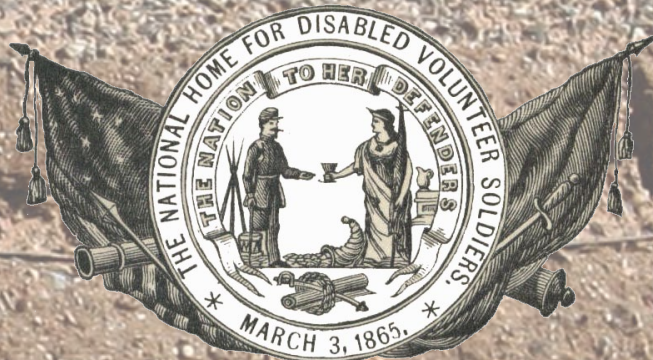


69th Annual
VA Voluntary Service
National Advisory
Committee
Meeting
Report

April 22-24, 2015
Albuquerque, NM



Celebrating 150 Years of Service to Veterans



Cover photo by Kim Ashley courtesy of the Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service
National Advisory Committee Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 22, 2015 8:00-11:00 A.M.**

Call to Order: W. G. "Bill" Kilgore, National Representative, AMVETS, and Executive Committee (EC) Chairperson

Invocation: The invocation was delivered by Colonel Charles Gallina, National Representative, Knights of Columbus

Pledge of Allegiance: Lead by Del "Bulldog" Turner, National Representative, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.

Chairman's Opening Remarks: Mr. Kilgore welcomed members of EC and those present from the public. He reminded all attendees that the EC meetings are open to the public but are not open for comment other than from board members. Mr. Kilgore informed the committee that Jeffery Moragne will be present, but might be delayed. He then asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Turner, National Representative, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A, moved to approve the agenda; Mr. Emil Franz, National Representative, Marine Corps League, seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

Roll Call: NEC attendance was duly recorded as follows:

	<u>Present (P)/ Absent (A)</u>
American Legion, The	P
American Legion Auxiliary	P
American Red Cross	P
AMVETS	P
AMVETS Auxiliary	P
Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks	P
Blinded Veterans Association	P
Disabled American Veterans	P
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary	P
Forty and Eight	P
Knights of Columbus	P
Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Of the U.S., Inc.	P
Marine Corps League	P
Masonic Service Association of North America	P
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.	P
National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution	P
Paralyzed Veterans of America	P
The Salvation Army	P
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	P
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.	A

VA and Other Staff Present:

Sabrina C. Clark, Director, Voluntary Service Office, VA Central Office (VACO)

Sonja Brown, Chief, Voluntary Service and Public Affairs, New Mexico VA Healthcare System, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Lorna Hatch, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Maine Healthcare System, Togus, Maine and NAC Meeting Planner

Christine Feeser, Program Specialist, Voluntary Service Office, VACO and NAC Meeting Planner

Mary Jo Munnely, Lead Staff Assistant, Voluntary Service Office, VACO

Anna Diehl, Chief, Community Resources/Public Affairs, Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center & Clinics, White City, Oregon

Joe Dooley, Chief, Voluntary Service, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, Bedford, Massachusetts

Stephanie Burns, Chief, Voluntary Service, Washington DC VAMC, Washington, DC

Ginny Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, Voluntary Service Office, VACO

J. P. Brown, III, President, James H. Park Memorial Fund Board

Christopher Slawinski, Treasurer, James H. Park Memorial Fund Board

Goals and Objectives: Mr. Kilgore presented the goals and objectives of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC).

1. Provide VAVS NAC an opportunity to conduct its business in a manner that assures achievement of all responsibilities mandated by its charter.
2. Provide NAC orientation to new local and national VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives and new VAVS staff.
3. Present to all member organization representatives an overview of current and pending VA policies and procedures.
4. Foster full and open communication among member organizations, their representatives, and Voluntary Service Central Office and field staff.
5. Provide the NAC member organizations with the educational and training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer programs with special emphasis on methods to recruit, retain, motivate, and recognize volunteers.
6. Furnish the NAC member organizations the opportunity to hear from VA leadership concerning key issues within the Department of Veterans Affairs.
7. Arrange for the NAC review of, and action on, recommendations.
8. Honor the national recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, **Sharadyanne Salomon**, student volunteer at West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, West Palm Beach, Florida.
9. Recognize **Lorna Hatch**, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Maine Healthcare System, Augusta, Maine, as the recipient of the Voluntary Service Award for Excellence.

10. Recognize **Patti Williamson**, VAVS Representative, American Legion Auxiliary, VA Illianna Health Care System, Danville, Illinois, as the VAVS NAC Female Volunteer of the Year; and, **James Hogan**, Blinded Veterans Association, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, as the VAVS NAC Male Volunteer of the Year.
11. Recognize the following award recipients for the American Spirit Awards: **Todd Greenman**, Battle Creek VA Medical Center, Battle Creek, Michigan, for Student Recruitment; **Dax Allcorn**, Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center, Muskogee, Oklahoma, for Corporate Recruitment; **Stephanie Burns**, Washington DC VA Medical Center, Washington, DC for Military Recruitment; and **Beverly Leneski**, VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, Ann Arbor, Michigan, for Faith-Based Recruitment.

Additions/Revisions to minutes of the EC Meeting held October 2014: The minutes were approved as written.

Host's Welcome: Ms. Sonja Brown, Chief, Voluntary Service and Public Affairs, New Mexico VA Healthcare System, Albuquerque, New Mexico welcomed all EC committee members and staff to New Mexico and thanked them for selecting Albuquerque to host the 69th annual NAC Meeting and Conference.

69th Annual Meeting Agenda Overview: Lorna Hatch, Chief VAVS, VA Maine Healthcare System and NAC Annual Meeting Planner, provided an overview of the meeting's agenda and events. She expected to see high attendance at the Representative and Deputy Representative Training presented by Joseph Dooley, Chief, Voluntary Service, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, Bedford, Massachusetts and Colonel Gallina. She spoke briefly about the Keynote Speaker, Chip Madera, and thanked the Knights of Columbus, Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and VAVS Partners for sponsoring him to speak at the conference. Without their sponsorship, the special presentation would not have been possible.

VAVS Update: Sabrina C. Clark, Director, Voluntary Service Office, acknowledge all those involved in planning this year's conference. Her highlights included the following: The Annual Narrative reporting process has been changed to allow for a more comprehensive and meaningful reflection of VAVS across the field. From this past year's report, there continues to be a decline in regularly scheduled volunteers and hours, but consistent increases in occasional hours. She acknowledged the concern that many have expressed about the decline, but reminded the group that the numbers are not the only evidence of strong programs. The narratives showed the development of unique and innovative assignments and provided an opportunity to showcase best practices. Mrs. Clark also reminded the group that it is extremely important that VAVS remain flexible to the changing needs of Veterans and the strategic priorities of the organization. That focus should always come first.

Mrs. Clark spoke about her strategic direction aligned to the principles of Leadership, Collaboration and Impact (LCI). She highlighted aspects of each that were noted in the annual reports. Noteworthy was the significant leadership activities of VAVS staff, which serves to position the team and the program as a critical component of VA's ability to care for Veterans. She noted the VA's continued focus on strategic partnerships and community engagement. She emphasized the collaboration that VAVS has had with the Office of

Community Engagement and Public-Private Partnership within VA. She also acknowledged Stephanie Burns and the VAVS team in Washington, DC, for their involvement in fostering a key partnership with Walter Reed. In the area of impact, Mrs. Clark reminded the group that there were many ways to show the impact of VAVS and the importance of identifying internal champions to help define the contributions of VAVS programs and services on Veterans. Mrs. Clark highlighted the growing role of VAVS in the areas of outreach and communications. Volunteers and community partners are tremendous communication vehicles. VA is beginning to realize the power behind these individuals and utilize them for telling the story of VA, attracting Veterans to VA for services, and delivering key messages on behalf of the organization. In doing so, the opportunity exist for recruitment and outreach for VAVS. The group was encouraged to stay involved in these types of activities.

From the narratives, each VISN was asked to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the VAVS Program. This process, known as a SWOT analysis, allows her office to look at patterns across organizations and focus in on those themes to assist in the ongoing growth and improvement for VAVS. These themes will be how VAVS identifies its strategic focus and way forward. Mrs. Clark emphasized the importance of developing a strategy for intentional performance improvement.

One of the ways that this is being accomplished is through the new sub-committee to the EC that allows VAVS staff and EC members to collaborative establish a strategic framework that promotes the overall working of the committee in forming important, goal-oriented recommendations.

Mr. Kilgore requested to get approval for the minutes of the October 2014 meeting. Mr. Turner moved for approval. John Kleindienst, Disabled American Veterans, seconded the approval. **The motion was carried.**

Subcommittee Reports:

Recommendations: George Braatz, Masonic Service Association of North America, reported that during the fall EC meeting, one 2015 recommendation was approved to go forward to the NAC for approval during the Friday business session: The members of the NAC EC recommend that the Department of Veterans Affairs either change or amend the current General Post-funds Policy to non-appropriated funds or seek a special code, therein, to allow VA facilities the latitude to receive and utilize all donations for their intended purpose.

In addition, the ad hoc partnership committee developed five additional 2015 recommendations to be presented during the EC meeting.

He reported that VA responded to the 2014 VAVS NAC Recommendation by concurring in principle with streamlining the onboarding process in order to bring volunteers on board in a timely manner to expand the scope of the volunteer's impact and increase overall volunteer recruitment. Instead of piloting the onboarding processes currently utilized by the Durham VAMC and the Washington DC VAMC as the recommendation recommended, VA believes the onboarding process should be shared as a best practice to encourage utilization at facilities that may benefit from this process.

Mr. Turner expressed his concern with the wording of the VA response "concur in principle," stating that he believed the VA should either concur or not concur. Mrs. Clark explained that

a best practice at one facility may not be able to be duplicated at another facility. She challenged the Recommendations Subcommittee to bring forward recommendations that need the Secretary's input to implement.

Mr. Kilgore asked for approval of the report. Edward Eckroth, Blinded Veterans Association, made a motion. Mr. Kleindienst seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

NAC Volunteer of the Year: Mr. Kilgore reported that the call for nominations was sent out July 23, 2014, and by the end of November, there was no response. Mr. Kilgore understands that some organizations only meet three times per year but would like to see more involvement and nominations come through. The proper format of nominations was stressed and a reminder to VA staff to have all nominations sent to the National Representative of the organization to which the nominee is a member for preliminary judging. The National Representative submits the nomination with a cover letter on the Organization's letterhead as the procedure states. It was recommended that a separate deadline be set for organizations to receive the initial submissions to allow time to judge and submit on time. Mr. Kilgore called a vote. **The vote was not approved.**

Mr. Kilgore asked for a motion to approve the report. Mr. Braatz moved to approve report. Mr. Ron Rolfes, Jr., Forty and Eight, moved to second the approval. **The motion was carried.**

Recruitment: Colonel Gallina reviewed the first two quarters of fiscal year (FY) 2015 in comparison to the first two quarters of FY 2014. There have been declining trends in the past, and they are still continuing to decline. This is happening mostly due to policies and procedures and lengthy on-boarding processes. Colonel Gallina reviewed the intergenerational recruitment strategy. His major concern is lack of recruitment at all levels. Recruitment is a full-time commitment. He highlighted the following recruitment tips for national representatives:

- Develop and maintain organization Representative/Deputy Representative Training Briefing;
- Regularly review and update Representative and Deputy Representative rosters
- Continuously coordinate with VAVS Chiefs to reconcile with local VAMC records of certified representatives;
- Review and update recruitment materials; intergenerational focus;
- Develop or expand organization websites to promote VAVS program; maximum use of "social networking" media;
- Post VA/VAVS news releases, PSAs, and fil clips highlighting important or updated benefits and/or services;
- Review quarterly reports for Representative and Deputy Representative attendance, replace nonperformers;
- Intergenerational volunteer recruitment; and
- Review AJRs for up/down trends.

Retention of volunteers needs to start immediately after recruitment. Volunteers are uncompensated employees that provide a value in terms of service and in monetary value. The "No Veteran Dies Alone" program was highlighted as a key program recruitment initiative; it takes a highly specialized volunteer to sit with a Veteran who is about to pass.

Every Annual Joint Review (AJR) should be reviewed and sent back with recommendations. When speaking on “occasional volunteers” that aren't able to commit, invite them. Bring in every program that the VA has to offer to entice them to come more often and with other “occasional volunteers.” The power is in the ask.

Colonel Gallina expressed the fact that he preferred for all of the AJRs to come to him electronically. This allows for faster communication and feedback between organizations.

Mr. Kilgore asked for a motion to accept the report. Mr. Kleindienst moved to accept the report. Mr. Franz seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

Membership: Mr. Turner outlined the categories of membership and noted the change in the criteria for Service Member category from 30 to 25 VA facilities. He expressed his frustration that the proposed additional membership criteria that the ad hoc membership committee worked on was still pending at VA level and has not yet come to fruition. This policy will strengthen the current membership criteria and ensure interested organizations are legitimate, working organizations. United Daughters of the Confederate moved from Associate to Service Member. Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. and Polish Legion, American Veterans have dropped from Service Member to Associate Service Member. The participation of Catholic War Veterans Auxiliary and Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association has dropped below the associate service member category. However, we are pleased to note that both organizations have applied for and met the criteria for NAC Honorary Membership. Honorary Member Organizations are those who are not able to maintain the support at or above the Associate Service Member Category but have at least 10 consecutive years of NAC membership.

Mr. Kilgore asks for a motion to approve the report. Mr. Kleindienst, Disabled American Veterans, made a motion to approve this report. Mr. Franz seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

(Recess)

(Whereupon, the meeting was resumed)

Ad hoc VAVS NAC Partnership: The ad hoc committee is co-chaired by Colonel Gallina and Anna Diehl. Colonel Gallina introduced the committee members and discussed the collaboration efforts of the committee. The committee members presented the recommendations and provided the background information for each.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rescind or amend the VA Financial Alert or policy requiring any food or beverage expenditures be approved by an SES official prior to expenditure (ref: VHA Office of Finance Alert Volume 2009, Issue 6 and amendment Alert Volume 2010, Issue 2, dated 11/2009). It is recommended the appropriate documentation be developed and distributed authorizing VAVS Program Managers, VAVS Service Chiefs, and authorized GPF Approval Officials be delegated the authority to purchase food items for Veteran Patients enrolled for VA care in keeping with Federal Acquisition Regulations and Donors Instructions/Earmarks.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that the Department of Veterans Affairs rescind or amend the procedure, VA Financial Policies and Procedures: Award Ceremonies, Food or Refreshments, Gifts or Mementos; Volume II – Chapter 4, dated December 2013, that requires the Under Secretary of Health's approval prior to execution of events with over 100 attendees or with refreshment or meal expenditures greater than \$20 per person. It is recommended that VA provide formal delegated authority for the local Facility Director (SES) to approve volunteer awards and recognition ceremonies at the facility level.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs fully support a National Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Campaign in concert with the Director, Voluntary Service Office and the Chair, VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Executive Committee. The members recommend the development of corresponding Communication Plan, Recruitment Strategy, and appropriate recruitment and retention tools.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs encourage the involvement of VA Voluntary Service as a component of New Employee Orientation. An advanced VA Voluntary Service training orientation to include topics such as General Post Fund administration, utilization of VA Volunteers, impact of community resources, Volunteer Transportation Network regulation, Federal Tort Claims liabilities and additional high visibility components of the VAVS program to be included as part of higher level trainings for top management candidates and Senior Executives. The committee further recommends inclusion of Veteran service activity for VA's leadership development programs.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the Department of Veterans Affairs recognize the Voluntary Service System (VSS) as a high level Information Technology priority and provide funding for enhancement and a 5-year infrastructure sustainability plan. Though the demands on available funding across VA are significant, the NAC believes the value added by VA Voluntary Service through supplemental service assistance, donations, and community outreach and partnership opportunities are worthy in Veterans healthcare delivery and assistance thus requiring VA's continued support of the tools needed by staff to effectively manage the program.

A question was asked whether this ad hoc recommendation had anything to do with the current recommendation that was approved at the fall EC. It does not.

Mr. Kilgore recommended a motion that the ad hoc recommendations go to the Recommendation Subcommittee to be presented during the NAC Business Meeting. Mr. Turner made a motion; Mr. Kleindienst seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

Mr. Kilgore explained the process of the Recommendations Committee to the EC.

Remarks- VA Advisory Committee Office: Jeffery Moragne, Director, Advisory Committee Management Office, introduced himself and his position. He expressed that the Secretary would like him to speak with VA Advisory Committee Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members and to let them know that the Secretary is engaged and has their best interests in mind, but would like for all to be aware of guidelines that guide all advisory committees.

Mr. Moragne pointed out that The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) was enacted in 1972 to ensure that advice by the various advisory committees formed over the years is

objective and accessible to the public. The Act formalized a process for establishing, operating, overseeing, and terminating these advisory bodies and created the Committee Management Secretariat to monitor compliance with the Act. FACA applies anytime a body meets as an advisory committee. The public always has a right to comment whether in writing or standing up to ask a question. The only time this is an exception is when the advisory committee is doing administrative work. He stressed the importance of new committee members taking the time to get to know their Committee charter. Mr. Moragne reviewed what the “gold standard” is in VA for advisory committees. He reviewed the importance of cross committee collaboration and some of the new business practices in working with the new Secretary. The Secretary has introduced a new idea that is moving forward at a great pace called Community Veterans Experience Boards, which are local entities that partner with VA as well as Federal Government, local, state, and private partnerships.

Mr. Moragne suggested the possibility of utilizing a virtual meeting to get EC members up-to-date with leadership quickly. He invited the committee members to review the length of a typical term they serve on a committee and to think about having a fresh face come in to keep innovation fresh and to release new energy into the group.

Mr. Moragne also expanded on the thought of serving “one term” on a committee was not set in stone or a rule that absolutely had to be followed. There was discussion about different organizations and how they might be affected and more discussion was brought about concerning dismissal of staff.

Parke Board Update: John P. Brown, III, President, James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board. Mr. Brown thanked the NAC for its continued relationship and support of the Parke Memorial Fund. One challenge has been to receive more applications. More applicants are desired. Mr. Brown is making a recommendation to the board to increase the scholarships by another \$5,000. He expressed how appreciative the Parke Board is of the donations received at conferences and meetings but that donations are accepted year round. Mr. Brown expressed the importance of creating relationships and partnerships with corporate companies in hometowns.

Parke Board Treasurer's Report: Christopher Slawinski, Treasurer, discussed the amount of money that is in the Parke Fund. The 2008 Parke winner asked for their scholarship money. He discussed newest updates for further outstanding scholarships. Students who have previously won must apply to receive scholarship money before the age of 24. If they do not complete this process, the money goes back into the fund. The Parke Board has tried its best to ensure that those students are contacted in time to receive their scholarships. There has been a slight increase in donations but the most successful donation year remains 2008. He requests that all NAC members go to their organization’s leadership to inform them of the benefits of supporting this scholarship fund. It is an important tool and added benefit to bring in youth volunteers.

VAVS Partners, Inc. Treasurer's Report: Jerry Butler, VAVS Partners, Inc., Treasurer, reported that the EC NAC committee has previously reviewed the treasurer’s report at the October meeting. He stated the reason for the decline in money this year, 2014, was because of purchases made for things that were bought in bulk for 2 years (2014) which will not need to be purchased for next year, 2015, but VAVS Partners, Inc. will need to purchase

goods again for 2016 & 2017 meetings.

Old Business:

Future 2016 Annual Meeting Plans: VAVS Partners, Inc. and Christine Feeser, Program Specialist, Voluntary Service Office, VACO and NAC Meeting Planner, reviewed the benefits of holding NAC conferences at the same site two years in a row whenever possible and practical to do so. This was suggested by the EC in 2013. All dates were taken into consideration for the 70th Anniversary NAC Meeting and Conference for 2016 and the NAC Meeting Planners recommended to the EC either dates of May 3-6, 2016 or May 17-20, 2016 in Albuquerque based on hotel availability. Mr. Kilgore asked for a motion to hold the conference during the May 3 – 6 dates. Mr. Turner made a motion. John Kleindienst, Disabled American Veterans, seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

No New Business was discussed.

Fall 2015 EC Meeting: Mrs. Clark discussed potential locations and dates for the upcoming fall EC Meeting. She introduced members to a proposed method of communicating between meetings by initiating quarterly conference calls with EC members to be held in June and September of 2015.

After some discussion, Mr. Rolfes made a recommendation and a motion that the fall EC meeting be held in D.C. Mr. Kilgore asked for a second motion. Mr. Kleindienst seconded that motion. **The motion was carried.**

Due to the passing of Mr. Robert Hennings, National Representative, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and EC Vice Chairperson, Mr. Rolfes was moved from the Chairperson of the Recommendations Subcommittee to Vice Chairperson of the EC to finish out Mr. Henning's term. Mr. Kilgore asked for a recommendation to either keep Mr. Rolfes in his new position or to find someone else who will fill that position. Mr. Braatz made a motion and recommended that Mr. Rolfes remain in his new position. Mr. Rolfes seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

Adjournment: W.G. "Bill" Kilgore

(At this time, the meeting was adjourned.)

VAVS REP/DEP TRAINING Wednesday, April 22nd, 2015 - 1:00-2:30 PM

Faculty: Mr. Dooley, Chief, VAVS, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, Bedford, MA, and Colonel Gallina, VAVS National Representative, Knights of Columbus.

Mr. Dooley introduced himself and Colonel Gallina and welcomed the new and seasoned VAVS NAC National and local Representatives and Deputy Representatives and VAVS staff and volunteers. He stressed the importance of the training is to provide a foundation for the principles of VAVS, especially as they relate to the local VAVS committees, the NAC, and the EC. Mr. Dooley outlined the VAVS references and web resources to include the NAC standard operating policy, VAVS national policies, and facility local policies. He explained

what the acronym VAVS means, its mission, and other key definitions. It was noted that 2016 will be the 70th anniversary of VAVS.

Colonel Gallina discussed the circular partnership and needed interaction between VACO, VA facilities, and the organizations at the local and national level. The VAVS mission is to provide a structured Voluntary Service program to serve America's Veterans with dignity, grace, and compassion. The primary duty of the NAC is to make recommendations to the Secretary of the VA through the Under Secretary for Health on the coordination and promotion of volunteer activities within VA health care facilities. The new Secretary is looking at reducing VISNs from 21 to 17 and is looking at transforming from within the VA. There is an opportunity to make an impact with the Secretary to engage a supplemental workforce of volunteers.

Colonel Gallina reviewed the VA organizational structure, including the new Secretary, Robert "Bob" McDonald. He went through the organizational structure of VAVS and displayed a picture of VAVS VISN Liaison Chiefs, emphasizing that if VISN Liaison Chiefs "don't hear about what is happening on a local level, they won't be able to help things on a national level."

The NAC is currently the oldest advisory committee in the federal government. A brief overview of the history of the NAC, its membership categories, its composition, and what a recommendation is was covered. Volunteers are the main focus in keeping the participating organizations alive. Recruitment is a 24-hour a day/7-day a week job.

Service members (voting members) of the NAC have to maintain the provision of volunteers and participation on local VAVS facility committees at a minimum of 25 VA facilities which is a change from 30 facilities over the last year. This change benefits some of the older organizations that have declining memberships but still want to stay engaged in the VAVS program and bring a unique perspective to work of the NAC. Decreasing the number of facilities to 25 also benefits new organizations that are working their way up through the associate service member category to become a voting member.

For the first time, an ad hoc committee, made up of EC members and VAVS field staff, has collaborated to produce additional recommendations that were approved by the EC to go forward for a vote on Friday, April 24th, 2015.

Proper formatting needs to be applied to all nominations coming into the VAVS Male and Female Volunteer of the Year Awards. This needs to be done through the National Representatives. Mr. Kilgore has outlined this several times and will not accept any nominations that are not in the proper format, regardless of the nominee's qualifications.

Staying in contact with other National Representatives and Deputy Representatives is crucial throughout the year. Reviewing quarterly reports and staying on top of the AJRs are vital to a successful program. If there is an issue, stay in contact with the VAVS Chief and stay on top of local Representatives and Deputy Representatives.

Mr. Dooley stressed how important it is to have a certification letter for each organization to be able to assist in guidance from a national level to a local level and keep open communication between offices.

The AJR is so vitally important to evaluate last year's progress and set goals for the upcoming year and 5-year progress. Electronic copy is preferred. Volunteer and organization records need to be accurate in order for VAVS to continue to receive the resources and funding essential for operation.

An important aspect of being a Voluntary Service Program Manager is to step out of your comfort zone and set an example. It is recommended to create a committee and/or subcommittee to start recruitment on a local level. This falls under the duty for the Voluntary Service Program Manager.

VAVS Committee Meetings must be attended. Only 3 meetings are allowed to be missed, and the only reason a meeting may be excused is for a national or state convention.

When the AJR reports are turned in and the goals are met, it is a S.M.A.R.T. way to plan for the upcoming year. It makes AJR reports specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-oriented. The reports show 131,000 registered volunteers and 76,000 working. It is vital to record and make sure that the number of volunteers and number of hours get logged properly.

VAVS is making a tremendous effort to assist its Veterans closer to their homes. Electronic communications will be the future of how the organizations communicate with VAVS, the creation of virtual assignments will help with recruitment, as well as retention of younger volunteers.

Colonel Gallina spoke on working with the generation "X" to figure out how to incorporate technology, their friends and family, and make volunteering worthwhile for them.

Colonel Gallina concluded by discussing how to incorporate different generations to be able to come together to volunteer.

BUSINESS SESSION

Thursday, April 23, 2015, 8:30-11:30 A.M.

Call to Order: W.G. "Bill" Kilgore, National Representative, AMVETS, and Executive Committee (EC) Chairperson

Invocation: The invocation was delivered by Ronald Cok, Chief Chaplain Service, NMVAHCS

National Anthem: Sung by Bea Davalos, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Laurel Hull, VAVS Representative, Marine Corps League and President, Marine Corps League Foundation, NMVAHCS

Welcome: Andrew M. Welch, MHA, FACHE, Medical Center Director, NMVAHCS, welcomed all participants to Albuquerque, New Mexico and invited them to take advantage of visiting the many different offerings and attractions throughout the state. Mr. Welch mentioned other

tourist attractions from the newest shopping center, “Albuquerque Uptown,” to the Sandia Peak Tram that stretches from the northeast edge of the city to the Crestline of the Sandia Mountains. He took the opportunity to highlight the many contributions from volunteers and all that they do to change the lives of Veterans. He thanked all participants for giving the VA a gift of volunteering every single day to the Veterans.

Chairman's Opening Remarks and Meeting Objectives: Mr. Kilgore thanked Mrs. Clark and her staff and all exhibitors present. One of the exhibitors had a drawing and the winners were announced. Mr. Kilgore asked for a moment of silence for Mr. Hennings who passed away in October 2014. (Moment of silence)

Mr. Kilgore spoke on expectations for the activities for the rest of the day and gave a brief overview of the VAVS NAC.

Roll Call: NEC attendance was duly recorded as follows:

<u>Organization Name</u>	<u>Present (P)/ Absent (A)</u>	
<u>Service Member Organizations</u>		
American Ex-Prisoners of War		A
American Gold Star Mothers	P	
American Legion, The	P	
American Legion Auxiliary	P	
American Red Cross	P	
AMVETS	P	
AMVETS Auxiliary	P	
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	P	
Blinded Veterans Association	P	
Disabled American Veterans	P	
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary	P	
Forty and Eight	P	
Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.	P	
Knights of Columbus	P	
Korean War Veterans Association	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., Inc.	P	
Marine Corps League	P	
Marine Corps League Auxiliary	P	
Masonic Service Association of North America	P	
Military Order of the Cootie	P	
Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary	P	
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.	P	
Military Women Across the Nation	P	
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution	P	
National Society Sons of the American Revolution	P	
Paralyzed Veterans of America	P	
The Salvation Army	P	
Sons of the American Legion	P	

United Daughters of the Confederacy	P	
United Veterans Services	P	
Veteran of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	P	
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.		A
<u>Associate Service Member Organizations</u>		
Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.	P	
Catholic War Veterans		A
Corporation for National and Community Service	P	
Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, (1861-1865)		A
Fleet Reserve Association	P	
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.	P	
Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.	P	
National Ladies Auxiliary, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.		A
National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century		A
Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.	P	
Soldier's Angels	P	
United Auto Workers		A
<u>Donor Member Organizations</u>		
Air Compassion for Veterans		A
The Bowlers to Veterans Link (BVL), Inc.		A
Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project	P	
Silver Star Families of America		A
<u>Associate Donor Member Organizations</u>		
N/A		
<u>Honorary Member</u>		
Catholic War Veterans Ladies' Auxiliary	P	
I.B.P.O Elks of the World, Inc.	P	
Sons of AMVETS	P	
Women's Army Corps Veterans Association	P	
Women Marines Association	P	

150th Anniversary- VA Celebrates its Civil War Roots: Darlene Richardson, Historian, Office of Health Systems Communications, gave a presentation on the history of how the VA became what it is today. America's federal system of Veterans' hospitals and domicillaries, known today as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, originated as a national soldiers and sailors asylum for Civil War Veterans of the Union military forces. President Abraham Lincoln signed a law on March 3, 1865, the day before his second inauguration, to authorize it. That national asylum was the first government institution in the world established for Veterans of temporary "volunteer" military forces. It evolved over the next 150 years to become the modern health care system that VHA is today. VA and its ancestors have provided care for generations of Veterans from every American war.

(Recess)

(Whereupon, the meeting was resumed)

Mr. Kilgore thanked the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc., for their sponsorship of the break.

Veterans Canteen Service Update: Ray Tober, Director, Veterans Canteen Service introduced himself and discussed the history and purpose of the Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) to collaborate through partnership, and provide and enhance the quality of life for Veterans. He pointed out that one of the main services the VCS provides is a business-to-business service. This allows for all purchases made through the VCS to give 10% back to Voluntary Service. In 2014, alone, \$8 million-dollars were given back to the VA communities to support a variety of programs. In addition, VCS was able to give back \$1.5 million-dollars to the VA Homelessness Programs. Mr. Tober thanked the Voluntary Service Chiefs for their passion, dedication, and service in VA.

Voluntary Service and Its Impact: 2013, Technical Career Field Trainees: Courtney Graham, VA Eastern Colorado Healthcare System, Denver, Colorado; Gerald Ferguson, Philadelphia VA Medical Center; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Ben Johnson, Charles George VA Medical Center, Asheville, North Carolina; Cheryl Samples, Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center, Washington, DC; Utaw Vines, Carl Vinson VA Medical Center, Dublin, Georgia.

This presentation focused on the impact of VAVS and was used as a vehicle to highlight and showcase volunteers and can be tailored to every individual organization or medical facility. The presenters provided a review of the VAVS Mission Statement and the VAVS Alignment to VA's Blueprint for Excellence. Major components included volunteer management, community partnerships and outreach, event planning and management, and the management of gifts and donations. A brief overview of the VAVS goals and VAVS program was also presented. In conclusion, the impact of Voluntary Service comes not only from donations but also from time spent with Veterans through volunteering. All Veterans who have served were asked to stand and be recognized.

VAVS Award Presentations: Mr. Kilgore and Mrs. Clark highlighted the accomplishments and presented the awards to the award recipients.

NAC Male and Female Volunteer of the Year: Male Volunteer of the Year, James Hogan, Blinded Veterans Association, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Los Angeles, California; and, Female Volunteer of the Year, Patti Williamson, American Legion Auxiliary, VA Illiana Health Care System, Danville, Illinois.

American Spirit Awards: Student Recruitment, Todd Greenman, Battle Creek VAMC, Battle Creek, Michigan; Military Recruitment, Stephanie Burns, Washington, D.C., VAMC, Washington, D.C.; Faith-based Recruitment, Beverly Leneski, VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Corporate Recruitment, Dax Allcorn, Jack C. Montgomery VAMC, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

VAVS Award for Excellence: Lorna Hatch, Chief, VA Maine Healthcare System, Augusta, Maine.

Each of the awardees related their own personal experiences and value of volunteering.

(At this time, the meeting was adjourned.)

BUSINESS SESSION

Friday, April 24, 2015, 8:30-11:30 A.M.

Call to Order: W.G. "Bill" Kilgore, National Representative, AMVETS, and Executive Committee (EC) Chairperson

Pledge of Allegiance: Lead by Sarah Langley, VAVS Representative, AMVETS, NMVAHCS

Subcommittee Reports:

Recommendations: Mr. Braatz, reported that the following 6 Recommendations had been developed and approved by the EC for the NAC's consideration:

1. The Executive Committee recommends that the Department of Veterans Affairs either change or amend the current General Post Fund Policy to non-appropriated funds, or seek a special code, therein, to allow VA facilities the latitude to receive, and utilize all donations for their intended use. Mr. Braatz moved a motion for approval. Mr. Edward Lilley, The American Legion, seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**
2. The Executive Committee recommends the Department of Veterans Affairs rescind VHA Office of Finance Alert Vol 20009, Issue 6, and Amendment Alert Vol 2010, Issue 2, dated 11/2009. The VAVS NAC recommends new financial guidance (Alert, Amendment, Memo, Directive, etc.) be developed and distributed authorizing delegated authority to VAVS Program Managers, VAVS Service Chiefs, and authorized GPF Approval Officials to purchase food items for Veteran Patients enrolled for VA care in keeping with Federal Acquisition Regulations and Donors Instruction/Earmarks. Mr. Braatz moved a motion for approval. Mr. Turner seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**
3. The Executive Committee recommends that the Department of Veterans Affairs rescind this procedure. The members of the NAC recommend that VA provide formal delegated authority for the local Facility Director (SES) to approve volunteer awards and recognition ceremonies at the facility level. Mr. Braatz moved a motion for approval. Mr. Kleindienst seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**
4. The Executive Committee recommends that the SECVA fully support a National Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Campaign in concert with the Director, Voluntary Service Office and the Chair, VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee. The members recommend the development of corresponding Communication Plan, Recruitment Strategy, and appropriate recruitment and retention tools. Mr. Braatz moved for a motion for approval. Mr. Franz, seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**
5. The Executive Committee recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs mandate that VA Voluntary Service be included as a component of New Employee Orientation. An advanced VA Voluntary Service training orientation to include topics such as General Post Fund Administration, utilization of VA Volunteers, impact of community resources, Volunteer Transportation Network regulation, Federal Tort Claims liabilities and additional high-visibility components of VAVS program to be

included as part of higher level trainings for top management candidates and Senior Executives. The committee further recommends inclusion of Veteran service activity for VA's leadership development programs. Mr. Braatz moved for a motion for approval. Mr. Mr.Eckroth seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

6. The Executive Committee recommends that the Department of Veterans Affairs recognize the Voluntary Service System as a high-level information Technology priority and provide funding for enhancement and a 5-year infrastructure sustainability plan. Though the demands on available funding across VA are significant, the NAC believes the value added by VA Voluntary Service through supplemental service assistance, donations, and community outreach and partnership opportunities are worthy in Veterans health care delivery and assistance, thus requiring VA's continued support of the tools needed by staff to effectively manage the program. Mr. Braatz made a motion for approval. Ms. Rebecca Strauss, Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary, seconded the motion. **The motion was carried.**

NAC Volunteer of the Year: Mr. Kilgore congratulated the recipients of this year's NAC male and female volunteer of the year and thanked the organizations who submitted nominations and the VAVS staff who supported nominations. He expressed his concerns regarding the number of nominations submitted in the improper format. If a nomination is not in the correct format with a cover letter from the National Representative of the nominating organization, the nomination will not be accepted regardless of how qualified the candidate may be. Mr. Kilgore brought copies of the past year's winning nominations for any members to review as a best practice. The deadline for the nominations is December 31st of each year. Nominations must be sent to VAVS VACO electronically or be postmarked by the December 31st date. Mr. Kilgore also reminded the attendees that Organization's may set earlier deadlines in order for the organization to have time to judge the nominations and select the male and female candidate to send forward to VAVS VACO. Organizations that set earlier deadlines should communicate the date to the VAVS VACO and field staff to ensure timely receipt of nominations or supporting documentation. Through the communications at the NAC and EC meetings, improvements and changes are being made and there has been noted progress over the past couple of years. Mr. Turner made a motion to approve the report. Mr. Stewart Israel, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, seconded the motion. **The Report was carried.**

Recruitment: Colonel. Gallina reported that there has been a 5-year declining trend in recruitment. He provided a summary of the volunteer hours contributed. Volunteer retention is an issue that needs more attention. The EC and the NAC are both currently working on the most efficient way possible to on-board volunteers. It is the National Representatives responsibility to maintain and manage its own Representatives and Deputy Representatives at the local level, in coordination with VAVS Chiefs and Program Managers. Reviewing quarterly reports is essential to success. AJRs give an ability to compare numbers from year-to-year. Restructuring recruitment campaigns at the national and local level within NAC organizations will help to ensure a positive outcome when trying to recruit new volunteers. Recognition needs to be utilized as a tool to help boost overall volunteer morale. New and unique programs are another opportunity to provide occasional volunteers with a reason to spend their time at the hospital. The ability to recruit is in the power of the ask and the invitation to volunteer. Start asking.

Membership: Mr. Turner outlined the categories of membership and noted the change in the criteria for Service Member category from 30 to 25 VA facilities. He mentioned that the proposed additional membership criteria for the NAC that the ad hoc membership committee worked on was still pending at VA level and had not yet been implemented. He noted the organizations that had changed categories or had been dropped and those who are not able to maintain the support at or above the Associate Service Member category but have at least 10 consecutive years of NAC membership and have applied and are now considered honorary members.

Mr. Turner mentioned, these organizations might not have the opportunity to reach the allotted amount of facilities required to meet NAC standards but as of this time are either considered to be “honorary” or dropped from NAC.

The main goal as national leaders is to stay actively involved in recruiting, retention, and making sure that the volunteers are maintaining an active role.

VA Voluntary Service Report: Mrs. Clark reviewed the VAVS accomplishments over the past year, reinforced VHA's Blueprint for Excellence, and linked VAVS to the 10 essential strategies contained in the Blueprint for Excellence.

The Ten Essential Strategies are as follows:

1. Operate a health care network that anticipates and meets the unique needs of enrolled Veterans, in general, and the service disabled and most venerable Veterans, in particular.
2. Deliver high quality, Veteran-centered care that compares favorably to the best of private sector in measured outcomes, value, access, and patient experience.
3. Leverage information technologies, analytics, and models of health care delivery to optimize individual well-being and population health outcomes.
4. Grow an organizational culture, rooted in VA's core values and mission that prioritizes the Veteran first, engaging and inspiring employees to their highest possible level of performance and conduct.
5. Foster an environment of continuous learning, responsible risk-taking, and person accountability.
6. Advance a model of health care that is personalized, proactive, and patient-driven, and engages and inspires Veterans to their highest possible level of health and well-being.
7. The VA carries a financial impact of over \$63 million.
8. Support innovation in health services through academic affiliations, information exchange, intergovernmental, public-private, and community-based initiatives.
9. Operate and communicate with integrity, transparency, and accountability to earn and maintain the trust of Veterans, stewards of the system (Congress, Veterans Service Organizations) and the public.
10. Modernize management processes in human resources, procurement, payment, capital infrastructure, and information technology to operate with benchmark agility and efficiency.

Mrs. Clark reviewed the foundation of VAVS and encouraged all participants to stay positive through periods of change or challenge and finished her presentation with this thought, “For VAVS, what remains is an insatiable desire to serve Veterans, a keen ability to match the skills and talents of others with the needs of our facilities, and a commitment to individuals and organizations who steadily stand on their traditions of service. This is the foundation of

VAVS and it is what will endure through periods of change or challenge. Stay calm. We're standing on solid ground!"

(Recess)

(Whereupon, the meeting was resumed)

Mr. Kilgore thanked the Knights of Columbus for their sponsorship during the break.

National Advisory Committee Chair Report: Mr. Gary Tallman, Acting Executive Director, VHA Office of Communications and Acting NAC Chairperson, following a presentation on the history of National Veterans Homes, made the point that 50 years after the Civil War, our country's Veterans still required medical attention. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War and our Veterans needing medical attention is at an all-time high. The Secretary asked Maura Sullivan, Assistant Secretary for the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, to work with VHA and VAVS to come up with more efficient ways to get Veterans' stories heard.

Veterans Health Administration Update: Carolyn M. Clancy, MD, Interim Under Secretary for Health reported that the last year brought an array of challenges for VA health care. The greatest crisis of this generation has now turned into the greatest opportunity for improvement. There are two main priorities that have emerged from this crisis: one, access to care; and, two, exceptional Veteran experience.

The number of Veterans over the last 14 years has increased dramatically. The VA has been challenged to serve the Veterans of the latest generation coming back from war, while continuing to serve the needs of the Vietnam Veteran population.

Resources have become a big issue. Dr. Clancy explained that many facilities don't have the capacity to bring in Veterans at a steady pace, due to the few resources available. Virtual care is now available and has been assisting with the current resource issue. She expanded on the Veterans Choice Program, what it entails, and how it will bring further opportunity for Veterans to be eligible to gain access to health care.

The President put a challenge forward to have zero tolerance for any Veteran sleeping on the street. Dr. Clancy spoke on the means in which this needs to happen to set forth a plan.

VA's history of innovation and collaboration makes us well suited to become the first health care system in this country to serve as a model for 21st Century health care. Employees and volunteers who are passionate about and defend VA's mission are one of the VA's greatest strengths of our organization. Dr. Clancy spoke about focusing on how to get ahead of the curve before the next crisis.

70th Annual NAC Meeting and Conference Presentation: Ms. Brown thanked all who attended the 69th Annual VAVS NAC Advisory Committee Meeting and Conference in the Land of Enchantment and stated she looked forward to hosting the 70th Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Closing Remarks: Mr. Kilgore reviewed the schedule for the remainder of the day and the

weekend.

Closing Video: Ginny Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA Central Office created and presented the conference closing video.

(At this time, the meeting was adjourned.)

Educational workshops were held in the afternoons of April 23 and 24, 2015 on the following topics:

Cultural Understanding: Discovering the Keys to Inclusion for VA Volunteers: John Fuller, Ed.D., Chief Diversity Educator, Department of Veterans Affairs; Antony Washington, EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Management Specialist

How do external influences away from the workplace and internal influences within the workplace affect employee's morale, engagement, and performance? Mr. Fuller and Mr. Washington explored external factors brought into the workplace and internalized, as well as internal factors, to include ICARE and respect of employees and the critical aspects of respect and integrity. There was a review of the overall meaning and spirit of cultural competence development and confidence in cross cultural encounters and implicit association recognition barriers and aspects of uncivil behavior, bullying, and survival tips. The role religion plays in the workplace and service delivery, confidence in LGBT cross-cultural encounters by increasing awareness, generational differences and rethinking the way we thought generational awareness was all about and 21st century realities Veterans and their cycle of rotations, PTSD returning after 3 decades, etc. were all areas explored in this session. VA leadership considerations for taking care of employees first were also expressed to include selfless service and modeling/living ICARE values.

Leadership through Service: Deborah Brookshire, Chief, VAVS Southern Arizona VA Healthcare System; Melisa Heinlein, Chief, VAVS Philadelphia VA Medical Center; Tyrone Green, Program Manager, VAVS Central Office

This break-out and interactive session introduced new ideas and methods as to how to start engaging and bringing in more youth into VA facilities in local communities. The idea is to involve the youngest generation coming in to help volunteer at VA facilities, not only have them doing “mindless activities” such as picking up trash, but getting them excited about and involved in what is happening. Showing them how they can make a difference to help change the lives of others. Teens want to hang out with friends, connect through mobile technology, avoid commitment, decide to go last minute, avoid showing up early, and will never stay until the end of a commitment. For teens that do volunteer, this social change can be a huge added benefit with an opportunity to meet new people and help change lives.

The ideas of what teens who volunteer in 2015 are concerned most about: animal welfare, hunger, homelessness, the environment, the economy. The top volunteer activities for high school youth are: fund-raising, clean-ups, and working with kids in a sports recreation program. Lack of time, responsibilities, practical concerns, lack of interest or non-enjoyable activity, and never having an opportunity by not being asked to volunteer are some of the reasons why youth are discouraged or don't feel it necessary to join VAVS youth programs.

This session was broken out into groups where all participants were given the opportunity to create and foster their own ideas of what would make the next generations want to come volunteer and how to keep them engaged in a VAVS volunteer program.

Starting the Conversation: How the VA and Its Partners Can Be Part of Getting the Story Right for Veterans: Todd Livick, VHA Office of Public Communications

Now is the time to increase the effectiveness of communications with capabilities and to focus on being message driven and not answer driven. With so many VA Health care programs coming under scrutiny, this workshop addressed how to create an incident-specific communication plan. The Department of Veterans Affairs, (VA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) seek to integrate the efforts of its various offices and programs to provide proactive Veteran health care delivery information to key stakeholders. Having proactive communication planning enables VHA to be able to more strategically tell its story, rather than reacting to circumstances and media queries.

Mr. Livick challenged attendees to think about if they had 30 seconds to give a synopsis about their bottom line, what the VAVS mission statement meant to them, would they be able to accomplish that task? Sometimes when speaking to members of Congress, Veterans Service Organizations, Veterans or fellow employees, there are only a few moments, maybe even less than 30 seconds to get a message across. Great messages are honest, relevant, concise, people-oriented, positive, simple and memorable.

Whole Health Approach to Care: Janet Vertrees, Clinical Health Systems Specialist, Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

This workshop encouraged participants to look at honoring America's Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being. The mission of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation is to catalyze and sustain cultural transformation in health care and with our Veterans. Ms. Vertrees described the difference between an experience and the practice of health care and how that may vary from patient to patient.

Attendees were given an opportunity to take a look at their mindfulness (being present in the moment), meditate for a few minutes in silence, open their minds to new personal development, and were invited to think about the power of the mind. There was an interactive activity that gathered all participants to think about their areas of mastery and areas of challenges and how that can not just effect themselves but also the Veterans.

“What matters to people in life; not just their body, but all dimensions, including the mind and spirit, living better with whatever challenges life brings.”