



STATE OF WASHINGTON

VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PO BOX 41150 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1150 • 1-800-562-2308

**Meeting Minutes
June 5, 2008
Best Western Conference Center
Ellensburg, Washington**

PRESENT:

Phil Ruhmshottel, Vice Chair & Marine Corps League
Bill Nickerson, Washington Veterans' Home
Rupert Markham, Washington Soldiers' Home
Gary Pearson, PVA
Dennis Primoli, At Large
Gary Yeager, MOPH
Deryl McCarty, MOAA
Lloyd Burroughs, NABVets
COL Mary Forbes, At Large
Michele Colpaert, DAV
Bill Schrier, American Legion
Frank Cordero, Advisor
Dan Gogerty, Advisor
George Edmundson, Advisor
First Gentleman, Mike Gregoire
John Lee, WDVA Director
April Harris, WDVA Executive Assistant

EXCUSED:

Oria Berndt, Advisor
Dick Kirk, Advisor
Dick Whipple, Chair & VFW
Dr. Les Burger, Advisor
Roy Compton, AX-POWs

Call to Order

Vice Chairman, Phil Ruhmshottel called the meeting to order. Lloyd Burroughs offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. April Harris called the roll.

The community members present were asked to introduce themselves.

Minutes

A motion was made by Bill Schrier to accept the minutes from the last meeting as written. A second to the motion was made by Gary Pearson and the motion was passed unanimously.

Farewell to Rupert

Rupert Markham has submitted his resignation from the committee. He was honored by Phil Ruhmshottel and First Gentleman, Mike Gregoire, for his contributions and given a plaque to commemorate his service to the VAAC. He thanked the VAAC for the award and said he would miss everyone.

81st Heavy Combat Brigade

Tom Riggs from the National Guard presented a plan to have pre-deployment events all around the state on August 17th for those who will deploy to Iraq in September. This will be their second tour in Iraq. A table was distributed with cities and points of contact for the events. He asked that the Veterans Service Organizations commit to assist with as many as possible. This will include advertising the event, inviting elected officials and participating. This will not be a benefits fair where claims will be taken.

These events are to honor them for their service and make it an enjoyable day for them and their families. Tom is the POC for the events and can be reached at TomRiggs.Riggs@us.army.mil

First Mike

First Mike has been busy attending events all around the state and in Washington D.C. He met with Secretary Peake at Walla Walla, participated in the homeless count, attended the WDVA town hall meetings and has met with the oldest living Washington State veteran, John Babcock of Spokane, and participated in an event to present two portraits done by Michael Reagan to soldiers' family members, to name just a few of the activities the last few months.

He was also recognized in the Washington Post for attending the funerals of Washington State's fallen soldiers.

Emblem Fund

Dennis Primoli reported on the grants awarded for veteran memorial projects this year. They totaled \$30,253.08. Two of the requests were not funded because additional information was needed. The committee voted to grant funds to these memorials, for an additional \$4,000, when the additional information was received. The next RFP will be issued in the fall of 2009.

Tahoma High School Performing Arts Center

John passed around some drawings of the new performing arts center being built at Tahoma High School next to the cemetery. The committee, headed by Mike Maryanski, would like the VAAC to recommend prominent veterans to be honored in this facility. A sub-committee consisting of Phil Ruhmshottel, Gary Pearson and Dan Gogerty was created to bring a list back to the full committee for consideration and then forwarding to Mr. Maryanski. He will be doing a full presentation at the next meeting.

Good of the Order

Rafael: Please ensure women and minority veterans are mentioned in the Strategic Plan. The Ft. Nunez event hosted by the Native American Makah Tribe was wonderful. The Filipino independence ceremony is at the Seattle Center.

Rupert: Thank you to the committee for the plaque and the opportunity to be on the committee.

Dennis: Focus on TBI and PTSD for the new returnees and make sure the families have support.

Bill Schrier: Thanks to the department for attending the meeting.

Bill Nickerson: He will miss Rupert. They worked together at Retsil and he learned a lot from him. Good health to him the rest of his life.

Gary Yeager: Very interested in scholarships and jobs for veterans.

Gary Pearson: Thanks for coming to the meeting. He appreciates First Mike's attendance and time spent with veterans

Mary: The 81st brigade and aviation units will be having 30, 60 and 90 day events for post-active duty. They are adding staff at Camp Murray to meet the needs. Military Source One will help and provide a complete outreach program to include life consultants for families.

Second Life, a virtual meeting program is exciting and worth viewing a demonstration.

The Veterans Family Fund of America is a six-month certificate of deposit where one half of the interest goes to help veterans and their families and is tax deductible. On June 10th there will be an event in Lynnwood, put on by Mike Schindler who wrote a book about military families.

Frank:

Indian country healthcare facilities are providing space for compensation and pension claims filing. Michele Colpaert helped make it happen. Currently there is an eight to twelve month delay for dental appointments. Dr. Burger also assisted by contacting the Washington Dental Association to hopefully get some other dentists to help.

VISN 20 sponsors TVR training and WDVA does also.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dave Garcia said the Ken Burns series about the war does not have any women, no Native Americans, no Hispanics and no Merchant Marines.

Glad to see we're focusing on returnees. They need to send family members to where the injured soldiers are and support them while they are there. Provide ramps, etc.

when they return home. It is good to see different groups working together and the communication.

Bob Wallace said the VAAC is a gem to the state of Washington. Thanks for inviting us today.

Eva Wallace stated the auxiliaries are working on Operation Military Kids with Madigan and Mary Bridge hospitals. Layettes have been provided to 250 family members and the program is expanding to WTB. Thanks to WDVA for the service officer training.

Larry Watson, American Legion State Commander, thanked John Lee, Mike Gregoire and Bill Schrier for their service to veterans.

Chaplain Jeffrey said there was a retreat, at Madigan, for wives whose husbands are deployed to Iraq which is very helpful.

There is a WDVA town hall in Spokane on June 12th at 500 S. Stone St. with 11:30 lunch for community representatives.

Meeting adjourned by Vice-Chair, Phil Ruhmshottel.