

United Veterans Council
“2007 Veterans Organization of the Year”
An Ad-Hoc Alliance of Veterans Service Organizations in San Diego County
“The Voice of the Veterans Community in San Diego”
www.SDUV.org

Veterans Museum and Memorial Center
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Summary of Meeting

Saturday, February 23, 2008

The Chairman: Tom Richards (Lt. Col. USMC USN, Ret.) called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was taken and Will Hays offered the invocation. All council members were present and over 40 members of the Council and guests. Tom has been appointed by the Governor of California to the California Veterans Board.

Appropriate introductions were conducted.

The Chairman introduced Wade Sanders the Senior Advisor to the California Lt. Governor Garamendi. He assured the SDUV that he and his office are working diligently to provide excellent care for our CA veterans.

Guest Speaker: Bob Bolger, USN (Ret.), spoke for 5 minutes about the Vietnam Memorial Monument, Coronado. He encouraged members and guests to visit the memorial and to take the boat tour. (If you need assistance getting on the base, please e-mail vummf@aol.com). – There will be a memorial service for a Chaplain killed in Vietnam tomorrow, Sunday, February 24 at the Amphibious Base Chapel. The website for the memorial is <http://www.vummf.org/> (Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument Foundation).

Chairman Tom Richards introduced David Toss, a former Navy SEAL and Corpsman. David is running for a SD city council seat in District 7. He spoke about his concern for proper and honorable burials for SD veterans. He said that 500-600 veterans a month pass away in San Diego each month. (The SDUV has no political affiliations and endorses no candidate.)

Minutes: Approval of the Minutes for this meeting and our last meeting will be taken at our next adjournment.

Treasurer's Report: Joe Brunner, Treasurer, reported that the SDUV has \$3,513.80 with \$100 in savings. – Bumper stickers for all branches of the military have been purchased for the SDUV and are now available. We have earned \$40 on bumper sticker sales. – An encouragement for continued donations was made.

Chairman Comments: 1) The SDUV chairman thanked Rep. Bob Filner for his continued diligence in promoting and protecting the welfare of U.S. veterans. 2) The Chairman brought to our attention an incident of a separated Marine Lance Corporal who was refused employment by the TSA because he was being treated for PTSD at the V.A. – Our chairman has spoken to several Congressional and state representatives about preventing this kind of employment discrimination. 3) The Chairman reminded attendees of the Veterans Job and Resource Fair at the SDUV on June 7. 4) A Mission and Vision meeting was held after the Feb. 23 meeting with the Communications Committee to improve the SDUV website and to make extensive upgrades.

1st Vice Chairman: Allen Miliefsky shared 1) The DD214 is available online at www.vetrecs.archives.gov. 2) As upgrades continue to be made to the SDUV website, pertinent forms and information for veterans will be added. 3) Allen encouraged members and guests to donate to the SDUV and to invite friends to attend our meetings.

2nd Vice Chairman: Betty Nimits informed us that February 22 was the anniversary of the flag being raised on Iwo Jima by 5 Marines and a Navy Corpsman in 1946.

Admiral Len Hering reported that the “Mighty” 1st District VFW renewed their membership with a check for \$250 and made an additional donation of \$100. – The Chairman congratulated the Admiral for his fundraising efforts.

Sr. Advisor to Lt. Governor Steve Garamendi informed us of AB 1809 which assists troops and their families with transferring of school and college units when they transfer from base to base.

A Tax Volunteer for the Veterans Home gave instructions for receiving the Economic Stimulus Package that starts in May.

Jack Hawkins, Information and Logistics Officer from MCAS Miramar informed us that there are no longer any environmental obstacles for completing the Veterans Cemetery Annex. He thanked us for our advocacy and concern; but, assured us that with Rep. Bob Filner's help, the cemetery annex has been approved.

Chief Hospital Corpsman Bautista, Navy Medical Center, San Diego who has just returned from Iraq informed us that he is now with the Patient Relations Department, (near the pharmacy), to assist all veterans with their needs. He passed out flyers from Rear Admiral Hunter for a town hall meeting to address Veteran issues.

A representative from the Marine 1st Division Association informed us that 1) The Ladies Auxiliary has “Welcome Home Heroes” medals available to give to troops returning from Iraq. Contact them if your organization needs medals to give out. 2) On March 8th at 2:30 a “Battle Colors Ceremony” will be held at Camp Pendleton. The Drum and Bugle and the Silent Drill teams will be performing. 3) On March 29th at 5 P.M. the Kiwanis Club will be holding a Mardi Gras fundraiser at the Lakeside Community Center to support community services. 4) On April 20 the cancer society relay will be held at Santee Lakes. Teams are invited to participate.

Beatrice Agate from the Parliamentarians of San Diego gave an invitation to attend a workshop in Pacific Beach on April 12, 8:30 A.M to Noon.

REPORTS

Eagles Wings – Chaplain Ron Witter informed us that his organization assist military widows and widowers with their grief and bereavement with licensed counselors. New sessions will be held at the SDUV in April, the first Sunday.

Senate Report – Leon Babcock, student aide for Rep. Denise Richards, informed us that HR 2702 is supported by both CA Senators and will be a “substantial improvement” over the current educational benefits offered through the GI Bill. – Senate Bill 2610 “Roll of Valor Act” will create a database of military honorees. (House version: HR 3769). – Chairman Richards interjected that there have been many frauds who have falsely claimed to be medal recipients. This bill would allow people to check such claims online.

Steve Arends reported that he is making frequent trips to Washington DC. He gave praise to Rep. Filner and Ricardo Flores (from Rep. Susan Davis’ office) for their work on bills that provide for needs of veterans. He elaborated on several bills, including 1) Senate bill 1814: A Veteran Recovery Plan that permits outsourcing to civilian outreaches” SB 2055: A combat stress support bill that provides crisis counseling; AB 1758: Increases college benefits for Coast Guard; SB 1222: A 6.6 million dollar bill for statewide CVSO funding; SB 601: Credentialing of ROTC instructors. (For a complete transcript of Steve’s report, please go to www.MilitaryTransitionNews.com.)

“Good Of the Order” Announcement:

Flyers and registration forms here for the upcoming 7th Annual Chula Vista Veterans Home Support Foundation’s Golf Classic. Eastlake Country Club in eastern Chula Vista. Monday, May 5th, 2008. Noon

shotgun start. 11:00 registration. Dinner & charity auction after round of golf. Need golfers, sponsors, donors, and items to be raffled off, or auctioned. POC is John Smith at the Veterans Home at (619) 205-1406

Cindy Butler, V.A. Medical Center announced a “Welcome Home” event the V.A. is sponsoring at the VA Medical Center, especially for returning Iraq & Afghanistan vets on Saturday, March 29th, 3350 La Jolla Village Dr., SD. – The retro-fitting of the hospital is almost completed. – Valet and front door parking is available for disabled vets. – Shingle shots for vets over 60 are available.

V.A. Regional Office, Assistant Director J. Smith informed us that her director is in Wash. D.C. The department is creating an electronic filing system. – They have leased an additional 29,000 square feet of office space and hired 100 new employees. – And she warned of investment scams that offer to exchange veteran benefits for a lump sum. – A “Veterans helping Veterans” wall is being constructed that highlights the military careers of veteran employees at the V.A.

Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery: Director confirmed that the Miramar Annex has been approved and will be completed.

CA Vet Home, Chula Vista: Ms. Burkman said that construction is taking place which is temporarily limiting maximum capacity. They are repairing showers and creating single space occupancy room. – They have a healthy budget and will be adding 40 additional positions.

Cal Vet Board: 1) They set policy for veteran Affairs 2) hear appeals from vets whose benefits were denied. 3) Advocate for CA vets. 4) PTSD: Recent suicides are just tip of iceberg.

One VA Committee: 1) The 2009 budget improves vet healthcare. 2) Building budget has been cut in half! Funds must be reinstated. 3) VA has new MRI machine that is 100% better and quieter. 4) Robo-surgery for prostate is coming soon.

San Diego Veterans Advisory Council: 1) Next meeting will be held on March 8, 9:30 A.M. at the CVSO office in downtown San Diego. 2) John Campbell is resigning due to health reasons. His position will be taken by Ted Bonano, Marine Captain.

County Veterans Service Report: John Smith 1) Forums are being held throughout the county to improve veterans’ health and mental care. 2) The “Veterans Home Golf Classic” will be held at the East Lake Country Club in Chula Vista on Monday, May 5. Sponsorships are available. Email john.smith@cdva.ca.gov

UVA: 1) New elections have been held. 2) Volunteers needed! Next meeting: 2nd Thursday 8 P.M. 3) Memorial Day Committee is welcome to become part of SDUV Association. 4) New Committee: Veterans Week Committee. (November 5-11 is “Veterans Week.”) Need more

members to plan and promote! 5) Participating organizations are encouraged to make a \$50 donation.

Mount Soledad: 1) Safety issues. Railings needed. 2) 75% of plaques are installed. 3) An honored plaque for Jerry will be erected on March 26 at 2 P.M. The keynote speaker will be General Mike Aguilar.

Midway Museum: Joe is having an anniversary with fellow combat reporters who served in Beirut 25 years ago. Several improvements have been made at the midway to make the tours more exciting. They are looking for sponsors to make more repairs.

XK San Diego: Needs more readers. www.xksandiego.com.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:10 A.M.

The next meeting of the United Veterans Council of San Diego will be held on _____ at 9:30 A.M. in the lower hall of the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, 2115 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101.

These Minutes were prepared by:

Mark Baird
Secretary, SDUV
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