

ODVS Advisory Committee
Thursday, August 20, 2015

LeRoy Clendenen convened the meeting at 10:33 AM at the American Legion Post 171, 393 E. College Avenue, Westerville, Ohio. The meeting was opened with a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The pledge was followed by a moment of silence.

Roll Call

In Attendance:

Suzette Price, American Legion
Merle Pratt, AMVETS
April Philiopoulos, Advisory Committee on Women Veterans
Paul Haller, County Commissioners' Association of Ohio
Kenneth B. Marcum, Disabled American Veterans
Herbert Greff, Jewish War Veterans
Ed Zoretic, Korean War Veterans
Kelvin Jones, Labor Organization
William Eberle, Marine Corps League
John C. McCoy, Military Officers Association of America
Carl Price, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Victor Wilson, Ohio National Guard Association
LeRoy Clendenen, Chair, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Cliff Riley, Vietnam Veterans of America
Robert L. Mackin, Ohio State Association of Veteran Service Commissioners
David Ridenour, Ohio State Association of Veteran Service Commissioners
Jane Roland, Vice Chair, Ohio State Association of County Veteran Service Officers
Bob Park, Ohio State Association of County Veterans Service Officers
Tim Espich, Acting Director, Ohio Department of Veterans Services
Jim Forster, Acting Secretary, Ohio Department of Veterans Services
Angela Sullivan, Advisor, Ohio Attorney General's Office

Visitors:

Daniel Eakins, Ohio Department of Veterans Services
Jon Field, Ohio Department of Veterans Services
Steve Ewing, Ohio Department of Veterans Services
Fred Stratmann, Ohio Department of Veterans Services
Robert Haas, Department of Veterans Affairs/Wellness
John Stoner, Vietnam Veterans of America
Ray Autenrieb, Vietnam Veterans of America
Don Jones, Vietnam Veterans of America
Lisa Valentry, Ohio Senate Office of Senator Hughes
Eric Campfield, Ohio Senate Office of Senator Hughes
Jason Owen, Capital University Law School
Heather Lane, Veteran Companion Animal Services (VCAS)
Chris Macisco, VCAS
Kevin Curtis, Office of Secretary of State John Husted
Cliff Eckle, Ohio History Connection
Todd Kleismit, Ohio History Connection
James Kaster, Franklin County Recorder's Office

Absent:

Tim Gorrell, Ohio Department of Veterans Services -- Excused
Don Youngblood, Army Navy Union – Excused
Tammy Puff, Attorney General's Office -- Excused
Mary Ann Janning, Catholic War Veterans -- Excused
Jonathan Warmeling, Ohio State Association of County Veteran Service Officers-Excused
Joseph Eden, Ohio Department of Veterans Services -- Excused

Previous Meeting Minutes

The previous meeting minutes were approved after a motion by John McCoy, MOAA; seconded by Merle Pratt, AMVETS.

Agenda

The agenda was approved after a motion by Merle Pratt, AMVETS; seconded by Carl Price, MOPH.

Bills and Communications

- Karen Kish advised that Angela Sullivan is the new Attorney General Representative to the Advisory Committee.
- Larry J. Wulf advised that Mary Ann Janning, Catholic War Veterans representative would not attend the August meeting.
- Christopher Mabe advised that Kelvin Jones would be the OCSEA Representative to the Advisory Committee.
- Tammy Puff advised that she would be unable to attend the committee meeting due to her required attendance at another conference.
- Don Youngblood advised that he would be unable to attend the committee meeting due to his organization's national convention.

Report of Subcommittees: No sub-committees had met and no reports were given.

Guest Introductions

Guests in attendance were given an opportunity to introduce themselves and make limited comments.

The Committee Chair added a new topic to be discussed under New Business; his motion was seconded by April Philiopoulos, Advisory Committee for Women Veterans, and approved. The topic is: County Veterans Service Commission Update

Legislative Update – Steve Ewing

Steve Ewing, ODVS Legislative Liaison, discussed the highlights of the approved biennial budget bill and what that means for veterans. With the legislature on summer recess he explained that there was little legislative action to report until they return to session in mid-September. He gave a synopsis of pending state and federal legislation.

New Business

- I. The Committee Chair added a new topic to be discussed under New Business; his motion was seconded by April Philiopoulos, Advisory Committee for Women Veterans, and approved. The topic is: County Veterans Service Commission Update

Dave Ridenour briefed the results of the last OSAVSC leadership elections: Robert Mackin is now President; Ted Brunner is First Vice-President; and Ronald Distel is Second Vice-President. Their organization constitution has been broken into a separate documents: Constitution and By-Laws which will give their Executive Committee more flexibility to manage issues between meetings. CVSC recommended that Annual training requirements be changed from points per training event to a 10 hour training hour requirement for yearly certification. This will necessitate changes to the Administrative Code Rules for Veterans Service Commissioners, and these will be brought back to the Advisory Committee for discussion. Montgomery County Veterans Service Commission turmoil reported during the last meeting has resolved itself; the six additional commissioners appointed by the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners will not be reappointed because the statutory requirements of 5901.021 O.R.C. have been met.

- II. Veterans Art Show of Northwest Ohio is scheduled at Bowling Green University; interested veteran artists are asked to contact Mr. Ridenour; contact information was included on the program flyer.
- III. Capital University Program: Leaders to Lawyers: Jason Owen, Esq., Associate Director of Admissions discussed the Capital University the advantages of the Leaders to Lawyers Program and their Graduate Certificate Paralegal Program for returning veterans and the employment opportunities these programs provide. Capital University is a military friendly school, and will match up to \$6,000 any Yellow Ribbon funding received from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Tuition costs and financial assistance were also discussed.
- IV. Ohio History Connection: Todd Kleismit and Cliff Eckoles identified that the Ohio Historical Society is now the Ohio History Connection. They are in need of military service memorabilia from the Korean War, Vietnam War and recent conflicts in the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan for the Ohio History Connection. In the past they have waited passively for folks to donate items; unfortunately they have seen a generational lag in donations. They are also interested in collecting stories of the veteran's service. If you have items or individual veterans who are willing to tell their stories of service or have memorabilia from their time in the service or know of someone who is looking to donate material, please contact them and discuss the items, veterans@ohiohistory.org or 614/297-2535. Items donated and accepted into their permanent collection are maintained permanently.
- V. Workforce Update by Michael Evans from the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, explained the origin of his office in 2012 to unify Ohio's workforce program and to get returning veterans to work. Four key strategies are being followed to encourage veterans to return to Ohio when they complete their service time, and find employment for them. From July 2014, through the Veterans Business Support Center and the Ohio Means Jobs website there have been 2,000 inquiries from employers seeking to hire veterans; provided 4,000 resumes for review by prospective employers, 857 job interviews, and 403 employees have been hired at an average salary of \$14.25.

- VI. War Orphans Scholarship Update by Daniel Eakins, ODVS Programs: the FY16 and 17 budget bill has made positive changes in the funding of the War Orphans Scholarship. It allows the fund manager to create a reserve fund with unencumbered funding for future fiscal years should the fund require it. In FY16 the fund grows to \$6.8 million dollars, allowing a 30% increase in funding; 320 new recipients of scholarships were added for a total of 920 scholarships. The breakout is 609 students attending 4 year universities and a 120 attending 2 year degree programs funded at 100% and an average of \$5,607 for private universities. In FY 17 dollars increase to \$7.1 million the goal is to maintain funding at the 100% level and establish a reserve fund of \$241,000. Danny and Jon Fields are working with the Department of Higher Education to adjust the application to make it clearer and less legalize, and to establish a standard meeting date in July (last Wednesday and will begin in 2016). Deadline for applications to be submitted in July 1st.
- VII. Amputee Recreational Support Group. Bob Haas explained how a new program is being developed through his work as an advocate in the Amputee Clinic at the Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic. He has been appointed to the Board of Director's for the facility. The new program is a joint initiative between the VA and himself to recognize outside recreational activities, evaluate them and to establish a resource book for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The goal is to make them accessible to the veteran and ensure the veteran knows that the activities are good for them. Through their Open Houses the staff at the Columbus Outpatient Clinic will learn of the availability of these activities. This is part of the effort to transform the VA into a wellness program.
- VIII. Military Injury Relief Fund: Tim Espich updated the members on the changes to the program as a result of the budget bill. The program has been moved from Job and Family Services Department to ODVS effective July 1, 2015; it now has \$2 million in funding; awards have been paused during the transition but will begin again in September; security for the veteran's records has been improved; and new eligibility rules for the award have been established to expand it to veterans injured in active service after September 1, 2001. Proof of injuries remains the same as does the requirement that the applicant be an Ohio resident at the time of application. There is a new application which requires that the veteran have his signature notarized. The applications will be processed by the Bonus Team in Sandusky; they can be reached by calling our 1-800 number, Option #3. Future changes will be considered once the fund is operational.
- IX. Paul Haller, CCAO, briefed on the upcoming Buckeye Hero Hunt which will be a crossbow hunt in Southern Ohio for twelve disabled veterans at the Zaleski State Forest. The hunt will run from October 9-11, 2015. Potential hunters must submit an application and qualify for the free hunting license from the state; all costs to the hunter have been paid, guides and equipment will be provided through donations by Cabelas and Field and Stream. If this hunt is successful the Ohio Department of Wild Life is looking to expand the program throughout the state.
- X. Jane Roland announced the upcoming Veteran's Appreciation Day in Ashland, OH. Events will run all day on August 22, 2015 and will culminate in a USO Show from 7 to 9 p.m.

- XI. The Ohio Women's Veterans Conference is moving to a smaller venue at the Easton Hilton Inn on September 12, 2015.

Unfinished Business

Carl Price from the MOPH asked that the organizations and ODVS vote to support the introduction of Senator Hughes' Bill to establish August 7 as MOPH Day in Ohio. Ohio is the first state to be a Purple Heart State by the Ohio Revised Code. Chairman Clendenin advised that the committee would delay the vote until the next Advisory Committee meeting to give the representatives to coordinate with their organizations.

Director's Comments

Tim Espich gave Director Gorrell's comments because of his absence due to his vacation. He encouraged the veterans' service organizations to submit their reports to ODVS so that they can request their funds from the Office of Budget and Management; he also mentioned the staff changes within ODVS. He again highlighted the good news contained in the biennial budget, employment for veterans, the War Orphans Scholarship funding, the GDX and MIRF for veterans and the citizens of Ohio. He congratulated the Women Veterans Group who decided to pull their conference from its previous location and move it to the Easton Hilton Inn. And lastly he asked the Veterans Service Organizations to come to the next couple of meetings prepared to brief the Director on their top three or four priorities.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned after a motion was made by Herb Greff and seconded by Ed Zoretic. The next meeting will be held on September 17, 2015 at the American Legion Post 171.