand-downs. MACV golf tournament at the White Eagle Golf Club in Hudson Wisconsin on Monday August 6.

- DVD of WWII Memorial –Greg and Marci Jorgensen, Laurie Jorgenson-flyers were distributed to order the DVD of the WWII Memorial Dedication on June 9th. Make checks payable to Seasons Remember, PO Box 170 Lakeville, MN 55044 \$15 each (price includes tax, shipping and handling.)
- DEED-Gary Quernermoen-763-785-6465 or gary.quernemoen@state.mn.us-Veteran Job Fair at Earle Brown Heritage Center 6155 Earle Brown Drive Brooklyn Center, Mn 11-4:30 on Tuesday November 6, 2007 www.deed.state.mn.us
Sponsored by Veterans employment Service. Vendors can sign up to have a booth at the fair for \$279 it includes skirted 8X10 table, two chairs, wireless internet access, lunch and refreshments. There will be an additional charge for electrical and phone. Mail registration to MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development Attn: Veteran Job Fair 1202 89th Avenue NE Suite 230 Blaine, Mn 55434-3351

3. Federal Agencies

- VA Regional Office –Jeff Alger-Director-Sue Malley, begins work on August 7 as the new assistant director. The FY06 Geographic Distribution of VA expenditures by state and county is now available on the VA web site. Ft McCoy-VARO was on site welcoming back the 1/34th BCT. They were conducting job interviews in anticipation of being able to hire 10-20 returnees for the staff in the PMC and Service Center. Hiring: currently in the process of hiring 45 additional VSR's for the PMC due to the potential consolidation of original pension work. Anticipate brokering in 3,000 older widow's pension cases in the next two months. Anticipate hiring a number of VSR's for the Service Center after the fiscal year 08 starts in September. Space is a huge issue for the department. BHW building is crammed. They are looking at temporary private office space in Bloomington. In October 2008 about 20,000 sq ft will be available in the Burger Bldg in St Paul for the Regional Loan Center. This affects about 80 employees.
- VISN 23 –Kathleen Harris-www.pccww.gov will give a full account of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. VA's Suicide hotline begins operations. The VA has begun operation of a national suicide prevention hot line for veterans. The toll-free number is 1-800-273-TALK or 8255. Mental health professionals in New York will staff the VA's hot line around the clock. VA is partnering with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Dept of health and Human Service.
- Mpls VA Hospital – Steve Kleinglass-The ploy trauma unit is busy with additions everyday. The housing unit on the first floor is now open. There has not been a Grand Opening yet.
- St Cloud VA Hospital – Cheryl Thieschafer-St Cloud will be hosing the moving wall on the first week of September.

- Ft Snelling Cemetery – Art Smith

	Ft Snelling Cemetery July 2007	Current FYTD	Total to Date	
• Total interments	390	3776	175,775	
• Caskets	154	1841	144,242	
• Cremations	210	1690	31,288	
• Columbarium	35	245	245	1,266 female veterans

4. Federal Congressional Representatives and Senators

- Senator Norm Coleman – Greg Gorman-The Senator visited Camp Ripley and met with a field artillery unit. He also visited Fort McCoy to welcome returning soldiers.
- Senator Amy Klobuchar – Zach Rodvold-As of 8-1-07 the Senator has sponsored 14 different bills that are related to veterans/ military affairs

- **3rd District Representative – Jim Ramstad - Margaret Cavanaugh-Rep Ramstads newsletter was distributed. <http://www.house.gov/ramstad>**
 - **4th District Representative – Betty McCollum – Josh Straka-A handout was distributed on a veteran’s update that included the key veterans bills the 110th Congress have passed into law.**
 - **5th District Representative – Keith Ellison – Mike Siebenaler-Gave a legislative update**
 - **6th District Representative – Michele Bachman – Sean Nienow-Iraq trip update. Visited soldiers in a medical facility in Germany.**
 - **7th District Representative – Collin Peterson – Al Loehr-Reported on the Presidential Commission for improved Veterans Care. The Commission last week urged broad changes to veterans’ care that would boost benefits for family members helping the wounded establish an easy-to-use Web site for medical records and overhaul the way disability pay is awarded. It also recommended strong partnerships between the Pentagon and the private sector to boost treatment for traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. Bush said he has instructed Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson and Defense Secretary Robert Gates to take all the recommendations seriously and implement the ones they have the power to enact. He called on Congress to make the recommended changes under its authority.**
5. **Announcements – Vice Chair- September 2, 2007 is a dedication in Ramsey, Mn at Veteran Lake of the wall to MN soldiers that have died in Iraq. Ralph will provide the directions. Retiree Appreciation days: August 24-Ft. Snelling, August 25-Camp Ripley, Sept 28-Duluth, Sept 29-Mystic Lake Casino. There will be a stand down in Duluth on Sept 24th.**
 6. **Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes**
 7. **New Business- There is a need for volunteers at the Airport Veterans Center.**
 8. **Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30 am, Wed, September 5th at Mpls VA Campus, Building 9**
 9. **There were 47 members and visitors in attendance**

Respectfully submitted by Jana Kyser