

# **LOUISIANA VETERANS COALITION**

**Camp Beauregard, Louisiana**

**Saturday, 26 February 2011**

***Purpose: To stimulate love of country and the flag; To defend the honor, integrity and supremacy of our National Government and the Constitution of the United States; and to protect the rights and interest of Louisiana Veterans Coalition members in matters of State Legislation.***

## ***Meeting Minutes***

- 1. Meeting was called to order at 0930 hrs by COL F.W. Grant, Chairman Louisiana Veterans Coalition (LVC).***
- 2. Invocation was given by Robt. C. Griffith, Public Relations Officer.***
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by LTC Lessie A Griffith, Louisiana Council of Chapters, Military Officers Association of America.***
- 4. Chairman Grant called for introduction of members and guest in attendance: See Appendix A.***
- 5. Guest Speaker – Ms Robin Keller, Press Secretary, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA), Baton Rouge, Louisiana***

***Ms Keller's gave a most informative and captivating update of the programs & priorities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include Human Resources, Veterans Homes and Staffing Levels and Veterans Benefits managed by the LDVA. Additionally, Ms Keller focused on the Louisiana Military Family Assistance Fund and correcting the unequal law as related to financial benefits to families of Louisiana Soldiers Killed In Action (KIA).***

***LDVA also announced the availability of the "Support Our Veterans" license plates to honor Louisiana veterans and continued support of the Military Family Assistance Fund, available via [www.expresslane.org](http://www.expresslane.org) or by calling 225-925-6146. Ms Keller may be contacted directly by emailing [robin.keller@vetaffairs.la.gov](mailto:robin.keller@vetaffairs.la.gov) or calling 225-922-0500, ext 228.***

- 7. Minutes of the LVC Meeting of 30 October 2010 were presented by Robt C Griffith, Secretary, Louisiana Veterans Coalition.***

***Subsequently, motion was made by COL F.W. Grant to accept the minutes as presented without reading. Motion approved by voice vote without objection.***

**8. Financial Report presented by Robt. C. Griffith, Treasurer, with a stated balance of \$674.44 as of 31 January 2011. Expenditure since 30 October 2010 included \$100.00 donation to the Louisiana Military Family Assistance Fund. Under current approval, this donation concluded the fourth of four consecutive donations to the Assistance Fund.**

**9. Old Business: None addressed.**

**10. Election of Coalition Officer – The following Officer was nominated/ elected by special election per Article VI of the By-Laws of the Louisiana Veterans Coalition.**

**Chairman: COL Louis T. Dechert of CENLA Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association.**

**Motion made and approved by voice vote without objection and consequently, COL Louis T. Dechert installed as Chairman by outgoing Chairman, COL F.W. Grant.**

**Subsequently, COL Dechert presented an overbrief related to the Organization of Korean War Veterans in the State of Louisiana. Copy available on request via email: [griffithgrp@hotmail.com](mailto:griffithgrp@hotmail.com) .**

**11. New business: Interpretations by Robt. C. Griffith, Public Relations Officer, Louisiana Veterans Coalition:**

**a. Position of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates related to FY 2012 plans on Tricare and Force Reductions. Copy of Secretary Gates remarks available on request by emailing [griffithgrp@hotmail.com](mailto:griffithgrp@hotmail.com) .**

**b. Existing law related to Killed In Action benefits for Louisiana National Guard Soldiers (reemphasis of Ms Keller's remarks).**

**c. Handout presented related to 1<sup>st</sup> Annual S.W. Louisiana All Veterans' Reunion, a 2 day festival to honor the men and women who have served and continue to serve our country in the Armed Forces. 21-22 May 2011 @ DeRidder Louisiana. Copy of handout available via email @ [griffithgrp@hotmail.com](mailto:griffithgrp@hotmail.com) or, by contacting Ashley Ruch 337-462-8900 or [arush@cityofderidder.org](mailto:arush@cityofderidder.org), or on line at [www.swlaallveteransreunion.org](http://www.swlaallveteransreunion.org) .**

**12. Open floor discussion:**

**COL David Couvillon – Marine Corps League – Presented a proposal to honor Louisiana native sons Lieutenant General Commandant John A LeJeune and General Commandant Robert H Barrow, USMC by naming the bridge which connects Pointe Coupee and West Feliciana Parishes in their Honor. Actions to address this proposal may be elaborated on by emailing COL David Couvillon @ [captcouv@cox.net](mailto:captcouv@cox.net) or calling 225-964-2738.**

**Subsequently, a motion was made to the floor for a RESOLUTION from the Louisiana Veterans Coalition to support renaming the aforementioned bridge in honor of LG LeJeune and GEN Barrow. Motion was seconded and approved by voice vote without objection. Appendix B.**

**13. Closing remarks was presented by outgoing Chairman, COL F.W. “Ted” Grant. Meeting was adjourned @ 1100 hrs.**

**Next meeting date to be 18 June 2011**

**Robt. C. Griffith, Secretary  
Louisiana Veterans Coalition**

**337-208-8742 / [griffithgrp@hotmail.com](mailto:griffithgrp@hotmail.com)**

**Meeting Minutes, 02.26.2011**

**Appendix: A**

*A scheduled meeting of the Louisiana Veterans Coalition was held at Camp Beauregard on 26 February 2011.*

*The following were in attendance:*

- COL F.W. "Ted" Grant – Outgoing Chairman > Reserve Officers Asso**  
[elvieaug02@aol.com](mailto:elvieaug02@aol.com) : 225-927-7289 / 225-316-3915 (cell)
- COL Louis T Dechert – Chairman Elect > Korean War Veterans Asso**  
[dechert@bellsouth.net](mailto:dechert@bellsouth.net) : 318-641-8293 / 202-997-9538 (cell)
- LTC Lessie A Griffith >Vice Chairman>Military Officers Asso of America**  
[griffithgrp@hotmail.com](mailto:griffithgrp@hotmail.com) : 337-462-0143
- CSM James C. Myrick > Vice Chairman > Special Forces / MOPH /**  
**Silver Senator National Silver Haired Congress**  
337-383-7898 / 337-244-7504 (cell)
- ISG Robt. C Griffith > Secretary/Treasurer: Public Relations Officer**  
[griffithgrp@hotmail.com](mailto:griffithgrp@hotmail.com) : 337-208-8742 (cell) > 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Bde
- MS Robin Keller > Guest Speaker**  
**Press Secretary, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs**  
[robin.keller@la.gov](mailto:robin.keller@la.gov) : 225-922-0500,ext 228 / 225-281-7833 (cell)
- CSM Kenneth Kovah > State Commander > Veterans of Foreign Wars**  
[kenk52@att.net](mailto:kenk52@att.net) / 318-549-1251 / 318-426-2857 (cell)
- MSG Russell Shoemaker >State Chief of Staff >Veterans of Foreign Wars**  
[rshoe\\_1@bellsouth.net](mailto:rshoe_1@bellsouth.net) / 210-831-1363 (cell)
- COL Jack N Humphries – State Chairman > Louisiana Commission for**  
**Employment Support of the National Guard/ Reserve (ESGR)**  
[humphries@suddenlink.net](mailto:humphries@suddenlink.net) / 318-255-1640 / 318-278-5875 (cell)
- COL David Couvillon- Marine Corps League**  
[captcoav@cox.net](mailto:captcoav@cox.net) / 225-964-2738
- Lt Col Charles T "Chuck" Tosten, Jr – Order of Daedalians**  
[skyrider@suddenlink.net](mailto:skyrider@suddenlink.net) / 318-4421016
- COL Barrett R Byrd – USMC Ret, Member at Large**  
[barettbyrd@yahoo.com](mailto:barettbyrd@yahoo.com) / 703-582-9750 (cell)
- MSG Jesse Campos – Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH)**  
[Jesse\\_sf65@yahoo.com](mailto:Jesse_sf65@yahoo.com) / 337-238-0170 (cell)
- MAJ George Thompson – Military Officers Association of America**  
[gcmx@bellsouth.net](mailto:gcmx@bellsouth.net) / 337-397-8667 (cell)
- MRS Mary Thompson – Spouse, Retired Military Member At Large**  
[gcmx@bellsouth.net](mailto:gcmx@bellsouth.net) / 337-239-6272

***Meeting Minutes, 02.26.2011***  
***Appendix: B***

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, a bridge is being constructed over the Mississippi River which is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2011 joining West Feliciana Parish and Pointe Coupee Parish; and

**WHEREAS**, the Louisiana Legislature previously named this bridge the “John James Audubon Bridge” pursuant to SB68/Act No. 483 of the 1993 Regular Session; and

**WHEREAS**, Louisiana is proud of commemorating Louisiana servicemembers and veterans; and

**WHEREAS**, John James Audubon was not born in the United States of America, and it would be more fitting and patriotic to name the bridge after Louisiana veterans who risked their lives to provide us with the freedoms we enjoy today; and

**WHEREAS**, Robert H. Barrow (1922-2008) was raised on Rosale Plantation in West Feliciana Parish, attended Louisiana State University, and joined the United States Marine Corps during World War II; and

**WHEREAS**, General Robert H. Barrow rose through the ranks to become the 27<sup>th</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps, which is the highest ranking officer in the Marine Corps; and

**WHEREAS**, General Robert H. Barrow was the first Commandant to decline being buried in Arlington National Cemetery, and instead chose as his final resting place the idyllic cemetery at Grace Episcopal Church in St. Francisville; and

**WHEREAS**, across the Mississippi River, John A. Lejeune (1867-1942) grew up on Old Hickory Plantation in Pointe Coupee Parish, attended Louisiana State University, and joined the Marine Corps later becoming the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps; and

**WHEREAS**, General John A. Lejeune is considered by many to be the “Greatest of all Leathernecks,” and Camp Lejeune in North Carolina is named in his honor; and

**WHEREAS**, West Feliciana Parish and Pointe Coupee Parish share a common bond in that these two parishes both produced Commandants of the Marine Corps, the only parishes in Louisiana that can boast such an accomplishment; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Louisiana Veterans Coalition urges the Louisiana Legislature to reconsider and re-name said bridge the “Lejeune-Barrow Bridge” recognizing exemplary Military heritage and honoring the two great generals who called Louisiana home.

**ADOPTED**, this 26th day of February, 2011, by vote of all members present.

Robt. C. Griffith, Secretary  
Louisiana Veterans Coalition  
337-208-8742 / [griffithgrp@hotmail.com](mailto:griffithgrp@hotmail.com)