PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY
VETERANS' RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE

Pursuant to Section 19.84, Wis. Stats., a regular meeting of the **Brown County Veterans' Recognition Subcommittee** was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 5:00 p.m., in Room 201 of the Northern Building, 305 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

PRESENT: Chair Bernie Erickson, Duane Pierce, Tracy Rosinski, Rosemary Desisles, Carl Soderberg, Jim Haskins, Jerry Polus, Lynn Geiser, Louise Dahlke, Mark Meunier, Eric Simon, Ed Koslowski, Joe Witkowski
EXCUSED: Delores Pierce

**Running Total of Veterans' Certificates: 1685

1. **Call Meeting to Order.**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bernie Erickson at 5:00 p.m.

2. **Invocation.**

3. **Approve/Modify Agenda.**

The agenda was modified to move Item 11 to follow Item 4.

Motion made by Joe Witkowski, seconded by Duane Pierce to approve as amended. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **Approve/Modify Minutes of March 17, 2015.**

Motion made by Joe Witkowski, seconded by Ed Koslowski to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **Possible discussion/review regarding Veterans Appreciation Day at the Brown County Fair in preparation for 2015.**

Jim Haskins reported that he had received an e-mail from Rachel at the Fair Board regarding the band for the Fair event. The e-mail indicated that Rachel knew of a band comprised of all veterans who play a variety of music from classic 1970s rock to current music. Haskins said that he will attend the Fair Board meeting on April 22 to get more information regarding this band and will report back to this Subcommittee next month. CVSO Jerry Polus indicated that he has heard back from the Air Force band and they are unable to perform at the Fair this year so a different band will be necessary. Ed Koslowski indicated that he had spoken with his contact person from the band that performed last year and they are available this year and the cost would be $300, so that may be an option. This will be discussed further at next month's meeting.

Louise Dahlke of the Fair Board brought up the issue of the covered stage and asked how much of the stage the Subcommittee desired to be covered and why. It was indicated that the covering was desired for weather purposes. Dahlke indicated that if the weather does not look like it is going to be good, there would probably be room available for the band in a large tent down near the office if the Subcommittee desired. Erickson had concerns regarding separating the band from the display tables and there was also concern as to whether there would be enough space for the military vehicles that are displayed. Koslowski also noted that the reason the event was moved to its current location was due to the noise from the band playing in an adjacent tent, however Dahlke pointed out that she did not feel that would be an issue any longer as the tents are no longer adjacent to each other.

A discussion was also held with regard to the times of the event. Dahlke indicated that flyers have already gone out and indicate that the event will be held from noon until 6:00 pm. Erickson indicated that he will meet with Polus prior to the next meeting to establish a tentative timeline and then bring it back to this Subcommittee for finalization. The subject of tickets also came up and Polus indicated that he will get his letter out to the various organizations inviting them to attend the event no later than the beginning of June. Koslowski indicated that he will begin holding Meet and Greet meetings in May to

work out details. He also indicated that Lynn Geiser has contacted American Legion Post 539 to do the color guard and they are available to do it. Geiser will be laying the wreath.

6. **Discussion re: Covered stage.**

This item was covered during the general fair discussion at Item 4 above.

7. **Discussion re: Recognition item for female veterans.**

Geiser passed around a coin that she thought would make a nice handout for the female veterans being honored. A discussion followed regarding a recognition item and it was decided that a certificate would be given along with a flower. Rosinski volunteered to contact a florist as did Erickson to see if they could get flowers donated.

8. **Possible discussion regarding honoring female veterans at Veterans Appreciation Day at the Brown County Fair.**

Koslowski asked if a guest speaker had been lined up and indicated that it may be nice to have a female vet talk. This will be discussed in greater detail at a later meeting.

9. **Discussion re: Veterans Day donation list.**

This item will be placed on next month's agenda to allow time to check the materials left by Sherry Steenbock for the donation list.

10. **Report from Committee Members Present (Erickson, Desisles, Haskins, Geiser, Koslowski, Maino, Pierce, Rosinski & Witkowski).**

-Erickson did not have anything to report.

-Rosemary Desisles reported that Dan Perron of the Military Avenue Business District is interested in doing a fundraiser, possibly a 5K run. Desisles felt this was a good idea and she would like to pursue it a little further. Geiser indicated that she had also spoken with Perron about this and both Desisles and Geiser will keep the Subcommittee advised.

-Jim Haskins reported that he was recently at American Antiques and was advised that the Masonic Temple at 525 N. Taylor Street will be holding a veterans' appreciation lunch on April 25. There will be two seatings for this and Haskins had tickets available for the Subcommittee. The menu will include brats and hamburgers and fixings and a tour will also be included in the event.

Haskins also reported on a bill in the State Assembly that makes lying about being in the military service a crime. Falsely claiming military services for an award related to military service would be a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to $10,000 and nine months in jail. If someone makes claims of military service with the intent to commit or aid in another crime, he or she would be guilty of a felony punishable of up to six years in prison and a $10,000 fine. Polus indicated that WBAY had contacted him earlier in the day to talk about this.

Haskins continued that on March 31 the Governor of Georgia announced a new program aimed at honoring the State's 234,000 Vietnam Veterans with personalized Certificate of Honor. He continued that 1,584 Georgians died in Viet Nam. Polus noted that the same thing is being done in Wisconsin and there is information on the vets website. Haskins concluded by talking about the remains of a Viet Nam Veteran that have been returned home after 45 years and was laid to rest with full military honors in Belmont, North Carolina.

-Lynn Geiser reported that the Pat Tillman run/walk will be held from 8:00 – 10:00 am on Saturday, April 25 at Shawano Avenue near Kropps Supper Club. In the afternoon of April 25 the UWGB Intertribal Student Council will hold their annual Pow Wow. Women veterans will be honored at this event and they have asked anyone who wishes to be honored to dress in black pants and a white shirt. There will be grand entrances at 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm with the color guard unit from the Wisconsin Indian Veterans Association's Oneida Chamber.

Geiser continued that she is still working on the 501(c)(3) status for the Hope For Vets group and as part of that she will be taking on a fellowship through The Mission Continues which is a program that empowers veterans facing the challenge of adjusting to life at home to find new missions. This program

deploys vets in their communities so that their shared legacy will be one of action and services. Geiser will be working on a six month fellowship and will be working with the Volunteer Center on this. Her three goals are to give the resources to the veterans, to be able to collaborate with the veterans organizations and to bring volunteerism into the community to bring veterans together to provide them with employment needs and mentors.

-Ed Koslowski reported that last weekend the Military Order had their state convention at the Comfort Suites and they invited Amvets to do the bingo for the veterans that came from King. With cooperation of the Vietnam Vets, Desert Vets and Amvets, a lot of money was given for bingo and the remaining funds were given to their transportation fund. He appreciated the cooperation between the different veterans organizations and feels that this will continue and even increase.

Koslowski continued that the open house at King will be held on May 17. On May 20 Festival Foods in De Pere will be hosting a brat fry to raise money for Old Glory Honor Flights.

-Duane Pierce reported that Legion Post 11 on North Irwin Street will be holding a booyah sale on Saturday, April 25. He also indicated that the Menominee Tribe will be doing their Annual Veterans Pow Wow on May 16 & 17. On May 17 sometime between noon and 2:00 pm Rolling Thunder will be doing a table ceremony at the Pow Wow.

Pierce also reported that he has recently come across a new information source for VA benefits: www.311vet.com. This website provides general information regarding VA benefits anywhere and at any time free of charge.

-Tracy Rosinski stated that there has been a change in plans with Debra Grassman. Heartland is now bringing Debra Grassman to town on September 11, instead of in June. She will do a soul injury ceremony at that time at the Green Bay Distillery. Rosinski will provide more information as the date draws closer.

-Joe Witkowski shared several articles he had seen recently in the newspaper. One was with regard to an Old Glory Honor Flight fundraiser that will be taking place on April 24 at Trinity Lutheran School. He also stated that on April 25 the nation's veterans will be honored at the Southwest High School auditorium from 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Witkowski also shared an article about a Green Bay man who is making his way through Army Reserve competition designed to test this skills of GIs. This soldier, Jordan Stubblefield, took top honors at a competition in Texas and is now moving on to the next round of the competition in North Carolina in May. The competition tests weapons handling skills, drill ceremonies, physical fitness, first aid, military knowledge and current events. Witkowski thought it was great that Green Bay has someone in national competition for military skills.

Witkowski also shared an old article regarding the Green Bay Area Great Lakes Sports Fishermen and the work they do to touch the lives of others. Finally, Witkowski reported on an article that appeared in the Glimpses of the Past history section of the newspaper about GIs in the War. He shared a personal story that in 1944, at the age of 13 and in the 7th grade, they had a victory celebration at Markesan School in which he and several other boys sang a few songs which he sang for the Subcommittee.

11. **Comments from Outfitters 4 Patriots – Mark Meunier.**

Although shown in the proper format here, this item was taken following Item 4.

Mark Meunier, President and Founders of Outfitters 4 Patriots and Board Member, Eric Simon introduced themselves to the Subcommittee. Meunier stated that he had come back wounded from Iraq and was invited to go on a hunting trip through Heroes for Vets. He had an awesome time and was well taken care. Meunier found out that there is nothing in northern Wisconsin like it and he began researching a way to get something started. That is how Outfitters 4 Patriots came to be. He stated that there are roughly 16 volunteer members involved and all money donated goes right back into the trips and troops. There are not a lot of rules as to who would be eligible for a trip and they basically take anyone who served overseas in combat or war zone. They do not just do hunting and fishing, they can also do camping or ATVing or anything else they are interested in. He noted that along with taking vets on trips, sometimes they take the vets to fenced preserves for those that may be too disabled to hunt on their own. They hunt on land that is leased or properties owned by members.

Meunier continued that Outfitters 4 Patriots has partnered with Take 'Em Outdoors which is a non-profit charity dedicated to taking children with severe or terminal illnesses and wounded veterans into the outdoors. Meunier stated that they provide the experiences for vets and Take 'Em Outdoors

concentrates more on children as Meunier has found it usually works best to match a vet with a vet. Last year Outfitters 4 Patriots raised $18,000 and helped 72 families. They have received good feedback from the vets who they have helped and they hope to continue to increase the number of vets they serve,

Desisles asked Meunier how the group raises money and Meunier replied that they hold a golf outing in the Upper Peninsulas and for this first time this year, they will be holding an event in Green Bay. A sportsmans banquet will be held on May 17 at Stadium View. The cost is $40.00 per ticket and this includes dinner and a door prize entry. A flyer for this event was distributed to the Subcommittee and a copy is attached.

Meunier thanked the Subcommittee for the opportunity to come and talk. He noted that his organization is not only interested on the receiving end, but they also have many members who like to volunteer and help in in various ways.

12. **Report from CVSO Jerry Polus.**

Polus reported on the Veterans Manor that will be opening soon. He noted that the building is about 75% complete at this time and is scheduled to open mid-June. Polus and County Executive Troy Streckenbach had a tour of the facility and Polus said that it is very, very nice. This is subsidized housing for low income married veterans with no children or non-married veterans. There are two applications necessary to apply and Polus can supply these. Polus continued that they are also looking at a transitional housing facility for veterans. Priority will be given to Brown County veterans, but veterans from other counties will also be considered.

Polus also reported that there is a veteran from Denmark who is making wooden and glass flag cases and donating them to the Veterans Services Office who in turn sells them. The proceeds are then donated to the DAV transportation program. The cases sell for $40 or $50, depending on the type of wood used.

Polus also reported that he has set up an appointment with Dan Perron of the Military Avenue Business District to talk about the possibility of constructing a memorial. Polus will keep the subcommittee advised on this. Polus thought it may be a good idea to invite Perron to a future meeting of this group to see what the group does.

13. **Comments from Carl Soderburg**

Carl Soderberg reported that there had recently been a Town Hall meeting in Appleton regarding the project being launched by the VVA to get legislation passed to establish a research center within the VA dedicated to studying the effects of agent orange on descendants of veterans. He continued that there is strong anecdotal evidence that because agent orange was contaminated by dioxin which is stored in the fat cells and never goes away, that the negative health effects are being passed down to the children and eventually grandchildren of exposed vets. This is in the very early stage of research, but the VVA is trying to have this research done so this issue does not have to linger in Congress for a number of years before something is done.

14. **Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law.** None.

15. **Adjourn.**

Motion made by Jim Haskins, seconded by Rosemary Desisles to adjourn at 6:07 pm. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio
Recording Secretary