

UVLC Minutes–Wednesday September 3, 2014

- **Call to order – 09:30, Invocation – Pledge of Allegiance –**
- **Greetings: Recognition of visitors and guests –**
 - **Announcements - Ralph Donais, Chairman - Jerry Kyser, Vice Chairman.**
 - **On 9/21 is POW/MIA Recognition Day**
 - **At 2 p.m. at UofM TCF Stadium**
- **Jerry Kyser being honored**
- **Outstanding Women Veteran’s award nominations still open**

1. Federal Agencies

VA Regional Office – Ron Woolery

- Without a Director right now- Antoine Waller officially took new job in Baltimore
 - Ms. Donna Myer Hickel is acting Director now
 - Ms. Kaye Anderson and Ms. Hickel will both be interim Assistant Directors
- Town Hall: Every VA facility is required to conduct a “town hall meeting” open forum
 - At 10:30 on 9/12
- VA status update: Reduced backlog from peak of 611,000 in March to 264,000
 - As of 8/25, have completed 1,136,000
 - 1.17 million last year- on pace to beat that significantly
 - Non-rating force has completed 2.5 million claims, more than has been completed in any year in the last 15 years
 - Increasing this year in 44% over best year (which was 4 years ago)
 - 1 in 4 Veterans now submit dependency claims electronically through eBenefits
 - On average, they are receiving payments in 1-3 days
 - A lot of older Veterans do not have eBenefits or do not want to submit them electronically
 - Electronic claims use a system similar to a system used by turbo tax-expedites the process
 - Automating 21% of burials moving forward
 - Will result in automation of about 62,000 burials a year
 - Reduced Veterans pension inventory by 67%, and reduced backlog by 93%
 - Reduced DIC claims by 58%, reduced backlog by 86%, improved timeliness by 80 days while maintaining a 90% accuracy rate

VISN 23 –Janet Murphy- Director VISN 23 – Christopher Stromberg

- A few sites flagged in audit: remain open issues until more information given
- A lot of changes to VA:
 - New Secretary named Robert McDonald , a West Point graduate and former Army Ranger, most well-known from being former COO of Proctor and Gamble
 - Working on a 90 day Transition Plan
- Increasing outreach to Veterans in community, including Town Hall meeting
- Bill Funding for Veteran's Choice- supports Veteran's choice to choose where they get care
 - Will have a Veteran's Choice Card
 - Can use it if you cannot get care within 30 days or 40 miles from a VA facility
 - More money for additional staff – will take time to figure out where more staff is needed most

Mpls VA HCS – Director Patrick J Kelly - Mike Rosecrans- Leg. Liaison

- Suicide Prevention week is September 8th-12th
 - Staff is available to speak to Veterans and friends and families of Veterans
 - Will have handouts, wristbands, bumper stickers all emblazoned with helpline number
 - MN Military radio is planning a program on this topic on the 14th
- Pain Awareness Day is 9/18 from 8-3 at Medical Center
 - Informational booths all day on 2nd floor Atrium
 - Keynote at 11, 12, and 1 in Auditorium
 - Sessions on mindfulness, yoga, and Thai chi
 - Techniques to help Veterans manage pain
- Audiologies suites in 3 CBOCs
 - Northwest Metro-9, Ramsey Clinic-3, Twin Parts-2, Maplewood-2
 - Anticipating 9-15% increase in productivity once booths underway are complete
- Eye Clinic reservation will start this month
 - Project to take about a year
 - Will expand from 10 to 31 Eye Lanes

St Cloud VA HCS – Director Barry Bahl - Trish Aljets

- Very busy month for us
- Saturday on 9/6 is 2nd Annual Rendezvous

- Purpose is to bring Veterans and families friends to campus to see what we are all about
- 40 different booths manned by service organizations and community partners
- Kicks off with Suicide Awareness Walk, Stroll, and Roll at 9 am
- Ends around 3:30 p.m.
- Folks available to do enrollments
- Tours of medical center
- Stages with entertainment
- Using this event to kick off 90th Anniversary of Medical Center
- 9/8 is our Town Hall meeting
 - 5 p.m. in Auditorium
 - Please park in Lot just north of building 57 (mental health building)
- On 9/17 is 90th Anniversary Party
 - Building 92
 - Invitations have been sent out
 - Open to Public
- Friday, 9/26 is annual celebration of Caregivers
 - From 11-1 in Building 96
 - For caregivers, Veterans, and general public
 - Lot of resources available
- Tuesday, 9/30th : Women Veterans Workshop
 - Will now be holding series of workshops
 - Topic this time is Stress and Relieving Stress
- 11/9 is Annual Veterans Day Parade
 - Come on up and join us
- 10/1 and 10/2: Flu Clinics open
- 4 new providers started within last few weeks
 - 6 more to come
- New Psychiatry building: parking lot is in
 - Hope to be moving in within next couple of months
- New walking path is open
- Disc golf course is reopened open to public
- Given money to select a design firm to help us design a Adult Day health building
- Wind turbine is not working
 - Quite a bit in media lately
 - Discussions continue with contractor
 - Hoping to reach resolution soon

Question: Parade kicks off at 1 pm. Line up is at 11:30 if you want to participate. Give me a call if you would like to register to participate

Ft Snelling Cemetery – Robert Roeser

- New Director: John G. Knapp from Camp Smith in Hawaii

- Will come to next meeting to introduce himself
 - Marine Officer/Colonel
- June: 598 services
 - 135 WWII
 - 73 Korea
 - 101 Vietnam
 - 5 Persian
 - 23 Peacetime
 - 0 Active Duty
 - 230 Dependents
 - **Breakdown :**
 - 145 Army
 - 83 Navy
 - 38 Airforce
 - 12 Marines
 - 3 Coast Guards
 - 3 Merchant Marines
 - 7 Female Veterans
- July: 566 services
 - 133 WWII
 - 81 Korea
 - 81 Vietnam
 - 7 Persian
 - 22 Peacetime
 - 1 Active Duty
 - 241 Dependents
 - **Breakdown :**
 - 142 Army
 - 81 Navy
 - 28 Air force
 - 20 Marines
 - 3 Coast Guards
 - 0 Merchant Marines
- Year to Date Rifle Squads Performed: 2,007
- Total Graves/Remains we care for: 210,236
- Will bring August numbers to next meeting

Vets Employment & Training Service [VETS] – Davis Seay

- Congratulate MACV on success of their stand downs
 - Exciting to see record numbers
 - MACV in Mankato was recently awarded another HVRP grant

- Get to visit them in second quarter to do a meet and greet
- Jobs for Veterans Day Grant 5 year plan was approved, with an additional funding
 - Salary grant so translates into more positions
 - Staff the local Veteran Employment Representatives for Employer Outreach
- USARA claims and Veteran preference claims:
 - Cases have remained consistent over the last few months
 - 2 claims granted, 1 settlement, the rest are still in process

2. Federal Congressional Representatives and Senators

Senator Amy Klobuchar- Greg Swanholm

- Big news is Veterans Access to Care through Choice Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014
 - Senator was proud to support this act
- Greg Swanholm will be taking a step back from constituent's service work
 - Eller Hendrickson, Intern, will be taking over
 - Introduces himself: Army Veteran, member of American Legion, VFW, AUSA, and Quad A
 - From Northfield, MN
 - Went to Gustavus college
 - Deployed twice to Iraq and Afghanistan
 - Passionate about working with Veterans

Senator Al Franken- Nicole Ly

- Busy last few months
- In July, she attended an Army Reserve Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Event
 - Thanks Colonel Beechum for setting that up
- Held two meetings, with Congressman Walz, regarding Suicide Prevention
 - With various Veterans organizations and families affected
- Met with General Nash
 - Attended kickoff to building of solar panel field at Camp Ripley
- Alex Schuler is joining us as Constituent Service Representative
- Acknowledge Kathy and rest of MACV staff for fantastic stand down
- Primarily focusing on Service Academy nomination program for September

- Alex Schuler
 - Background: Marine Corps Veteran
 - 2 tours to Iraq
 - Out in 2009
 - Degree in Political Science at UofM
 - Worked for Habitat for Humanity
 - In Veteran Outreach at the moment

2nd District Representative – John Kline – Chaz Johnson

- Service Academy information session
 - Will be 9/22 at Burnsville Diamond Head Education Center
- Congressmen Kline will be sitting down with Pentagon and DoD to discuss Middle East

3rd District Representative –Eric Paulson – John Paul Yates Not in attendance

4th District Representative – Betty McCollum – Connie Haddeland

- Shout out to Guard this morning
- Just came from Congressional Staff Briefing on status and plans lacking for C130 fleets and Cyber Security issues - valuable meeting
- Ben has been filling in for me, grateful for Ben's abilities to cover
- August has been month of National Guard
- Breaking ground new readiness center and joined facility in Stillwater
- Went to AHATS in Arden Hills
- Yesterday spent at Roseville Armory
- Congresswoman has signed on to a letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs:
 - Speaks to certifications for provider agreements for extended care agreements for services such as hospice and palliative care
 - Current rules require all small providers to meet criteria of federal contractors
 - This rule would allow all those small providers to meet the criteria similar to Medicaid and Medicare and bypass the rules applicable to federal contractors
 - Would allow for more options for our aging Veteran population
- Will be participating in Service Academy evening, sponsored by Congressmen Paulson, in Bloomington on 9/16
- Our Service Academy process is underway- already have a few applications

5th District Representative – Keith Ellison – Mike Siebenaler Not in attendance

6th District Representation – Michele Bachmann- Nicole Pelzer

- Academy Night will be on 9/16
 - At Ramsey Government center in Anoka

7th District Representative – Collin Peterson – Meg Louwagie

- Busy in community during August Recess
- City of Redwood Falls joined as a Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Cities
 - Will continue to support those efforts in Congress

8th District Representative – Rick Nolan- Rick Olseen

- Very busy during recess- Honorary Chair of Duluth Airshow
- At Solar Panel groundbreaking at Camp Ripley
- Congressman believes the President should come to Congress with everything that is going on in the world (like ISIS)
- Introducing a bill called Restoring Democracy Act
 - restoring 5 day work week for Congress
- Veterans Bill- will be helpful for our constituents in rural areas
- C130s: Interesting to learn they are so old
 - Interesting to see the funding to restore this workhorse of the Air National Guard

1st District Representative – Tim Walz –Shawn Schoesser

- Congratulating Jerry on his Veterans Voices Award
- From our Office, Dave Wenzel, has received the Veterans Voices for Veterans on the Rise
 - For his work with college students and Veterans, and advocacy in the community
- Condolences for Mark Madison and Julie Bailey
- Congressman was selected by MOAA for an award for his leadership(The Matrix Award)
- Selected as conferee on bipartisan issues on Senate bill and House bill (bill we are talking about today)
- Congressman introduced the Clayhunt for Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act
 - Helps prevent suicide by not recognizing Era or Age
 - Requires independent third party to evaluate DoD and Veterans affairs mental health programs
 - Looking at metrics to establish best practices
 - Forms strategic partnership with Reserves, National Guard, and Veterans Affairs at State level
 - Establish pilot programs for VA providers working in mental health areas
 - Will help supplement education for Veterans looking to study mental health professions

3. State Agencies and MN Veteran Assistance Organizations

MN Dept. of Veteran Affairs - Anna Long

- Record attendance at State Fair
- Bridge on Minneapolis Veterans home campus is closed during inspection process
 - Closed through October, more information available
- Gold Star family retreat coming up
 - 1st weekend of October
- Planning for Veterans Day
 - Tuesday, 11/11
 - Inver Grove Heights
 - Breakfast 8:30-9:30
 - Programs start at 10:00
- Partnering with Twin Cities Public Television on documentary about women Veterans
 - Looking to find a currently serving female Veterans to serve as host
 - More information coming
- New Hire: Eric Gromdall
 - Title: Special Advisor on Indian Veteran Homelessness

- MN looking to end Veteran homelessness by 2015
- Ensuring resources and places available to all Veterans
- Working closely with interagency coalition
- Open House farewell for Reggie- information coming soon

MN Military Affairs – COL Sandy Best- Yellow Ribbon - Annette Kyper

- Welcome to Lt. Colonel Joe Sharky
- Brigadier General Llyodalt has been promoted to Major General
- New Deputy Assistant Adjutant General for Air Side: Colon Dave Hamler
- General Nash, Don Kerr, and several leaders attended National Conference of State Legislators Summit
 - Army Compatible Use Buffer Initiative
 - Funding: want to use MN's model as a National Model
 - Spoke about MN's Yellow Ribbon program
- On 8/22, had a joint groundbreaking in Stillwater
- On 8/26 many made it out to the State Fair for Veteran Appreciation Day
- 8/27 was exciting day at Camp Ripley for the MN National Guard/ MN Power Ceremony
- Honorable Hammock , Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Army, came in to award the DoD Environmental Team award to Camp Ripley for sustainable efforts
- Discussed how privileged we are in MN to have a supportive Congressional delegation and their staff
- Talked about providing Red Units and the C130H, and the need to modernize those aircraft
 - Proud to report great synchronization throughout Reserve, Guard, and Active Duty
- Talked about our Cyber Response strategy
- Don Kerr will be leading a group of State legislators members staff at Camp Ripley tomorrow
 - 3rd part in a series to help education them about the National Guard
- On 9/13: a Departure Ceremony for Cottage Grove based 204th Medical Company
 - 43 soldiers Deploying to Egypt
- 9/15: Welcoming home 140 soldiers returning home from Afghanistan
 - 114th Transportation Company returning home
- National Guard Bureau has identified a budget shortfall
 - 101 million dollars shortfall
 - Not caused by state of MN, but all states will be affected
 - MN has 3 million dollar piece we need to shift and figure out how to handle
- Readiness Center Transformation Master Plan
 - Study on aging facilities in MN
 - 64 Armory locations in 63 communities
 - This information will be included in report that goes to Congress in December

- Looking at consolidations in communities
- Will be sharing will state stakeholders before sharing in December

Annette Kyper:

- Taking Beyond Yellow Ribbon program nationally
- 3 days in Alaska next week
- North Dakota visited us to learn how to bring this to their state, as well
- 2 more proclamations since we last met
 - Brings total up to 40
 - McGeoff Construction and SuperAmerica(Northern Tier Energy)
 - Red Wood Falls has been named a YR city
 - McCloud county has been named a YR county
 - Fulfills our goal of having a YR network for all of our Army/Air Base communities
 - New communities interested in joining the YRN
- St. Michael/Albertville has their YRN kickoff party next week
 - 9/18 at 6:30 p.m. at Albertville City Hall
 - Will train the community for 9-12 with information and support
- Saturday, 10/18, at 9 a.m. at Star Fire Events Center
 - Beginning process of forming YRN for Waseca county
- Just completed a refreshed list of all YRN point of contacts, will be sending to Ralph
- 212 cities, 25 counties, and 40 companies that have been proclaimed YR
 - About 94 networks from the cities and counties
- Please connect with your local YRN to help Veterans

MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kathy Vitalis

- Our stand downs have already been mentioned
 - Ended up seeing over 1,000 Veterans
 - Often asked “ Are they ALL homeless?”
 - About 30-40% were by definition homeless
 - The rest were having some sort of crisis, like an eviction notice, and needed help
 - Part of our homelessness prevention services
- Also had wonderful events in Virginia and Duluth
 - Congressman Nolan spoke in Duluth
 - In Virginia,
- Other Stand downs coming up
 - Bemidji is 9/24
 - Grand Rapids on 9/25

- Legal Clinics coming up
 - Minneapolis 9/9
 - St. Cloud 9/23
- Annual Fundraising Dinner is soon
 - Tickets are \$50
 - Friday, 9/19
 - Silent Auction
 - Begins at 6, Dinner at 7
 - At Landmark Events Center
 - 11501 Masonic Home Drive, Bloomington
 - All info on Website
 - Doran Hocker one of two Veterans chosen by the FLOTUS as one of the stories to share when she announced the mayoral campaign to end homelessness
 - He will be speaker at Dinner, sharing his tale of homelessness
- Chris Hinton, is also a Veterans Voice award winner
- Alex Schuler is also a Veterans Voice award winner
- Jimmy Collier was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the St. Paul Area Coalition for the Homelessness
- Will be having a premiere to view the Twin Cities public television documentary showcasing the stories of 3 veterans overcoming homelessness
- Story about Virginia stand down: was asked “why are you standing on a stove?” when told she was standing on the Iron Range on a conference call

Military Action Group (MAG) – Jerry Kyser

- Putting together for ideas going forward to next year
- MAG is an opportunity for organizations to put forward proposals to legislators
- Next meeting with me 11/25, after the election
- Trying to get more businesses certified as Veteran Owned Businesses(VOB) without going through Federal certification
- Want more VOB working on the Vikings Stadium
- Department of Veteran Affairs is working on a process where they can help verify who is a VOB
 - Women and minorities have a process through which they can get verified, the military needs one too
 - Hopefully, we can then get some money from the state to fund this process
- 9/11 and 11/11 are important dates before then
- Flyers up here: for the 21st at 2.p.m listening to retired Lt. Commander Bill Carl about being a POW
- Applications for Women’s Veterans program here(if you want it electronically, we can send it to you)

4. Announcements –

- About 3 weeks ago, a Veteran asked if there were any golf courses willing to donate a bucket of balls to a Veterans returning home and having difficulty readjusting to civilian life
 - Went to golf course in Fridley, they said absolutely! The golf pro even offered a free lesson.
 - Said to contact them to set it up
- Jim Fisher, new president of VBA State Council, our office will be closed for a while to help say goodbye to Julie Bailey, a longtime employee.
- Dan Murphy, with the Air Force Association, our month chapter meeting will be held at Rail Station this month (meetings are the second Tuesday of every month)
- On Saturday night, we have our Commemorative Air Force fall party. \$15 for tickets. Roseville Orchestra, B25 jets, a lot of fun!
 - cafmn.org
- MN Women Veterans giving thanks to and applauding Jerry Kyser for winning award
 - Going to D.C. to fight for an Equal Rights Amendment to protect women Veterans

5. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes

- Beginning balance was \$4,846.25
 - 0 deposits
 - \$355.14 worth of expenses
 - \$4,471.11 as of 9/1
 - Motion made and accepted
- Old Business: None
- New Business:
- The 25th is next MAG meeting: anything to bring up?
 - No vote taken at MAG
 - Talked retiree pension, business tax credit for hiring Veterans at last meeting
 - Tax credit was pushed out to 8 years for widows, want it to be permanent until status change
- Younger generation is not coming back to MN
- Nothing that had anything to do with money for Veterans was passed this year
- Need people at meetings!
- Pro-bono lawyer can change our classification so we can say we lobby instead of advise

UVLC Treasurer's Report as of 1 September, 2014

Balance as of 1 Aug 2014: \$4,826.25

Deposits for Aug, 2014: \$0.00

Expenses for Aug, 2014:

Supplies (printer cartridge): \$10.70

Parking Expense: \$37.19

Printing Expense: \$187.25

Transcription Expense: \$120.00

(Total of \$355.14)

Balance as of 1 Sept, 2014

Submitted by Donald Rask, Treasurer UVLC

Next meeting 1 October, 2014