

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 –Wednesday, Dec 5, 2007

- Call to order
- Invocation – Chaplain – Lt Vince Hokkanen read Psalm 18
- Pledge of Allegiance led by Howard Wilson
- Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s
- Reports from:
 1. Chairman – Meeting site change: 5th floor of the Veteran Service Building, Parking lot K, east of the building by the Police Memorial. The meeting will be the 9th of January @ 9:30. Vice Chairman: January 14,2008 - State Capital, room 118 at 10:30 Vets Committee meetings will begin.
 2. State Agencies:
 - [MN Dept of Veteran Affairs](#) - Commissioner- Clark Dyrud-Work is being done on a narrowly focused Voting package from the Governors office. Not willing to talk about details at this time. Christine will be happy to relay this information once the details have been worked out. Veterans’ homes are now under the Commissioner. There is an organizational chart that will be available next month. An Executive Director, Gilbert Acevedo has been hired. He is a Retired Navy Master Chief from California. He will be here next meeting. Home board is a part of the MN Dept of Veteran Affairs. Sandy Larson will be the PR manager for the Mpls Veterans Home. There are mutual relationships that are in place. Legislative structure is in place. There will be a Communication Director by next month. The staff at the Mpls home is excellent. The unions are a part of the solution. English as a second language has been stated as a problem and there is leadership training and education training that will be set to action. Recognition was given to Chip Cox for his service as the Acting Director of the Veterans Homes.
 - [MN Secretary of State](#) –Todd Pierce-lawyer and Major in the JAG corps. He is working in a nonpartisan manner when it comes to voting. It is a fundamental right of a US citizen. Absentee Voting for the Military and Civilian ballots are part of Fed-Voting Act. The Dept of Defense set up the recommendations. In today’s Army there are Contractors, Military and Civilians who support one half of the military efforts. There will be an electronic system for ballots. Gov office and Sec of State will work in conjunction with this effort to make sure our overseas military and civilians are able to Vote in next year’s elections and have them be able to be counted.

- [MN Military Affairs](#) National Guard– COL Eric Ahlness-The new normal; 1000 to 1500 Soldiers and Airman deployed at any given time for the foreseeable future because of the War on Terror. 148th fighter wing. Alert mission for F16s in Hawaii because of airframe problems with the Air Force F-15. They will be back at Christmas. The 34th Inf Band was voted best military band award.
- [MN Assistance Council for Veterans \(MACV\)](#)-Kara Cornils- Annual open house in on Friday in building 47 12-4. Friday the 14th open house in Mankato. For 2008 working on a new housing project in Duluth. 4 units of transitional housing and several units for permanent housing for veterans. May, will be the next stand down. Looking at adding one more stand down. Hoping to do a one-day event in International Falls.
- [Other MN Veterans Legislative issues](#)-Airline pilot restriction for retirement at 60 years old. This is a Veterans issue due to the large percentage of Vietnam Veterans who are senior airline pilots. Bills are in the US House to change the retirement age to 65, as all of the Worlds Airlines are. There is also Merchant Marine pension compensation is on the docket this year.

3. Federal Agencies

- [VA Regional Office](#) – Jeff Alger- Director- Hired Julie Carie at the Reg. Office. She will be a welcome asset to the Regional Office. The Loan Guarantee Regional Office has moved to Bloomington. This is the first part of the cascade list to bring more space at the Reg. Office in order to bring additional pension work from across the country. The IT Computer shop is being challenged with the inability to log on quickly. St Paul is viewed as one of the top offices in the country. VA is still working under a continuing resolution because Congress has not passed a bill that the President will sign. Recognition was given to Jerry Kyser for all of his behind the scenes efforts and the great support he provides to the Regional office.
- [VISN 23](#) – Cynthia Breyfogle, Deputy Network Director - 272,000 patients were seen last year. VISN 23 is one of the pilot sites for Project Hero. Humana health care was awarded the contract as well as Delta dental care as preferred providers to work with VISN 23. In the interim the fee care will continue. 21,600 receiving care from the VA. Cynthia reported for St Cloud Hospital Director Barry Bahl – St Cloud is very busy and they are recruiting for an Intern Psychiatrist.
- [Mpls VA Hospital](#) – Steve Kleinglass – Director- Holiday season there are some restrictions for visitation in order to protect patient confidentiality because of the large number of people coming and going at he Hospital. If any of the Service Organizations want to do something for the patients please do it through the Voluntary Services Dept.. Thank you for all of the support throughout the past year. The spinal cord injury construction area is under a roof and ahead of schedule.

- **St Paul Vets Center** – Ernie Boswell-Two recent hires with two more to come. New groups. Combat vets, sexual trauma, and marital groups. Sept of 08 there will be a 35 ft mobile outreach vehicle going to rural areas. Expanding solicitation for contract fee providers. Initiative to keep veterans in college (dropping off at 3 times the rate.) Going to various campuses every two weeks to help support discussion groups. This is a coordinated effort with the CVSO's.
- **88th Regional Readiness Command** SGT Major Janet Jones -Regional Readiness support Command. Government on display will be January 26-27 at the MOA. 100th anniversary of the Army Reserve. The Governor will have an official proclamation. The 451st Army Reserve Band will be doing concerts this weekend as well. Recognition ceremonies each weekend. Six recognition events for soldiers and their family members are taking place in Six States in the 88th Reg. Command .
- **Ft Snelling Cemetery** – Art Smith – Director – Major 20 Million expansion project that will take the Cemetery into 2050s with the ability to serve Veterans and their Families. Ft Snelling has no problems with the budget and they will complete their mission.

Total Internments for Nov 382 Current FYTD:781 Total to Date: 177,347

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|-------------------------------------|-------|-----|---------|
| • Caskets | 185 | 347 | 144,935 |
| • Cremations | 160 | 360 | 32,021 |
| • Columbarium | 37 | 47 | 391 |
| • Female Veterans - | 1,296 | | |
| • September 2007(updated 11/5/2007) | | | |
| • WWII | 129 | | |
| • KOREA | 44 | | |
| • VIETNAM | 40 | | |
| • PERSIAN GULF | 0 | | |
| • PEACETIME | 20 | | |
| • ACTIVE DUTY | 0 | | |
| • DEPENDENT | 166 | | |

4. **Federal Congressional Representatives and Senators**

- **Senator Norm Coleman** – Greg Gorham-Veteran day was busy, traveled to Laverne. Presented a purple heart to a veteran who had earned it in 1945. Greg attended the stand down at Mankato. On Nov 17th the service academy interviews took place. 80 candidates were interviewed. Legislative updates. Educational issue: 90% have had their orders corrected.
- **Senator Amy Klobuchar** – Martin Ludden-Veterans Day memorials were attended. Caseworkers 203 were opened. Over 100 were closed. Def Alliance of Mn defense contractors; student vet day ceremony at the U of M. Leg level: working with Cynthia new rural outreach. Started a pilot program for the rural areas. Big news: Moved to 1200 Washington Ave S in Mpls.

- 1st District Representative – Tim Waltz – Chad Larimer-handout for progress on bills. New Chief of Staff Josh Surgemake. Academy nominations were interviewed.
- 3rd District Representative – Jim Ramstad - Margaret Cavanaugh does all of the casework in the office. Help facilitate delegation letters. Check on specific legislation for veterans when they call in. Reenlistment bonus. The person cannot fulfill the term of reenlistment. They have to give back this bonus. Even injured soldiers have to pay it back. This is an issue that they will be taking action.
- 4th District Representative – Betty McCollum – Josh Straka-Great tradition was begun at the Uof M for the over 500 student veterans that were given recognition.
- 5th District Representative – Keith Ellison – Mike Siebenaler-Came back from the middle east. Met with soldiers there. Continuing rounds of American Legion and VFW in the 5th congressional district. We ask for opinions and ideas. We want to learn from you. This is completely non-partisan. Doing academy interview on December 8th. Signed on to a letter to change the Reenlistment bonuses.
- 6th District Representative – Michele Bachman – Sean Nienow-Attended Veterans day celebrations at several locations. Academy nominations this Saturday. VA will be on the docket this next week. There were some continuing resolutions.

5. Announcements – Chairman – Vice Chairman-American Legion Calendar has the numbers for all of the VSO's in the counties. Sessions start February 14th.

6. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes

7. Old Business-Finance report. New checking account. \$89 needs to be approved for expenses. Membership dues are subject to renewal on January 1st. Required to submit a form to the IRS this year. The Sec of State is requiring a reestablished identity.

8. New Business- It has been discussed that we as an organization do a report card on how the legislation issues have been dealt with. This should be published in the local media. We want to give the information to the Commander's Task Force. Information about voting should be made public about legislative actions taken on veteran issues. Recommended that Jenkins take this to the CTF. Party caucuses are a great platform to bring the veterans issues to the people. A motion was put forth to gather information on how MN Legislators voted on Veteran Issues and compiling a report on the 2007 legislative session. Motion Passed

9. Richard Jenkins moved that UVLC submit the voting information report to the CTF.
Motion Passed
10. Tom Nesbitt, Lawrence Dean and Jerry Nalipinski are a part of the nominating committee.
They will report for the election Jan 9,2008
11. A Motion was put forth to endorse the relocation of The MN Air NG Museum from the Air NG Base onto the adjacent Underutilized land on the Fort Snelling bluff. Motion Passed
12. HR1125 draft to Congressman Obertsar. Question: Why are they fighting moving the aviation retirement age to 65? Internationally it **is** 65 years old. 2400 Pilots, 65% who are Vietnam Veterans, are eliminated in the aviation business each year. Equally troubling and discriminatory are clauses in HR 1125 that would prohibit Veterans from regaining seniority, if and when legislation is passed. Motion put forth to support Draft Letter and Mail to all MN Congressman . Motion Passed

HR 1125 was dropped and a new bill HR 4343 was brought to the House Floor for discussion and voting Tuesday night December 11,2007. HR4343 with the Airline Pilots retirement age changed to age 65 passed with 390 votes for and 46 against. A provision for regaining seniority for those Pilots forced to retire before any Legislation is passed was not included. The Senate Bill 1300 is now the legislation to work on to include the seniority issue.
13. Governor's Initiative -Richard Jenkins put forth a motion to support the Governor's Initiative separate from any other organization. Motion Passed
14. Meeting Adjourned. Next Meeting 9:30 am, Wed, Jan 9,2008 – 5th Floor, Veterans Service Building. Parking permits will be for the Lot K (east of Vets Service Buld.)

There were 44 persons in attendance.