

**Minutes from the Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee Meeting
Public Session
June 3, 2016**

The Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee (VWCAC) is a federal advisory committee within the Department of Defense (DoD) operating pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the Government in Sunshine Act of 1976, and other relevant federal regulations. The VWCAC meets three times a year and held its fifth public session on June 3, 2016 from 1:00 PM to 2:15 PM at the U.S. Access Board, 1331 F St NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC, 20004.

VWCAC Members

Governor Tom Ridge, Chairman
Colonel (R) C.R. Anderegg
Paul Bucha
Don Clarke
Morton Dean
Jeanette Early
Vice Admiral (R) James Hull
Jerome Johnson
Ann Mills-Griffiths
Lieutenant General (R) Roger Schultz
Jan Scruggs

DoD Sponsor

Michael Rhodes (Director of Administration, DoD)

DoD Staff:

Major General (R) James Jackson, Director
Larry Brom, Assistant Director
Mark Franklin
Michael Gable, Designated Federal Officer
Deborah Grays
LTC Nicole Hayes
Yvonne Schilz

Public Session Attendees

3 members of the public attended the session.

Meeting Agenda:

Commemoration Program Update

- Strategy and Engagement
- Commemorative Partners
- Events
- History and Legacy

Communications Working Group Presentation To Full Federal Advisory Committee
Deliberation On Communications Working Group Recommendation
Closing Remarks

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2:15 p.m. **Adjourn**

PUBLIC SESSION

At 1:07 pm., The Chairman, Mr. Tom Ridge opened the public session.

Mr. Mike Gable (DFO) made administrative remarks and explained the procedures for conducting the meeting, noting that copies of the slides and a list of the advisory committees are available on the sign-in table at the entrance, there would not be a question and answer period for the public, nor an open discussion for the public; however, the public is invited to submit written comments as directed in the Federal Register notice.

Staff Presentations

Members from the Vietnam War Commemoration presented the Advisory Committee the following updates and briefings:

Strategy & Engagement Update, presented by Ms. Deborah Grays

Ms. Grays showed a graph that projected we would achieve thanking and honoring approximately 70% of our 7 million Vietnam veterans by 11 November 2025. She also explained that on March 29th, which was our most recent large scale event, was with the Veterans Administration, where we distributed over 185,000 lapel pins at over 350 locations, and we're working with History.net for the upcoming Rolling Thunder 30th anniversary in 2017, next year, where we will have an opportunity to thank and honor an estimated 850,000-plus veterans.

Commemorative Partner Update, presented by Ms. Yvonne Schilz

Ms. Schilz informed the Advisory Committee that to date we now have 10,000 Commemorative Partners across the country, and quite a number more in the queue right waiting to be approved, and that our Commemorative Partners continue to grow every day.

Upcoming Major Events Update, presented by Lieutenant Colonel Nicole Hayes

LTC Hayes briefed that as of May 1st, the Commemoration had executed over 4,812 events, over 284 of which were speaking engagements where we either sent a representative from the Commemoration or had someone in a particular location assist us with support. She further explained that between January and April, the Commemoration had supported about 1,000 events and shipped over 245,000 Vietnam veteran Lapel pins, of which 180,000 were part of the nationwide, March 29th VA event. LTC Hayes noted that the 29 March event ignited a grassroots effort with local towns, town halls, clinics and communities getting involved with recognizing and thanking their Vietnam veterans. LTC Hayes highlighted the fact that our Commemorative Partners are becoming more self-sufficient and are capable of conducting these events with just material support, so our personnel support requirements have dropped off.

History and Legacy Program Update, presented by Mr. Mark Franklin

Mr. Franklin briefed that we had accomplished 233 oral history interviews to date and invited members of the FAC to participate in one of our local interview schedules – July 11-15 and August 15-19 – and for our out-of-town FAC members, the week of our next FAC meeting on September 19th. He also briefed that we had completed a poster series on African Americans in

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Service in Vietnam and currently working on a Latinos in Service poster series. The highlight for the History & Legacy branch was the fact that the Pentagon Corridor exhibit contract was out for bid and should be awarded by the end of the month, and that the Huey Helicopters were being sanded, primed and prepped for installation. He also discussed a new initiative the Teachers Toolkit, which is a 30-page document that provides a list of resources for teachers to use in the classroom to teach about the Vietnam War. The focus is on service learning or community service projects that thank and honor Vietnam veterans in their local communities. Finally, Mr. Franklin addressed the ongoing controversy over the current website timeline and explained that had almost finished inputting the recommendations of two independent Vietnam War historians, Dr. Greg Daddis of Chapman University in California, and Dr. Ed Miller, of Dartmouth. The plan is to roll out the new and improved timeline with our new website.

Deliberation and Advisory Group Recommendations

Following the Commemoration update briefings, the Advisory Committee deliberated and recommended the following:

1. Mr. Clarke noted that on the Events slide it was apparent that the number of “staffed” events had dropped off and asked if that represented a change in philosophy on how the staff is deployed to events or is it lack of resources?

LTC Hayes explained that it was an indication that our effort to ignite the grass roots effort was enabling Commemorative Partners to work with other Commemorative Partners in the local area and provide their own speakers and personnel support.

Ms. Mills-Griffith recommended that we find a way to capture that data in order to provide an accurate portrayal of how this has broadened the speaker base.

2. ADM Hull recommended that we develop a strategy that attempts to anticipate events that we have not planned for, partnering with some of the larger VSOs and their significant dates that may arise over the next two to five years.

As an example, Ms. Mills-Griffiths suggested the anniversaries of the larger veteran groups, and the six days a year that “everyone in the world” is required to fly the POW/MIA flag.

3. Mr. Dean offered a very brief synopsis of the Communications Working Group (CWG) efforts to best to advance the cause of the commemoration and how best to reach out to the nation and include not only more veterans but more of the non-veteran society in the project here. He stated that the collective feeling -- the members of the subcommittee -- is similar to what's here on this committee that we've got to move faster and broaden our outreach and that we're all kind of frustrated that we're not moving more quickly.

Governor Ridge reminded Mr. Dean that one of the tasks of the CWG was to develop recommendations for the Advisory Committee that would support and accelerate events under a national marketing plan. He further reminded that one of the recommendations was to consider what we wanted to do to elevate it, possibly through Public Service Announcements, working with the Ad Council, and whether it's legal to find a corporate sponsor to take what we're doing and elevate it nationally so there's a broader national message.

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Mr. Dean agreed and added that staff has to make a greater effort in enlisting more corporations in the cause, with a particular appeal to defense contractors who played a role and, as a number of members of our subcommittee said, made large profits during the war, and that we ought to make a larger effort in bringing them into the fold. He further added that the way to do that was to reach out to various veterans' organizations who already have lists of corporations that they deal with and see if we can have a joint effort in reaching out to those corporations.

4. Mr. Dean also said the CWG recommended the Commemoration staff make better use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Mr. Scruggs concurred and seconded that recommendation.

5. Mr. Dean also stated that the CWG recommended we get a national spokesperson who would get on the talk shows and radio stations and possibly some television broadcasts. The celebrity names of Gary Sinise and Cameron Diaz, whose father was a Vietnam veteran, were suggested.

Outcome: The meeting came to a close whereby Mr. Gable explained that our next session could be a bit longer and that we would follow up with the General and his team around the communication plan, try to give you a very specific response and hopefully flesh out some of those ideas.

A copy of the Advisory Committee's briefing and these minutes may be found at http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/vietnam_war_advisory_committee/

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm

I hereby certify, to the best of my knowledge, that the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.



Tom Ridge
Chairman
Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee