

Member Organizations:

24th Infantry Regiment
Buffalo Soldiers
Chicago Chapter

555th Parachute
Infantry Association
"Triple Nickel"
Chicago Chapter

American Legion
Dorie Miller Post 915

American Legion
Harold Washington
Post 1987

Blind Veterans
Association
Chicago Chapter

Montford Point Marine
Association
Chicago Chapter

Muslim American
Veterans Association
Chicago Chapter

National Women
Veterans United

One Savvy Veteran

Veterans of
Foreign Wars
Major Harris Post 2024

Veterans for Peace
Chicago Chapter

Veterans for Unification

Veterans Strike Force

Vietnam Veterans
of America
Chapter 311

VetNet



CVO meeting on February 20, 2016

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CVO Chair Dr. Stacy Henderson and Recording Secretary Dr. Connie Edwards lead the February CVO meeting.



CVO members Virgil Mathis, Chester Henry, and Darryl Lockhart and Newsletter Editor Howard Noey at the February Meeting.



CVO Veterans Affairs Committee Chair Larry Nazimek reports to the CVO membership.



Ray Parrish, Eric Lobo, Arthurine Jones, Darryl Howard and Larry Nazimek at the February CVO meeting.

CHICAGO SKY'S MILITARY MOMENT OF THE GAME



By

Larry Nazimek

If you have ever watched a Chicago Sky (WNBA) game on TV, you saw some really great basketball. While you saw commercials, interviews, and discussions between the announcers, a fan who saw the game in person saw a lot more. One of the things you missed was the Sky's "Military Moment of the Game," where a military member, or veteran, is honored.

During a time out in the third quarter, the person being honored goes onto the court with "Sky Guy," the team's mascot, who presents the honoree with a very unique three-dimensional (10.5 x 13 inch) plaque, with the US Flags and an American Eagle on top.

For the team's opener (June 5, 2015), I was the honoree, so I can attest to what a thrill and honor it was. NWVU was honored at their July 21 game, and Meosha Thomas was honored on Aug. 2.

For information on the Military Moment of the game, and how to nominate someone, go to the Sky's website, <http://sky.wnba.com>, click on the COMMUNITY TAB, then click on the HOOPS FOR TROOPS on the dropdown menu, then MILITARY MOMENT OF THE GAME.

The honoree get free tickets for himself, friends, and family members.

The 2014 Eastern Div. Champion Sky is an organization that is about much more than the game. They do a lot of work with various causes throughout the Chicago metro area, as you can see by going to their web site and clicking on the COMMUNITY tab.

They are also very pro-military. They hold an annual "Hoops for Troops" game, where there are military displays, and money is raised for military-related charities. This year's game will be held on July 15. <http://sky.wnba.com/hoops-for-troops/>. It's an event you don't want to miss. In addition, the Sky will be holding a Veteran Hiring Expo on July 11.

2015 WELCOME HOME WARRIOR SUMMIT - CHICAGO, IL

Larry E. Nazimek

When a group organizes a really fantastic event, they raise the bar so high that anything else they do will be compared with it, and there will be some disappointment when they fail to meet the lofty standard that they had previously set.

Furthermore, an event organizer will announce the groups that have promised to participate and the services that have been pledged, but if those responsible fail to do what they promised, or even worse, are "no-shows," the organizers are often blamed.

Many of us will remember some of the prior Warrior Summits, such as the ones held at the UIC Forum and Soldier Field. There was a great deal of floor space, so numerous organizations, such as CVO, had a table, as did many educational institutions, employers, medical providers, political candidates, and many others. The one held Oct. 24, 2015, hosted by the Warrior Summit Coalition, however, was held at the Circle Pavilion, on the floor where basketball games are played. This venue provided far less floor space, so things were scaled down, and CVO's request for a table was denied. This is not to say, however, that there was no empty floor space, but that was due to the VA, and others, who were absent.

There were supposed to have been representatives from VA Healthcare, offering "onsite VA physicals, vision screenings, registration for health care and much more," but they were conspicuous by their absence. I was told that they had some type of Stand Down event that required their presence.

The IL Treasurer's Office had its "Cash Dash" program available, where attendees could check to see if the State had any of their unclaimed property. The IL Secy. of State reps showed vets how they could get "VETERAN" imprinted on their renewed driver's license or State ID card. The Cook County Recorder of Deeds processed vets for the Cook County Military & Veteran Discount Program cards. Those who qualified for energy (i. e., gas or electricity) assistance could sign up, provided that they brought with them their latest utility bills and proof of income for the past 30 days. The Cook County VAC and many others offered various employment and homeless services to vets in need. Attorneys were present to help vets with wills and advance directives. The Illinois Dept. of Employment Security provided registration and assistance to job seekers. There were many others present, offering various goods and services.

There were free T-shirts to the first 1,500 attendees, but the free Warrior Summit Hats that were supposed to have been given to these first 1,500 were nowhere to be seen, as their supplier had not delivered in time.

There were also supposed to have been "FREE Sports tickets to the first 500 veterans Chicago Blackhawks, Chicago Bulls, Chicago Wolves, Chicago Sky." Many attendees arrived early, because they wanted tickets for the champion Blackhawks, whose tickets are expensive. What the Blackhawks provided, however, were merely a pair of tickets that were raffled off in one of several hourly raffles. What attendees did receive, however, were a pair of Wolves tickets for their Nov. 21 Salute to Military Families game. The Wolves, who donated a jersey for the raffle, and whose Chairman of the Board/Governor, Don Levin, is a USMC vet, have always been good to vets. Sky tickets were mistakenly on the list, but the WNBA is a summer league, so no Sky tickets were available.

JAN. 27, 2016, MEETING WITH CONG. LUIS GUTIERREZ'S STAFFER

Larry Nazimek

On Jan. 27, 2016, Ray Parrish and Larry Nazimek met with Cong. Luis V. Gutierrez's staffer Sergio Anariba at the Congressman's local office. Sergio is their staff person who handles military/veteran matters. He is not a veteran so it was good that we got to speak with him in order for him to be better able to help vets.

This meeting came about after Larry Nazimek called the Congressman's Office to request the meeting. Such meetings are valuable (as we learned with Cong. Quigley's Office), because CVO establishes a relationship, presents our issues, and lobbies for legislation. Congressmen and their staffers often attend meetings where large numbers of vets present personal horror stories, when such meetings should focus on issues. Individual problems are best handled individually.

We explained our position on our traditional issues, such as mandatory funding, presumptive benefits, universal eligibility for VA health care, end of co-pays, etc. The importance of explaining these points is that most people, including Congressmen, are unaware of them. There is the assumption that all vets are being taken care of adequately, and that our needs are being addressed, which we know is not the case. If we want positive change, then we must present our case to those who can affect such changes.

Ray Parrish gave Sergio Anariba a copy of the Veterans Benefits Manual from the NVLSP (National Veterans Legal Services Program), an excellent reference guide on veterans' issues. When a veteran files a disability claim, it is often important that certain words be used in establishing grounds for the claim, and if those words are not used, the vet loses. The manuals go into great detail on these matters. Ray has extensive experience in counselling veterans and working with them on their claims.

As we have learned in working with Cong. Quigley, it is one thing to advocate for legislation that has not been introduced, but quite another to lobby for specific legislation that has been introduced. We asked that Cong. Gutierrez sign on as a co-sponsor for H.R. 1170 (Chiropractic Care for Veterans) and to support S. 1203 (a bill to improve the furnishing of health care to vets and improve the processing of claims), which was unanimously passed by the Sen. but is now being bounced around several committees and sub-committees. We also requested support for S. 1567, a bill to provide for reviews of bad discharges in cases where the vet had mental problems which lead to his adverse discharge.

While we advocate for things that we want Congress to do, we also hope that Congressmen and their staffs use us as a resource when various matters arise. The channels of dialogue must remain open.

We hope to have similar meetings with other Congressmen, and we ask CVO members to call their congressmen's office to request such meetings.

New Veterans Caucus in Chicago City Council

New veterans caucus: Six Chicago aldermen who are military veterans are organizing themselves into a City Council Veterans Caucus.

Northwest Side Ald. Gilbert Villegas, 36th, said he will be joined in the group by aldermen Danny Solis, 25th; George Cardenas, 12th; Milly Santiago, 31st; Christopher Taliaferro, 29th; and Edward Burke, 14th.

Villegas said the group wants to work to end veteran homelessness and improve the prospects for city employment for people getting out of the armed forces.

The Veterans Caucus will join the Black and Latino caucuses, the LGBT Caucus and two progressive caucuses that aldermen have organized over the years to present unified voting blocs and press the city on issues important to them. (John Byrne)

FEB. 25, 2016 MEETING WITH CONGRESSWOMAN JAN SCHAKOWSKY'S STAFFER

by

Larry Nazimek

On Feb. 25, 2016, Ray Parrish and Larry Nazimek met with Andrew Goczkowski, Constituent Advocate for Cong. Jan Schakowsky, at her Chicago office. Mr. Goczkowski had previously worked in their DC office on military/veteran issues, so he was well-aware of the type of things that were brought up; we did not, for example, have to explain things like "VISN."

This meeting resulted from a call by Nazimek to the Congresswoman's Office as part of our series of meetings with our Congressional Delegation in order to discuss our issues. We know what changes should be made, so we must tell those who can affect the changes. We discussed the issues that have been important to us, and he took many notes, as he was genuinely interested. Ray Parrish gave Mr. Goczkowski a copy of the Veterans Benefits Manual from the NVLSP (National Veterans Legal Services Program), because it provides a great deal of information that will help him help vets.

As has been the case with previous meetings with congressmen, requesting support on legislation that has been introduced was of particular interest.

While we want help from our public officials, we also want a continuing open dialogue with them, so that they will come to us with questions and work with us on future issues. Mr. Goczkowski brought up various ideas of things Cong. Schakowsky could do for local vets, such as organizing various events. We will notify him of future Stand Downs for homeless vets, so that their office can participate.

CVO Meeting with Rep. Bobby Rush Staff

February 12, 2016

by Bruce Parry

On Friday, February 12th, CVO, represented by Past Chair Bruce Parry and member Darryl Lockhart, met with Robyn Wheeler Grange, Rep. Bobby Rush's District Director in Chicago. In a small world scenario, it turns out that Robyn's husband, Lesley, served with Darryl in Afghanistan and Robyn herself was very active in the welcome home activities. So Darryl knew Robyn and her husband. We got off to a great start.

Bruce and Darryl explained the CVO Veterans Program, with its 5 key points, to Robyn and she promised to bring it up to both Rep. Rush and Nishith Pandya, Rep. Rush's Washington representative for veterans legislative affairs. The trio also discussed several bills forward by CVO Veterans Affairs Committee Chair Larry Nazimek Robyn will also pass along. These included bills providing for every VA to have chiropractic care, to improve the VA benefits process and regarding discharges.

At the same time, we discussed some of the other short-comings of the VA, including the practice of the VA of charging the veteran's private health care insurance for the veteran's VA healthcare.

The meeting was very positive. The key is continued contact with Rep. Rush's office and follow up by both Mrs. Grange and CVO.

WRITE FOR THE CVO NEWSLETTER!

Submissions to the CVO Newsletter should be pertinent to veterans and their families and reflect the membership and mission of CVO. We reserve the right to refuse any submission. We may edit submissions but will strive to not change the content. Edited versions will be resent to the submitter for consideration. Articles should be 150 to 170 words in length.

Submit articles to Newsletter@CoalitionofVets.org or mail to:

CVO

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