

**UNITED VETERANS COMMITTEE OF COLORADO (UVC)**

<http://unitedveteranscommittee.com>



**UVC**  
**P.O. Box 31261**  
**Aurora, CO 80041-1261**

**Minutes**

**14 April, 2009**

**MEETINGS AT VFW POST 9644**  
**0900 hours**  
**2680 W Hampden Ave**  
**Englewood, CO 80110-1906**  
**303-789-9733**

West of Sante Fe on highway 285. First traffic light, turn right (Brady Court) and follow curving road to top of hill. VFW Post on left OR Turn North on Federal, and then right on Hampden and VFW Post will be on your right.

**NEW WEB ADDRESS:**

<http://unitedveteranscommittee.com>

**Email:** [uvcorg@comcast.net](mailto:uvcorg@comcast.net)

1. CALL TO ORDER 0900 hrs
2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
3. MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR POW/MIA's.
4. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION
  - First Time Attendees/Visitors welcomed
    1. LTC John Toth, Professor of Military Science, Univ. of Colo
    2. Major Martin Maranjo, Auraria campus
    3. Cadet Ryan McCann
    4. Jamie Grim, District Representative, Cong Betsy Markey's Office
    5. Jeff Roy, MOPH National Commander
    6. Francisco "Paco" Elizalde, Jr, MOPH dept of Colorado Jr Vice Cmdr
    7. Jerry Kelly, United Spinal
  - Special Speakers – LTC Roth reported on the current status of ROTC in Colorado, including its various programs and opportunities for student/cadet financial assistance.
5. ROLL CALL
6. REPORTS:
  - a) Secretary – minutes approved as published
  - b) Treasurer – Report accepted with exception that Korean War Vets state that they have made a contribution that the Treasurer's report does not show They will provide a copy of the cancelled check.
7. ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:
  - DAV** – Ken Camell – Advised that
    - the Department convention will be May 28-29 27 at the Doubletree Hotel on Quebec, across from Stapleton
    - the DAV National Convention will be in downtown Denver August 23-27 at the Sheraton Hotel, 1550 Court Place
  - Am legion** – Jim Gillis advised that
    - a 440 soldier Guard deployment was coming up on the weekend, with a sendoff event at the Pepsi Center. Friday afternoon. UVC members were invited. (Publicity also went out via UVC e-blast).
    - On Sat, Apr 25 @ 5:30 everyone, especially folks in Colorado Springs are invited to the Post 209 dedication. Nat'l Cmdr David Rehbein will be in attendance.
  - WVIN** – Edmee J. Hills reported that,
    - similar to last year, a joint resolution will be signed by the Senate, the House, and the Governor to recognize Veterans' Widows and Widowers Recognition Day.
    - And efforts are underway to get the remaining states to join Colorado in recognizing June 28 as Veterans' Widows and Widowers Recognition Day.
  - AMMV** – Clarke Valles thanked UVC and the Colorado Congressional delegation for their continuing support of HR 23 and S 961 / 663
  - Aurora Veterans Affairs Commission** – Pamela Bennett announced that the Aurora VAC was sponsoring a Memorial Day Parade on May 23, and a flag ceremony on May 25<sup>th</sup> at the east side of the Aurora Municipal Center, Alameda & Chambers, with a Buckley AFB ANG flyover.
  - Rocky Mountain USO** – Hedy Margolis announced the 2009 Rocky Mountain USO 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament and Silent Auction, Monday June 29<sup>th</sup> 2009 at the Highlands Ranch Golf Club, and distributed a flyer/registration form for the event.

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**VFW** – Warren Tellgren reported that the VFW's 2009 Priority Goals are at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) and mentioned these four

- Enforce PL 106-50's 3% government-wide procurement goal for disabled veteran owned small businesses.
- Improve Women veterans health care.
- Pass advanced funding for VA healthcare (see below under Cong Polis). (No Colorado Congressional members had yet signed on.)
- Eliminate 12 year limiting factor for service connected disabled use of vocational rehab and training.

**AVC** – Ken Melcher – Memorial Day Services @ Fort Logan National cemetery will be on May 25th, starting at 100hrs.

**Other** – Jay Bobick, UVC President, provided an update on the VA Hospital Architectural Planning Committee. They are planning for a 204-bed hospital with 30-bed Spinal care unit. Site demolition work will begin in June, with an 'official' groundbreaking ceremony in August. Effort will be made to complete the outpatient building in time for the USAF clinic to occupy it in Feb 2012 when their current facility lease runs out. Efforts are underway to add back in a theatre and chapel, and folks are working on obtaining additional financing.

### 8. UVC COMMITTEES

- Legislative Committee –
  - Marvin Meyers congratulated UVC member organizations for their successful efforts to obtain approval for the new VA hospital and provided updates on significant bills in the Colorado legislature affecting Veterans
  - Nate Gorman reiterated Marvin's comments, provided additional detail on several bills of interest to veterans, and advised that, to date, JBC members do not want to touch the Veterans Trust Fund, despite JBC staff recommendations.
- Banquet Committee – Ken Melcher reported that Honor Flight had reserved several tables, but, in general, banquet reservations and ad copy are running a bit behind last year. Also he reminded us that reservations deadline was the next day.
- Membership Committee – George Palmateer - the membership committee have been working to cleanup the membership records and brought to floor several organizations whose applications had not been formally voted or who sought reinstatement. The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans were formally accepted as a voting member. The Greatest Generation Foundation and the Aurora Veterans Affairs Commission were voted in as Associate members. The Univ of Colo. Veterans Affairs Office was reinstated. Vote on the Colorado Veterans for Housing was deferred, pending a representative to speak for the organization.
- Nominating Committee – George Palmateer presented, and the membership accepted, the committee's slate of officers for the 2009-2011 term of office as follows:
  - President – George Thomas
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Pres. – Ralph Bozella
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres. – Mike Shapiro
  - Secretary - Steve Rylant
  - Treasurer - Glenn Kataoka

### 9. COLORADO BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS – George Thomas

- April's meeting would be later in the day at the DMA.
- The May meeting will be on the 13<sup>th</sup> in Grand Junction at VFW 1247 with a social the prior evening at 1900 hrs, and the business meeting starting at 0900. West slope members are encouraged to attend.
- The June meeting will address grant requests HB 1329 is pending to allow the revenue split to fund grants to increase to 90/10 %

10. VETERANS NURSING HOME COMMISSION – Bill Sinclair – complimented Nate Gorman on the work he is doing as our lobbyist and reported that the commission meeting on 24 March was non-productive due to unplanned absences. The Governor has reappointed two members, and the commission will meet again in June.

11. VETERANS NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATION – Brad Honl and Jeff Jerebker provided updates on Fitzsimmons and the other homes. Census is recovering from the flu outbreaks reported last month.

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12. FITZSIMMONS NURSING HOME ADVISORY COUNCIL – Ken Melcher had nothing to add.

13. CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS

Senator Udall's Office –

Senator Bennett's Office –

Congressional Dist. 1 – DeGette –

Congressional Dist. 2 – Polis – Gina Salazar reported that Congressman Polis

- Signed a letter to Chairman Spratt, HBC, requesting approval of the Dept of Veterans Affairs budget One year in advance
  - The presidents Budget outline mentions increasing funding but did not address changing the way the funding process works to approve the budget a year in advance.
  - Late and last-minute funding doesn't allow the VA to provide quality care to veterans or offer to continue production on VA facilities like Fitzsimmins.
- Will open a 3<sup>rd</sup> District Office on 4/16 to serve Adams, Weld, and Jefferson Counties.
  - New office will be headed by Gina, who is the deputy Dist. Dir. And MLA
  - Location is 1200 E 78<sup>th</sup> Ave, Suite 105, Thornton, 80229 (in the Welby New Technology High School)
  - More info – [gina.salazar@mail.house.gov](mailto:gina.salazar@mail.house.gov) or 303-287-4159
- Will hold a roundtable discussion with Iraq and Afghanistan Vets to share his recent experiences visiting those two areas, and to get their thoughts and ideas.

Congressional Dist. 3 – Salazar –

Congressional Dist. 4 – Markey – Jamie Grim reported that the Congresswoman is co-sponsoring

- HR 174 to establish a military cemetery
- HR 303: the Retired Pay Restoration Act
- Hr 666: Military Valor Roll Honor Act
- HR 667: Heros at Home Act 2009
- HR 775: Surviving spouses Equity Act

Congressional Dist. 5 – Lamborn –

Congressional Dist. 6 – Coffman – Myron Spanier reported that Congressman Coffman

- Visited the border – the National guard may go back
- Will be visiting most of the military bases in Colorado
- Introduced a bill for Water Conservation Credit
- Expressed major concerns with the new Gates proposed military cuts and restructure.

Congressional Dist. 7 – Perlmutter –

14. VISN 19, VARO, VA National Cemetery NCA, VA ECHCS, VA DALC, Fort Logan

1.) VISN 19 – Dr Leigh Anderson reported on VISN 19 Expansion Plan updates

- 8 proposals submitted to Office of Rural Health. Anticipate go / no go decisions by end of month
- Expanding women's health care
- Expanding pain in initiatives
- DaVince Prostatectomy Robotic Program
- Expanding surgical programs in Cheyenne & Grand Junction

2.) VARO – Rebecca Sawyer Smith

- Introduced Gabe Douglas, a new staff assistant in the director's Office. Gabe is a Navy OEF/OIF veteran, and currently in the reserves.
- VARO has authority to hire 17-23 employees with stimulus money to decrease claims pending. Claims production has been over goal for the past two months (11% over in March). Home Loan production has increased due to the economy.
- The Disability Evaluation System (DES) Pilot Program starts in May. VARO will have three in the program, which will involve one VA/DOD exam for newly discharged veterans at Fort Carson. DES Pilot is in addition to VARO's BOD site in Ft Carson
- The Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass has completed and VARO looks forward to hosting the 2010 National Wheel Chair Games here in Denver.

3.) Ft. Logan – (see AVC, above)

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4.) ECHCS – Keith Harmon, new Executive Assistant replacing Christina White (Keith [Harmon@VA.gov](mailto:Harmon@VA.gov) , 303-398-7469) provided the following updates.

- DES Pilot @Ft Carson scheduled to open June 1. All employees on board and scheduled for training in both DOD and VA systems
- Joint Incentive Fund (JIF) proposal submitted to both DOD & VA requesting 2-year startup funds for VA to do ambulatory surgery @ USAFA. If approved, will allow VA to do Surgeries in Colorado springs and reduce travel impacts for vets from southern Colorado.
- VA Eastern Colorado has been designated as a Federal Communications Center for disaster preparedness, assuming the responsibility from Ft Carson. VAMC will now coordinate disaster relief for medical evac to Colorado, such as from New Orleans after Katrina.
- New Hospital: ECHCS met with the architects after the stand-alone hospital announcement. They are developing options to reincorporate the bed tower and research Final budget expected at end of April.
- Colorado Springs: Space planning meeting scheduled for April 16. Because of ambulatory surgery plan for the USAFA, the planned HCC must be “rightsized”. Looking at leasing options for existing or planned vacant space. Once space needs are determined, VACO will advertise and negotiate.
- Thanks to VISN19, the Denver VAMC has been approved for an electro-physiology program with their cardiac program, enabling them to provide services previously sent to Salt Lake City.
- DaVinci: Contract signed with Rose Hospital to use their DaVinci Robot for radical prostatectomies. A VA surgeon will do the procedures. Patient outcomes are reportedly vastly improved. With experience gained, workload cost will be evaluated to see if VA should purchase the equipment & become a urology center of excellence.
- Next VSO Meeting: April 15 @1330 hrs in the auditorium.

15. DMVA / DVA – no report

16. OLD BUSINESS:

17. NEW BUSINESS:

18. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS –

- Marvin Meyers reminded us that UVC has voted three times, unanimously, supporting the following:
  - All land north and south of the Veterans Home at Fitzsimmons is obligated for future development for Veteran Domiciliary Care and related services.
  - It is part of the Fitzsimmons Master Plan.
  - The land has been conveyed to the State of Colorado and diversion for other uses is not negotiable.
- Jay Bobick read two letters sent to UVC
  - From VA Secretary Shinseki expressing regrets that scheduled congressional testimony precludes his appearance at our annual banquet, but expressing his desire to receive a subsequent invitation to address our group.
  - From PVA President and National Director Jim Sack expressing gratitude to UVC for our supporting efforts to assure inclusion of a spinal cord unit in the new VA Hospital.

19. ADJOURN 1110 hrs

20. Next Meeting: 12 May 2009

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Michael Shapiro Secretary UVC** April 24, 2009

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*James C. Bobick, UVC President, 303-699-1575*  
*George Dale Thomas, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, 303-751-8252*  
*Ralph Bozella, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP; 303-776-3890*  
*Warren Tellgren, Immediate Past Commander, 303-912-4927*  
*Michael N. Shapiro, Secretary, 303-619-2276*  
*Glenn Kataoka, Treasurer, 303-795-4343*  
*Marvin Meyers, Legislative Committee Chairman, 303-694-9022;*  
*Nathan M. Gorman, Legislative Liaison, 303-221-2231.*  
*Larry Carrol, Judge Advocate 303-794-2894*  
*Budget Committee – Ken Melcher, 303-341-9170*  
*Nominating Committee – George Palmateer, 303-279-7593*  
*Awards Banquet Committee – Ken Melcher, 303-341-9170*  
*Membership Committee – George Palmateer, 303-279-7593*

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