



Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, July 10, 2024 10:00 am
Freedom Center, Enhanced Classroom, Camp Dodge, Iowa

Commission of Veteran Affairs members:

Present: Todd Jacobus, Elizabeth Ledvina, Darlene McMartin, Joella Perry, Scott Miller, Robert Suesakul, Becky Dirks Haugsted, George Mosby, Gregory Paulline, Reggie Richardson, Dennis Jones

Absent: Linda Jones

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Staff Members present: Penny Cutler-Bermudez, Kimberly Bratland, Nathan Wilson, Kellie Meyer, Karl Lettow, Ben Dales, Kevin House, Gavin Sandvig, Melissa Miller.

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

APPROVED: Darlene McMartin DATE: October 2, 2024
Darlene McMartin, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

1. Call to Order: Chairperson Ledvina called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.
2. Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence
3. Roll call
4. Welcome and Introduction of Guests
5. Report from Regional VA: N/A (not in attendance)
6. Report from Director Judith Johnson-Mekota of VA Iowa City Medical Clinic, Iowa City
 - a. Vet Fest in Waterloo at the Grout Museum, Marketing for increased enrollment for Veterans and increasing awareness of the new clinic in Waterloo and in an effort to Increase PACT Act and toxic screenings
 - b. Women Veterans Wellness Retreat, August 21, 9:00 am-3:00 pm, Walker Homestead in Iowa City; Sponsored by the Women's Health Clinic
 - c. The Trinity and Quad Cities Community Veterans Engagement Board received the Non Profit Collaboration Of the Year Award for their work with Unity Point-Trinity from the Quad Cities Regional Business Journal.
 - d. Decorah CBOC will open early in 2025. Galesburg still in the works.
 - e. Fisher House application put on hold for now. Survey will begin and estimated completion date will be 2027.
 - f. Community Engagement and partnership coordinators, leading 34 coalition s in catchment areas. Certified to provide CALM training (Counseling and Access to Lethal Means). Three trainings scheduled for July. If there is interest in having the team attend training or conferences, they will work with you to set that up.



7. Report from Director Lisa Curnes-VA Central Iowa
 - a. PACT Act-continuing to screen 100 Veterans a week. To date have screened 25,000 toxic screenings and nationally have screened over 5.5 million Veterans at VA. Veterans do not need to be sick to get screened, you can get screened now and if down the road you become ill, you will be eligible for care right away
 - b. PACT Act event in May at Southside clinic. Over 180 participants
 - c. Mesqwaki Pow Wow and Iowa State Fair are the next scheduled events.
 - d. Virtual Mobile Clinic is now activated. 38 foot mobile unit that goes out to rural counties and provide telehealth services. Has two exam rooms, centrally located with a waiting room and lab draw area. The mobile unit deploys 3-4 days each week and has recently been to Wright, Kossuth and Dallas counties. This unit is staffed with a RN, 2 telehealth clinical technicians and a driver
 - e. Construction updates: Marshalltown CBOC will be opening soon with a ribbon cutting at the end of August. Ames CBOC location and terms of lease are still being worked out. Hoping to have a space by the end of 2025. The ICU renovation on the 5th floor is ongoing. Should be completed by the end of summer with 9 patient rooms with individual bathrooms. The warehouse is complete and is already occupied and functioning. The lab addition (10K square foot) will start at the end of the fiscal year.
8. Introduction of the new Cemetery and Benefits Bureau Chief, Gavin Sandvig.
9. Presentation from Floyd Hammer and Kathy Hamilton-The Outreach Program
 - a. The Outreach Program was established in 2004, and Outreach is celebrating its 20th anniversary!
 - b. \$5000 donation from America Salutes You (supports Veterans and First Responders) which they would like to use as seed money to see how VSOs and Outreach can collaborate to provide food for homeless Veterans.
 - c. Proposing a joint program called "Iowa Salutes You", that would include a packaging event with luncheon, video presentation from America Salutes You.
10. Presentation from Larry Ritland, Legacy Ride
 - a. Bike ride honoring Women Airforce Service Pilots in WWII. The purpose of the WASP program was to train women to fly CONUS missions, which would free up men to fly combat missions. There were 38 women that died during the program, two of which were from Iowa.
 - b. Gleanna Roberts and Beverly Jean Moses were the two Iowans who lost their lives serving in the WASP program.
 - c. The Legacy Ride will start on September 3, 2024 from the Iowa State Capitol and continue on for 26 days, ending at the WASP Museum in Sweetwater, Texas. Does not accept donations or sponsors, he funds the ride on his own.
 - d. Awaiting confirmation that Governor Reynolds will issue a proclamation on September 3, 2024, naming September 3 as Gleanna Roberts and Beverly Jean Moses Day in Iowa.
11. Baxter American Legion-Huey Project (Neil Seales, Greg Christensen, Lynn Hardin)



- a. Request for funds from the License Plate Fund/Veterans Trust Fund for monetary assistance in completing the Huey memorial.
 - b. Established in 1997 the memorial consisted of 2 walls with 314 bricks engraved to honor local veterans, and one flag pole. Enhancements include two more walls, two more flag poles, lighting, 2 Soldier statues, 244 additional bricks (124 open bricks) and recently a mural depicting seven Hueys coming to get the wounded named "Healing Skies"
 - c. Fundraising efforts have included meetings with Veteran groups, flyers, ads in the papers, notices on the local radio, fundraising suppers and word of mouth.
 - d. The Huey is 53 feet long, 8.5 feet wide, and once on pedestal it will weigh 4,000 pounds.
 - e. The Huey is currently being refurbished in Indiana and will have a new paint job reflecting the "Big Red One". Locally fundraising has raised \$37,500 but total cost is \$75,000. Asking for assistance for the remaining \$37,500.
12. Presentation by Penny Cutler-Bermudez, Licensed Nursing Home Administrator; Iowa Veterans Home.
- a. VA Surveyors showed up to do their annual unannounced inspection, so Penny stepping in for Sarah Bruner. Positive comments coming out of the survey, they are reporting that they have confidence that our residents are under great care.
 - b. IVH Update-slowly building licensed nursing staff numbers which have allowed us to add 10 more nursing beds to open in August and continue with the rest of the wing by the end of September. By the end of the year, they will be asking the Federal VA to put 30 more beds online as the Domicillary number is reduced to meet the growing needs of nursing level care.
 - c. Growing our own CNAs and encouraging them to continue their education by offering flexible schedules and 3 day work weeks, and if they do weekend package, they can stay for free. There are 6 employees awaiting to take their boards for licensing.
 - d. Adding clinicals from the University of Northern Iowa. Penny and Sarah Bruner were asked to sit on the UNI Nursing Board. Drake and Allen college also represented on the board which allows for collaboration between the agencies and creative think tanks to move nursing into a positive direction.
 - e. Realignment of IVH, effecting 11 staff members (eliminated) and 4 (reduced from fulltime to parttime). Reason for the alignment is to recognize the cost of care continues to increase.. IVH has been looking for the last year and a half at every position that has been vacated to see if they could be reallocated in a different way or not fill it, to manage the budget. The cost of food, supplies, equipment, utilities and medication are huge increased costs. This was the final phase we looked at positions that we could realign without impacting patient services
 - i. Currently two leaders and eight professional staff that work on the paperwork and the programming of a 35 employee department. This is being adjusted to 4 leaders to do the paperwork and MDS and the rest will



- be focused on delivering the services. The department will be increased from 35 to 36 members once the alignment is completed.
- ii. Arts and Crafts, Leather, Ceramics, Gift Shops, resident trips and facility wide recreation will still be delivered as it has been.
 - f. Encouraging those affected to apply for the new positions or other vacancies in food service, laundry and nursing services.
 - g. Thank you to the community for their collaborative efforts to support the facility and the residents.
13. Presentation by Kimberly Bratland, Clinical Services Support Bureau Chief, Iowa Veterans Home.
- a. IVH needs more vital sign machines. Seeking to purchase portable monitors with stands to measure BP, pulse, temp and pulse oximeters. This will provide more expedient exam as these machines have a clinic mode for rapid physical examination of multiple residents. Each unit and household would have one portable vital sign monitors available.
 - b. The average amount of cost is \$2500-\$3000 each unit. IVH is in need of 20 units and they are actively seeking donations towards the amount of \$50,000. IVH has already received \$7500 and is asking the Commission to consider funding the remaining \$42,500.
14. Presentation by Jennifer Crowl, Valor Insurance
- a. Who: Licensed Insurance Agent and an Army Veteran herself. Office staff is also dedicated to Veteran support. Works out of Dallas county, but serves people in all 99 counties.
 - b. What: Serve the Veteran community by finding ways to infuse monies back into the Veteran and their families household.
 - i. In the last year, the 10 households she has worked with have resulted in money back and benefits instilled around \$50,000.
 - ii. Important to work directly with the county VSOs to allow them to work on their side and then she can work on the insurance side, maximizing the money and benefits for the Veterans family. Has completed 12 outreach events so far this year and is connected with AMVETS, VFW, American Legion.
 - iii. Also works with personnel connected to Tricare for Life and people with federal benefits
 - c. Why: Veterans are in need. All costs and insurances are skyrocketing. Wants Veterans to have a point of contact in person, instead of a 1-800 number. There is a lot of legislation happening which will impact the senior community soon such as the Inflation Reduction Act.
15. Presentation by Hannah Hanson, Senior VA Specialist; H-Wave military representative
- a. Education as to what H-wave is and how it can be a resource to Veterans in the VA space if the VA clinician deems the Veteran is an appropriate candidate.



- i. Veteran owned business contracted with the VA, so there is no out of pocket cost to the Veteran
 - ii. Home use modality used for 15 FDA approved indications anywhere from chronic and acute pain all the way to range of motion, increased circulation and muscle spasms. Teeth to Toes help.
 - iii. Two sided: 1. Opioid alternative; pain control through sodium channel inhibition. 2. Low frequency; Non fatiguing, non tatonizing muscle contraction which allows for increased circulation and nourishment to the sites that are being targeted and removing waste and inflammation that is sitting in the site.
 - iv. H-wave provides all the training
 - v. To obtain an H-wave, the VA clinician puts in an order from physical therapy or prosthetics.. they come to the home for fitting or the Veteran can come to the VA and they also offer virtual care if the patient prefers.
 - vi. Fully refundable within 30 days for any reason.
 - b. Community Support and Availability
 - i. They would like to support any Veteran events they can, please reach out for sponsorship information as they want to give back in anyway they can.
 - c. Hannah leaving for Texas and Bryan Sumner will be taking over. He is a physical therapist by training and has worked with a lot of Veterans from Camp Dodge.
16. Presentation by Jennifer Olson, VSO-IA County, representing John Thompson, Salute to the Fallen
 - a. Salute to the Fallen is a 501c.3 from Cedar Rapids. Their focus is on combatting Veteran Suicide through outreach, emergency contacts and referrals, and attending funerals of those that have been lost.
 - b. Works directly with county VSOs and many local resources to ensure that the needs of those in crisis are addressed in a timely manner.
 - c. Partners are not large corporations, but other Veterans committed to assisting, organizing and conducting other fundraising events.
 - d. Two sided project request
 - i. Vehicle Wrap-indicating who they are and what their vision is and allowing easy identification when they arrive on calls, funerals, or other outreach events.
 1. Currently holding monthly fundraising events for this portion. Estimate for this portion is \$4,500.
 - ii. Lighting of the Vehicle- this is what they are seeking assistance in purchasing. The cost of the lighting is \$11,088.36. These lights serve not only as part of the vision goal, but also serves as a safety measure in the identification by other emergency services called on scene.
 - iii. Total cost of the project is \$15,588.36
17. IDVA Update provided by Todd Jacobus, Director, IDVA



1. Realignment of Iowa Veterans Home Structure & Impact on Staff. Earlier this week, I sent each of you a letter regarding a realignment of the Iowa Veterans Home structure and its impact on staff. I want to provide an overview of those changes today:

a. On Monday, July 8, we initiated a plan that will realign the Iowa Veterans Home organizational structure to better meet the needs of Veterans and spouses residing with us here in Marshalltown, which have evolved over time. The cost of care is increasing while federal reimbursements are not keeping up with cost of care. **This realignment will result in a more efficient and responsive support to and care for our residents by putting more staff in a direct-care role.** This realignment is a strategic decision to position ourselves to provide the very best in support for our residents. We currently have vacant positions and encourage affected staff members to apply for these vacancies.

b. Our leadership team notified 15 members of the Iowa Veterans Home staff that their employment status with the agency will be impacted as a result of an organizational re-structuring that we will implement effective August 18, 2024. This message was delivered in person to the affected individuals – to include options for interviewing for open positions within the Iowa Veterans Home and throughout other State Agencies. Organization changes include:

(1) Supervisory responsibility of Pharmacy transitioning from Operations to the Licensed Nursing Home Administrator.

(2) Supervisory responsibility over the Quality and Compliance Bureau transitioning from the Medical Director to the Licensed Nursing Home Administrator.

(3) Supervisory responsibility of Volunteer Services transitioning from Activities to Social Work Supervisor.

(4) Supervisory responsibility of the Switchboard Operations transitioning to Social Work Supervisor.

(5) Supervisory responsibilities for the Safety Program transitioning from the Facilities Management Bureau to the Quality and Compliance Bureau.

(6) Supervisory responsibility of Employee Health transitioning from Human Resources to the Medical Clinic with support from Human Resources.

(7) Finally, as we transition 30 rooms from Domiciliary to Nursing Level of Care, we will also move supervisory responsibility of the Fox Building from the Licensed Nursing Home Administrator to the Administrator of Nursing.

c. **A total of 15 positions are affected by this alignment** - 11 positions will be eliminated; and 4 positions will be transitioned from full-time to part-time. **We will advertise and hire 7 new positions**, for which impacted staff are eligible to apply. These new positions are listed on the State of Iowa's job website now.



d. **We make every decision with one thing in mind: delivering excellent care to the Veterans and their families.** While change can be difficult, this will enhance the services we deliver to our customers, deliver the very best possible care to our residents, and sustain our operation in the future. We are certainly grateful to all our employees for their dedication and commitment to serving those in our care.

e. Our leadership team facilitated three in-person Staff Forums to address these changes with all staff on Monday at 11:00 am, 2:30 pm, and 11:00 pm. In addition, I sent a letter explaining the changes to every staff member in the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as to our Commissioners. Lastly, I facilitated a Resident Forum on Tuesday, July 9, at 3:00 pm.

f. These were challenging, difficult decisions impacting 15 staff members and their families, the Clinical Services Bureau, and our IVH team, and I feel very badly about the negative impacts of these decisions.

2. IVH Leadership Meeting with VA Hospital Directors (Des Moines CIHCS) & Iowa City (ICHCS). The IVH leadership team met on Tuesday, July 9 – with Judith Johnson-Mekota & Lisa Curnes to discuss how we can improve in the way that we deliver services to Iowa Veterans. We appreciate these senior leaders taking the time to meet with us, and look forward to these meetings taking place monthly – the next meeting will be in-person at the Iowa Veterans Home.

3. Inform – IVH Survey by U.S. VA Central Office. A 5-person survey team from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs arrived on the Iowa Veterans Home campus on Monday, July 8, 2024, at 9:00 am for their annual unannounced inspection of our operation. The team will provide two out-briefings at the conclusion of this survey. The Nursing level of care out-briefing will be on Thursday, July 11, at 12:00 pm. The Domiciliary level of care out-briefing will be on Friday, July 12, at 12:00 pm.

4. Dr. Doug Steenblock, Chief of the Mental Health Bureau at the Iowa Veterans Home, is organizing a committee from mental health specialists across Iowa focused on providing options for Iowans, including Veterans, who have more advanced mental health challenges needing nursing level of care support. We are fortunate to have Dr. Steenblock on-staff. It is unusual for a care facility to have a team of mental health professionals on-staff, and we are fortunate to have Dr. Steenblock, who has been at IVH for 30+ years, leading this Bureau.

5. Overview of Issues & Initiatives for IDVA:

a. Options to address funding challenges at IVH – rising cost of pharmaceuticals, food, fuel, electricity, water, incentive pay to retain licensed staff



- b. Continue work on transitioning 30 (ea) rooms in Fox Building from Independent Living (Domiciliary) to Nursing level of care. (No one will be discharged during this transition.)
- c. Implement procurement plan for \$168,000 of equipment at Iowa Veterans Cemetery approved by General Assembly
- d. Develop of IDVA (monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly) newsletter for Iowa Veterans community
- e. Continue work on installation / troubleshooting nurse call system
- f. Continue working on replacement of pharmaceutical distribution hardware (ARxium)
- g. Will open second of three hallways in Malloy Building 2nd Floor North Wing on August 5; this hallway has been temporarily closed since November 28, 2022.
- h. We are close to sign a MOU with National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) for VSO training and certification; currently with attorney general for final decision
- i. Refinement of Administrative Rules associated with laws passed during 2024 legislative session.
- j. New outside directional signage being placed at Iowa Veterans Home Campus; should be complete by July 31, 2024.
- k. Developing plan to replace ham radio tower on IVH grounds to provide better capability to "Smokin Hot Radio" Club.
- l. Sun shade device installation in courtyard
- m. Strategic plan for Sheeler Building (2nd & 3rd Floor), & Heinz Hall

6. Personnel Update:

a. **New Benefits & Cemetery Bureau Chief.** Welcome to Gavin Sandvig, who began serving as the Benefits & Cemetery Bureau Chief on Friday, July 5, 2024. Gavin served 30 years in the Iowa Army National Guard – both as an enlisted Soldier and Officer, retiring as the Logistics Officer for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team 34th Infantry Division in Boone, Iowa. Gavin comes to the IDVA team with a high level of energy and an enthusiasm that will impact the entire Veterans community here in Iowa. Gavin can be reached at cell: (641) 758-5318, gavin.sandvig@iowa.gov.



b. **Info Commissioners.** On June 18, 2024, Governor Reynolds appointed Dennis Jones to serve as a Commissioner on the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs where he will represent the Marine Corps League. This appointment will require confirmation by the Senate during the 2025 legislative session.

Census Update: 398 Residents

7. Iowa Veterans Home Wartime Service, July 1, 2024:

- a. Total Residents: 398
- b. World War II Veterans: 4
- c. Korean War Veterans: 28
- d. Vietnam Veterans: 210
- e. Peacetime Veterans: 84
- f. Persian Gulf (ODS/OIF, OEF): 16
- g. Spouses: 56

8. Iowa Veterans Home Age of Residents, July 1, 2024

- a. Total Residents: 398
- b. Ages 22-54 – 4 ea
- c. Ages 55-64 – 44 ea
- d. Ages 65-74 – 117 ea
- e. Ages 75-84 – 146
- f. Ages 85-94 – 73 ea
- g. Ages 95-100 – 14 ea

9. **Info – Fire in Dack Building.** During our meeting on April 3, 2024, I reported on the fire in the Dack Building 4th Floor West Wing, which was caused by magnifying light issued by the VA to one of our visually challenged Veterans. This fire resulted in smoke damage, as well as significant water damage due to the sprinkler system – impacting numerous residents on the 2nd, 3rd & 4th Floor, and causing 22 residents to be re-located to the Malloy Building. All but one of these residents returned to their rooms in the Dack Building on May 6. Room 420 continues to not be occupied due to the need for a cooling unit replacement there. The cost to mitigate damage to the facility was \$175,000. The State Executive Council authorized reimbursement of these funds through the 29C.20 Contingency / Disaster Aid Fund.

10. **Action – Update on Licensed Staff:** If any of our Veterans community / stakeholders knows of medical professionals looking for an outstanding workplace and opportunity, then please direct them to the Iowa Veterans Home! Listed below are the positions and the number of vacancies in each position.



- a. Nurse Supervisor: Authorized 25, Assigned 24, 96%
- b. Nurse Clinician: Authorized 12, Assigned 12, 100%
- c. Registered Nurse (RN): Authorized 17, Assigned 13, 76.47%
- d. Licensed Practical Nurse: Authorized 50, Assigned 31, 62%
- e. Certified Medical Aid: Authorized 80, Assigned 60, 70% [Note: CMAs counted in CNA / RTW Numbers also]
- f. Certified Nurses Assistant (CNA | RTW): Authorized 180, Assigned 157, 81.59%
The State of Iowa refers to CNAs as "Resident Treatment Workers" (RTWs).

11. Action – Nursing Position Vacancies at Iowa Veterans Home. Our census on July 1, 2024 was 398, and we have been right around the 400 level for the last 12 months. We have a capacity for 447 residents. Like many long-term care facilities, we are challenged in hiring and retaining certified staff. We have an outstanding recruiting and retention team engaged in events throughout the State of Iowa. But, while we are improving we need to do more.

- a. We anticipate 3 (ea) Registered Nurses to transfer from the Glenwood Resource Center to the Iowa Veterans Home. We will welcome these health care professionals with open arms.
- b. The University of Northern Iowa recently started a Nursing Program where students may pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. We have an agreement for students to do clinicals at the Iowa Veterans Home, and have also provided them with the opportunity to remain overnight at Heinz Hall at no cost.
- c. IVH's Licensed Nursing Home Administrator and IVH's Administrator of Nursing are currently serving on the newly established Board of Directors for the University of Northern Iowa College of Nursing.
- d. IVH has a relationship with the Marshalltown Community College Nursing Program, and many MCC students are on-staff at IVH.
- e. 18 temporary staff members completed classes and are waiting to take their board examinations to be Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs); six of those have already committed to applying for full-time permanent positions. Other will be pursuing higher level licensure.

12. Update on "Coffee & Camaraderie". Kris Jones of Waterloo asked me to provide an update on Coffee & Camaraderie events taking place across the State of Iowa. Informal Coffee & Camaraderie programs are intended to build friendships, provides venues for information exchange, and provides a network that results in our Veterans community knowing that they are never alone. Look for information in the community closest to you and consider checking it out. These C & Cs are scheduled to meet monthly on the same day, time and location, attendance is optional, someone organizes the agenda and facilitates the conversation, and all present at the event share their experiences, perspectives, lessons learned, points of contact, and "how to" address problems / issues. Marshalltown recently established a Coffee & Camaraderie Group!!! These organizations / gatherings are already taking place in:

- a. **Black Hawk County | Waterloo** (Coordinators: Jen & Andy Schreiber & Kris Jones)



- b. **Cerro Gordo County | Mason City** (Coordinator Josh Davison and Tommy Balterria)
- c. **Dubuque County | Dubuque** (Coordinator: Randy Rennison).
- d. **Hamilton County | Webster City** (Coordinator: Ryan Sawyer)
- e. **Iowa County | Marengo** (Coordinator Jenni Olson)
- f. **Johnson County | Iowa City** (Coordinators: John Mikelson & Brandon Brandy Hudson)
- g. **Marshall County | Marshalltown** (Coordinator Kevin Huseboe & Shari Cougenour).

Meetings take place on first Tuesday of each month at 7:30-10:00 am, at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 839, 107 East Meadow Lane, Marshalltown, Iowa 50158. For more information contact va@marshallcountyia.gov.

- h. **Polk County | Des Moines** (Coordinators Kaylor Schumacher & Jeremy Frisbey)

13. Action – Communication with Veterans & Stakeholders. During our meeting in April 2024 I committed to the Veterans Community that we would be working on establishing a monthly / bi-monthly newsletter that provides an update to Iowa Veterans – similar to the newsletter that many Iowans receive from other State Departments of Veterans Affairs. I want you to know that **we've not forgotten about that commitment and will renew our energy on this project.**

14. Inform – Communication with Staff & Commissioners. Each month our IDVA Bureau Chiefs send out an end of month newsletter to staff and to the Commission with an overview of our on-going operations. In addition, staff members can anonymously submit feedback (compliments, concerns, complaints, criticisms) to me in a written form. I respond to feedback in a monthly video, which I also share with the Commission. Bottom line is that we are accountable to our team, and respond to every inquiry. If there is anyone out there who has comments or feedback to me, or anyone on our team, then please reach out to me. I can be reached at todd.jacobus@ivh.state.ia.us and cell: (641) 750-9399.

15. Veterans Day 2024 Keynote Speaker at Iowa Veterans Cemetery. Command Sergeant Major Rick Lamb (U.S. Army Retired) will be the keynote speaker at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery on Monday, November 11, 2024. Rick began his career in the Iowa Army National Guard as a 17 year-old high school junior at Des Moines Hoover High School. After graduating in 1977, Rick joined the United States Army where he served one of the most storied careers of any Iowan wearing a Soldier's uniform – serving in two Ranger Battalions, 4 Special Forces Groups, two Theater Special Operations Commands, and Joint Special Operations Task Force – Horn of Africa, more than 12 years overseas and participating in almost every major combat operation spanning Operation Eagle Claw (Iran) through Operation Iraqi Freedom. Rick is a Silver Star & Purple Heart recipient, is a member of the United States Special Operations Command's Commando Hall of Fame, the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame, and was the Arthur "Bull" Simons Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Please join us for this event!

16. Action –2025 Veterans Day on the Hill. Veterans Day on the Hill will take place on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. The day will begin at 7:30 am with vendors setting up their



displays, 9:00 am with Commissioners meeting with Governor Reynolds in her office, a photograph in the rotunda at 9:50 am, and the program beginning at 10:00 am. Please mark your calendars now and help spread the word of this event.

17. Inform – Fall 2024 School. Please mark your calendars for the following events and look for a letter of instruction from our office within the next two weeks:

a. **County Commissioner Reception, Sunday, October 13, 2024.** We will coordinate a social event for County Commissioners on Sunday, October 13, 2024 from 5:00-7:30 pm at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum. We will be sending out a letter of instruction that will include details of this event, and will be looking for RSVPs from Commissioners who commit to attending.

b. **IDVA Fall 2024 School for County Commissioners of Veterans Affairs, Monday, October 14, 2024.** The IDVA School for County Commissioners will take place on Monday, October 14, 2024 from 9:00 am-3:30 pm at the Freedom Center (Building S70) on Camp Dodge, 7105 NW 70th Ave., Johnston, Iowa 50131. All County Commissioners are invited, and very much encouraged, to attend this training. It is important for Commissioners to understand their duties, responsibilities, and learn best practices, and there is no better venue for this than the Annual IDVA School. We also invite County Boards of Supervisors to attend this Commissioner training. It is imperative for counties to work together to address the needs of Iowa Veterans, and our Boards of Supervisors play a significant role on this team. If you have questions, then please reach out to me at cell: (641) 750-9399 or todd.jacobus@ivh.state.ia.us.

c. **IDVA Fall 2024 School for County Directors / Administrators of Veterans Affairs, October 15-17, 2024.** The IDVA School for County Directors / Administrators of Veterans Affairs will take place on Tuesday through Thursday, October 15-17, 2024, at a location in Central Iowa to be determined. The IDVA is working with the Iowa Association of County Commissioners & Veteran Service Officers (IACCVSO) on this training and the venue. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17). We have some very talented Veteran Service Officers throughout the State of Iowa, and it is important that we bring everyone together to help all of us become better, more effective. Virtual learning is great when necessary. But nothing is going to replace the opportunity of direct dialogue and person-to-person interaction. Look for the letter of instruction that we will send out soon. If you have questions or concerns then please reach out to me at cell: (641) 750-9399 or todd.jacobus@ivh.state.ia.us.

18. Events

July 10, 2024 10:00 am – Quarterly Meeting of Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs, Iowa National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters, Johnston



- July 24, 2024 12:00 pm – Iowa Pork Producers Luncheon at Iowa Veterans Home
- August 12, 2024 10:00 am – Iowa State Fair Veterans Parade, Iowa State Fairgrounds, Des Moines
- August 12-16, 2024 – National Association of State Veterans Homes Conference, Orlando, FL
- August 18-21, 2024 – National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs Conference, Indianapolis, IN
- September 27, 2024 10:00 am – The Final Salute to Unclaimed Veterans, West Des Moines Christian Church / Iowa Veterans Cemetery
- October 2, 2024 10:00 am – Quarterly Meeting of Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs, Iowa Veterans Home, Malloy Leisure Resource Center, Marshalltown
- November 11, 2024 8:00 am – Veterans Day Program at Iowa Veterans Cemetery, Van Meter (Keynote speaker: Command Sergeant Major Rick Lamb, U.S. Army Retired)
- November 11, 2024 10:30 am – Veterans Day Program at Iowa Veterans Home, Marshalltown
- December 14, 2024 8:00 am – Wreaths Across America Program at Iowa Veterans Cemetery, Van Meter
- December 14, 2024 10:00 am – Wreaths Across America Program at Iowa Veterans Home, Marshalltown
- January 8, 2025 10:00 am – Quarterly Meeting of Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs, Iowa National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters, Johnston
- January 22, 2025 – Veterans Day on the Hill at Iowa State Capitol
- April 2, 2025 – Quarterly Meeting of Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs, Iowa Veterans Home, Malloy Leisure Resource Center, Marshalltown
- July 9, 2025 – Quarterly Meeting of Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs, Iowa National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters, Johnston
- October 1, 2025 – Quarterly Meeting of Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs, Iowa Veterans Home, Malloy Leisure Resource Center, Marshalltown



18. Motion by Darlene McMartin to approve minutes from the ICVA meeting on April 3, 2024. Second by Joella Perry. Motion approved unanimously.
19. Motion by George Mosby to approve the minutes from the Trust Fund conference call meeting on April 4, 2024. Second by Becky Dirks-Haugsted. Motion approved unanimously.
20. Motion by Scott Miller to approve the minutes from the Trust Fund conference call meeting on May 2, 2024. Second by Robert Seausakul. Motion approved unanimously.
21. Motion by Joella Perry to approved the minutes from the Trust Fund conference call meeting on June 6, 2024. Second by Darlene McMartin. Motion approved unanimously.
22. Motion by Becky Dirks-Haugsted to approve the minuted from the Trust Fund conference call meeting on July 8, 2024. Second by George Mosby. Motion approved unanimously.
23. Elections of New Officers:
 - a. Motion by Joella Perry for Darlene McMartin for Chair. Second by Greg Paulline. Motion approved unanimously.
 - b. Motion by Greg Paulline for Joella Perry as Vice Chair. Second by Darlene McMartin. Motion approved unanimously.
 - c. Motion by Darlene McMarting for George Mosby as 2nd Vice Chair. Second by Scott Miller. Motion approved unanimously.
24. Sub Committee appointments
 - a. Darlene will send out committee listing by email at a later date after a revision is completed. Removing some committees and adding a mental health task force. Members will have 30 days to respond.
 - b. Educational Committee met June 26th
 - c. Administrative Rules Committee also met June 26th
 - d. Outreach and Marketing Committee- Three levels of support; County-18; Inter Agencies, which are other states and federal agenices-97; Community for profit, non profit and Veteran Organizations -63.
25. Old Business-None
26. New Business
 - a. Motion by Joella Perry to approve new administrative rules. Second by Darlene McMartin. Motion approved unanimously.
27. Update from Chairperson Ledvina on the county commission meeting held on July 9, 2024
 - a. Working on CVSO manual
 - b. Date and time of next association meeting is October 14
 - c. New by laws and rules coming out
 - d. Spring School will be held at Stoney Creek, April 15-18· 2024. The association will not be holding any CEUs. The Code change takes the responsibility of CEUs and places it on the counties.
 - e. National level does quarterly accreditation training



28. Announcements:

- a. National Guard hosting annual Alumni Day at Camp Dodge Freedom Center on August 3, 2024 from 0700-1300. Registration is online. This is a great place to get resources and benefit information.
- b. Upcoming 1800 member deployment to CENTCOM in a year.

29. Public Comment

- a. Commissioners are encouraged to attend county events and turn in activities for mileage. Darlene mcMartin to attend Clay County Fair and Harrison county on July 24th for a Women's Veterans program.
- b. Wayne Marek-DSM Vet Center, also partners with the Des Moines VA to conduct the annual Homeless Veteran Stand Down. The CRC is located at 1223 Center Street in Des Moines. Twice a year they do a count, this summer is July 31st and August 1. If you would like to assist, call (515) 699-5637 to the CRC and signing up. CRC supports Veterans in shelters, around 150-200 in housing, and also those Vets that are at risk. The at risk population is the targeted audience at the September Stand Down. Funding has dropped federally since the county of homeless. Volunteer number is (515) 815-4894
- c. Mike Mortensen was nominated and received the national level Ann Knowles award for Veteran advocacy.

30. Next ICVA meeting will be October 2, 2024 at 10:00 am at the Iowa Veterans Home, Whitehill Auditorium, 1301 Summit Street, Marshalltown, Iowa

31. Motion to adjourn by Joella Perry. Second by Robert Seusakul. Meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm.