

Vietnam Veterans of America
Conference of State Council Presidents
January 27-28, 2012
Daytona FL
Approved Minutes

Meeting of the Conference of State Council Presidents was called to order by Chair Charlie Montgomery at 9:00 am on Friday, January 27, 2012.

Chapter 1048 presented the colors. Lionel Marmolejo, GA, gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was done and a moment of silence followed for POW/MIA's, and our troops in harms way.

Roll Call of States: The states represented at the meeting totaled 30; a quorum was met. The following States were present:

ALABAMA	LOUISIANA	OKLAHOMA
ARIZONA	MISSISSIPPI	PENNSYLVANIA
CALIFORNIA	MONTANA	SOUTH CAROLINA
CONNECTICUT	NEBRASKA	SOUTH DAKOTA
FLORIDA	NEVADA	TENNESSEE
GEORGIA	NEW JERSEY	TEXAS
INDIANA	NEW YORK	VIRGINIA
IOWA	NORTH CAROLINA	WASHINGTON
KANSAS	NORTH DAKOTA	WEST VIRGINIA
KENTUCKY	OHIO	WISCONSIN

Officers present were:

Chair:	Charlie Montgomery - Virginia
1 st Vice Chair	Tom Burke - Ohio
2 nd Vice Chair	Bill Messer - Arizona
Secretary:	Avery Taylor – South Carolina

Housekeeping:

Charlie Montgomery assigned Wayne Reynolds of Alabama as Parliamentarian.

The agenda was adopted with moving Vet Employment presentation to Saturday.

The minutes of October 6, 2011, were accepted without objection.

Jerry Klein of Florida welcomed members of the conference.

Bob Barry, Region 4 Director welcomed members of the conference.

John Rowan welcomed members of the conference.

Officers Reports:

Chair, Charlie Montgomery:

Yielded time to Lionell Marmolejo to discuss the current BOD proposal regarding “partnering” with the Yale Law School to allow a same sex, non-veteran, “legally married” spouse to receive VA survivors benefits.

Motion: 0112001, by Lionell Marmolejo, 2nd by Wayne Reynolds, to have SC presidents take the issue to their state councils for opinion and report at the next BOD meeting. (The issue to decide: Should the VVA be involved in this “Politically Charged Issue” of whether a person should be allowed to file with VA for spousal benefits in a same sex marriage. **Motion Failed on a role call vote: 15 F, 15 O.**

In favor: AL, GA, KS, LA, MS, MT, NE, NV, NJ, NC, SC, SD, VA, WA, WV

Oppose: AZ, CA, CT, FL, IN, IO, KY, NY, ND, OH, OK, PA, TN, TX, WI

Also announced that Tom Burke has been appointed as National Public Affairs Chair and that Tom Berger has been kept on the payroll, at least until April.

Tom Burke: Read report about backlog of claims to be rated and retraining claims specialists. He emphasized that members need to inform congress about our opinion of the condition.

Bill Messer: Nothing to report.

Announcements:

Wes Guidry – Winter conference room bookings are falling off. This makes it hard to get a good deal with venues.

Motion: 0112002, by Dottie Barickman, 2nd by Pat Bessigano to have the 2013 Winter CSCP meeting at Silver Spring, MD in conjunction with our regular BOD meeting. Carried without objection.

Special Presentations:

Suicide Risk Prevention – Dr. Jan Kemp, Director of the VA Crisis Center, made a presentation on the operation of the call center.

Dick Southern (California) gave an update on the National Membership committee and announced new application forms will be available soon. Procedures to sign up for online distribution of membership rosters will be sent to CSCP talklist.

Dave Simmons (West Virginia) discussed a presentation he gave to the United Mine Workers in WV to promote an awareness of VVA and how we can partner in Health Care programs awareness and other things.

CSCP Reports:

Constitution – Bill Messer stated there will be a proposal on wording regarding calling a Director and officer.

Veteran Benefits – Jerry Klein announced the VA is going to an automated rating system. We should also have online service officer training in a couple of months.

Women Veterans – Beverly Stewart is replaced by Pat Dumin on this committee.

Veterans Health Council – Pat Bessigano reported that the main projects for the committee right now are HepC and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary studies.

Membership – Dick Southern stated new War Maps will be printed and distributed.

Political Action Committee –

Motion 0112003 by Wayne Reynolds to have another “Take the Hill” event in conjunction with the Spring CSCP/BOD meeting. Motion carried without objection.

It was stated the meeting will be moved to Wednesday and the visit to the hill on Thursday. The National office will need to prepare the state presidents for the upcoming “take the hill” event in April (topics to discuss with members.)

iMIS Report:

Wayne Reynolds (AL) gave a presentation on the history and status of the iMIS project, why it is \$200K over budget, and what we are doing next.

Hays Insurance:

Rex Moody (MS) gave a presentation on the services provided by Hays Insurance including when and how to apply for additional coverage. Policies will need to be renewed before the end of this year but chapters and councils should get instructions on how to do this in plenty of time. Ned Foote will send info packet to CSCP talklist.

Veterans Relief Fund:

Bill Robins (WA) discussed this fund, formerly called the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act, and stated that states (by county) have access to this fund and everyone should learn how to use it.

He also announced that the “concurrent pay” bills are still in committee and we should make an effort to encourage these to be enacted.

Veterans Employment:

Ron Pierce gave a presentation of what the VA is doing to encourage businesses to hire our veterans returning from service and the family members of deployed servicemen. Two questions were raised that he will have to get back to us on:

1. Why does a veteran owned business have to re-certify annually?
2. How long must a hired veteran have to be on the payroll before the employer can claim his tax credits?

General Discussion –

The status of Service Officer growth was discussed as many locations are currently at the cap of \$20K. As we see how the car donation program generates funds we want to expand to new states before raising the cap to \$25K.

The \$437K grant is in the bank and has not been committed. Consensus is we need to use this for a special and permanent event. It should not be used to recover expended funds.

E-mailing of Rosters will begin by the end of February. Chapters must inform Joe Sternburg who to send to. It was suggested that there be training on how to manipulate these reports online at the Leadership conference. The planning committee will take it under advisement.

Announcements/ Round Table:

North Carolina – Region III conference will be in Ashville, March 28 – 31.

Pennsylvania – Created a vet foundation to help raise funds. Performed a homeless veteran presentation.

California – Had 201st weekly sit-in with the LA VA to get the Vet land back.

Indiana – Pat Bessigano suggested sending pamphlets to doctors with a cover letter to increase awareness of veteran entitlements. She will send out a sample letter to the CSCP talklist.

Wisconsin – Just started working on establishing the first Native American chapter.

Florida – Legislation introduced to open up Veteran Courts statewide. Also, a bill introduced to convert military experience into college credits. Jerry will forward additional information regarding Veteran Courts to CSCP talklist.

Texas – Preparing for leadership conference. Encouraged people to sign up for Omni Perks card.

Oklahoma – Suggested (from their own experience) it would be a good idea to insure you have a backup for both the Secretary and Treasurer positions.

Kentucky – Have hit the 1,000 member milestone.

Several states – reported issues and problems with getting chapters reinstated following the IRS and VVA suspensions, especially with incarcerated chapters.

There being no further business, Meeting was adjourned at 11:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Avery Taylor

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CSCP Secretary