



S.V.A.C.

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 8 JAN 2013

Location: NG Aviation Facility, Concord

In Attendance:

<u>Members:</u> Peter Burdett, Chairman, MOAA Bobby Broneske, Vice Chairman, CVMA Steph Riley, Secretary, NGANH Sen. Sharon Carson Sen. Sam Cataldo Rep. Robert Theberge Rep. Al Baldasaro Benjamin Saxon, DAV Greg Lynch, VFW Kenith Chase, MOPH Al Grant, VVA Raymond Goulet, Jr VVA David Kenney, ROA Joe DiChiaro, MOAA Ed Josephson, AFA Mark Willer, Rolling Thunder Joe Shea, MCL Ray Hayes, AFSA Frank Musmanno, NH Army Retiree Council Susan Cuddy, WVA Mary Morin, WVA Mike Farinola, CVMA Raymond Schwendeman, CVMA	<u>Advisors:</u> (non-voting) Peter Fortier, NHNG Mike Horne, NH Veterans' Cemetery Barry Conway, SAGE Emeritus <u>Guests:</u> Sarah Holmes, Special Assistant for Senator Shaheen Steve Monier, Special Assistant for Senator Ayotte Jackie Cilley, District Director for Rep Shea-Porter Joshua Denton, caseworker for Rep Shea-Porter Chuck Gilboy, Outreach Director for Rep. Shea-Porter Sean Downey, District Director for Rep. McLane-Kuster Michael Ollen, CSC for Rep McLane-Kuster Howie Howe, HOTH Henry Pratte, Veterans Museum of NH Michael Rice, NHNG Enlisted Association/ESGR Col Paul Loiselle, Director of Air Staff, NHNG Maj Gen William Reddel, NH TAG COL Kenneth Lull, NH ESGR Dan Marcek, VetFlix Robert Garand, Catholic War Veterans Russell Bilodeau, Catholic War Veterans Judy DeCarteret, Manchester VA Karen "K" McCarthy, WVA Cate Sementa, SSFV Harbor Homes Carol Furlong, Harbor Homes Catherine Crane, Gold Star Mother Susan Peterson, Blue Star Mother Karen Testerman, Blue star Mother
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1. Open Meeting/ Call to order: Chairman, Pete Burdett convened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

a. Pledge of Allegiance: P Burdett **Invocation:** J DiChiaro

b. Welcome/Remarks: We are in the midst of transition legislatively, getting things sorted out. Our Chair Emeritus, Griff, sends his regards as he can't make it here today.

c. Introduction of New Members/Guests/Visitors:

Kenith Chase- Military Order of the Purple Heart

Jackie Cilley- District Director of 1st Congressional District

Approved

Joshua Denton- Congressional caseworker for Rep Shea-Porter
Chuck Gilboy- Outreach Director for Rep Shea-Porter
Sean Downey- District Director for Rep McLane-Kuster
Michael Ollen- Constituent Service Coordinator for Rep McLane-Kuster
Sen Sam Cataldo from Framingham
Cate Sementa- Harbor Homes SSVF program manager (Supportive Services for Veteran Families)
Carol Furlong- VP Harbor Homes

d. Secretary's Report: S Riley reported the presence of a quorum, making it an official meeting. The minutes from the DEC 2012 were amended to remove John Pappas' name from attendance roster. The minutes were approved with a motion by G Lynch, and a 2nd by A Baldasaro, unanimous vote to accept minutes.

e. Speakers:

Cate Sementa, Harbor Homes- SSVF is part of an initiative to end homelessness by 2015. It is short term (0-90 days) case management and financial assistance for veterans facing a housing crisis and economic hardship. SSVF connects them to long term resources within the community: veterans' housing that Harbor Homes provides, mental health services if needed, the VA services that they qualify for, etc. The way the grant is arranged is to roughly spend 65% of the dollars and efforts on vets that are homeless or about to be homeless (within 2 weeks of that happening). HUD has gotten the message that it is important to get a person safely housed before the other issues can be addressed. Other issues take a back seat with folks if they are worried about their housing situation. Regarding eligibility requirements- can't serve all veterans, but the policy is to get a warm referral to a resource and if the vet does not connect, they would call back. The veteran gets to determine their household so it can include significant others, step children, etc. The economic hardship requirement is defined by HUD guidelines. The veteran has to have a military discharge status that anything other than "dishonorable". This also applies to folks serving in the Guard; they can be actively serving in the Guard and still receive the benefit if they are in some state of financial duress. They have to have served for at least 24 hours of a deployment on Presidential orders. There are some income based qualifications. There is no consideration to disqualify folks that have had chronic substance abuse, criminal records, and housing problems in the past, etc. It is all about getting them stable, permanent housing as soon as it can be provided. We serve the whole state of NH working in conjunction with the Family Resource Center in Gorham, who serves the North Country, with Easter Seals who serves the Manchester area, Harbor Homes who helps with case management and with Milford Regional Counseling to address the folks in the west and southern part of the state. All that has to happen is to call Cate Sementa and tell the veterans story and she will connect them with a caseworker. Want to do immediate action for housing situations, worst case scenario would be to put the vet up in a hotel until other arrangements could be made. There is a lot of flexibility in the financial support that can be given: child care expenses, car repairs, moving expenses, rent, utilities, etc.

Carol Furlong, Harbor Homes- We have over \$1 million to serve about 300 veterans. If you know of any veterans that are in danger of going homeless for any reason, have them call. Can also connect them to wrap around services to help their hardship situation, ex. legal aid to negotiate child support.

Maj Gen William Reddel, The Adjutant General- We walked away from the fiscal cliff, but sequestration is still there. There is another \$500 billion scheduled to come out of the DoD budget. We are still operating under a continuing resolution. No new projects can be started. Once the budget is signed, will need to execute it within probably 6 months. Will be challenging.

[Grant]-will the nomination of a new Secretary of Defense change anything?

[Reddel]-shouldn't change anything, will let the process run its course

Barry Conway- SAGE Emeritus- the new Veteran's Home acting director, Peggy LeBreque, should be at the next meeting. Thanked everyone who has been involved with the receptions, thanked everyone for their good will. Also appreciates being allowed to continue his participation on SVAC.

2. Old Business:

a. Legislative Committee- Ed Josephson: has sent out the LSR spreadsheet to everyone. So far no text has been released; no bill numbers have been submitted. There will probably be hearings before the next SVAC meeting so there won't be a committee position presented at those hearings. Will attend the hearings and testify if it is appropriate as to what we are planning on doing. Then at the 5 FEB meeting take a vote on the LSRs with texts and follow up with a letter to the appropriate committee explaining our position.

[Theberge]-there has been a delay in getting the bills delivered, were supposed to have 80 bills delivered this morning and only had 24. Do not have the text of the bills and just going by the title can be misleading. Some of the veteran's bills have been submitted by Rep. Baldasaro and he has the language for those.

[Carson]- from the Senate side, will start getting the bills at the end of the month and they will probably be acted upon. So doing a letter after the next SVAC meeting probably won't be worthwhile because the bill probably will have gone forward. The Senate and House calendars are on the state website, should follow that for the hearing dates

[Baldasaro]- can talk on the bills that he submitted and has text on:

HB 0069- is a housekeeping bill that permits the use of firing weapons at ceremonies, would be using blank ammunition. If you comply with the current law, you can't fire weapons at parades or ceremonies. Funerals are already covered under law. Bill doesn't say to notify schools prior to celebrations. Usually the schools are not in session when the ceremonies take place. This will cover ROTC at schools.

[Farinola]-include an amendment to include towns with parks that ban weapons firing

Motion was made by Rep Baldasaro to support the bill, seconded by A. Grant, unanimous vote for support.

HB 0119- Allowing towns and cities to grant a part year veterans credit during the year of acquisition of property. Currently you have to wait a year to claim the veteran property credit, want to be able to claim it immediately and have a pro-rated tax credit.

[Baldasaro]-there will be another bill that follows which says if a non-veteran buys a house from a veteran who has the tax credit, they should have to pay the full taxes for the rest of the year and not benefit from the veteran tax credit.

Motion was made by Rep Baldasaro to support this bill, seconded by A Grant, unanimous vote for support

HB 0177- bill was submitted by Rep John Graham. Per the National Guard this bill is a language fix to existing law, changed from "in the Line of Duty" to say "military service". In section 3 the NHNG wanted to add "are limited to" and in paragraph 7 added "TAG shall cause the name of the recipient of the NH Medal Honor to be entered on the NH Medal of Honor roll"

[Dichiario]- the language "military service" is too general, saying "in the Line of Duty" is more specific

[Carson]- with respect to Rep Baldasaro, this is counterproductive until we have the actual language or text to refer to. Would hate to commit to support something if everyone is not informed properly

[Josephson]-should table this process until we can email out the text to everyone so they can review it and discuss it properly before we vote on it

M Farinola made a motion to table the process until we have the full text of the bills, seconded by A Grant, unanimous vote to table the process

b. SB 0863 Honor and Remember Flag- Sen Carson: sponsored by Sen Forrester, she was not able to attend tonight. Last year this bill was introduced and proved to be a bit controversial. The House State Veterans Committee worked hard on this issue and it went to a Committee of Conference which was able to resolve the differences but unfortunately one of the senators did not sign off on the bill so nothing happened with it. It has been brought forward again this year. Susan Peterson, Catherine Crane and Karen Testerman are present to speak about the bill. Had attended last Sept to talk about the bill.

[Crane]-The flag is a symbol and way to Honor and Remember our fallen service members. The bill calls for flying the flag on 5 days throughout the year at the state house and the vet cemetery: Gold Star Mother's Day (the first Sunday after Easter), Memorial Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, and Veterans Day. November 11. It would not replace the American flag; it would fly under the NH state flag. It wouldn't go to funerals for presentation. It could also be used as an educational piece for children.

[Theberge]-For clarification, in the Committee of Conference, it was tacked on to a veteran plate bill. Had a good debate, brought up to Sen Barnes (who was for it) that the bill should include a protocol for the flag in the bill.

[Baldasaro]-Contacted the Federal Govt to see what they have done with their Honor and Remember Flag bill, they haven't moved on it. Propose that we wait to see what they do with it before we support it as a state. Would support flying the Gold Star Mothers flag because that is a federally recognized flag.

[Farinola]-SVAC didn't support last year's bill and the CVMA would not support an Honor and Remember Flag bill this year. The American flag is the only one we want recognized.

[Peterson]-14 states have already adopted the flag, 7 states have endorsed it. Pennsylvania and West VA fly it continuously.

[Morin]-Sen Barnes had dropped the number of days to 3 in last year's bill and it would only fly over the state house.

[Peterson]-this year's bill asks for the original 5 days and for it to be flown over the State House and at the Vet Cemetery. It would be no charge to the state or the Vet Cemetery for getting the flag or replacing it

[Josephson]- the 2 days that were removed were redundant in recognition of the fallen. Will there be an administrative requirement levied on the state to say who will receive it? If it becomes a state recognized flag, would your committee be replaced by the state? It should state in the language that the state recognizes your committee as the one who determines who should receive the flag.

[Baldasaro]-Should put the cost of the flag into the bill language and that the state would not be responsible for buying it or replacing it

[Theberge]- be open-minded about this bill. We don't know what the language is. Sen Carson is taking notes on what is being said.

[Howe]- I oppose the bill. The American flag is the only one that I feel should honor and remember fallen service members

[Burdett]-we are not ready to vote on this tonight. Need to wait for the language of the bill.

[Carson]-send me emails with any thoughts you have on this bill

3. New Business:

a. Newly appointed members: Sen Carson is continuing on the committee and Sen Cataldo has been newly appointed to the committee from the Senate. Rep Theberge and Rep Baldasaro have been re-appointed to the committee for 2 more years.

b. Issues from the floor:

1. Vet Mobile (Burdett) - MOAA has come up with a concept of having a golf cart that can transport people around at the Vet Cemetery. Joe Daley, a member of MOAA, has a point of contact that has access to golf carts and got a price estimate. MOAA will be discussing funding for it at the next meeting. May develop a rotation schedule for getting drivers for it.

[Farinola]-supporting organizations may donate to it if they can put a decal on it

2. McQuillen Award (Conway) - Mary Morin was the 2012 recipient of the Maurice McQuillin Service to Fellow NH Veterans Award. She was nominated by Barry Conway for her outstanding work with veterans.

<http://www.unionleader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130102/NEWHAMPSHIRE09/130109853/0/NEWHAMPSHIRE03&template=printart>

3. Joe Dichiaro sent a letter to Sen Shaheen and Sen Ayotte regarding the Military Religious Freedom Act protecting the rights of chaplains to not have to perform same sex marriages. He received replies from both with Sen Ayotte supporting the Act and Senator Sheehan indicating that she would "not support policies that discriminate against members of our military based on their sexual orientation."

c. National Legislative Staff Remarks:

1. Sarah Holmes (Senator Shaheen):

SHAHEEN APPLAUDS SENATE PASSAGE OF CRITICAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

(Washington, D.C.) - U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) today joined her Senate colleagues in a unanimous vote of 98-0 in favor of the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The annual bill includes a number of provisions authored or supported by Shaheen.

"Ensuring our military has the equipment and the resources needed to defend our nation is one of our most important responsibilities," said Shaheen a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "Overall this year's bill will strengthen our national security, enhance our military readiness, and improve the quality of life for our service members. I was pleased that the final bill incorporated a number of proposals I have strongly supported, including investments in our military's energy security, restored funding for Virginia-class submarines, improvements in the health care of female service members, the elimination of a wasteful and unnecessary weapons program, and enhanced oversight of U.S. reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan."

Notable provisions in this year's NDAA include a 1.7 percent pay raise for all members of the Armed Services, funding to combat Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Afghanistan, as well as investments in our military's ability to deal with 21st century threats, including cyber warfare, terrorism, and the proliferation of nuclear materials around the globe. The bill also provides the necessary investments in equipment and cutting edge technology that our men and women in uniform need to be successful on the battlefield while cutting wasteful programs which are not needed to defend our security. Numerous provisions authored or supported by Senator Shaheen were in the final bill, and a few are summarized below.

Military Energy Security

Senator Shaheen was a lead cosponsor and strong supporter of two amendments that will ensure DOD is able to enhance American energy security and continue investing in homegrown alternative energy, including advanced [biofuels](#). "Reducing our dependence on foreign oil is critical to our national security," said Shaheen. "Biofuels have demonstrated the ability to power our most advanced military equipment, and are produced right here in the United States. Our military leaders are committed to improving our nation's energy security, and I am pleased that the Senate voted not to put arbitrary limits on their efforts." Senator Shaheen has long supported the military's effort to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil. Earlier this year she published an [op-ed](#) with Senator Susan Collins supporting the military's investment in advanced biofuels. She also chaired an Energy Subcommittee [hearing aboard the USS Kearsarge](#) highlighting Navy and Marine Corps energy advancements.

Restored Funding for a Second Virginia-Class Attack Submarine in Fiscal Year 2014

Senator Shaheen led an effort with Senators Collins (R-ME) and Ayotte (R-NH) to restore funding in the bill to build a second Virginia class submarine in Fiscal Year 2014. Building two boats as planned in FY14 will mitigate the risk of submarine shortfalls in future years and reduce the cost of each boat. Funding for submarine construction had been reduced in the President's proposed budget. "The effectiveness and flexibility of our attack submarine fleet continues to provide outstanding service to our Navy and excellent value to the taxpayer. In the past two years, we saw our submarines play a lead role in NATO operations in Libya and supporting a Special Operations Forces hostage rescue in Somalia, all while fulfilling ongoing intelligence gathering requirements," said Shaheen. "Regardless of the mission, our sub fleet's ability to operate covertly is invaluable to our security. I was pleased we were able to come up with a solution that allows the Navy to keep sub construction on schedule."

Oversight over Contracting Dollars

Senator Shaheen continued her effort to promote more effective oversight of the federal contracting process by authoring an amendment to require the suspension and debarment branches within the DOD to report to Congress on their pending backlog and their plans for addressing these critical cases. Significant delays in suspension and

debarment decisions risk allowing money to flow to dangerous, corrupt or poorly performing contractors. The legislation follows her request for information on the response time for suspension and debarment proposals from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). It was reported that the average response time to SIGAR's recommendations took a total of 323 days from start to finish. Shaheen, also a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has consistently pushed for [increased transparency and oversight of the contracting process and taxpayer dollars](#). "I am pleased that this good governance amendment was agreed to by unanimous consent and was included in the bill. I think everyone can agree that we should be processing suspension and debarment recommendations as quickly as due process allows. Right now, I'm not sure we are meeting that mark." Guard and Reserve Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Senator Shaheen continued her efforts to support returning servicemen and women, particularly National Guard and Reservists. At her request, the bill includes an extension through 2015 of a 2010 Shaheen provision that ensures DOD mental health services and suicide prevention programs take into account the unique circumstances facing returning Guard and Reserve members. Following deployment, Guard and Reservists typically do not have access to the same services as their active duty counterparts living on military bases or in military communities. Non-military communities are often ill-equipped to help with the challenges of demobilization. Shaheen's provision focuses on improving awareness in non-military communities. "Our military men and women make incredible sacrifices to protect our country, and too often the immense mental tolls associated with their service are overlooked," Shaheen said. "As we work to provide the necessary systems of support, it's critical we ensure those programs also take into account the unique challenges faced by returning Guard members and Reservists."

Elimination of Duplication and Waste

Senator Shaheen continued her effort to identify and eliminate underperforming and duplicative DOD programs. Shaheen joined a group of Senators in an effort to terminate the Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS). Despite no intention to purchase the final product, DOD planned to spend an additional \$804 million to complete the program's development. Shaheen [has been a vocal opponent](#) against further funding to the repeatedly delayed, over budget program. "We need to ensure that every dollar is spent effectively and efficiently, regardless of the budget situation. This project is a perfect example of an opportunity to reduce defense spending without compromising our national security. We simply can't afford programs we don't intend to use, or that duplicate capability we already have," Shaheen said.

BIPARTISAN GROUP OF SENATORS CALL ON ARMY TO ADDRESS CONCERN OVER CONTRACTORS WITH LINKS TO TERRORIST GROUPS

(Washington, D.C.) – A bipartisan group of senators led by U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) sent a letter to the U.S. Army yesterday expressing concern over the growing backlog of referrals pending before the Army's Suspension and Debarment office and particularly the backlog of referrals on contractors with links to terrorist groups. The letter, sent to Army Secretary John McHugh and Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno, specially called for greater responsiveness by the Army in processing the recommendations made by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). Along with Senator Shaheen, the letter was also signed by Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Tom Coburn (R-OK), Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Jim Webb (D-VA), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), James Inhofe (R-OK) and John Cornyn (R-TX). "An effective and timely suspension and debarment process is critical to ensuring appropriate use of taxpayer dollars in Afghanistan, as well as for preventing these funds from flowing to criminal and terrorist networks," the senators wrote in the letter. "With these concerns in mind, we ask that you closely review the 43 cases involving terrorist groups that are still pending before the suspension and debarment branch. In addition, we ask that you ensure the Army processes future referrals from Afghanistan in a deliberate and timely manner." SIGAR provides independent oversight of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan to ensure that money being spent by the United States is being used efficiently and effectively. SIGAR's recommendations to suspend or debar a contractor are sent to the Army for review and to make a final decision. A debarment referral from SIGAR indicates that a contractor is strongly suspected of committing waste, fraud or abuse and can lead to the termination of their contract and the permanent debarment of the contractor. Significant lapses between these referrals from SIGAR and action by the Army increases the risk that money is flowing to corrupt or poorly performing contractors. Even more concerning, 43 of SIGAR's pending recommendations with the Army involve individuals or companies with links based on findings from U.S. Central Command and the Department of Commerce to terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda and the Haqqani Network. The stated goal for the Army's Suspension and Debarment office is to complete referrals from an inspector general or investigative agency within 30 days. However, SIGAR reports that between June 2011 and June 2012, the average time to process a debarment referral was a total of 323 days.

SHAHEEN AMENDMENT SIGNED INTO LAW

(Washington, D.C.) – An amendment introduced by U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) to provide health care equity to women serving in the military was signed into law last night with President Barack Obama's signature approving the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act. The [Shaheen Amendment](#), which would provide servicewomen coverage for abortions if they are victims of rape or incest, was passed through both chambers of Congress last month with broad bipartisan support. "After three decades of a policy that discriminated against women who put their lives on the line for us, I am so proud that we will finally begin to provide the coverage our

servicewomen deserve,” Shaheen said. “Civilian women who depend on the federal government for health insurance – whether they are postal workers or Medicaid recipients – have the right to access affordable abortion care if they are sexually assaulted. It is only fair that the thousands of brave women in uniform fighting to protect our freedoms are treated the same. I am glad that colleagues in both Houses of Congress and of both parties could come together to right this wrong.” Unlike most other federal health programs, Department of Defense rules did not have a funding exemption for abortion care in the case of rape or incest. The Shaheen amendment will put Department of Defense rules in line with other federal policies and help ensure that women in uniform receive coverage for the same health care services as most women who receive health care through the federal government. Currently there are more than 214,000 women serving in active duty in the military. Those who have been sexually assaulted, especially those posted overseas, have been forced to seek unsafe and unacceptable alternatives to care due to the funding ban in current law. The Shaheen Amendment enjoyed strong broad bipartisan support in Congress and received resounding endorsements from a coalition of military leaders and organizations. Among those who raised their voice in support of the provision were [Colin Powell](#), USA (Ret.), the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the 65th United States Secretary of State, and Retired Army Major Military Generals [Gale Pollock](#) and [Dennis Laich](#).

2. Steve Monier (Senator Ayotte):

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS: On January 3, 2013, Senator Ayotte announced her committee assignments for the 113th Congress. She will serve on five Senate Committees: Armed Services; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Budget; and Aging. “These assignments put me in a strong position to stand up for New Hampshire citizens,” said Senator Ayotte. “As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I will continue to fight to ensure that our servicemen and women have the resources and support they need to complete their missions. I will continue to be a strong advocate for Pease and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. I’m also pleased to have been appointed to serve on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which oversees the Department of Homeland Security and is the Senate’s chief oversight committee.”

PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS NDAA: On January 2, 2013, President Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013 (NDAA), the annual defense policy bill that supports the men and women of the U.S. armed forces and their families, and authorizes the equipment, training, and resources that service members need to complete their missions. The major Ayotte provisions in the final bill included:

Joining Forces Program: Senator Ayotte and Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) successfully included an amendment aimed at enhancing the department’s research, treatment, education, and outreach initiatives focused on the mental health, substance abuse, and traumatic brain injury needs of members of the National Guard and Reserve. This amendment will help address the unique needs of Guard and Reserve members by allowing DoD to enter into partnerships with private organizations and institutions according to a competitive and merit-based process.

Prosthetics for Wounded Warriors: Language included by Senator Ayotte requires the Secretary of Defense to develop and implement a plan to standardize the production and performance of prostheses and prosthetic sockets for military amputees. The Ayotte report language encourages DoD to continue clinical and technological research and development for prostheses, as well as adopt standards for production and human performance. Such standards are critical to helping service members, who have lost one or more limbs in service to our country, achieve their highest goals for recovery, rehabilitation, and performance.

Military Cemeteries: Senator Ayotte successfully included an amendment that would require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report no later than 30 days after the closure of any overseas U.S. military base that details a plan to ensure that an appropriate federal agency or private entity assumes responsibility for continued maintenance and oversight of the cemetery located on the base. The Ayotte amendment would help ensure that no cemetery will be neglected the way Clark Veterans Cemetery was following the Air Force’s departure from Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

Bipartisan Ayotte Provisions already in the NDAA

****Section 236:** Senator Begich joined the Senator Ayotte-led effort to include a provision to save \$400 million dollars by cutting off funding to the troubled, over-cost and behind schedule Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) weapons program that Pentagon has said it will never procure.

****Section 2843:** As stated above, Senator Begich also joined Senator Ayotte to include a provision to prevent overseas military cemeteries from being abandoned, as Clark Veterans Cemetery was in 1991, by requiring DoD to designate an appropriate agency to maintain base cemeteries before closing overseas military bases.

****Section 321:** Senator Ayotte worked with several colleagues to include a provision that repeals controversial language related to military depots and shipyards included in last year’s defense bill that threatened to upset the delicate workload balance between private and public shipyards, including Portsmouth Naval Shipyard

Additional Ayotte Provisions already in the NDAA

****Section 524:** Increases oversight of the DoD’s proposed reduction in the number of soldiers and Marines, as well as minimize the use of involuntary separation.

****Section 801:** Saves millions of acquisition dollars by prohibiting DoD from using cost-type contracts for the production of major defense acquisition programs.

****Section 1003:** Requires the Pentagon to complete a full statement of budget resources by 2014, which will improve financial stewardship at the Pentagon.

Section 1021: Requires the Navy to submit a report that clearly states the Navy's ship requirement and justify any reported reduction in the required fleet size.

****Section 1077:** Ensures that our nuclear deterrent remains strong as the Obama administration implements the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

Report Language: Requires DoD to meet unique facility requirements associated with historic buildings located on military installations. This helps the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard

NDAA Floor Amendments included in the NDAA

Senator Ayotte Sponsored:

****Senate Amendment 3245:** The final bill includes Senator Ayotte's legislation to prohibit for one year the use of funds for the transfer or release of certain individuals from the United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The full Senate voted to pass Senator Ayotte's permanent prohibition by a 54 to 41 margin.

Senator Ayotte Cosponsored:

****Senate Amendment 3051:** This McCain amendment authorizes additional Marine Corps personnel for the performance of security functions for United States embassies, consulates and other diplomatic facilities abroad.

****Senate Amendment 3193:** This Casey amendment requires DoD to develop a plan to promote the security of Afghan women and girls during the security transition process.

****Senate Amendment 3124:** This Blumenthal amendment requires the government to take action to prevent human trafficking related to government contracts.

****Senate Amendment 3098:** This Shaheen amendment requires DoD to report on the suspension and debarment activities of all military departments and the defense logistics agency.

****Senate Amendment 3009:** This Sessions amendment requires the president to submit to Congress for review any future bilateral security agreement with Afghanistan.

During Roll Call Votes Senator Ayotte Voted in Favor of:

Senate Amendment 2955: This Leahy amendment improves the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program.

Senate Amendment 3232: This Menendez-Kirk amendment increases sanctions on Iran.

Senate Amendment 3158: This Cornyn amendment requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit a plan to Congress to reduce the current backlog of veterans' claims.

Senate Amendment 3058: This Gillibrand amendment requires DoD's TRICARE program to cover certain behavioral autism treatments.

December 21

SENATOR AYOTTE COAUTHORS BIPARTISAN LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA TO URGE CONTINUED IRAN SANCTIONS: Led by Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), the letter was signed by a total of 74 Senators. The Senators pointed to the significant impact current sanctions are having on the Iranian economy, yet cautioned that, "the Iranian government has continued to press forward with its nuclear program. It has quintupled its stockpile of low enriched uranium since 2009. It has taken a significant step closer to possessing weapons-grade uranium by enriching up to 20 percent. And it has raced towards completion of its hardened Fordow enrichment facility, more than doubling the number of centrifuges installed there just since the summer of this year...we believe there is no national security challenge that is more urgent and essential to resolve during your second term than Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. We share your commitment to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and strongly agree with your statement that, '[t]he clock is ticking. If [the Iranians] do not meet the demands of the international community, then we are going to take all options necessary to ensure they don't have a nuclear weapon.'" Senator Ayotte stated, "We must fully implement the strongest possible sanctions against the Iranian regime and make it clear that the United States cannot and will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapons capability."

December 20

SENATE APPROVES CLARK VETERANS CEMETERY BILL: On Wednesday, December 20, 2012, the U.S. Senate unanimously approved legislation introduced by Senator Ayotte to restore the Clark Veterans Cemetery, which is the final resting place in the Philippines for more than 8,300 U.S. service member and their dependents. Following a volcanic eruption in 1991, the U.S. abandoned Clark Air Force Base, leaving the Cemetery covered in ash and overgrown by weeds. Senator Ayotte said: "The American veterans buried in Clark Veterans Cemetery deserve a dignified and well-maintained final resting place, and it's time for the U.S. to again fulfill its responsibility to care for this sacred ground." The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Clark Veterans Cemetery legislation on December 31, 2012.

December 6

SENATE PASSES MAGNITSKY LEGISLATION: The Senate approved the Russia and Moldova Jackson-Vanik Repeal and Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act (H.R. 6156), which normalizes trade relations between the U.S. and Russia, while sanctioning Russian officials who are responsible for human rights abuses. The bill is named after Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian lawyer who was arrested for investigating official corruption and was subsequently killed in prison. The legislation would deny U.S. visas to designated human rights abusers, revoke any visa issued to such a person, and freeze their U.S. assets. Senator Ayotte cosponsored the Senate version of the Magnitsky bill, which would have extended the sanctions on human rights abusers beyond Russia to all countries.

Activities in New Hampshire in December:

December 7th – The 10th and final Town Hall meeting of 2012 was held in Coos County, at Pittsburg Fire Department, Pittsburg. Following the Town Hall, visited Wounded Warriors at 45 North Camp in Pittsburg.

December 15th – Participated in the Blue Star Mothers' wreath laying at the State Veterans Cemetery.

December 2nd – Called in to WTPL's NH Wake Up Show with Peter St. James, which featured the NH National Guard.

3. Jackie Cilley (Congresswoman Shea-Porter):

Chuck Gilroy will be giving the updates and introducing the rest of the team. Congresswoman Shea-Porter has been appointed to the House Armed Services Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee. She will be very focused on working on issues critical to the military and veterans. Will be passing off the baton to Josh Denton, congressional caseworker and veteran specialist. He is an Iraqi war veteran.

4. Sean Downing (Congresswoman McLane-Kuster):

Congresswoman McLane-Kuster has been assigned to the House Agricultural Committee which is responsible for agricultural issues and rural development. She is working very hard to get appointed to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Offices are open in Concord and Nashua from 0830-1700. Would like to introduce Mike Cole who is the Constituent Service Coordinator, working out of Concord, and will be responsible for veterans' issues and veterans' affairs. Mike's brother is currently deployed to Afghanistan with a Special Forces unit out of Ft Bragg so veterans' issues are extremely important to him. Reach out to him with any issues to do with veterans. Are working on hiring staff for the North Country office. Congresswoman McLane-Kuster will be back in the state next week and will be touring the North Country. On Thursday, Jan 10, she will be having a ceremonial swearing in at the Warren Rudman Federal Courthouse in Concord at 1600 that is open to the public.

4. Misc. / Announcements / Calendar Items:

5. Motion to adjourn 1st M Farinola, 2nd A Grant and the meeting ended at 1845.

Next meeting date: 5 FEB 2013 (Regularly the 1st Tue at 1700) Location: NG Aviation Facility - Concord, NH

Respectfully submitted,

Steph Riley
Secretary