

New Hampshire

STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BIANNUAL REPORT

MAY 1, 2014



S.V.A.C.

SVAC Biannual Report — MAY 2014

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with RSA 115-A:8, State Veterans Advisory Committee, this report is issued to the Speaker of the House, Senate President, Governor, Executive Council, Chairs of the Veteran committees and the various veterans' organizations active in the State of New Hampshire. This is the first of two required biannual reports for 2014.

HISTORY

RSA 115-A:8 states that a veterans' advisory committee be formed composed of two Senators appointed by the President of the Senate, two Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House and members of various veteran organizations. The members shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, and secretary from the committee membership.

On July 17, 2002, Mr. Ken Leidner, past chairman of the committee's predecessor, called the organizational meeting to order at the LOB in Concord, NH. The primary purpose was to elect the officers of the new State Veterans Advisory Committee. The initial veteran organization members present were the American Legion (AMLEGION), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), The Retired Officers Association (TROA) (now the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)), and the Reserve Officers Association (ROA). Elections were held in accordance with the governing RSA. The first officers elected were: Dr. Griffin Dalianis, Chairman, LCDR David Kenney, USNR, Vice - Chairman, and Mr. Ed Granger, TREA, Secretary. Since 2002 the committee has generally met on a monthly basis except for a two-month summer recess period. The committee adopted bylaws as of June 8, 2004 to govern management and operation. These bylaws were most recently updated in May of 2010.

During the 2007 Legislative session the Governor signed an amendment to RSA 115-A:8 increasing the voting membership of the SVAC from ten to fourteen veterans' organizations in the state of New Hampshire. In 2008 the authorized number of voting organizations was reached and there were two qualified applicant organizations awaiting an opening. The Committee requested the legislative members to submit a bill to increase the authorized voting membership for the second time since 2002. This was done under SB 15 introduced in the 2009 session that was adopted to permit an increase in the membership of the SVAC to a maximum of 20 organizations (plus the two legislative members from the Senate and from the House). Currently the voting membership comprises 16 organizations plus the four legislative members.

This report contains a summary of the meetings, committee composition, legislative initiatives, and successes the Veterans Advisory Committee accomplished during this reporting period.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The officers, legislative members and sixteen member organizations are shown below. These are the voting members of the committee; each has one vote.

Chairman – Peter Burdett – *Military Officers Association of America*

Vice Chairman – Bobby Broneske – *Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association*

Secretary – Lt. Col. Stephanie Riley – *National Guard Association of New Hampshire*

Chairman Emeritus – Dr. Griffin T. Dalianis – *Disabled American Veterans*

Legislative Members:

- Senator Sharon M. Carson
- Senator Sam Cataldo
- Representative Robert L. Theberge
- Representative Al Baldasaro

Voting Organization Members (as of the date of this report):

- 1 American Legion (AMLEGION) (*P – Ken Maynard, A – Bill Roy*)
- 2 Disabled American Veterans (DAV) (*P – Benjamin Saxon, A – Ron Reilly*)
- 3 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) (*P – Jim Golden, A – Paul Chevalier*)
- 4 Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) (*P – Alan Grant, A – Raymond Goulet, Jr.*)
- 5 Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH) (*P – Kenith Chase, A – Patti Fowler*)
- 6 Reserve Officers Association (ROA) (*P – CDR Dave Kenney, A – Mike Horne, A – BG John Pappas*)
- 7 Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) (*P – Peter Burdett, A – Col. Kenneth J. Lull, A – H. Allen (Chad) Chadwick*)
- 8 The Air Force Association (AFA) (*P – Kevin Grady, A – Ed Josephson*)
- 9 The National Guard Association of New Hampshire (*P – LtCol Roy Hunter, A – Col. Paul Loiselle, A – LtCol Stephanie Riley*)
- 10 Rolling Thunder (*P – John and Diane Domenicis*)
- 11 Marine Corps League (MCL) (*P – Gary A. Gahan, A – Joe Shea*)
- 12 Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) (*P – John Symington, A – Ray Hayes*)
- 13 New Hampshire Army Retiree Council (*P – Frank Musmanno, A – CSM (Ret) Mike Rice*)
- 14 Women Veterans of America (*P – Susan Cuddy, A – Mary Morin*)

15 Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (*P – Bobby Broneske, A – Michael Farinola, A – Peter Newell, A – Raymond Schwendeman*)

16 Catholic War Veterans (*P – Russell Bilodeau*)

Committee Advisors:

Many senior leaders of state agencies routinely provide advice to the Committee, but do not have voting privileges.

- BGen Carol Protzmann, USAF (ANG), *Deputy Adjutant General*
- Kerry McHugh, *Policy Advisor for Gov. Hassan*
- Peter Fortier, *NH Military Archivist, (Alt. Rep for BGen Protzmann)*
- Peggy LaBrecque, *Commandant, NH Veterans Home*
- Barry Conway, *Sage Emeritus*
- Michael Horne, *Director, NH State Veterans Cemetery*
- Dr. William Busby, *Regional Manager Northeast Region, Vet Centers*
- Jo A. Moncher, *NH Dept of Health and Human Service, Bureau Chief, Community Based Military Programs*
- Ken Leidner, *NH Veterans Association*
- Joseph DiChiaro, Jr. – *Appointed Chaplain*

MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE/COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Since the last report of the committee dated November 1, 2013 the committee has held one meeting in the Governor and Council Chambers in the State House and 5 meetings at the National Guard Aviation Facility in Concord. The SVAC has held 103 meetings since July 2002. Meeting announcements are made in accordance with the legislative calendar procedures and Email. The Committee regularly invites input from all groups, organizations, and individuals interested in veterans. Many guests attend all or most meetings. Typical attendance at a meeting is 50 plus. During this period speakers and guests included the following:

Governor Maggie Hassan
Sen. Nancy Styles, District 24 on the seacoast
Rep. Marilinda Garcia, Salem
Maj Gen William Reddel, TAG
Bill Zelif, Fmr US Congressman Dist. 1, NH
Andrew Breuder, Manchester VAMC
Andy LaCasse, WRJ VAMC
Angela Roberts, Harbor Homes SSVF
Becki Malandrino, Easter Seals
Betty Ouellette, Veterans Count, Legacy Corps
Bill Bates, NHNGEA
Bill Hopkins, NH Peace Action
Bob Baker, AMVETS Commander
Bob Stevens, Veteran History project
Bradley Mayes, VBA

Cate Sementa, Harbor Homes SSVF
Chris Bright, Philips Healthcare Govt Division
CMSgt Anthony Casella, NHNGEA
Col Bryan Clements, NHARNG
Col Paul Loiselle, Chief of Joint Staff NHNG
Conrad Perreault, NH Korean War Vets
CSM John Nanof, State CSM NGARNG
CSM Steve Houten, State CSM NGARNG
Cynthia Sweeney, Daughters of American Revolution
Daisy Wojewoda, Easter Seals
Dan Marcek, VetFlix
Daniel Bricker, Manchester VAMC
David Canter, Vet-to-Vet
David Green, Concord Hospital
David Wall, Building Dreams for Marines

Doug Hewitt, American Red Cross
Erin Corcoran, ED of Warren B Rudman Center
Ernie Sulloway, DAV
Frank Emiro, fmr Rep.
Ginger Munson, Easter Seals
Heather Aicholtz, 211 NH
Henry Pratte, Veterans Museum of NH
Howie Howe, HOTH
Ian Clark, NHNGEA
Jesse Garcia, Harbor Homes SSVF
Jim Rubens, GOP candidate for US Senate
John Broderick, Jr., Dean of UNH School of Law
John Reed, Tricare/USFHP Healthcare Rep
Judy Crockett, Manchester VAMC
Justin Strevig, NHNG SMFS
Kaitlyn Meisel, NH Vet to Vet
Karen McCarthy, Women Vets of America
Karin Borgstrom, UNH School of Law
Ken Lull, NH ESGR
Larry Ward, VVA
Leah Fox, Currier Museum of Arts
LeighAnn Shriver
Leslie Pasternack, ACT ONE
Lewis Chipola, VFW
Lisa Aldridge, NHNG Transition Assistance Advisor
LTC Richard Oberman, NHARNG
LTC Roy Hunter, President of NGANH
LTC Steve Russell, CVA
LtCol Todd Swass, NGANH

MAJ Justin Strevig, Director of SMFS, NHNG
Mark McCabe, VFW
Mark Sullivan, Veterans Count, Seacoast Chapter
Mark Wainright- Hire Patriots program
Mary Behnke, Women Vets Program Manager, NH VA
MG Harry Miller, Easter Seals NH
MSG Ian Clark, NHNGEA
MSgt William Bates, NHNGEA
Patrick Goyetch, Philips Healthcare Govt Division
Pauline Meridien, BITS
Pete Duffy, Legislative Director NGAUS
Richard Downes, Coalition of Families of Korean and Cold War POW/MIAs
Richard Moushegian, NH Korean War Vets Assn
Rick Courtemanche, Veterans Count, Seacoast Chapter
Rick Downs, Men Missing in Action
Roger Hooper, American Red Cross
Roger Knight, Red Sox Foundation & MGH Home Base
Russell Bilodeau, Catholic War Veterans
Sarah Ward, AmeriCorps VISTA
Scott Slattery, Harbor Homes SSVF
Seth Gahr, NH State Police
Sharyn Kelly, Women Vets of America
Sheri Avena, Beacon Hospice
Stella Lareau, Manchester VAMC PAO
Steve Houten, NHARNG
Taylor Caswell, Soldier On
Whitney Blethen, Beacon Hospice

Representatives of the NH Congressional Delegation attend all meetings for coordination purposes including the following:

Sarah Holmes (Senator Shaheen)
Peter Clark (Senator Shaheen)
Steve Monier (Senator Ayotte)
Joshua Denton (Representative Shea-Porter)
Michael Ollen (Representative McLane-Kuster)

Committee legislative activities

The committee continues to be actively involved in providing guidance and testimony on legislation put forth on behalf of veterans. Committee members were involved in several public proclamations and bill signing ceremonies at the Governor's office.

A letter from the SVAC Chairman is provided to every legislator at the beginning of each legislative session to promote awareness of SVAC activities and to encourage early engagement with the SVAC on proposed legislation for the upcoming session.

The SVAC actively supported the selection of the NH Air National Guard as the first ANG unit to receive the KC-46A tanker. This effort made a small contribution to a successful campaign by many government and non-government organizations and individuals resulting in the selection of Pease ANGB first ANG base to receive this next generation tanker.

A subcommittee, chaired by Ed Josephson, monitors legislative activities, drafts proposed testimony and coordinates and leads SVAC testimony and activities with Legislative Committees and members.

Bill recommendations are made after discussions and voting involving the full SVAC.

Positions on the various bills are determined by majority vote of the Committee. The Committee position on a bill does not prohibit a member organization from presenting a minority position to the General Court.

During this period the SVAC took formal positions on 23 bills and followed one other bill for the 2013 session as shown in the tables below:

Table 1

Bill	Title	Status 2013 Session Wrap-up
BILLS IN THE 2014 SESSION SUPPORTED BY THE SVAC		
HB 1359	establishing a committee to study the feasibility of placing medal decals on special number plates for veterans. (NEW TITLE)	Both Houses Passed/Adopted w/Amendment
HB 1389	naming a bridge in Derry after Lance Corporal Michael E. Geary.	Both Houses Passed/Adopted
HB 1451	establishing a canine veterans day.	Both Houses Passed/Adopted
HB 1488	adopting the interstate compact on educational support for military children.	Passed House, Senate Committee Report OTP. Awaiting final
HCR 12	urging Congress to fund the development and implementation of a comprehensive health care system for New Hampshire veterans.	ITL
HR 20	urging Congress to support a state-wide veteran's medical identification card.	House Passed/Adopted
HR 22	urging Congress to fund the development and implementation of a comprehensive health care delivery system to enhance the level of specialty care for New Hampshire's veterans.	Rereferred to Committee
SB 296	preferences for veterans and disabled veterans in public employment.	Laid on Table
SB 298	establishing a permanent commission on post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.	Both Houses Passed/Adopted

TABLE 2

Bill	Title	Status 2013 Session Wrap-up
BILLS IN THE 2014 SESSION OPPOSED BY THE SVAC		
HB 1279	compliance with 2012 National Defense Authorization Act.	ITL
HB 1321	reporting of Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery scores.	Passed House, Senate Committee Report OTP. Awaiting final
HB 1390	Gold Star and Blue Star Mothers Service Flags and the Silver Star Service Flag.	ITL
HR 23	the smoking policy at the New Hampshire veterans' home.	Interim Study
SB 47	recognizing the honor and remember flag as a symbol of the service and sacrifice of the armed forces.	ITL
SB 212	the Honor and Remember Flag as an official symbol to recognize and honor fallen members of the armed forces.	Senate passed/adopted w/amend. House in committee.

The committee remains an active participant in testimony and public advocacy for issues impacting veterans. We believe such legislation reflects the esteem in which New Hampshire holds her veterans.

The committee again extends appreciation to all the legislative members who sponsored, co-sponsored and supported the various veteran-related bills put forward. We recognize that in these times of fiscal restraint it is not always easy to support legislation that may increase State expenditures, no matter how worthy the purpose. We thank them for their dedication and hard work in support of New Hampshire veterans.

This committee works closely with respective committee members to ensure initiatives on behalf of veterans are focused and relevant. It serves as a catalyst for communications in support of veterans' interests within the State of New Hampshire.

COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

As previously noted, communications from this committee remains a vital function. We interpret this function broadly. We primarily utilize email for agendas, meeting minutes, and other pertinent information to ensure timely delivery to committee members for review. In addition, press releases and news items of interest are also delivered to the email distribution list.

We continue to publish committee related information in the Concord Monitor, Nashua Telegraph, The New Hampshire Union Leader, Keene Sentinel, Portsmouth Herald, and other state news periodicals. We have reached WMUR and also to various newspaper

resources in the northern part of the state including Lebanon and Conway to publish veteran related information for their area.

Members of the Committee often participate in the public discourse on veterans' issues, either as the representatives of their veterans' organization or as individuals. Committee member organizations further the reach of Committee communications through publication of relevant items in their own newsletters, other media and websites.

Of course, effective communications are a two-way street. The Committee routinely invites speakers and visitors representing a number of organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, to present information likely to help the SVAC in developing sound advice on issues of importance to veterans. This included inviting legislators and their constituents to present their views to either encourage the SVAC to take a particular position or to change a position once made. For example, during the period covered by this report the SVAC devoted a considerable portion of two meetings hearing the views of both legislators and a constituent as they sought a change in the position the SVAC had taken on a particular bill.

The SVAC encourages more legislators to more frequently take the opportunity to participate and exchange views with the members of the SVAC in developing positions on matters important to the veterans of New Hampshire.

CONCLUSION

This committee comprises 16 member organizations. Organizations aspiring to membership are required to show a sincere commitment by attending and participating at meetings in a non-voting role before their letter request for admittance is considered. The committee encourages any NH Veteran Service Organization (VSO) to attend our meetings and to seek membership.

Last year the SVAC Chairman, Peter Burdett, received a greatly appreciated honor when he was appointed by the Army Secretary as his Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for New Hampshire. He was sworn in to this important position in the Executive Chambers at the State House with Governor Maggie Hassan as host and U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Kelly Ayotte speaking. Governor Hassan called Burdett the perfect fit for the position that was established 92 years ago. Senator Shaheen said he combines the two NH traditions of NH – volunteerism and military service. Senator Ayotte said she could not think of anyone more deserving or qualified for the position.

The Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army serves an important role in providing individual advice to the Secretary of the Army, the Army Chief of Staff and commanders at all levels on public sentiments toward the Army. They work closely with Army and installation commanders, the Adjutant General and many other activities within their area of responsibility. They both disseminate information to the public via various means and advice to the Army to gain maximum understanding and cooperation between the civilian community and the Army. The position is accorded the protocol position of Lieutenant General.

A significant number of advisors, guests and representatives of our Congressional Delegation participate in the meetings in recognition of the mutual value of shared communications and collaboration on veteran issues. In fact, the attendance rate of our Congressional Delegation was again 100% during the period of this report.

The committee provides a unique means of quickly disseminating information on events and matters of interest to veterans. Matters brought to the attention of the SVAC can be distributed more quickly than ever before via the email and newsletter capabilities of member organizations to reach the approximately 117,000 members of the New Hampshire veteran community.

We continue to work with members of the NH House and Senate to develop our support and testimony agenda for upcoming legislative actions on behalf of veterans. This committee can and will help to support new legislation for veterans. Legislators are encouraged to review bill language with the committee prior to or during the filing period and then follow-up prior to hearings to insure the SVAC understanding of the intent of the bill. We can help avoid unintended consequences and clarify technical jargon.

We have maintained a positive reputation among the legislators with whom we have contact. We will continue to maintain an active dialogue with the legislative members and the respective committees. This committee is focused on our mission of providing a common voice for New Hampshire's veterans and their families and providing a coordination forum for announcing scheduled events to benefit veterans.

An example of the coordination and collaboration functions of the committee were highlighted by continuing to assist with supporting the Deployment Cycle Support – Care Coordination Program (DCS-CCP), a Military-Civilian, Public-Private Partnership to directly support our NH National Guard and reservists within the context of “Fort NH”. Additionally the committee continues to generate support for attending the Welcome Home Ceremony for our NH Vietnam era veterans (42,128 in NH as of 9/30/2013). The latest was held in Whitefield, NH on 5 May 2013.

If this report generates any questions or ideas, the committee would be pleased to address them. Contact me by calling: 800-778-4251 or email at: peter_burdett@ml.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Pete Burdett
Peter Burdett, Chairman

May 1, 2014