

New Hampshire

STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BIANNUAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 1, 2009



S.V.A.C.

SVAC Biannual Report — November 2009

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with RSA 115 - A:8, this report is issued to the Speaker of the House, Senate President, Governor, Executive council, and the veteran's organizations represented in the State of New Hampshire. This is the second of two required biannual reports for 2009.

HISTORY

RSA 115 - A:8 states that a veteran's advisory committee be formed comprised of legislative members, members of various veteran organizations, and shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, and secretary from the committee membership.

On July 17, 2002, Mr. Ken Leidner, past chairman of the committee, called the committee to meeting at the LOB in Concord, NH to reconstitute the committee and to elect new officers to succeed the prior committee. At that time, several veteran organization leaders were present including the American Legion, DAV, VVA, VFW, TROA (now MOAA), and the 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, Secretary. Since 2002 the committee has generally met on a monthly basis except for a two-month summer recess period. The committee adopted by-laws as of June 8, 2004 to govern management and operation.

During the 2007 Legislative session the Governor signed an amendment to RSA 115-A:2 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 members of the Senate and two members of the House). As of the date of this report the voting membership comprises 16 organizations.

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The current membership of the committee is presented below. These are the voting members of the committee. Each legislative member and organization has one vote. Several senior leaders of state veteran organizations serve as committee advisors and are also identified.

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

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

Secretary - Mike Horne – *Reserve Officer Association*

Legislative Members (2010):

- Senator Maggie Wood Hassan
- Senator Sharon M. Carson
- Honorable Al Baldasaro
- Honorable Roger Berube

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

- 1 American Legion (AMLEGION) (*P – Francis "Sharkey" Madden, Jr.*)
- 2 Disabled American Veterans (DAV) (*P – Raymond (Butch) Colby, A – Griff Dalianis, A – Ron Reilly, A – Lawrence Johnson*)
- 3 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) (*P – Roland (Ron) Miller, A – Paul Chevalier, A – Gene Pawlik*)
- 4 Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) (*P – Alan Grant, A – Raymond Goulet, Jr.*)
- 5 Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH) (*P – Tony Karam, A – Dean L. Mottard*)
- 6 Reserve Officers Association (ROA) (*P - Dave Kenney, A – BG John Pappas, A – Mike Horne*)
- 7 The Retired Enlisted Association (REA) (*P - Ed Granger*)
- 8 Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) (*P – Peter Burdett, A – John Graham*)
- 9 The Air Force Association (AFA) (*P – Kevin Grady, A - Ed Josephson*)
- 10 The National Guard Association of New Hampshire (*P – Rich Duncan, A – James Moody, A – Mike Horne*)
- 11 Rolling Thunder (*P – Jim Chisholm*)
- 12 Marine Corps League (MCL) (*P – Joe Shea, A - Frank Diekmann*)
- 13 Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) (*P - John Symington*)
- 14 New Hampshire Army Retiree Council (*P – Frank Musmanno, A – Bruce Barton*)
- 15 Women Veterans of America (*P – Trina Wycoff, A – Mary Morin, A – Susan Cuddy*)
- 16 Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (*P – Bobby Broneske, A – Richard Paris*)

Committee Advisors:

- BG Stephen C. Burritt, USA (ARNG) - *Deputy Adjutant General*
- Peter Fortier - *NH Military Archivist - (Alt. Rep for BG Burritt)*
- Maj. Gen. John Jacobsmeyer, USAF (Ret), *State Veterans Council*
- Mary Morin - *State Veterans Council*
- Paul Bernard, Esq. - *State Veterans Council*
- Ken Leidner - *NH Veterans Association*
- Barry Conway - *NH Veterans Home*
- Michael Horne - *NH State Veterans Cemetery*
- Tim Beebe – *Regional Director Vet Centers*
- Jo A Moncher, *NH Dept of Health and Human Service, Bureau Chief of Community Based Care and Military programs*

MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE/COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Since the last report of the committee on May 1, 2009 the committee has held 5 meetings, 4 at the National Guard Aviation Facility in Concord and a special summer session at MerchantsAuto.com Stadium in Manchester held in conjunction with the Fisher Cats Military Appreciation Night. A total of 66 meetings have occurred since July of 2002. Meeting announcements are made in accordance with the legislative calendar procedures. Meetings are sometimes held in other locations throughout the state to balance travel burdens. The Committee regularly invites input from all groups, organizations, and individuals interested in various aspects of veteran's affairs. During this period speakers and guests included the following:

Rep. Frank Emiro
Rep. Robert L'Heureux
Maj Gen William Reddel, III, Adjutant General of NH
Lisa Aldridge, NHNG, NH Transition Assistant Advisor
Mike Palmeri, Aide de Camp to CASA (G. Dalianis)
Karen McCarthy, Liberty House
CSM Greg Crotto, NH Army National Guard
Rich Swauger, U.S. Marine Riders
Rick Brenner, NH Fisher Cats
Stephanie Livoli, NH Fisher Cats
Joe Moriarty, Guardian Mortgage
Marti Jones, NH VAMC Patient Advocate
Maureen Burke
CPT Christine Chambers, Cmdr NH Army Recruiting Co
Howie Howe, NH Help of the Home front (NH NOTH)
Dave Ouellette, Sr. Vice Cmdr, Dept 9, VFW
Robert J Giuda
Christine M. Giuda
Rilla M Whiteneck
Henry Pratte, Veterans Museum of NH
Lisa Angelina, NH Dept of Corrections
SSGT Eric Miller NH Army Recruiting Co (Nashua)
Tracy Broderick, Elks NH State Chair
CDR Lynne Ferrari Blankenbeker, USN
Ted Kehr, NH ESGR

Representatives of the NH Congressional Delegation (for coordination purposes)

Sarah Holmes, representing Senator Shaheen
Kent Nolan, representing Senator Gregg

Rep. Robert Theberge, Congressman Hodes
 Jane Pauley, Congressman Hodes
 Chuck Gilboy, Congresswoman Shea-Porter
 Heather MacNeill, Congresswoman Shea-Porter
 Maggie Leuzarder, Senator Shaheen
 Trevor Chandler, Congressman Hodes

Committee legislative activities

The committee continues to be actively involved in providing guidance and testimony on several important pieces of 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 subcommittee, chaired by Ed Josephson, continued to closely monitor legislative activities, drafted proposed testimony and coordinated and led SVAC testimony and activities with Senate and House committees.

The committee will continue to provide direct testimony, both oral and written, to the various committees of the House and Senate on the bills we recommended for support. The bills in the last session as provided in the May 1 Report and updated in Table 1 below, were discussed by the whole committee.

Table 1 – Bills reviewed for the 2009 session. *Bills in italics were not supported. Bills on which the SVAC took no position have the word “neutral” after the Title.*

Bill Number	Title
THE FOLLOWING 14 BILLS WERE PASSED	
HB 56	renaming a bridge to honor U. S. Navy Seal Daniel Healy.
HB 88	prohibiting filing with the registry of deeds a document that includes an individual's armed forces service number.
<i>HB 90</i>	<i>employment of veterans on Veterans' Day.</i>
HB 206	retention of governmental records under the right-to-know law. (neutral)
HB 295	mental health treatment for veterans convicted of crimes.
SB 15	the membership of the state veterans' advisory committee.
SB 35	establishing a committee to study creating a veterans' legal aid advocacy project in New Hampshire.
SB 57	the commission to study the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury suffered by New Hampshire soldiers and veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bill Number	Title
SB 76	naming a bridge in the town of Barrington the Sp. Jesse Scott Conger Memorial Bridge.
SB 96	naming a bridge in Webster in honor of William Tracy.
SB 131	state hiring of veterans.
SB 133	authorizing purple heart special number plates for veterans still on active duty.
SB 148	establishing that the state of New Hampshire recognizes the designations of Prisoner of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) as valid descriptions of casualty status and category classification for military personnel.

	THE FOLLOWING 10 BILLS WERE ITL
HB 91	allowing municipalities to extend the veterans' tax credit to veterans who do not have service in a war or conflict, and the definition of veteran. (neutral)
HB 155	allowing municipalities to adopt a non-wartime veterans' property tax credit.
HB 188	enabling municipalities to extend the veterans' property tax credit to all honorably discharged veterans. (neutral)
HB 382	extensions of time for filing returns and making payments under the interest and dividends tax for deployed members of the United State armed forces. (neutral)
HB 454	a lottery ticket to benefit homeless veterans. (neutral)
HB 455	a lottery ticket to benefit the state veterans council. (neutral)
HB 524	establishing a permanent state defense force.(neutral)
SB 17	Selective Service registration upon driver's license application or renewal.
SB 82	eliminating fees for plates and registration for certain veterans.
SB 86	the minimum period of service required eligibility for the veterans' property tax credit.
	THE FOLLOWING 2 BILLS WERE RETAINED IN COMMITTEE
HB 53	the definition of "public body" under the right-to-know law. (neutral)
HB 484	the definition of charitable organizations for raffles and game of chance. (neutral)

	THE FOLLOWING BILL WAS LAID ON TABLE
HB 357	<i>retention of special number plates for veterans by surviving spouses.</i>

The committee remains an active participant in testimony and public advocacy for the veteran issues. We believe these pieces of legislation are important representations of 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 granting tax credits, exemptions etc. We thank them for their dedicated support and hard work in support of New Hampshire veterans.

This committee works closely with respective committee members during the legislative sessions to ensure initiatives on behalf of veterans are focused and relevant.

The Committee continues to serve as a catalyst for communications in support of veterans' interests within the State of New Hampshire.

COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

As previously reported, communications from this committee remains a vital function. We interpret this function broadly. We continue to 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 Nashua Telegraph, The Union Leader, Keene Sentinel, Portsmouth Herald, and other state news periodicals. We have reached out 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 and other media.

CONCLUSION

This committee continues to expand its capabilities to fulfill its advisory responsibilities. This is shown most clearly in the expansion of the veteran's organization membership from 10 in 2002 to 14 in 2007 to 16 today. Since organizations aspiring to membership are required to show a sincere commitment by attending meetings in a non-voting role for as long as two years before a vote is taken on their admittance there is a high level of confidence that the vitality of

the SVAC will not be diminished as numbers increase. There has also been a concomitant increase in the number of advisors, guests and representatives of our Congressional Delegation participating in the meetings in recognition of the mutual value of shared communications.

The committee provides a unique means of quickly communicating on 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 throughout the veteran community.

We continue to work with members of the House and Senate to develop our support and testimony agenda for upcoming legislative actions on behalf of veterans.

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.

Respectfully submitted,

Griffin T. Dalianis, Chairman

Date