

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, January 4, 2023 10:00 a.m.
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, Camp Dodge
Johnston, IA 50131

Commission of Veterans Affairs Members

Present: Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair
Darlene McMartin, 1st Vice Chair
Gary Wattnem, 2nd Vice Chair
Orene Cressler, Member
Kenneth Lloyd, Member
George Mosby, Member
Gregory Paulline, Member
Mary Van Horn, Member
Carol Whitmore, Member
Todd Jacobus, IVH Commandant, IDVA Executive Director

Absent: Steve Hyde, Member

Iowa Veterans Home/Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Staff Members

Present: Nathan Wilson, Operations Executive Administrator, IVH/IDVA
Robert Stavnes, Public Service Manager, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
Karl Lettow, Public Information Officer, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
Polly Roll, Executive Secretary, Iowa Veterans Home, Recording Secretary

Guests Present: Adam Akers, Executive Director, Franklin County Veterans Affairs
Eddie Andrews, Iowa House, District 90 Representative
Bruce Beeston, VVA State Council, Legislative
Kristi Catrenich, Des Moines Regional Office
John Derner, The American Legion
Roger Elliott, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 490
Darwin Goodspeed, Director, VA Central Iowa Health Care System
Patty Hamann, Cedar County VA/IACCVSO 1st Vice
Tom Hudson, USS Iowa (SSN 797), Executive Director, Commissioning Committee
Jamie Johnson, Public Affairs Officer, Iowa City VA Health Care System
Ron Leber, State Commander, VFW
Doug MacCrea, USS Iowa (SSN 797) Commissioning Committee
Wayne Marek, Des Moines Vet Center
Brett McLain, Story County Veterans Affairs
Michael Mortensen, President, Iowa Association of County Commissioners & Veteran Service Officers
Duane Otto, Purple Heart 861 MOPH
Karen Otto, Purple Heart Auxiliary 777
Nick Praska, Director, Dallas County Veterans Affairs
Pat Sweeney, Executive Director, Polk County Veterans Affairs

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE UNAPPROVED UNTIL ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

APPROVED: _____ Date: _____
Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Call to Order

Chairperson Ledvina called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Ledvina followed by a moment of silence for our departed veterans, POWs, those missing in action (MIAs) and those on active duty at this time.

Roll Call

Polly Roll took roll call. Guests introduced themselves.

Presentation, Tom Hudson, US Navy Retired Chief Petty Officer and Executive Director of the USS Iowa SSN 797

Tom Hudson spoke on the USS Iowa and clarified misunderstandings associated with the legislature's appropriation to support the USS Iowa Submarine. He also had a handout which is copied below, Page 3.

The USS IOWA SSN 797 is a soon-to-be-commissioned nuclear submarine for the U.S. Navy. As the christening nears, the SSN 797 Commissioning Committee ramped up activities to both raise money for the privately sponsored event and introduce the 130 plus member crew to Iowans. The Committee has been very busy in 2022. They hosted four in-state visits with a total of 13 crew members starting with the American Legion Mid-Winter Conference in February in Des Moines, LCDR Kevin O'Malley and LTJG Pat Rafferty visit Iowa in support of Memorial Day events held at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery, RAGBRAI and a big presence at the Iowa State Fair. PCU IOWA Commanding Officer Matt Powell and select crew members visited the Iowa State Fair on Monday, August 15, 2022, which was a designated "Veterans Day at the Iowa State Fair". The Captain attended the Prairie Meadows Veterans Day event.

Tom Hudson spoke on the primary goals of the Commissioning Committee. One of the primary goals of the Commissioning Committee is to draw attention to the USS Iowa and to connect Iowa and Iowans to the command crew of the submarine to the greatest extent possible.

Tom Hudson shared that the federal appropriation does not cover any expenses beyond the warfighting capability of the submarine. The federal government does not outfit the submarine, or any of the Navy's ships, with recreational gear, like exercise equipment, video players, games, etc. The Federal Appropriation is to build a submarine to go to war. Tom Hudson stated that the on-going fundraising campaign here in Iowa is to provide our Sailors with the "nice to have" equipment that will increase their effectiveness. The USS Iowa Commission is leading this effort in Iowa and needs our help.

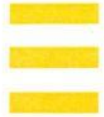
Tom Hudson stated that the goal is to raise \$500,000. The 89th General Assembly appropriated \$150,000 during the 2022 legislative session. \$75,000 of that appropriation came from the General Fund; \$75,000 of that appropriation came from the License Plate Fund. Tom Hudson shared with the Commission that Doug McCrae informed them at the October 5, 2022, Commission meeting that the USS Iowa Commission would not accept the \$75,000 from the License Plate Fund managed by the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs. Tom stated that these funds will be returned to the Iowa Veterans License Plate Fund in July 2023. At this time, it is the impression of the USS Iowa Commission that major corporations in the state of Iowa are interested in investing in Veterans; however, they are not as interested in giving to active military funds.

Christening of the USS Iowa is planned for May 6, 2023, with former Iowa first lady Christie Vilsack wielding the champagne bottle at the company's Groton, Connecticut, shipyard. This event will be livestreamed with more information to follow. IPTV is interested in doing a segment on this also.

Handout



Information and Background USS IOWA Commissioning Committee



- ★ Tracking for May 2023 Christening - the bottle break!
- ★ Delivery to Navy planned for December 2023
- ★ Commissioning pacing for Spring 2024

2022 Committee Activity

- ★ Hosted 4 in state visits, 13 crew members, 15 days total
- ★ Supported 6 crew members riding 7 day RAGBRAI
- ★ Supported 4 Crew/Family events in Connecticut
- ★ Governor proclaimed August as USS IOWA SSN 797 month
- ★ CO tours IA Cultural Affairs and BB-61 artifacts

Ties to Iowa

- ★ First XO assigned was Iowa native, prior enlisted, has now achieved rank of O-5
- ★ Currently 4 crew members are from Iowa, ranging from E3 - E9

To develop a long lasting relationship between the citizens of Iowa and the crew that will man our state's namesake.



Funding for the USS IOWA



Primary Goals of the Commissioning Committee

- ★ **Morale & wellness items to maintain a vigorous warfighting crew**
 - Habitability upgrades to reflect the state of Iowa and make the boat more comfortable
 - Provide fitness equipment and improved recreational items
- ★ **Traditional ceremonies of the christening and commissioning**
 - Time-honored multi-day celebrations with the public welcome
 - Opportunity to celebrate & recognize the accomplishments of the crew and prepare for active service
- ★ **Family Readiness Support Group**
 - Financial and social support for families while crew members are working on boat construction and at sea
 - Support includes childcare costs, travel expenses and social gatherings

FundRaising

Total Goal by 2024	\$500,000
Raised to Date	\$175,000 - includes only \$75k from general fund
Expending	Approx \$50k for each of last 3 years hosting crew related activities
State Appropriation	\$75k will lowest of any state (32 states w/ named boats)

John Deere, Principal, EMC, Bankers Trust, Gabus Foundation, KnG (Krause), Kinze, Wellmark, Veridian, +many others all decline to support a military related cause

VA Regional Office Update

Darwin Goodspeed, Director of the VA Central Iowa Health Care System, spoke. Below is a brief bio.

Darwin G. Goodspeed, FACHE, was appointed as Director of the Central Iowa Health Care System by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs on May 9, 2022. He is responsible for a Joint Commission accredited Level 2 facility with 61 acute beds, 60 domiciliary beds and 108 Community Living Center beds. In addition to the main

campus located in Des Moines, the VA CIHCS has oversight of five Community Based Outpatient/Outreach Clinics (CBOC) are operated in Carroll, Fort Dodge, Knoxville, Marshalltown and Mason City, Iowa.

Prior to joining the VA CIHCS, Mr. Goodspeed was the Director of the VA Portland Health Care System in Portland, Oregon from November 2018 until May 2022, Director of the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System from December 2013 until November 2018, and Associate Director at the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center from February 2011 to November 2013.

Mr. Goodspeed retired from the United States Navy after serving active duty from 1982-2003 as a Medical Service Corps Officer; he achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

He graduated from the VA Executive Career Field in 2010 and from the Health Care Leadership Institute in 2009. Professional certifications include Fellow American College of Healthcare Executive, VHA Certified Mentor and Excellence in Government Fellow.

Director Goodspeed continued to update on the following:

- The VA CIHCS is actively completing Toxic Exposure Screening (TES) on all Veterans who present to the VA for care. This initiates the process for additional evaluations if indicated and the VA is ready to support enrollment for care for all Veterans who are newly eligible under the PACT Act.
- A new location has been identified for the replacement clinic in Marshalltown. It will be near the Walmart and we are hoping to break ground later this year. The CBOC currently in Marshalltown is the oldest in Iowa.
- There are multiple infrastructure projects on the main campus to that will enhance electrical power, improve the steam and chiller plant, and provide upgrades in preparation for some new buildings in the future, including a new Sterile Processing Services facility, new operating rooms, a Mental Health Building, and a new multi-specialty building, as Support Services needs more space.
- Staffing continues to be a challenge, and the leadership team continues efforts to recruit staff in all areas. All incentives are being employed to hire.
- The VA CIHCS is developing a business case for a new CBOC in Ames; the process to open a new clinic is lengthy, so no appreciable movement is expected for at least two years.
- Specific veteran issues are challenging. For example, medications – A community provider will write a script for a brand-named drug and most often the VA will cover generic only. Billing can be an issue also. If a veteran is sent to a provider for a procedure or examination and the local provider does more than what the order states, the VA will not cover. Darwin has worked with several of these issues and has gotten them corrected in the system.

VA Regional Office – Des Moines Update

Kristi Catrenich, Change Management Agent, Des Moines Regional Office, gave the update for the Des Moines VA Regional Office.

PACT Act

- During the 3rd week of December, the VARO organized events for PACT Act week.
- Staff is working hard at completing PACT Act processing training. Several staff were trained early to ensure Des Moines was one of the first stations to start processing PACT Act claims on January 1, 2023. As more information becomes available, there will be virtual options to offer PACT Act training opportunities. There have been several successful large virtual training events via WebEx in the past.
- Part of national effort is to hire thousands of employees to help with PACT Act processing.
 - 15 people already successfully onboarded and are actively seeking more.
 - Seven years ago, the Des Moines VARO was staffed with close to 100 federal employees. It is currently staffed at 187 and more will be on-board soon.

- The Des Moines VARO is hiring for Veteran Service Representative and Veterans Service Representative (Rating). All positions are open to the public. Closing date is 2/16/2023 - www.usajobs.gov/job/695392900 www.usajobs.gov/job/695393000
- Opportunities to work from home with one day in the office.

VA Medical Center - Iowa City Update

Jamie Johnson, Public Affairs Officer, Iowa City VA Health Care System, gave the update on the Iowa City VA

PACT Act Event

On December 12, 2022, a PACT Act Week of Action event in Davenport, Iowa, was hosted. It was well attended, had good interactions, was able to assist with answers to questions and get claims filed on the spot.

- 33 People in-person and 700+ online
- 14 VBA contacts with six claims submitted

VBA & VHA Claims Clinic Partnership Tour

Beginning this spring, VBA will partner with IC VAHCS to conduct claims clinic tours to each of our CBOC locations as part of rural outreach efforts. This would have the VBA set up shop to have contacts with Veterans in the field and allow Veterans to file a claim on the spot. We plan to do this quarterly. Both VBA and VA will promote the tour closer to launch once dates/times have been finalized.

Construction Updates

Renovate 1W for Primary Care: Hoping to finish construction in February with March move, although they are working with contractors to overcome some new issues so this could shift.

2S MOHS/Cardiology: This project is slated to be done with construction in February and hoping to move Cardiology in by the end of February with MOHS to follow in March.

2W for IR/Cath/EP: Construction should be awarded by March and will start by May, will involve five phases to update IR and Cath equipment and build a new EP lab as well as new recovery bays and staff support areas.

Women's Clinic in Building 50: Expect construction to be start Fall 2023, last roughly 20 months.

EHRM Infrastructure: Construction will begin this month to update all of the IT closets on campus, scheduled to be complete by August 2024.

Ambulance Garage: Currently in design, construction expected to award November 2023 and complete by Fall 2024

9E Med/Psych: Planning to award construction in April 2023, complete by May 2024. Will wait to occupy and relocate 9W into this space for 9W renovation to follow.

9W Patient Safety Renovation: Scoping project for design to be awarded by April 2023. Will begin construction when 9E is complete. This project will update 9W to refresh the space and correct some potential risks that have been identified since it was opened.

Waterloo CBOC: Construction scheduled to be complete in May if all goes well, hope to move in this summer.

Galesburg CBOC: Currently in design with a Winter 2023/2024 move

Decorah CBOC: Currently in design with a Winter 2023/2024 move

Staffing

Recruiting and retention continues to be a challenge; this seems to be a nation-wide problem. Some of this is a financial and waiting period issue. University of Iowa is across the street and can hire immediately. It is tough to compete financially as there is a "bidding" war for employees and the VA is not allowed to do this. The length of time to make an offer and to onboard staff takes longer than other places.

Iowa Department of Veteran Affairs Update

Robert Stavnes, IDVA Public Service Manager spoke.

Robert was born in Decorah and raised on a dairy farm by Postville. He enlisted in the Iowa Guard in 1982. He got his Commission at The University of Iowa in 1984 and entered active duty as a Tanker and a Calvary Scout the following year. He served 30 years in the Army. He retired January 1, 2015. Robert took advantage of Home-Based Iowa initiatives and started his own consulting company. Ultimately, he worked overseas embedded in the same formations in which he was proud to serve as a Soldier, assigned to support efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. He was hired by a technology company, L3 Harris, in Texas, and worked for them eight years overseas and in Texas. Robert retired last summer. He learned as a veteran and learned vicariously by supporting his mother and mother-in-law and other friends and families that have needed support from the veteran's community. He has been active in the Military Officers Association of America in both the Chapter and the Council in the State of Iowa. In that position, the Association specifically worked with the elected congressional members and senators to get the language that they thought was most supportive to service men and women, their families, and veterans into the National Defense Authorization Act which has been terrific experience for Robert.

After time, Robert decided he wanted to serve again when he was offered a position with the IDVA, running the Benefits Office and the Iowa Veterans Cemetery in Van Meter. He has been on the job three weeks. The employees of both facilities are wonderful and important for veteran support. It is an honor for Robert to serve with them. Robert stated, "Great people do great work in great environments".

The Wreaths Across America event that was held in December was a remarkable event that brought out many people.

Iowa Veterans Home Update

Todd Jacobus, IVH Commandant/IDVA Executive Director, gave an update:

1. Thanks to the Commission for the great work done on the Legislative Priorities package, and for efforts in preparing for the 90th General Assembly.
2. The legislative session kicks off on January 9, Governor Reynolds' State of the State Address is on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at 6:00 pm, Major General Corell's Condition of the Guard Address is on Thursday, January 12, at 9:00 am, Governor Reynolds' inauguration is Friday, January 13, at 9:00 am, and several events will take place that day. Veterans Day on the Hill is on Wednesday morning, January 18.
3. The National Association of State Veterans Home training conference is February 5-9, 2023. The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs training / conference is on February 19-22, 2023. Todd plans to attend both of these events.
4. Todd has had some outstanding conversations with his counterparts in other States. Each State and the operating environment of each department is unique, but common to all is the need to be connected with the communities we serve, including the leadership of our Veteran Service Organizations, to facilitate professional discussion, and work to continually improve our organization.
5. The exchange of issues and concerns began within a few days of Todd's appointment during a three-hour meeting with Chairperson Elizabeth Ledvina and the County Association President Michael Mortensen. It is important to maintain these open lines of communication and Todd looks forward to that.
6. After the December 8, 2022, staff meeting, Todd received a folder that included 30 enclosures from Commission Chairperson Ledvina. This packet included a summary of the comments made during the

community meeting on October 25, 2022, at 7:00 pm – called by the ICVA – at American Legion Post 46 in Marshalltown, in addition to emails, letters, and statements from specific individuals and submitted anonymously.

7. Todd has spent many hours reviewing these documents, investigating the claims, meeting with individuals and groups of our leadership team, and discussing what we are doing to improve our situation. There are some truths in the documents, there are some exaggerations in the documents, and there are some blatant untruths in the documents.
8. It is true that there are investigations that take place at the Iowa Veterans Home. With 800 employees and 400 veterans / residents there are many opportunities for disagreements and engagements that result in an employee making a complaint and either our Human Resources Team, the Department of Administrative Services, and/or the Department of Inspection and Appeals, to conduct an investigation. I am glad that these venues exist in order to ensure that residents, supervisors and employees are all provided due process.
9. The results of investigations will not be disclosed, nor will we discuss specific individuals outside those with a need to know the information. This is frustrating to some, but this is a good practice. Please understand that when you read an article or a letter to the editor in the newspaper, see a posting on social media, or hear a conversation on the street that you are hearing one side of a story, and quite likely there are two other sides to that story.
10. It is important to open a dialogue, and the issues that were given to Todd last month provided him with a starting point to engage the leadership team. He wants the Commission, and the public, to be aware of what has been taking place at the Iowa Veterans Home in an effort to open lines of communication, address perceptions, and improve our situation. Here are a few items to convey:
 - a. There have been TWO staff surveys since April 2022. The leadership team reviewed those surveys and summarized the staff complaints.
 - b. The leadership team has been organizing a monthly leadership development program events where leaders learn about staff concerns, discuss best practices, and share ideas on how we can improve in the areas identified.
 - c. The leadership team visits each Bureau at the Iowa Veterans Home quarterly to meet with staff. This includes the Commandant, Nursing Home Administrator, Medical Director, and Operations Executive Administrator. Todd has attended one of these events and the discussion was good.
 - d. We now have a Morale Committee at the Iowa Veterans Home.
 - e. We adjusted the nursing staffing policy based on comments received.
 - f. We requested authority to award bonuses and increase wages in order to recruit and retain nursing staff.
 - g. In July 2022, we partnered with Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville to get inmate support in our Food Service Department, eliminating mandated overtime in Food Service by December 2022.
 - h. We are working to help enhance the work-life balance that our staff needs and deserves. We now have a weekend package available for staff, and we also have a three-day work week available for all levels.

- i. We have retained an attendance recognition program, which awards a free meal in the Atha Dining Room for winners.
11. We continue to receive comments in our drop-boxes, which are located in each of our buildings housing residents. Todd is happy to share those comments with the Commission. Todd has not responded to those cards since before the last Commission meeting in December, but he has all of those comments and will address each one of them.
12. In the future, we will have town hall meetings with staff. This will provide an opportunity for there to be an open discussion between staff and our senior leadership team.
13. If anyone becomes aware of allegations of abuse, harassment, bullying, or other similar behavior, then please ensure that those are directly reported to the Department of Administrative Services (for employees) or the Department of Inspection and Appeals (for residents). These words (abuse, harassment, bullying) are major allegations and will be investigated by professionals trained in these areas.
14. Todd hopes that each of our commissioners know that he is available to them 24 x 7 x 365. He has an open door for staff members, and many have used that policy for meaningful conversations with him. It is truly an honor to serve as both Commandant and Executive Director, and he is in service to each of you. Todd can be reached at cell: (641) 750-9399 or todd.jacobus@ivh.state.ia.us.

Approval of Minutes

2nd Vice Chair Commissioner Wattnem made a motion to approve the Commission Quarterly meeting minutes of October 5, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner Van Horn. Motion carried. Approved unanimously.

2nd Vice Chair Commissioner Lloyd made a motion to approve the Special Commission meeting minutes of December 8, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner Mosby. Motion carried. Approved unanimously.

Commissioner Whitmore made a motion to approve the Trust Fund conference call meeting minutes of October 6, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner Cressler. Motion carried. Approved unanimously.

Old Business

Chairperson Ledvina gave a handout regarding 2023 Veterans Day on the Hill along with the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs 2023 Legislative Initiatives, and Top Priorities and Awareness Issues. These were discussed. Please see the Media Advisory, 2023 Legislative Initiatives, Iowa Commission on Veterans Affairs Representatives, Senate/House Veterans Affairs Committees listed, Pages 10 – 12.

Priorities Discussion – Listed on Page 11

- Chairperson Ledvina met with Representative Bobby Kaufmann, Chair of Ways and Means (H). He is in support and promoting the Military Property Tax Credit.
 - Looking into past bills and reviewing the wording. All military organizations need to stay away from percentage of service connected wording with the property tax.
 - Assessed value could change depending on service connected disability.
 - Representative Kaufman is looking into different wording. He is looking at the whole State of Iowa's property tax exemption.
- Number one priority is the Federal Code Definition aligning the veteran's definition from Federal code to State code.
- Asking to remove the DAV representative from the State Commission at their request and add a representative from the Marine Corps League. DAV will still be represented just will not be on the State Commission.

- Elizabeth Ledvina reported that the American Legion Legislative Committee met in December with Representative Chad Ingels, Chair of the House Veterans Committee, regarding the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund. The bill to address the funding shortfall is “in the works” right now. Elizabeth Ledvina also spoke to Senator Jeff Reichman, Chair of the Senate Veterans Committee, regarding the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund. Senator Reichman is looking forward to addressing the funding shortfall also. If we can get the bill done and passed, the Governor will sign and be implemented immediately.
 - All trust funds applications will have to be renewed with updated estimates and bank accounts. Some applications are a couple years old. They have a “shelf life” of one year. Vendors have 90 days to submit the bill.
- Trust fund – Interest money is coming in and invoices are being paid.
- Enable the Iowa American Dream – To increase and support the Iowa ownership program.

Awareness Issues

- Discussion was made on the awareness issues listed on Page 11.

Handout

Media Advisory: 2023 Veterans Day on the Hill, State Capitol Rotunda, Jan. 18th

CAMP DODGE, JOHNSTON, IOWA – **The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs** is hosting our annual Veterans Day on the Hill in the State Capitol Rotunda, Jan. 18th, from 9 a.m. to noon, with speakers starting at 10 a.m.

Media are invited to attend. Plans are for a return to our traditional in-person, public event, with about 30-45 minutes of speakers. It will also be broadcast state-wide and recorded on our facebook page at facebook.com/IowaDepartmentofVeteransAffairs. After the ceremony, veterans are strongly encouraged to meet with their elected representatives to discuss the Iowa Commission on Veterans Affairs 2022 Legislative Initiatives introduced at the event.

WHAT: Iowa Veterans Day Ceremony

WHO: Veterans from across Iowa; Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds; Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg; Key Legislative Leaders on Veterans Affairs; Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Executive Director and Iowa Veterans Home Commandant, Todd Jacobus; Iowa Commission on Veterans Affairs Chair, Elizabeth Ledvina; Jackie Schmillen, Singer and Iowa Army National Guard Public Affairs Director; Iowa National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Ben Corell; 103rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command; and Home Base Iowa Program Manager, Jathan Chicoine (or appointed).

WHEN: Wednesday, January 18th, at 9 a.m.

WHERE: State Capitol Rotunda

RSVP: This is a public ceremony, free and open to all.



Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs 2023 Legislative Initiatives

In order to continue the programs that support Iowa veterans and their families, we support the protection of the financial integrity of the following agencies and programs:

- Iowa Veterans Home
- Military Home Ownership Program
- Iowa Veterans Trust Fund
- County Allocation Funds
- Injured Veteran Grant Program
- Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
- Iowa Veterans Cemetery
- Veterans License Fee Fund

TOP PRIORITIES

1. **Align ‘Veteran’ Definition:** We fully support changes to the Iowa Code **definition of a “Veteran”** to match the **Federal Code** definition, and we support the *Veteran Modernization Act* to improve and update Iowa Code sections 35 through 35B.
2. **Property Tax Relief:** We fully support upgrades to the **Military Property Tax Exemption Program** and other exemptions for our veterans and military community.
3. **Update the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund:** We fully support increasing the annual deposit of Lottery funds to the **Iowa Veterans Trust Fund** spendable account to \$800,000.00, to achieve the intended 2012 purpose, and meet veteran needs in the 2023 economy.
4. **Enable the Iowan-American Dream They Protect:** We fully support access to home and property ownership for veterans and military members by increasing funding for the **Military Home Ownership Assistance Program** to meet demand.

AWARENESS ISSUES:

- A) We support Iowa state sales tax **exemption** on the purchase of **wheelchair accessible vehicles** for veterans’ vehicles modified by the VA.
- B) We support any legislation pertaining to **Mental Health** for our veterans, their families and all Iowans suffering from these diverse life-taking conditions.
- C) We support the **Green Alert Act** H.R.2797 – Establishing a ‘green alert advisory’ which would be activated when a Veteran with a history of mental health issues goes missing.
- D) We support the use of the **Iowa Veterans Trust Fund and the Veteran’s license fee fund** to the greatest degree possible to assist Veterans programs throughout the state.
- E) We support adoption of the **Sgt. Brandon Lay “Green Alert” Bill** to help prevent veteran suicide by augmenting existing “Amber Alert” capabilities.

Iowa Commission on Veterans Affairs Representatives

- Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair, eledvina@tamacounty.org
- Darlene McMartin, 1st Vice-Chair, Public Member at Large, macmp75@gmail.com
- Gary Wattnem, 2nd Vice-Chair, Reserve Officers Association, gwattnem@gmail.com
- Lt. Col. George Mosby, Iowa National Guard, Director of Warrior & Family Services, Email: George.t.mosby.mil@mail.mil
- Orene Cressler, Iowa Association of County Commissioners and Veterans Service Officers, | ocresslerpocahontasvaga@ncn.net
- Steven Hyde, Military Order of the Purple Heart, steven.hyde47@gmail.com
- Kenneth Lloyd, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Ken2000L@heartofiowa.net
- Mary Van Horn, American Veterans, nid8ryan@msn.com
- Carol Whitmore, Veterans of Foreign Wars, whitmorebc@aol.com
- Gregory Paulline, Vietnam Veterans of America, ghpaulline@gmail.com

You can find your legislator at: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators>

Iowa Senate Veterans Affairs Committee:

- Jeff Reichman (R, District 50), Chair; jeff.reichman@legis.iowa.gov 319.520.8157
- Sandy Salmon (R, District 29), Vice Chair; sandy.salmon@legis.iowa.gov; 319.230.3581
- Bill Dotzler (D, District 310), Ranking Member; bill.dotzler@legis.iowa.gov; 319.240.5594
- Kevin Alons (R, District 7)
- Mark Costello (R, District 8)
- Dan Dawson (R, District 10)
- Jeff Edler (R, District 36)
- Mark Lofgren (R, District 48)
- Charlie McClintock, (R, District 42)
- Liz Bennett (D, District 39)
- Janice Weiner (D, District 45)
- Cindy Winckler (D, District 49)

House Veterans Affairs Committee

- Chad Ingels (R, District 68), Chair; chad.ingels@legis.iowa.gov; 566.920.5899
- Matthew Rinker (R, District 99), Vice Chair; mrinker.burl@gmail.com; 319.750.5156
- Josh Turek (D, District 71), Ranking Member; turek4iowa@gmail.com; 531.239.1231
- Eddie Andrews (R, District 43)
- Ken Carlson (R, District 13)
- Cindy Golding (R, District 83)
- Martin Graber (R, District 100)
- Stan Gustafson (R, District 25)
- Heather Hora (R, District 92)
- Tom Jeneary (R, District 3)
- Mike Sexton (R, District 7)
- Timi Brown (D, District 61)
- Sue Cahill (D, District 52)
- Ruth Ann Gaines (D, District 33)
- Charles Isenhart (D, District 71)
- Elinor Levin (D, District 89)
- Ross Wilburn (D, District 50)

Public Comments

Roger Elliott with Vietnam Veterans of America announced that the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge will host a Vietnam Historical Event/Veterans Living History event on June 3 - June 4. They re-enact Vietnam. It is a great event. Please plan on attending. It is held inside and outside.

Next Commission Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at the Iowa Veterans Home/Whitehill Auditorium, Marshalltown, Iowa.

Adjournment

Commissioner Van Horn motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Whitmore. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.