

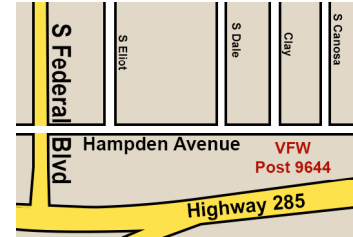


UNITED VETERANS COMMITTEE
MINUTES

13 June, 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 –President — Frank McCurdy
2. Invocation and Moment of Silence for Pow's and Mia's — Jim Craig
3. Pledge of Allegiance – 2nd Vice President — Dennis Orr
4. Welcome – first-time attendees and visitors
5. Guest Speakers

Celeste Davis Stragand, Regional TDM Program & Marketing Manager —
Shannon Newell & Jenna Williams — Project Coordinator (VAMC) and Project Executive
(CFM) — Joe Plant, Treasurer and Chaplain, Viet Nam Veterans 1106

Celeste Davis Stragand — Spoke about Bike to Work Day. Members were urged to avoid traffic and ride a bike to work. Bike to work day is Wednesday, June 28 and registration is free at 222.biketoworkday.us. There will be over 250 breakfast stations around the Denver Metro area.

Shannon Newell & Jenna Williams — Both gave an overview of construction status of the Replacement Medical Campus (932 complete) — the status of PTSD residential project and CLC — and an update on VAMC activation priorities. Information was also given on parking changes. Park in visitor parking in the north lot, south of 17th Place. A shuttle will be available.

Joe Plant — Joe spoke about fixing the VA — Drop the Choice Program — Hire more medical staff — shorten the hiring process — equalize pay to attract quality staff.

6. Roll Call and report— Membership Chair Gary Force
7. Secretary Report — Lori Derby — Minutes from May were posted and approved.
8. Treasurer Report — Bernie Rogoff — all expenses for the Banquet have been paid and over \$22000 is in the UVC treasury. Marine Corps League donated \$100.00 and American G.I. Forum also donated \$100.
9. Nominating Committee Chairman — Steve Rylant — Officers were proposed by the Executive Committee.

10. Nomination and installation of officers: Steve Rylant officiated as new officers were sworn in. They are: President – Jim Craig ; 1st VP – Dennis O.R.; 2nd VP – Leighann Wheeler. Phil Andreski had been proposed but declined the nomination of 2nd VP.
11. Bill Hanna gave his retirement/resignation speech to membership.

UVC COMMITTEE REPORTS

12. State Legislative Committee — Dick Young, David Ortiz — David spoke about a number of Bills and their status.
13. UVC Banquet — Karen Hone — Will be working on the 2018 banquet later in the summer — Next banquet will be held on April 8th, 2018.
14. Membership report — Gary Force
15. Student Veteran Committee — Izzy Abbass — Spoke about changes to G.I. Bill and mentioned a correspondence course students can take and send back. Work is continuing on changes for more modernization.
16. Area reps — Shelly, Phil, Lou, Tim — No report
17. Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs — Robby Robinson — There are issues at the Rifle facility and nurses are needed.
18. Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs — Ben Mestas — One-stop-shop in Grand Junction where all benefits will be available at one location. Funds are available for construction of new facility because of UVC. There has been an increase in funds for county service veteran officers. A USS Colorado grant is being applied for.

19. VSOs, ASSOCIATES AND AFFILIATES

- a. Paula Sarlis — Urged members to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Marine Corps Memorial on August 26, 2017. This is the only U.S. Marine Corporation memorial west of the Mississippi, located in Golden, Colorado at 6th Ave. and Colfax.
 - b. Joe Davalus — Commander American G.I. Forum, Mile High Chapter — Spoke on issues of deported veterans — they are honorably discharged. He wrote to both senators and asked for introduction of Bill in Senate. For more information, go to deportedveteranssupporthouse.org.
20. State Veterans CLC Administration — Aaron Termain — There is partnering in the Clermont Facility which is working out well to bring vets into the home. Mentioned that CNA wages are so low no one is applying for jobs with the VA. Pay is regulated by the State.

21. State Veterans CLC Commission — Cheryl — Commission met in Rifle in early June. The Commission doesn't meet in the summer but in September a survey will be taken in Walsenberg and Home Lake.

22. SENATE AND CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS

a. Rep. Jared Polis — District Advocate — Stuart Feinhor —

i. HR974, Brave Act, passed the House. This authorizes VA to give procurement preferences to contractors that employ vets.

ii. HR1367 — Helps keep the best VA workforce. HR2288 Passed the House. Improves and modernizes the entire VA appeals process.

iii. HR467, passed. Requires medical facilities to provide certification of compliance with scheduling policies. Polis is an original cosponsor of a Bill reauthorizing the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans for two more years. He congratulated the new UVC officers and thanked Frank McCurdy for his inspiring service to UVC.

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

i. Bennet completed three more town halls last Friday in Edwards, Glenwood Springs and Frisco (13th town hall this year.)

ii. Last week the Senate, With Bennet's support, passed the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protections Act. This Bill will increase accountability within the VA, improve VA leadership and protect whistleblowers.

iii. In early June Bennet visited the Joe Will VFW Post 6612 in Hugo, Colorado and held an impromptu town hall. The visit was to originally recognize Joe Will, the first Lincoln County resident killed during WW II. Bennet was able to assist in optining a piece of the USS Arizona which was the ship Joe was on when it was destroyed during Pearl Harbor. This serves as a memorial to Joe and his family and will be housed at the Post.

d. Sen. Cory Gardner — Representative — Tim Cullen

i. Gave a military and VA update

e. Congresswoman Diana DeGette — Congressional Aide — Matthew Mengesha —

i. DeGette's third annual Senior Resource Fair will be held on June 19, 2017 from 11a.m. to 12:30-p.m. at the Scheitler Recreation Center, 5031 W. 46th ave, Denver Co, 80212.

23. VISN 19, VA Regional Office, VA Cemetery, ECHCH — Joe Turnbach — Director, Ft. Logan National Cemetery — 731 interments in May; 125 caskets, 246 cremation. June 23rd a service for unclaimed veterans will be held. Thanked UVC for assistance in purchasing state land.

a. Steven Best — Joe Turnbach represented Steven Best — Gave a follow-up on House Bill 17-1346, which addresses the sale of up to 66 acres of land to extend the life of Ft. Logan

National Cemetery. Purchase of a tract of land for a new Denver area cemetery once Ft. Logan closes to first interments (needed in approximately 60 years, upon completion of the sale of State land.)

24. Old Business — Ralph Bozella congratulated and recognized Frank McCurdy for a great job and relationship with the VA and for representing the VA through UVC.

25. New Business — None

26. UVC President's Comments and Announcements

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

28. Adjourn — Next meeting date — September 12, 2017