

New Hampshire

STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BIANNUAL REPORT

MAY 1, 2009



S.V.A.C.

SVAC Biannual Report — May 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 first 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 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, a primary and alternate representative from the majority of these organizations currently comprise the voting body. In addition, several senior leaders of state veteran organizations are serving in the capacity as committee advisors and they are also noted in the list contained herein.

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

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

Secretary - Mike Horne - *National Guard Association of New Hampshire*

Legislative Members (2009):

- Senator Maggie Wood Hassan
- Senator Sharon M. Carson
- Honorable Al Baldasaro
- Honorable Stanley Plifka, Jr. (resigned during this reporting period) replaced by Roger Berube

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

- 1 American Legion (*P – Charles (Chuck) Lewis, A – Francis "Sharkey" Madden, Jr., A – George McCall*)
- 2 Disabled American Veterans (*P – Robert Burke, A – Griff Dalianis, A – Ron Reilly*)
- 3 Veterans of Foreign Wars (*P – John Rubery, A – Paul Chevalier, A – Gene Pawlik*)
- 4 Vietnam Veterans of America (*P – Alan Grant, A – Raymond Goulet, Jr.*)
- 5 Military Order of Purple Heart (*P – Tony Karam, A - Brian Matchett, A – Dean L. Mottard*)
- 6 Reserve Officers Association (*P - Dave Kenney, A – BG John Pappas*)
- 7 The Retired Enlisted Association (*P - Ed Granger*)
- 8 Military Officers Association of America (*P – Peter Burdett, A – John Graham*)
- 9 The Air Force Association (*P – Kevin Grady, A - Ed Josephson*)
- 10 The National Guard Association of New Hampshire (*P – Deborah Carter, A – James Moody, A – Mike Horne*)
- 11 Rolling Thunder (*P – Jim Chisholm*)
- 12 Marine Corps League (*P – Joe Shea, A - Frank Diekmann*)
- 13 Air Force Sergeants Association (*P - John Symington*)
- 14 US Army Retiree Council (*P – Frank Musmanno, A – Bruce Barton*)

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*
- Ken Leidner - *NH Veterans Association*
- Barry Conway - *NH Veterans Home*
- Michael Horne - *NH 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 November 1, 2008 the committee has held 6 meetings at the National Guard Joint Force HQ and the Aviation Facility in Concord. A total of 60 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 reporting period speakers and guests included the following:

Bruce Clark, President, Navy League of NH and Chair of the USS New Hampshire Commissioning Committee

LTC Dave Madden, Senior Army Advisor to the NH Army National Guard

CSM Greg Crotto, NHNG

Trina Wycoff & Cindy Cuddy, NH chapter of Women Veterans of America

Bobby Broneske & Richard Paris, Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association of America

George McCall/new commander AMLEGION

Robert Burke/new commander DAV

State Representative Eleanor Kjellman

State Representative Frank Emiro

Liz Fitzgerald, Director of NH 2-1-1

Peter Kelleher, Harbor Homes

MGEN Joe Simeone

Ted Kehr, Director ESGR

Lisa Aldridge, NH Transition Assistance Advisor

Lisa Angelini, Dept of Corrections, RN

Representatives of the NH Congressional Delegation (for coordination purposes)

State Rep. Robert Thiberge, representing Congressman Hodes

Steve McAllister, representing Senator Sununu

Sarah Holmes, representing Senator Shaheen

Kent Nolan, representing Senator Gregg

Chuck Gilboy, representing Congresswoman Shea-Porter

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, draft proposed testimony and coordinate and lead 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 11 BILLS WERE PASSED
HCR 15	A resolution commemorating the commissioning of the USS New Hampshire
HB 1335	establishing a 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 (Committee of Conference requested) (neutral)
HB 1551	fees for special number plates for veterans (Incorporated in SB 490)
SB 303-FN	relative to special license plates
SB 336-FN	special number plates for veterans who are former prisoners of war.
SB 440	requiring occupational boards and commissions to include relevant military experience or training in satisfying requirements for engaging in a regulated profession.
SB 490	AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE. 01/23/08 0174s. 2008 SESSION. 08-2850. 03/01. AN ACT relative to fees for special number plates for veterans and relative to vehicle registration fees for disabled veterans and former prisoners of war.
SB 520-FN-A	requiring the state veteran’s council to issue a state veterans handbook biennially and making an appropriation therefore.
SB 521-FN	increasing the maximum scholarship amount available from the national guard scholarship fund
SCR 7	urging the United States Department of Defense and Congress to restore full services to the Manchester Veterans Administration Hospital.

Bill Number	Title
SCR 8	urging the United States Department of Defense to restore the designation of Prisoner of War and Missing in Action to those servicemen and servicewomen who are missing in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

THE FOLLOWING 11 BILLS WERE ITL	
HB 1144	<i>allowing veterans discharged under honorable conditions to be eligible for the veteran's property tax credit</i>
HB 1267	allowing municipalities to adopt a non-wartime veterans' property tax credit (neutral)
HB 1336	requiring the Department of Education to develop a plan to educate school personnel to recognize stress-related issues in children whose parents have served in Iraq and Afghanistan (neutral)
HB 1357-FN	extensions of time for filing returns and making payments under the interest and dividends tax for deployed members of the United State armed forces
HB 1368-FN-A	establishing a financial benefit for returning New Hampshire national guard and Army reserve unit members and make an appropriation thereof
HB 1455	increasing the amount of the veterans' property tax credit and enabling municipalities to extend the veterans property tax credit to include all veterans who have been honorably discharged
HB 1541	relative to service in the Vietnam Conflict for purposes of qualification for the veterans' property tax credit
HB 1595-FN	driver's license renewals by persons engaged in overseas government service
HCR 16	urging Congress to rescind a law allowing the President to exercise federal control over the state national guard without consent of the Governor. (neutral)
SB 515	(New Title) relative to the combat veteran business tax credit.
SB 457	<i>extending the veterans' property tax credit to all honorably discharged veterans.</i>
THE FOLLOWING 3 BILLS SENT TO INTERIM STUDY	
HB 1431	establishing a permanent state defense force (neutral)
HB 1526	(New Title) the use of images of New Hampshire residents who died in the line of duty.
SB 211-FN-A	establishing a veterans' programs number plate trust fund and a special veteran's programs license plate, to support state veterans' programs
THE FOLLOWING BILL WAS LAID ON TABLE	

SB 307-FN-L

exempting Purple Heart plate recipients from number plate and registration fees.

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 remains fully engaged in the advisory process. We will 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. The committee seeks to develop and improve communications throughout the veteran community.

We have maintained a positive reputation among the legislators with which we have had 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.

During this reporting period the Committee, the State, and all veterans suffered a severe loss with the passing of Dr. Brian Matchett. Dr. Matchett was a knowledgeable, committed, and tireless advocate in support of his fellow veterans. Those did not know him at first questioned his aggressive bulldog style but soon learned it masked a man of unquestioned sincerity with a deep emotional connection with the problems of veterans generated in part from his own experiences. We mourn the passing of a man impossible to replace. Semper Fi

Respectfully submitted,

Griffin T. Dalianis, Chairman

Date