



## UNITED VETERANS COMMITTEE MINUTES

**09 JANUARY, 2018  
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 — Jim Craig
2. Invocation and Moment of Silence for Pow's and Mia's — 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Dennis Orr
3. Pledge of Allegiance – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President — Leanne Wheeler
4. Welcome – seven first-time attendees and visitors
5. Guest Speakers — **Phil Nelson**; Group Leader, Citizens Climate Lobby, Golden Chapter Phil's group wants to schedule presentations to veterans' groups on the problems arising from a warming planet. They will discuss their proposed "Fee-and-dividend" solution.

**Tom Hoffman**; Consultant and Supporter for Citizen's Climate Lobby (CCL) — Introduced the idea that "Climate change is a national security challenge." Tom's group has speakers who can address the issue with the veterans' groups represented by UVC.

**Leanne Wheeler** — Leanne is working on student Veteran debt, fair credit and what's happening with the GI bill. She is looking at checking-cashing places. There is a bill that David Ortiz and Bill Hanna worked on last session to cap interest rates at 36% for check-cashing fees while living on combat pay.

UVC's new interim CFO will be Ignacio Garza. He will chair a program development committee and will be reaching out to private sector nonprofits to secure a quarterly fundraising goal. Ignacio has agreed to work with UVC's Facebook page.

UVC's next steps will be to tighten up its financial position, be it process or cashflow. A business plan will be created, similar to that which Leanne spoke about previously.

6. Roll Call and report— Membership Chair Gary Force — There were three new membership applicants and one will one voted on at the February meeting.
7. Secretary Report — Lori Derby — Minutes from the December meeting were posted on the UVC website, and they were accepted.

8. Treasurer Report — Bernie Rogoff — After all expenses the UVC budget balance is \$13,166.00. Bernie thanked Dick Young for donating tickets to the banquet.

Bernie mentioned the *New York Times* "Rage" article which he responded to. He asked everyone to defend the VA.

Tru Value is looking for vets who are seeking employment. If anyone knows of someone they should contact Bernie.

### **UVC COMMITTEE REPORTS**

9. State Legislative Committee

**Dick Young** — There are not very many bills before session this time. There is a bill asking for relief of \$20,000 for vets who are retiring in the state. However, the person in charge of the committee wouldn't bring it up so it could not be voted on. He noted that this will be a tense election year but, that UVC is a non-partisan group so members and the Board should not wear pins or hats that denote Republican or Democrat.

Veterans' Appreciation Day is January 26. The celebration will start at 8:45 in the East Wing after which, everyone will go into the house gallery at 9a.m. to praise and thank vets. This is a big event for vets and he asked that all members attend.

**Aaron Termain** — Has resolved the issue concerning increased pay for nurses at the veteran living centers.

**Steve Rylant** — Reported on Federal legislation. At the last general meeting, general and specific goals were adopted for UVC and its support of Choice.

There was a meeting at the VA Hospital to explain UVC and its veteran roll. There will be a meeting on January 12 in Castle Rock, 100 3<sup>rd</sup> St, 3p.m..

10. UVC Banquet — Lori Derby (Karen Hone away) — Gave a personal registration form to everyone in attendance and explained the two different registration forms to membership.

Leanne Wheeler — Reiterated that this banquet will be a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for Vietnam veterans. Urged VSOs to sponsor a table in the name of a MIA or POW or, to sponsor individual tickets for family members of a Vietnam vet. Wheeler Advisory Group will be sponsoring a table at the silver level. We should be able to raise \$50,000 from the banquet. Everyone who buys a banquet ticket will have a free tour of the new VA Center.

11. Membership report — Gary Force — One new applicant will be voted on at the February meeting.

12. Area reps — Shelly, Phil, Lou, Tim — Phil reported that there is a PDF on the UVC website where everyone can add goals that are important to particular audiences.
13. Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs — Robbie Robinson — No report.
14. Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs — Ben Mestas — He will be conducting the next meeting in Pueblo at CSO on Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup>. The deadline for grant applications is March 1<sup>st</sup>. Training for the veteran service centers will be held starting April 10 or the 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **VSOs, ASSOCIATES AND AFFILIATES**

15. VFW — Ed Atkin — House Bill 4457 will change everything if passed. The bill will dismantle the healthcare system as it is known, today, and vets will have a co-pay. There is a movement for Veterans of Foreign Wars to eliminate the bill. A copy of the bill can be found at [VFWCO.org](http://VFWCO.org). According to Atkin, Lamborn from Congressional District 5 is sponsoring the bill.

Blue Water Navy — Agent Orange Bill is still active. More information to be given in February.

doTERRA International — Karen Whitman (affiliate/Castlerock) — told membership about doTERRA essential oils and supplements, as well as, yoga and chiropractic that can be used to treat PTSD and pain. She can be reached at 720-202-1185. Other wellness advocates are Erin Olson (Broomfield) — 720-880-8305 or [epasse0824@gmail.com](mailto:epasse0824@gmail.com). Aleatha Hughes (Aurora) — 469-781-5353 or [aleathamarie@gmail.com](mailto:aleathamarie@gmail.com).

Voices for Veterans – Mental Health — Warren Harrison — Rocky Mountain Arthritis Association would like a veteran team for the fundraising walk at Washington Park on May 20, 2018

Task Force:ISO ([taskforceiso.org](http://taskforceiso.org)) — Joshua Kuehl, President — They provide photography for events that show the resilience of veterans. The 8-week lux sanitatem course begins on January 20 in Denver. Encouraged all interested vets to apply. Email [josh.k@taskforceiso.org](mailto:josh.k@taskforceiso.org) for an application.

### **16. GOVERNOR AND CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS**

- a. Sen. Michael Bennet — Constituent Advocate, John Griego
  - i. Senator Bennet worked to include a bipartisan measure within the 2018 National Defense Authorization act to recognize the National Museum of World War II Aviation as national caliber for its over 30,000 artifacts and flyable aircraft, including a fully restored P-38.
- b. Sen. Cory Gardner — Staff Assistant, Tim Cullen
  - i. Connected Government Act.
  - ii. Support for improved Access and Care Act plus Blue Water Navy Veterans Act.

- c. Rep. Jared Polis — Senior Constituent Advocate, Stuart Feinhor
  - i. Completed our service academy nominations for 42 candidates. Nominated 20 to USAFA, 10 each to USNA and USMA, 5 to USMMERA. So far, 3 have received offers of appointment.
  - ii. Jared met with directors of MD5 at CU, Lloyd Thrall. This is a joint program with technology, DOD and private business, esp cyber security. This is the only MD5 in Colorado and they set up vets in their careers.
  - iii. Polis continues to appreciate the Secretary's efforts to improve systems that affect vets, including Choice and casework processes.
  - iv. Last year they closed over 100 veteran-related cases, mostly favorable.
  - v. The VA seeks public comment on improving assistance for caregivers.  
Caregiver.va.gov.

d. Rep. Mike Coffman —Constituent Advocate, Burt Potwin — Coffman visited troops in Afghanistan over Christmas vacation. Also visited U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, Kuwait and Embassy staff in Jordan.

- i. U.S. Academy nomination update: 7 appointment offers.
- ii. Coffman visited troops in South Korea and Japan over Thanksgiving.
- iii. Coffman —Constituent Advocate, Burt Potwin — Coffman visited troops in

e. Rep. Lamborn —Senior Veteran Liaison, Jim Tackett — Refuted Ed Atkin's statement and will be reporting more on H.B. 4457 in February.

- i. U.S. Academy nomination update: 7 appointment offers.
- ii. Coffman visited troops in South Korea and Japan over Thanksgiving.
- iii. Coffman —Constituent Advocate, Burt Potwin — Coffman visited troops in

17. State Veterans CLC Administration — Aaron Termain

18. State Veterans CLC Commission — No report

19. **VISN 19, VA Regional Office, VA Cemetery, ECHCH — VISN**

VA Regional Office, Renaye Murphy, Director — The Decision Ready Claim (DRC) Program is the fastest way to get claims processed. DRC CLAIMS now include: Direct Service Connection, Presumptive Service Connection, Secondary Service Connection, Increased Disability Claims, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and Pre-Discharge. A DRC fact sheet was available, at the meeting, for every member.

VA – ECHCS — Khristie Barker, Public Affairs Community Outreach — Information sheets were available to membership, regarding the VA Medical Center room service and special diet considerations. For anyone having questions or concerns they were asked to email Denver VA at [VHAECHCommunications@va.gov](mailto:VHAECHCommunications@va.gov).

Executive Director, NCA Continental District – Steve Best – Ft. Logan December internments, 323 internments – 146 caskets, 177 cremations. Steve updated the status of load acquisition at Ft. Logan National Cemetery. Announced that Mat Williams was selected as the new Director of Ft. Logan National Cemetery; Paul LaGrange will be Assistant Cemetery Director. Mat replaces Joe Turnbach. Randy Reeves will be the VA's new Under Secretary of Memorial Affairs;

21. Old Business – No old Business.
22. New Business – No new business.
23. UVC President's Comments and Announcements – Review legislative and federal goals and don't forget the Banquet.
24. Benediction – UVC 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Leanne Wheeler
25. Adjourn – Next general meeting date – February 13, 2018