

# NH STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 7 November 2023

Location: ECTC, 722 Riverwood Dr., Pembroke, NH

## OFFICERS and VOTING MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

**Chairman** - Paul Loyd (P)  
**Vice Chair** - Diane Dominicis (P)  
**Secretary** - Denise DeBlois (P)  
**Treasurer** - Kelly Dobens (P)  
**Chair Emeritus** - David Kenney (P)  
**Chaplain** - Armand Soucy (P)

### **Air Force Association**

Kevin Grady (prim) (P)  
Gavin MacAloon (alt)

### **Air Force Sergeants Association**

Richard Dolby (prim)  
Martha Gladu (alt) (P)

### **American Legion**

Mike Lopez (prim) (P)  
Robert Blais (alt) (P)  
Bill Roy (alt) (P)  
Leo Paquin (alt) (P)

### **AUSA - Col. Cross Chapter**

Greg d'Arbonne (prim) (P)  
Ed Harrington (alt)

### **Catholic War Veterans**

Denise DeBlois (prim) (P)  
Robert Guldner (alt) (P)  
Armand Soucy (alt) (P)

### **Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association**

Nate Smith (prim)

### **Disabled American Veterans**

Rick Borrazas (prim) (P)  
Robert Guldner (alt) (P)

### **Korean War Veterans**

Mike Lopez (prim) (P)  
Conrad Perreault (alt)

**Marine Corps League**

Shawn Carboni (prim)  
Gary Gahan (alt)  
Chris Peirce (alt) (P)

**Military Officers Association (MOAA)**

Peter Burdett (prim) (P)  
Laurence Miller (alt) (P)  
William Luti (alt) (P)

**Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)**

Tony Fowler (prim)

**National Guard Association of NH**

Peter Duffy (prim)  
Steve Greco (alt)  
Roy Hunter (alt)  
Mike Horne (alt)

**NH Army Retiree Council**

Frank Musmanno (prim)  
Mike Rice (alt) (P)

**NH National Guard Enlisted Association**

Michael Lestage (prim)  
Mike Rice (alt) (P)  
Jack Howley (alt)

**NH Veterans Association**

Kelly Dobens (prim) (P)  
Mike Young (alt)  
Doug Crooker (alt)

**Patriot Resilient Leader Institute (Camp Resilience)**

Kurt Webber (prim)  
Ed Harrington (alt)  
Steve Veinotte (alt) (P)

**Reserve Officers Association of NH**

David Kenney (prim) (P)  
Mike Horne (alt)  
BG John Pappas (alt)

**Rolling Thunder**

Bruce Garry (prim) (P)  
Robert Brown (alt) (P)  
Diane Domenicis (alt) (P)

**Veterans of Foreign Wars**

Denis Querrard (prim) (P)  
Andrew Corrow (alt) (P)  
Paul Lloyd (alt) (P)

**Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA-41)**

Raymond Goulet, Jr. (prim) (P)  
Alan Grant (alt)  
Robert Heichlinger (alt) (P)

**LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS - non voting**

**Governor's Office** - Trevor McAden  
**Senator Maggie Hassan** - Justin Troiano  
**Senator Jeanne Shaheen** - Chris Scott  
**Congressman Chris Pappas** - Gage Wheeler  
**Congresswoman Annie Kuster** - Molly Smith

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS**

Rep. Terry Roy  
Rep. Tim Lang  
Sen. Regina Birdsell  
Rep. Linda Massimilla

**COMMITTEE ADVISORS/AGENCIES:**

**VAMC, Manchester, NH** - Kevin Forrest, Director  
**NHNG** - MG David Mikolaities, Adjutant General NHNG  
Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General  
**NH Veterans Cemetery** - Shawn Buck  
**NH Veterans Home** - Kimberly MacKay  
Margaret "Peggy" LaBrecque, Sage Emeritus  
**Bureau of Community Based Military** - Brenton Fraser, Director  
**Martins Point** - John Reed and Brenda Pennells  
**State Veterans Council** - Jim Adams

## **GUESTS:**

Pat Miller - NHMOAH

Jorg Dreusicke - VFW

SGM Jim Goss

Ronald G. Corsetti - Col, USA, Retired - Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army

Paula Borrazas - DAV Auxiliary and CWV Auxiliary

Connor Nicols - guest speaker

Col. John Wildermann - guest speaker

## **OPEN MEETING/CALL TO ORDER:**

Paul Lloyd, Chairman, convened meeting at 1700 hours.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Chairman

**Invocation:** Armand Soucy.

**Welcome - Remarks of the Chair:** Paul welcomed our guests.

## **Secretary's Report:**

Meeting has a quorum; attendance on file.

The minutes of the last meeting on 3 October 2023 was approved and placed in the record.

**Treasurer's Report:** Account balance is \$752.67.

A donation of \$100 was received from Martin's Point.

**Comments from Vice Chair:** Diane Domenicis - None.

**Comments from Director Emeritus:** David Kenney - None

## **Guest Speakers:**

### **(1) Connor Nicol, Founder "We Will Remember"**

Connor is a 15 year old student at Winnacunnet High School in Hampton, NH. He is the founder of "We Will Remember." He discussed his Memorial Dog Tag Project using

a Power Point presentation. Every life matters and we can remember them. He gets all the information from the National Archives which is public information. Connor formats the information and makes a dog tag for each individual service member who died and an information card with their name, rank, service, hometown and date of their death. Connor does not sell the dog tags. They are provided free to the person adopting the tag. He asks that the people who take the tags to say the service member's name, include them in their prayers, and keep them in their thoughts. They can use the tag as as a keychain, wear it as a dog tag or put it someplace safe. Connor is asking for help from the Veterans Service Organizations in finding homes for the dog tags and / or sponsoring additional dog tags. The tags cost approximate \$1 each to produce. So far Connor has made over 50,000 dog tags. His goal is to finish the Vietnam War and then move on to Desert Storm, OIF and other recent conflicts before starting on World War 2. Connor was featured on CNN. He received the National Patriotic Award from the VFW. Connor can be reached at tel. 540-845-3871 or [connor@wewillremember.us](mailto:connor@wewillremember.us). Website is [www.wewillremember.us](http://www.wewillremember.us).

### **(2) Col. John Wildermann, 99th Readiness Division Legislative Affairs**

Col. Wildermann is with the Army Reserve in New Jersey. He discussed the tuition reimbursement available by many states. There are 3 components - #1 is Active duty, so it #2 is National Guard, and the #3 is Reserve. New Jersey offers free tuition for National Guard members up to a doctorate. He is looking to have this available across all branches. New Hampshire has it for National Guard only.

### **(3) Brenda Pennels, Martins Point**

Brenda is the Strategic Relations Manager at Martin's Point Health Care and Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for Maine. She discussed the Medicare Advantage plans with Martin's Point available to veterans when eligible. She answered various questions on Medicare, Tricare, and CHAMPVA. You have until December 7th to make an election. Brenda Pennels can be reached at 207-671-1262 or [brenda.pennels@martinspoint.org](mailto:brenda.pennels@martinspoint.org).

## **SUPPORTING AGENCY REPORTS:**

### **Manchester VA Update:**

Ken Christopher gave a brief report on behalf Director Kevin Forrest. The VA held a second National Prescription Drug Take back day. The VA works closely with the New Hampshire Hospital Association. A certificate and Centenarian Coin was given to one veteran age 100. The VA had a Lung Cancer screening awareness day. The VA hired a new orthopedic surgeon.

The new flagpole is up.  
The Eagle entrance will be opening.  
The Million Veterans Program is being encouraged.  
The VA in White River Junction is renovating the inpatient ward in January.  
Atkinson, NH was selected as the site to celebrate Veterans Day.  
Flu shots and RSV shots are available.

**DMAVS Update:** Warren Perry gave an oral report.

Dept. of Military & Veterans Services (Warren Perry): He discussed the licensing for the Veteran Friendly Business Symposium. He mentioned the homeless issue. Housing veterans is not necessarily permanent housing. There are zoning laws, stigma, not in my back yard. The State is approving authority to accredit schools. Job is to help veterans get an education. Work through the Ask The Question Campaign - Have you ever served in the military? They are in the infant stages to provide dental services to veterans who cannot afford it. The issue is capacity. There is a pilot program in the North Country. They are building a network of providers in New Hampshire for veterans with chronic dental needs.

NHSVC (Shawn Buck): No Veterans Day service. Go to services in your local community. Tell your friends about Veterans Day. Thank you to Rolling Thunder and others for cleaning headstones. \$6.1 million is being provided for cemetery expansion. More veterans are coming to the NHSVC. Thursday, Nov 9th - Flags up at 1:00 pm. Monday, Nov 13th - bring flags in, weather permitting. 1st Saturday, Dec 2nd - Put Wreaths Up. All are welcome.

NHOVS (Bill Gaudreau): In a steady state after the PACT Act. Appointments are being booked into January. Office is down one VSO. They are actively hiring.

Other comments: National Guard folks are coming back from border patrol and the Middle East. The football field for the National Guard facility will be ready in March. It will be made available to the public for a fee. The field will be used for the Army Combat Fitness Test. Regarding welcome home ceremonies, troops are coming back in waves, not the whole unit.

**NH Veterans Home:** Commandant Kimberly MacKay gave an oral report and provided a written report as follows:

Resident status: 132 veterans (120 men and 12 women). Average age is 83.

We have 21 veterans on our wait list. 17 veterans are at other long term care facilities, while 4 veterans are living at home with family members.

We have 40 applications in admissions process.

Staffing, overall vacancy rate is 36%. Nursing vacancy is 42% and 43% for LNA's which correlates to the 42% resident bed vacancy rate.

Branches of Service: Army - 52  
Navy - 38  
Air Force - 31  
Marines - 7  
Coast Guard - 2  
National Guard - 2

Covid Update: We have offered all residents the covid vaccine.

We will be moving one of our neighborhoods, Tarr South, to other neighborhoods within the LEDU building to allow residents to have private rooms.

We said good bye to one of our veterans, Norman Sandborn Sr. He was instrumental in bringing the RED shirt program to the NH Veterans Home. He has raised money to ensure that every resident received a new red shirt upon admission.

Thank you for your support with adopt a veteran for our Christmas program. If you are interested in sponsoring a veteran please see below.

On the "Support" page of our website (<https://www.nh.gov/veterans/support/index.htm>), we briefly mention ways donations made to our Resident Benefit Fund support our veterans, including under the "Celebrations and Holidays" section.

Veterans Day Ceremony will be held on November 10, 2023 at 11 am at the NH Veterans Home in the town hall.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**LEGISLATIVE BRIEFINGS:**

Kevin Grady, Legislative Chair, is on vacation.  
The status of bills was distributed via email. There is no language yet on the bill list.

**LEGISLATIVE ADVISORS:** Written reports attached or emailed separately if submitted to Chair.

**Trevor McAden (Gov. Chris Sununu):** not present.

**8Chris Scott (Senator Shaheen):** brief report

**Justin Troiano (Senator Hassan):** brief report.

**Molly Smith (Rep. Annie Kuster):** brief report..

**Gage Wheeler (Rep. Chris Pappas):** brief report.

**Upcoming Events:**

1st Wednesday - Monthly POW/MIA Vigil - 1900 at Veteran's Park, Manchester, NH

4th Tuesday - Monthly POW/MIA Vigil - 1900 at Langdon Park, Portsmouth, NH

Every Thursday - Weekly POW/MIA vigil - 1900 at Hesky Park, Meredith, NH

1st Friday - Monthly POW/MIA vigil - 1900 at Pine Grove Cemetery, Salem, NH

**Next meeting date:** Tuesday, 5 December 2023

**Adjourn Meeting:** 1823 hours (6:23 pm)

A motion was made by Ray Goulet to adjourn, seconded. Unanimous. Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise DeBlois, Secretary



Office of U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan

NH SVAC Legislative Update

11.7.2023

10.10.2023

**SIGNED INTO LAW: Senators Hassan and Braun's Bipartisan Bill to Support Veterans' Children Born with Spina Bifida**

President Joe Biden has signed into law a bipartisan bill introduced by Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH), a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and Mike Braun (R-IN) to strengthen the VA Spina Bifida Program to benefit the children of Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

Many Vietnam veterans were exposed to the chemical Agent Orange during their service. Children born to those exposed to Agent Orange have a higher risk of spina bifida. Of the estimated 1,500 veterans' kids suffering from spina bifida in the U.S., fewer than half of those are enrolled in the VA Spina Bifida program. Under Senator Hassan and Braun's bill, the VA will proactively reach out to potential beneficiaries to make sure that they are getting the benefits that they are eligible for. Those benefits will also now last for the life of the child and will not be affected by the death of their parent.

*"Agent Orange not only had a devastating impact on service members exposed to it, but also posed medical risks to their children," said Senator Hassan. "We must make sure that this generation gets necessary medical care, and our new bipartisan law will help ensure that more veterans' children get the care and benefits that they need and deserve. I will continue working to get veterans and their families the support that they need to thrive."*

10.16.2023

**Senators Hassan and Ernst Encourage Veterans to Participate in VA's First National Buddy Check Week**

Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Joni Ernst (R-IA) are encouraging veterans to participate in the Department of Veterans Affairs' first annual National Buddy Check Week, which starts today and goes through October 20th. The VA is organizing outreach events to educate veterans on how to conduct peer wellness checks. Senators Hassan and Ernst worked to pass the bill into law last year to institute the yearly VA program to support veterans' mental health, which is modeled after the American Legion's "Buddy Check National Week of Calling" to connect veterans to other veterans in order to better ensure that they receive the support they need.

Thanks to Senators Hassan and Ernst's law, the VA is working directly with nonprofits that serve veterans, mental health experts, and members of the Armed Forces to provide educational opportunities for veterans to learn how to conduct peer wellness checks. Additionally, the Senators' bill ensures that the Veterans Crisis Line has a plan in place for the potential increase in calls that may occur during Buddy Check Week.

11.02.2023

## **Senator Hassan Helps Secure Key NH Priorities in Senate-Passed Government Funding Bill**

Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH) helped secure key New Hampshire priorities in the Senate-passed legislation providing government funding for the Departments of Agriculture, Veterans Affairs, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development.

- Significant funding for dry dock construction at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard
- A bipartisan amendment cosponsored by Senator Hassan to research toxic exposure of veterans who served in Kosovo
- Funding to support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as the European Deterrence Initiative and the Pacific Defense Initiative, to help continue standing up to Putin and protecting our national security
- Funding to expand access to child care for military families and support for the VA's caregiver program, which Senator Hassan has worked to protect
- Increased funding for veterans' mental health, as well as funding to help the VA respond to the opioid epidemic, including increasing access to lifesaving medication like naloxone
- Directing the VA to take additional action to protect military fire fighters exposed to PFAS, including creating a registry of veterans exposed to PFAS as a part of fire fighting chemicals
- Additional funding to support veterans – including for homeless veterans and veterans in rural communities – as well as for medical and prosthetic research programs and VA mammography services
- Increased funding to update legacy IT at the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Agriculture, and the Federal Aviation Administration – helping to improve government services, increase cybersecurity, and save taxpayer dollars
- Increased funding for Inspectors General at the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation, as well as the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, to help root out waste, fraud, and abuse at these agencies



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Account Name: NH STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
 Member Number: XXXX9540  
 Period Ending: 09/30/2023

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NH STATE VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
 1191 GOFFSTOWN RD  
 MANCHESTER NH 03102-2314

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**Summary of Accounts**

Type	Name	Account	End Balance
Savings	BUSINESS SAVINGS	XXXXXX4000	\$5.02
Checking	BUSINESS CHECKING	XXXXXX4009	\$652.67

**BUSINESS SAVINGS - XXXXXX4000**

Authorized Signer : Kelly Dobens  
 Designated Signer : David J Kenney

Eff Date	Tran Date	Description	Debits	Credits	Balance
09/01		Beginning Balance			\$5.02
09/30		Ending Balance			\$5.02

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY:**

Beginning balance	\$5.02
0 Deposits and other credits	\$0.00
0 Dividend payments	\$0.00
0 Withdrawals and other debits	\$0.00
Service charges	\$0.00
Ending balance	\$5.02

**DIVIDEND SUMMARY:**

Dividends paid year-to-date for this account	\$0.00
Annual percentage yield earned	0.0000%

**FEE SUMMARY:**

Description	This Period	Year-to-Date
Total Overdraft Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Returned Item Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00

**BUSINESS CHECKING - XXXXXX4009**

Authorized Signer : Kelly Dobens  
 Designated Signer : David J Kenney

Eff Date	Tran Date	Description	Debits	Credits	Balance
09/01		Beginning Balance			\$652.67
09/30		Ending Balance			\$652.67

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY:**

Beginning balance	\$652.67
0 Deposits and other credits	\$0.00
0 Dividend payments	\$0.00
0 Withdrawals and other debits	\$0.00
Service charges	\$0.00
Ending balance	\$652.67

**FEE SUMMARY:**

Description	This Period	Year-to-Date
Total Overdraft Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Returned Item Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00

Status Report  
 Bills and LSRs 2023/2024 Session

BILL/LSR	RELATIVE TO ...	COMMITTEE	STATUS	PRIME SPONSOR	LAST/NEXT HEARING	SVAC POSITION	REMARKS
HOUSE							
2123	Relative to New Hampshire's enforcement of the Military Service Selection Act		Proposed	Tom Mannion			
2144	A resolution affirming the New Hampshire militia		Proposed	Mike Belcher			
2153	Relative to state park system fees for retired members of the armed forces		Proposed	James Horgan			
2155	Relative to property tax exemptions for certain disabled veterans		Proposed	Diane Pauer			
2210	Relative to requiring the display of certain information Selective Service registration at drivers licensing and school military recruiting locations		Proposed	Tom Mannion			
2223	Relative to the Honor and Remember Flag		Proposed	Michael Moffett			
2235	Relative to special number plates for surviving spouses of veterans		Proposed	John Sellers			
2252	Relative to the National Guard recruitment and reinstatement incentive program		Proposed	Michael Moffett			
2254	Relative to a waiver from property taxes for disabled veterans		Proposed	Michael Moffett			
2265	Relative to creating a veterans treatment court program		Proposed	Michael Moffett			
2273	Relative to the interstate compact on educational opportunities for military children		Proposed	Hope Damon			
BILL/LSR	RELATIVE TO ...	COMMITTEE	STATUS	PRIME SPONSOR	LAST/NEXT HEARING	SVAC POSITION	REMARKS

