

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE VETERANS, MILITARY AND HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Myers at 1:30 p.m. on February 12, 2009, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Sean Gatewood- excused
Representative Pat George- excused

Committee staff present:

Art Griggs, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Scott Wells, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Corey Carnahan, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Chris Courtwright, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Barbara Lewerenz, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Robert Payne, Veteran

No written testimony:

Jack Fowler, Executive Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs (KCVA)

Others attending:

See attached list.

Moved by Representative Seweirt, seconded by Representative Crow for approval of minutes of the House Committee on Veterans, Military and Homeland Security, held February 10, 2009. Motion Carried

The Chairman recognized Jack Fowler, Executive Director of KCVA and indicated he would speak later on behalf of **HB 2267 - Requires senate confirmation of KCVA appointees.**

The Chairman opened discussion on **HB 2171 - Veterans; Vietnam war medallion program.** Moved by Representative Tapanelli, seconded by Representative Goyle, to amend HB 2171 by striking the reference on Page 2, line 36 - 39, which recommends transferring funds in the "Veterans Cemeteries Federal Construction Grant Fund" to the "Vietnam War Veterans' Recognition Award Fund" since these funds are no longer available. Motion Carried

Representative Tapanelli, introduced an amendment to **HB 2171** to change the title of the "Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Award Fund" to "Vietnam War Era Veterans Recognition Award Fund."

Discussion followed. The point was made that although it is indicated on the DD-214 that a veteran who actually served in Vietnam is marked "in country," it would be difficult to discern those veterans who were part of the support staff, but did not serve "in country." By adding the term "Era" the recognition would be inclusive. The definition of "veteran" was clarified by Representative Goico to mean active duty service of 180 days of those who have served in combat or in support of combat. Representative Goyle reminded the Committee that **HB 2171** not only provides recognition of service for Vietnam War Era Veterans, but it also creates a tool for outreach. Representative Seiwert suggested that two medallions be created, one for those who served "in country" and one for others who served as support during the Vietnam War Era.. Representative Crow said KCVA should not be put in the position of determining eligibility for this recognition and that those who were not actually in Vietnam also served to train and support those in combat. Representative Meier stated that the Department of Defense has a certificate for those who served during the "Cold War Era."

The chairman recognized Robert Payne who agreed that if the recognition awards were designated as the Vietnam War Era, rather than Vietnam War it would be inclusive and better supported by veterans.
(Attachment 1)

Moved by Representative Tapanelli, seconded by Representative Garcia to amend HB 2171 by inserting "Era" after the word "War" where references are made to the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Award Fund." Motion Carried.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Veterans, Military And Homeland Security Committee at 1:30 p.m. on February 12, 2009, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

The Chairman requested Representative Tafanelli carry the bill.

The Chairman opened discussion on **HB 2267 - Requires senate confirmation of KCVA appointees.** Being none, it was Moved by Representative Goyle, seconded by Representative Crow for favorable passage of HB 2267. Motion Carried.

The Chairman recognized Jack Fowler, Executive Director of the KCVA (N o written testimony), who favored **HB 2267** and said it will have a positive effect on the KCVA and the community.

Being no further discussion, the Chairman appointed Representative Meier to carry the bill.

Representative Meier announced that she has been called to active duty military service and will soon be serving in Balad, Iraq as Command Inspector General with the 304th Sustainment Brigade. She expects to return in January 2010. Chairman Myers congratulated Representative Meier on her willingness to serve.

Chairman Myers announced that February 17 will be the last day for afternoon committees to meet and that the Agent Orange Resolution will be worked after "turn around day." February 17 will be the next meeting. Carmen Alldritt, Department of Vehicles, Department of Revenue, will brief the committee on the success of the REAL ID, a bill introduced by this committee several years ago to improve security for drivers' licenses and identification cards.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m..

Honorable Chairman Myers, members of the veterans,
military

& homeland security committee

As a Vietnam veteran and a lifelong resident of the state of Kansas.. I would like first to thank you and everyone involved, who finally after all these years see fit to give the men and women who had the privilege and honor to have served our country during this time of war the long overdue rewards that this bill...no, 2171 would bestow on us..

I hope that each member understands that I have a major problem with lines #26-27 and the first half of line # 28 which states-(sec;2 the Vietnam war medallion, medal and certificate shall be awarded regardless of whether or not such veteran served within the united states or in a foreign country...) I personally feel that if this language is left in this bill as written then this bill should be redesignated a Vietnam ERA veterans bill and as such would lessen the meaning that it would convey to me and I feel a host of other veterans who have, hopefully looked for our government to finally recognize the physical, mental, and emotional sacrifices that were borne by us each day as we served our country with honor One further point that I feel must be brought out is that with each military occupational specialty provided each individual who entered the republic of Vietnam there was a timeline on how long you were expected to serve that wasn't afforded personal who were stationed outside of this combat zone...I know that there were 796 Kansans who served and either died or were listed as MIA. I know of not one casualty of war who served in the united states during this time.....I thank you

Robert Payne
House Committee on Veterans
Military and Homeland Security
Date: 02/12/09
Attachment 1