

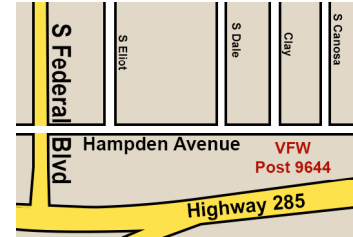


**UNITED VETERANS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**9 May, 2017
GENERAL MEETING
09:00**

UNITEDVETERANSCOMMITTEE.COM

Meetings at VFW Post 9644
2680 W Hampden Ave
Englewood, CO 80110-1906
303-789-9733



1. Call to order – United Veterans Committee – 1st Vice President — Jim Craig
2. Invocation and Moment of Silence for Pow's and Mia's — Phil Andreski
3. Pledge of Allegiance – 2nd Vice President — Dennis Orr
4. Welcome – first-time attendees and visitors —Natalie Tabor and Terry Hughes
5. Guest Speakers

Renaye Murphy, Regional VA Office Director — Information on 9/11, GI Bill, VA Montages, appeals information.

The key message is that VBA (Veterans' Benefits Administration) is accelerating, streamlining, and improving its claims process. Average days to complete a claim for 2017 is 118 days, a 6-day reduction from April 2016. The average number of days a claim awaited first development action has dropped from 25 days in January 2016 to 10.5 days in April 2017. Amount of tim claims awaited a rating decision has dropped from 29 days in January 2016 to less than 7 days in April 2017.

National Call Centers (NCC) — The average call wait time is 25 seconds with 100 percent of the calls getting through. Reduced the blocked call rate from 59 percent in 2015 to zero percent as of April 2017.

A direct upload for VSOs was launched on September 26, 2016, allowing VSOs the ability to directly upload veteran evidence online as opposed to mail or fax.

WARTAC program is on track to train 400 students during 2017 and then, hire them as claims people.

Renaye addressed home mortgage rates and avoiding foreclosures. If vets can be found who are experiencing trouble with their mortgages then, foreclosure can be avoided.

Chapter 18 benefits are benefits payable to children with Vietnam statics — children with spina bifida. Benefits are granted to mothers and fathers who had qualifying conditions from serving in Vietnam or the Demilitarized Zone. Some VSO's and advocates

are seeing claims for grandchildren — not considered proper claimant but, they are being tracked.

For further information the Website is: va.gov/benefits. Renaye's telephone number is 303-914-5800 or, Chris Hally can also help.

6. Sallie Houser-Hanfelder — UVC went before Congress. The last finding will be July, 2015. The PTSD building and the Community Living Center were, initially, taken out but the PTSD Center was put back in. However, the Community Living Center will be shut down. They have partnered with the state veteran homes and community for places where vets can go. The information on Facebook and other social medial sources regarding the closures is erroneous. The Choice Program is being revamped and, hopefully, VA will take back the scheduling.
7. Roll Call and report— Membership Chair Gary Force
8. Secretary Report — Lori Derby — Minutes from April meeting were given to those members in attendance. They were approved and will be posted after the May meeting.
9. Treasurer Report — Bernie Rogoff — all expenses for the Banquet have been paid and over \$25,000 is in the UVC treasury.
10. Nominating Committee Chairman — Steve Rylant — nomination of officers will be held at the General Meeting in June. Election and induction of 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents.

UVC COMMITTEE REPORTS

11. State Legislative Committee — Dick Young — Three Bills are pending, two will pass. Income tax deduction is up for grabs. Two Bills were proposed and defeated.

Long Bill — Money for maintenance of cemetery at Long Lake. All 15 of Senate/House resolutions were passed. The future: What we do has to go on all year long. Need to expand membership throughout State, not just Denver. Also need more participation. The House and Senate need people who know these reps.

Bill being passed for vets to get credit for military education in private sector. Need more input from veterans, veteran organizations and young vets for what they need. Bill 1004 (college credit) passed Congress during the meeting.

12. Federal Legislative — Steve Ryland — No report
13. UVC Banquet — Karen Hone — No report — Next banquet will be held on April 8th, 2018.
14. Membership report — Gary Force — Need to report

15. Area reps — Shelly — Military Appreciation will be on August 26, 2017 at the Rockies Game.
16. UVC Foundation — Steve Rylant — No report
17. Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs — Robby — Meeting on Friday, April 14 in Durango.
18. Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs — No report
19. **VSOs, ASSOCIATES AND AFFILIATES**
 - a. Colorado Fallen Heroes Memorial Fund — Rebecca Rippetoe Kim, Chair — The CFHM was created by Colorado’s legislators to erect a Memorial to honor Colorado’s KIA from World War II to present day. The Memorial will be located on the grounds of the Colorado Veterans Monument across from the State Capitol. Currently raising funds for the Memorial. Visit Facebook or www.coloradofallenheroesmemorial.org for more information.
 - b. Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs — William Robinson — Veterans Trust Fund and Veterans Assistance Grants should be announced this week. Next Board meeting in Durango, CO, May 12, 2017.
 - c. Homes for our Troops — Hank Galbreath — Homes for our Troops builds homes and donates the specially adapted homes to severely disabled, Post 9/11 veterans. To date, 231 homes have been built, nationwide, with 17 homes in Colorado.
20. State Veterans CLC Administration — Aaron Termain — No report
21. State Veterans CLC Commission — Karen Kowalski — Vice Chair — Meeting in Rifle June 5 and 6, 2017.
22. **SENATE AND CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS**
 - a. Rep. Mike Coffman — Constituent Advocate — Bert Potwin —
 - i. Naming of new medical center on track.
 - ii. U.S Service Academy nomination season is here. Please contact your Congressman’s office for help with this process. Information available on all CO U.S Rep and U.S Senator Websites.
 - b. Rep. Jared Polis — District Advocate — Stuart Feinhor —
 - i. This month four cadets are graduating from West Point, five from USAFA and three from USNA.
 - ii. Recently, Rep. Polis computer-sponsored HR 846 — Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act. Funds will help widows and surviving spouses who are eligible for Bill to receive their fair share.
 - iii. HR 748 — GI Bill STEM Extension Act — This will give students an extra nine months of benefits if they are in a STEM field.

iv. HR 1844 — Veterans' Access to Community Care — Will require the Secretary to implement Choice Act in a smoother way.

v. Helped a veteran get monthly benefits and a \$38K retro payment. Attending kickoff from "We Work" for veterans, which partners with Patriot Boot Camp to help vets move their careers forward.

c. Sen. Michael Bennet — Constituent Advocate — Alisha Andrews —

i. Bennet introduced a Bill to expand current fertility treatment and counseling for service members and veterans with service-connected injuries.

ii. Bennet joined a bipartisan group of members to introduce legislation in both the Senate and the House to expand caregiver programs that support people who are for wounded, ill, or injured veterans. Services Improvement Act would open program to veterans of all generations, making resources available to numerous caregivers. Vets of all eras would be eligible.

iv. In late April, Bennet and Senator Gardner introduced a Bill to rename Denver Stockyards Station Post Office after WWII veteran and Medal of Honor recipient George Sakato.

c. Sen. Cory Gardner — Regional Director — Andrew Durkley

i. An update re Korea was read to the members. An offer was made for high school kids to apply for Academy appointments.

23. VISN 19, VA Regional Office, VA Cemetery, ECHCH — Joe Turnbach — Director, Ft. Logan National Cemetery — 325 interments in April; 125 caskets, 200 cremation. May 29, 11 a.m. Memorial Day Ceremony. Channel 31 Fox News — airing an in-depth show about Ft. Logan. All projects are moving along well.

24. Old Business — No old Business — A thank you was extended to the Department of Colorado Marine Corps League for a \$100 donation.

25. New Business

26. UVC President's Comments and Announcements

27. Benediction — UVC 2nd Vice President — Dennis Orr

28. Adjourn — Next meeting date — June 13, 2017