

NJ
10
5684
1986
6.4

PUBLIC HEARING

before

ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Testimony from various local veterans' organizations regarding their concerns and recommendations for future legislation

December 4, 1986
Burlington County Office Building
Freeholders' Board Room
Mount Holly, New Jersey

MEMBER OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Peter J. Genova, Chairman
Assemblywoman Dolores G. Cooper, Vice Chairwoman
Assemblyman Harold L. Colburn, Jr.
Assemblyman Thomas H. Paterniti

ALSO PRESENT:

Frank J. Parisi
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Assembly Select Committee
on Veterans' Affairs

New Jersey State Library

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
Office of Legislative Services
Public Information Office
Hearing Unit
State House Annex
CN 068
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

NT
12
5684
1986
0.4

PUBLIC HEARING

before

ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Testimony from various local veterans' organizations
regarding their concerns and recommendations for future legislation

December 4, 1986
Burlington County Office Building
Freeholders' Board Room
Mount Holly, New Jersey

MEMBER OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Peter J. Genova, Chairman
Assemblywoman Dolores G. Cooper, Vice Chairwoman
Assemblyman Harold L. Colburn, Jr.
Assemblyman Thomas H. Paterniti

ALSO PRESENT:

Frank J. Parisi
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Assembly Select Committee
on Veterans' Affairs

New Jersey State Library

* * * * *

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
Office of Legislative Services
Public Information Office
Hearing Unit
State House Annex
CN 068
Trenton, New Jersey 08625





R J. GENOVA
irman
DRES G. COOPER
r-Chairman
DLO L. COLBURN, JR.
. DiGAETANO
NEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN
INNETT MAZUR
MAS H. PATERNITI

New Jersey State Legislature
ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE
ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
STATE HOUSE ANNEX, CN-068
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625
TELEPHONE: (609) 292-9106

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF LOCATION OF PUBLIC HEARING

November 26, 1986

The Assembly Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs Public Hearing scheduled for Thursday, December 4, 1986, at 7:30 P.M. will be held at the Burlington County Office Building, Freeholders Board Room, 49 Rancocas Road, Mt. Holly, New Jersey, rather than the American Legion Hall, Pemberton, New Jersey as previously announced.

The Committee will meet to hear testimony from various local veterans organizations regarding their concerns and recommendations for future legislation.

Anyone wishing to testify should contact Brian Volz, Aide to the Committee, at (609) 292-9106.

Directions:

From Trenton - Take New Jersey Turnpike South to Exit 5, take Route 541 South to Mount Holly. The Burlington County Office Building is in the center of town.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Sam Lo Bue	1
Patrick Pasculli Superintendent New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Cemetery	6
David Rivera Assistant Superintendent New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Cemetery	7
Charles L. Meyers Deputy Mayor Pemberton Township, New Jersey	8
Russell String Fleet Reserve Association	11
Adolph Werner President Fleet Reserve Association Branch 57	13
Vincent Burns Veterans' Services Council	28
Edward Devlin Mount Holly, New Jersey	30

* * * * *

ASSEMBLYMAN PETER J. GENOVA (Chairman): Good evening, everyone. We are very happy to be here in Burlington County. It's not too far. It's about 75 miles from Union County, but we made it down quite quickly on the Turnpike. I am a little disappointed that we don't have more of a crowd. I see several people nodding their heads. We were encouraged by some people in the State House to have the hearing down here, and we certainly were under the impression that we would have representation from many of our fine State's veterans' groups in this particular area showing up to voice their concerns about veterans' issues before the Committee.

As you can certainly appreciate, it is a bit frustrating when you try to open yourself up to the many different views and opinions about State government and how it relates to veterans' affairs, and you have such a sparsely attended turnout. But, in any event, I am glad to see that several members of the Committee have come out tonight.

S A M L O B U E (speaking from audience): More than last time.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yeah, right. Well, it's quite a ride.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: Yeah, but last time, too, we had a problem. We were in session. You left early, and we were still down there voting.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Wait a second.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: No, it just so happened that we had a conflict. It wasn't the Chairman's fault. We were supposed to be out at a certain time, and we got locked down there. He was gracious enough to leave on your behalf, while we held the fort there. That's all.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I enjoyed my stay in Vineland. It was very, very good. But, as you can see, we have several of our members in attendance tonight, and I am very, very happy that they are here.

Before we open the floor up to discussion, or inquiries -- discussion about some of the bills we have put through, and what we plan on attending to during the remainder of this year and 1987 -- I would like to ask my Committee members to introduce themselves to you, give you a little background about themselves, and tell you a little bit about the way the Committee has conducted itself through 1986.

As you know, I am Pete Genova, Chairman, from Union County. I represent the Twenty-First District, with the Speaker of the General Assembly, Chuck Hardwick. I am the first Chairman ever of the Assembly Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs, because it was created by Chuck Hardwick. I think it was a step in the right direction, and he should be commended for his initiative and his understanding of our State's veterans and what they need. In commending him, I feel very, very proud to be associated with such a fine individual.

This is Dr. Harold Colburn. Doc, why don't you tell us who you represent?

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Thank you. I didn't have to travel very far this time, because I am from Burlington. I was on the Board of Freeholders here for about 13 years.

I think Chairman Genova has done an excellent job so far. He has done a very thorough job with veterans' legislation in the time he has spent as Chairman of this Committee. He has tried to get us all over the State. Now, I haven't been able to do it. I think I attended the one in your town, so it is a good thing you came down here to ours. I got a little bit lost up in the center there, too, and a policeman was following me around, waiting for me to make a mistake. But, he didn't get me -- almost.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: They don't have much to do up there.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: I'm telling you, but anyhow-- He has done a very good job following the veterans' legislation

and trying to get the committees to consider it. As you may know, this Committee is made up of the chairpeople of a number of other committees. I happen to be Chairman of Health and Human Resources, and that has quite an application to veterans' affairs. As a matter of fact, our Committee will consider one of Pete's bills this coming Committee meeting, December 8. I have to be at a medical meeting, but it is a meeting on home health care, which I think is a very important bill. It is a pilot project, and certainly a type of service that is very much needed.

Pete is after us all the time to consider these bills, I can assure you. We have had several in our Committee. Assemblywoman Cooper had an important one, and she may say something about that. But there are others coming up, and there is only a limited number of bills we are allowed to consider in our Committees at each Committee meeting -- only seven. Sometimes we slip an extra one on, or we may have a meeting when there is no Assembly session, so we can get some extra ones on, with the permission of the Speaker. But we are only allowed to consider seven bills, and I think there are close to 300 bills in the Health Committee. You know, that is a lot of bills, and we can't get to all of them in a year. So, we try to pick the important ones, and the veterans' bills are among the important ones that are in our Committee.

I think I will leave it at that. Let us go on to the next person, so we don't spend all night having us talk.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Doctor.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: I am Assemblywoman Dolores Cooper, Second District, Atlantic. I am Assistant Majority Whip. I am Vice Chairman of this Committee, and I serve on the Assembly Senior Citizens Committee.

During World War II, I was a cryptographer with the War Department, serving at Fort Richardson, Alaska, as a civilian. Following the war, I married my late husband, who

passed away four months ago, Dr. David Cooper, who served our country four years in the armed services as a battalion dentist.

When I came to Atlantic City in 1947, it was very fashionable at that time to become involved with veterans' organizations. I think my first chairmanship -- I was married a week -- was Rummage Chairman with the Frank Berry Post. At any rate, the years went by. Veterans' organizations were on the decline and, of course, following the aging of a veteran-- Most veterans from my era are senior citizens requiring new needs, special needs, needs which I haven't faced before, and I have become very active in veterans' affairs once again. I was among those responsible for the reactivation of the Garr Greenstein Post in Atlantic County, which is now one of the largest, most active veterans' posts, with a membership of over 200 people.

Of course, I am the sponsor of, and hope I will live to see, the reality of a Veterans' Outreach Center in Vineland, serving the veterans of South Jersey. Right now, I see 52,000 being serviced per year, if not more, eliminating the long trek to Wilmington, Philadelphia, or North Jersey. Now, being a widow, I am being faced with new issues of the veterans' widows and families and their problems, so I feel it is quite a privilege to serve on this Committee. I was also responsible for pointing out to our Speaker, when he became the Majority Speaker, that the veterans' bills of the past, as we generally know, were disbursed to any number of committees. Now, we have pulled them all together and harnessed them into our Committee, which we hope will be able to serve the veterans of New Jersey more meaningfully and more effectively.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Dolores. Tom?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: I am Tom Paterniti. I am a dentist by profession. I come from the Eighteenth Legislative District in Middlesex County. I am a veteran, and a member of

the American Legion. Actually, I served for four years as Chairman of the Committee on Aging, which was the first Committee which had to do with senior citizen legislation. I am also responsible for several pieces of legislation which are law today, that do affect veterans. Actually, because I had that background when we formed this Committee -- which I thought was a great idea -- it opened my eyes to a lot of problems that face veterans who are going to be senior citizens, or who are senior citizens today, because their needs, as they become seniors, become even a little different, even though they are all veterans. I think it has put us in a position where we have been able to start introducing legislation to affect veterans or senior citizens. Their needs change, because when they are young, a lot of their problems are more or less acute, if they happen to be health problems, and then they more or less go away. But as they get older, the problems probably become more chronic, and their needs become much different. A lot of them end up where they are going to need in-home care or institutionalization.

I think we have a lot of soul-searching to do, because I think that within the next two or three years, just in New Jersey alone, we will have about 400,000 veterans who will be senior citizens. I think that sitting on this Committee has been very, very helpful. It has opened my eyes to a lot of your needs. I think we are starting to address them, and hopefully the veterans will be proud of us, because I think we want to make them the first -- the best -- in the country.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much, Tom. I would like to also introduce to you, ladies and gentlemen, some people who are with us who serve a very, very important part in the processing of our bills and in conducting our meetings around the State. I would like to introduce you to Sue Kobylarz. How's that?

MS. KOBYLARZ: Fine.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I know you are Donna's roommate.

MS. KOBYLARZ: That's right.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Sue is the Hearing Reporter for the Office of Legislative Services. If anyone requires a transcript of the minutes of the meeting, contact the aide of this Committee, who is Brian Volz or, if Brian is not there, Frank Parisi, who I will introduce you to next. Frank is our Office of Legislative Services aide tonight, in place of Brian, who is on vacation. Thank you very much for coming, Frank.

MR. PARISI: Any time.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I know it is difficult after putting in a full day in Trenton, but we are very, very happy to have you here. We also have Dave Matos, who is on the research staff, and aide to the minority party. He is here representing Tom Paterniti.

MR. PARISI: And Assemblyman Mazur, who, unfortunately, could not be here this evening from Bergen County. He had to be in Trenton this morning for a hearing, and go back to Bergen County, and he found impossible, at that point, to come back down to Burlington County. He expressed his regrets to everyone this evening, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay, fine. Thank you very much.

MR. PARISI: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I would like to recognize from my staff in Cranford, Liz Sep, who is my staff person who takes care of my veterans' affairs' materials, puts all of these folders in order for me, answers a lot of my correspondence, and who has been a great help with respect to this Committee.

We also have some people from the State. Pat, why don't you stand up and introduce yourself, and tell us--

P A T R I C K P A S C U L L I (speaking from audience): Yes, my name is Patrick Pasculli. I am the Superintendent of the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Cemetery. I am a former Assemblyman, having served on the Joint Appropriations

Committee and the Banking and Insurance Committee. I am a funeral director.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Dave?

D A V I D R I V E R A (speaking from audience): Hi, my name is David Rivera. I am Assistant Superintendent of the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Cemetery. I come from the Federal sector, having spent 15 years with the Department of the Army and Defense, and also 12 years with the United States Veterans' Administration. I am a public administrator by profession.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much. Thank you for taking the time out to join us tonight.

We are going to be doing some routine business a little later releasing some legislation. (indiscernible comment from one of the aides) Oh, how could I forget you?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: She was the first one here.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That is the first time I missed her, too.

MS. BAHNCK: Thanks a lot.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: This is my right arm. I would like to introduce you to a Majority Staff member who is a research person, who is Committee staffer for Doc Colburn on his Health Committee, and who serves with me on my Veterans' Committee. She happens to be a very good friend and a very dedicated individual. As I said before, she is my right arm down in Trenton, Ms. Donna Bahnck. Donna? Maybe we should clap for her. (applause) I call her my little package of dynamite. She does a great job.

As I said before, though, before we release some bills -- some routine bills to the standing committees for consideration -- we have six or seven of those, Frank, or eight? -- I would like to invite the public now to come before us to testify, as you so please, regarding some of your questions and concerns, regarding any matter. I would like to first call upon Charles Meyers, Deputy Mayor Pemberton Township. Your Honor, thank you for coming.

D E P U T Y M A Y O R C H A R L E S L. M E Y E R S:
Mr. Chairman, members of the Assembly Select Committee on
Veterans' Affairs: Good evening. I am Mr. Charles L. Meyers.
I am a Chief Warrant Officer -- CW2 -- U.S. Army Retired; a
two-time Vietnam vet; a committee person; Deputy Mayor of
Pemberton Township; a member of the Fort Dix Officers Retiree
Council; a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post
#10065; a member of the American Legion; and especially, a very
concerned citizen.

This evening, I am here to present some views and
concerns which not only affect me as a veteran, but others as
well. As veterans, we are all concerned with many problems
faced by veterans, but specifically the erosion of our
benefits; for example, the cost of living allowance -- half
benefits -- tax-exempt status on retirement pay, results and
the truth surrounding Agent Orange testing, the care of our
widows and orphans, and veterans' programs in general, to name
a few.

Several veterans have expressed disgust with the
Veterans' Hospital being located in Lyons in North Jersey. Why
not some facility centrally located -- something which was
promised years ago -- to treat the veterans? It was felt that
since we can locate offices for Senators and Assemblymen, that
the same impetus should be expended to establish veterans'
claim centers locally.

Additionally, there are concerns as to why the receipt
of limited medical treatment at military facilities, after
having dedicated a major portion of our years to the Armed
Forces of this nation, some as much as 20 and 30-plus years of
service, not excluding, by any means, those veterans who are
disabled and/or handicapped. It is the general feeling and
opinion that we, the veterans, including the Vietnam era
veterans, are considered second-class citizens, and we deserve
better.

Veterans' programs is another issue. It is apparent that in the recent past, there was a big push in veterans' programs. There was Job Service under the Department of Labor and Industry, with established veteran services, a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program -- known as DVOP -- and the Veterans' Education Assistance Program -- known as VEAP -- to name a few, wherein moneys were allocated without results, and did not meet the objectives of the programs. Thus, the veterans did not benefit and, as a result, the programs died. For some unknown reason, these and many other programs seemed to have had the "built-in-to-fail syndrome."

Thus, the message to impart to our legislators, is to aggressively seek avenues to improve veterans' benefits by effecting legislation to:

- 1) Provide tax-exempt status to veterans' retirement pay, in addition to the already established veterans' preference for hiring and the \$50 deductible on real estate taxes;

- 2) Establish a center wherein veterans can have claims processed and necessary assistance provided as required, i.e., a resource center;

- 3) Seek those educational benefit funds not used by veterans to provide other assistance;

- 4) Maintain and establish that any programs for veterans be thoroughly researched to provide impact studies and obtain input from veterans, and investigated before funds are allocated; and,

- 5) Provide that functions or programs for veterans be manned by those veterans who are knowledgeable and familiar with the specific era, i.e., Vietnam veterans to Vietnam veterans, World War II veterans to World War II veterans, etc., where there is a commonality or relationship.

I read, with much chagrin yesterday in The Newark Star-Ledger -- and I will read it for the record -- a letter

written by State Commander George F. Himmel, Jr., which really touches me very much. It was a letter to the editor, and it reads:

"The New Jersey Department of Human Services' Commissioner has done it again. Twice now, since taking office a few short months ago, he has managed to insult the veterans of our State. First he approved a segregated burial policy for veterans at the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Cemetery at Arnytown by religion. His latest slap in the face to veterans came on Veterans' Day -- November 11 -- when he allowed the Veterans' Cemetery to be opened without even having an American flag flown over the final resting place of men and women who served our nation. Can you imagine such insensitivity?

"A State veterans' cemetery on Veterans' Day without an American flag. The U.S. Flag Code approved by Congress notes that the flag should be displayed on all days, especially Veterans' Day -- November 11. Additionally, the Code states: 'The flag should be displayed daily, on or near the main administration building of every public institution.'

"Finally, even though it rained on Veterans' Day, the Code allows an all-weather flag to be flown. George F. Himmel, Jr., State Commander, Department of New Jersey American Legion, Trenton"

I thank you for affording me the opportunity of presenting some of the views and concerns of veterans, guaranteeing you that this is in no way the tip of the iceberg.

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I have copies of this for you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Charles.

DEPUTY MAYOR MEYERS: You're welcome.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: We appreciate it. We will be addressing some of the issues you brought up before us this evening, Charles, during our agenda later on. But what I think we might do right now, in the best interest of the last issue

you brought up, which has to do with the Arnytown Cemetery, now that we have Pat Pasculli and Dave Rivera here-- They would like to address the Committee on this particular topic. Hang on for one second, Pat.

I would like to invite anyone else who would care to speak on the Arnytown Cemetery controversy to come forward also, to let the Committee know you would like to speak. Is there anyone else who would like to speak on that? (no response) Okay.

R U S S E L L S T R I N G (speaking from audience): The only thing I would like to ask-- At the last Vineland meeting, you said there was going to be a submission, or a -- something to the veterans and to Mr. Altman. You wouldn't speak on it because at that time it was delicate. Is there any more on that?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Since that time, we do have a communication from a Deputy Attorney General from the Department of Law and Public Safety to -- at the time it was Acting Commissioner Geoffrey Perselay. That particular communication has carried through, obviously, to Drew Altman, who has expressed the same sentiments and has provided the same support to the particular issue as the Attorney General has illustrated. That, of course, is that there is no precedent being established with respect to the burial; that the Orthodox Jewish law requires that the deceased of other faiths be buried separately. That was the opinion, and constitutionally there is nothing wrong with it at all.

MR. STRING: Well, I understood they were going to reduce the number of graves to be set aside. That was going to be the--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, a half of 1% of the total grave sites in the cemetery have been designated -- a very, very small number. I have heard some talk about the possibility of erecting even a fence or some type of a-- Pat,

why don't you come up and talk more about that?

MR. PASCULLI (speaking from audience): Mr. Chairman, may I ask David to speak about this?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Sure.

I would just like to add, for the benefit of everyone here tonight, we are not here to debate the merits of this particular matter, whether or not Drew Altman or Geoffrey Perselay or the Governor or Attorney General Cary Edwards made the right or wrong decision. We know where the opposition is coming from, and we certainly can respect their feelings. We can also certainly respect the people who support the issue.

So, we are not here to debate it. We are here to try to provide some sort of education -- some insight -- as to what has actually happened. I am going to ask Dave to proceed.

MR. RIVERA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Select Committee.

With reference to the Jewish section that was established at the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Cemetery, it was part of my duties to see that the section was established, and to actually select the parcel of land that was so consecrated.

I brought with me tonight for your viewing the layouts of the cemetery showing Phase 1, as it is developed now. Please look at the parcel of land that was selected for the Jewish section in comparison to the rest. Talking as far as numbers are concerned, there were exactly 481 grave sites that I set aside as the Jewish section, in comparison to 110,000 grave sites left for the veterans of other faiths. These are the official layout maps (demonstrating) and the Jewish section is dedicated-- It is this section right here, which consists of .32 acres. That is less than half an acre. That is all there is.

The reason why is fairly obvious. The Jewish people of the Orthodox faith have not changed their laws as to the

burial of their dead. Contrary to the beliefs of the Catholic faith, for example-- They had the exact same beliefs, until Vatican II took place, which changed that. So, in an effort for the Administration to provide burial ground for all of the veterans of the State of New Jersey, including those of the Jewish Orthodox faith, this section was created. As I said before, it is only 481 grave sites from a total of 110,000. That is all they have in the Jewish section.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Did you want to speak any more on the cemetery, or is that--

MR. RIVERA: Pat and I, Mr. Chairman, do have other concerns, which we would like to bring up at this time, if you will allow us.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Other than this issue?

MR. RIVERA: Other than this issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay, fine. Is there anyone else who would like to speak on that?

A D O L P H W E R N E R (speaking from audience): I think one of the biggest objections to this business with the--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Would you come forward, please, and sit up here?

MR. WERNER: I think everyone can hear me.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, we are taping. May we have your name?

MR. WERNER: My name is Adolph Werner. I am President of the Fleet Reserve Association, Branch 57 in South Jersey.

I think that probably one of the big problems with this grave site allowance, is the fact that it was done surreptitiously. The thing was taken care of, the site was chosen, the number was chosen, they got an opinion from the Attorney General, and nobody in the veteran community knew anything about it. Supposedly, to the best of my knowledge-- I was not at the particular meeting, but when it finally came out and was brought up at the meeting when all of the veterans'

groups were there, none of the veterans' groups knew anything about it. It was already done, cut and dried, before anybody knew anything.

So, I think that is probably one of the big problems with this thing. I don't think it is the number of graves that were set aside. There might be some question about the location. It may be in a prime section of the cemetery, or something like that. But, as I say, I think the big problem was the manner in which this thing was done. Personally, speaking for myself, and a number of people I have talked to, I really don't think it's proper. We were all veterans together. We all went out and took our chances, whether it was some foreign country, on land or at sea, or wherever it might be. We all went out there and did our thing, and we all died the same way.

I mean, if you were on a ship, and it got sunk in the middle of the Pacific, it didn't make any difference whether you were a gentile, a Jew, a Catholic, or whatever. You all went down together. You all died together. We are all veterans; we all fought together, and I don't think we should be buried separately. That is my own personal opinion, and the opinion of many other people I have talked to.

I think this thing was done in a very, very poor manner. I would like to look at that site.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Assemblyman Paterniti?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: I would just like to address two points that the Mayor brought up in his presentation.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yeah, but we are not on that yet.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: All right; okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Dave, I think we have just about concluded that. Thank you. Assemblywoman Cooper?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Yes. I don't know where your aura of mystery comes from, because I was invited, approximately a month before the dedication, to be the guest

speaker at the dedication of the cemetery. I have a calendar to live by. The Jewish War Veterans chaplain came from North Jersey. A number of members of the Atlantic City Jewish War Veterans were there. Other people around the State knew we were going to be there. I saw nothing clouded in secrecy. We all had letters -- correspondence. It all came through Trenton.

I mean, I do not operate in a covert manner. Everything was planned. All of the people who were there, were there. The color guard from Fort Dix was notified. The Department of Defense was there. It doesn't sound much like Watergate or Irangate to me. (laughter)

MR. WERNER (from audience): I just want to say one thing. You mentioned that everyone knew all about this. (indiscernible comment from unidentified person) Well, this is what I just heard, "Everyone was aware."

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Please, please, let's not-- I think Assemblywoman Cooper is entitled to her opinion. If you have something to discuss about this afterward with the Assemblywoman--

MR. WERNER: Well, the only thing I want to know is, if everyone was on board about this decision, why did you go to one of the Attorney Generals to get an opinion beforehand?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Please, we are not here to debate, as I said before, okay? We are not going to hear you on that, because we heard you in Vineland on that. Several members of the Committee may be disturbed that we are even opening it up again. I did that as a courtesy to you, as I have done with the VVLP issue, which I have had up to here. Everyplace we went, we heard about the Vietnam veterans leadership. I just felt like, get it off your chest. If you wanted to go ahead and give it to us, go ahead. But, we did not take a position on that then, and we have not up until now. The same as this here.

As I said, I am sure some members may be questioning why I am doing this. Well, because I know you want to discuss it. We have come down here to visit you, and you are entitled to discuss it. But, we are not going to debate. The decision has been made by the Attorney General; the action has been taken. If Commander Himmel from the American Legion, if the Commander from the VFW-- I have heard from all of them. If they want to debate this with the Administration, they can go into T.K.'s office and talk to him about it. But we are not going to turn this Committee into a Committee that is going to handle controversy which we are not responsible for.

We are here to make sure that bills that are presented before the Legislature in the best interests of the veterans are looked at, are passed through, and are considered by the Speaker and passed, or are sent to the Senate and signed by the Governor, for you -- period.

Tom?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: There were two points the Mayor brought up. One had to do with establishing veterans' claims centers locally. About three years ago, when they tried to take money away from the veterans at the Old Soldiers' Home -- their pensions -- if you recall, I introduced legislation to stop that. They were going to take that money and use it to establish various offices for the veterans throughout the State. Finally, we adapted the bill. We appropriated a half a million dollars for regional offices for the veterans.

Now, as far as I know, the money was appropriated. I don't know what the Administration-- I don't know whether they established these offices or not, but the legislation was in place, it became law, and the money was appropriated. I mean, if you have a problem, and you want to find out what happened to these offices, I think you better check with the people at the State House. As legislators, we did what the veterans wanted us to do. We got them the money for the offices.

Secondly, you mentioned something about having more attention paid to veterans as far as medical treatment, and so on and so forth, because it is very limited. Because of this particular Committee, with your input, we have already started to play around with legislation. In fact, I sponsored a piece -- and I think that some of these gentlemen here are co-sponsors -- where with this DRG, a lot of hospitals in the State are either closing down, closing up wings, or so on and so forth-- This legislation would allow the State to either lease wings from some of these hospitals that are closed, or outright buy the hospital, and you would have a built-in facility at a nominal cost, compared to starting something from scratch. They could convert these or develop these into inpatient or outpatient centers for veterans in the State of New Jersey.

We started this legislation in good faith because of this particular Committee and the input you people have contributed. So, we are trying to address some of your problems.

DEPUTY MAYOR MEYERS: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you. Assemblywoman Cooper?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Yes. With reference to your presentation, AR-49 was passed by the Assembly -- it is in the Senate right now -- establishing the outpatient clinic in southern New Jersey. The way it is moving, it looks like it will ultimately go to Vineland. It is in the works. It is over in the Senate. We have a commitment from the City of Vineland. Just yesterday, I believe, you received your brochure from Newcomb General Hospital, photographically displaying all the facilities which will become available.

We have all received letters of support from Congressman Hughes. Senator Hurley, Senator Gormley -- we have all been working on it. As I say, it looks very promising. Of course, we still need military support behind it.

We just passed Assembly Resolution 100, recognizing aid to veterans exposed to radiation from nuclear tests during the occupation of Japan -- the atomic veterans. They recently met in Atlantic City, where their problems did not have sufficient lobbyists like yourselves. But we are now very much aware of the assistance they need, and their resolution is moving along.

Of course, that is why we are here, to administer and to make up for the absences in the past.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: We also have a Vietnam Outreach Center in Atlantic County, which is manned full-time. That was put in by Congressman Hughes, and they have been doing an excellent job, because I work very closely with them. Of course, the Agent Orange-- You mentioned that. That has been under consideration, expansion research, and so forth. But, our Vietnam Outreach Center has really been servicing Atlantic County. I think it is up to each county military group to get a center in their county.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much, Dolores. The Legislature has made significant progress in identifying the need for an outpatient clinic -- another outpatient clinic in Vineland. I know that several members of this Committee are supporting the Vineland facility, with coordination with Newcomb Medical Center. There is a bill which appropriates \$2 million to place a commitment from the State of New Jersey out there, to let people know that this is a reality. I feel that once Commissioner Altman puts his seal of approval on it in Human Services, it is going to move forward.

Does any other member have any questions? (no response) Dave, you want to speak on something else?

MR. RIVERA: Yes. I would like to yield to Mr. Pasculli. Basically, Mr. Chairman, some veterans' organizations have been attacking the Administration

constantly, particularly the Honorable Drew Altman, our Commissioner, and also our Acting Director of Veterans' Programs. Basically, it is because of a lack of knowledge of Federal and State rules and regulations and laws.

The gentleman who preceded me, the Deputy Mayor of Pemberton Township, mentioned one such case. We would like to make the public aware of what the Federal laws, rules, and regulations, governed by the United States Veterans' Administration, say directly about that particular instance.

MR. PASCULLI: Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, ladies and gentlemen: A while ago you heard some statements made by -- with all due respect -- Commander Himmel, pertaining to the flag that was not flown on Veterans' Day. But, there were a lot of extenuating factors which were not mentioned, and I would like to bring these to your attention, and to the attention of our visitors.

This past Veterans' Day -- November 11 -- was a rainy, cold day. We have no gates at the cemetery; the cemetery is constantly open. We are in the process of putting gates at the cemetery. So, during that day, anyone could come to the cemetery to visit the graves. At the present time, since June 2, we have approximately 402 veterans and/or their dependents interred. I am very happy to say that we have served our veterans and their families very well. They are extremely pleased with us. I would just ask anyone to speak to some of the veterans we have served, or their next of kin. I am sure they will explain to you how well they have been served.

I would like to be very brief, Mr. Chairman. I know you have your bills. Getting back to the flag, and I would like to mention this, in my hand I have the Code -- with all due respect -- that the Deputy Mayor spoke of. It is from the U.S. Veterans' Administration National Cemeteries Administration, Operation, and Maintenance. These rules are the rules that we are presently revising. They will be promulgated in our Administrative Code.

Pertaining to the heading of Veterans' Day, I would like to read them. The book is M40-2, as I mentioned from the U.S. Veterans' Administration. It is paragraph 11.06. It is a brief paragraph, and I would like to read it, if I may:

"Veterans' Day is a national holiday which, as prescribed by law, is observed annually on November 11. The date is derived from World War I, when on that date in 1918 armistice was declared. For that reason, the day was known as Armistice Day.

"Veterans' Day is extremely significant to all veterans, service organizations and individual veterans themselves. Because of this, the National Cemetery provides an appropriate setting for a patriotic ceremony or service honoring the living, as well as deceased veterans of this nation.

"As in the case of Memorial Day, the cemetery director or superintendent should take positive steps to encourage and assist local veterans' organizations, individually or jointly, in planning and staging some form of a ceremony in the cemetery in honor of the veterans.

"At those cemeteries where ceremonies are conducted, the cemetery superintendent, or responsible designee, will be on duty at the cemetery, from the time of its opening until the ceremony has been completed."

I would like to add that on that day, we had no notification of any services to be conducted. Normally, we require a notification of 30 days, so we can accommodate the veterans' organizations.

"Due to the season of the year that Veterans' Day is observed, it is not necessary to keep the cemetery open longer than the normal closing time."

Mr. Chairman, this is the heart of the matter concerning the weather and the flying of the flag, which I would like to quote now.

"Because this day annually is in November, when weather conditions can be adverse, the following inclement weather policy will apply: If no ceremony is planned for the cemetery, and the weather in the judgment of the cemetery's superintendent is adverse, the flags will not be displayed arrayed." I would like to repeat that: "The flags will not be displayed arrayed. If, however, a ceremony is scheduled, and held in the cemetery, notwithstanding the fact that the weather is bad, the flags will be displayed. If a ceremony is scheduled, but is cancelled or postponed because of the weather, the flags will not be displayed."

Mr. Chairman, that is the end of the ruling. I would invite anyone to look at it. They can get a copy from the Veterans' Administration. We follow rules and regulations. Sometimes, we have had some people misquote. They take the rules and regulations out of context. This is one of the reasons I wanted to speak about this tonight. I feel that the statement against Commissioner Altman, who is a great Commissioner -- he has done a tremendous amount for the veterans of the State of New Jersey -- was false.

Thank you.

MR. RIVERA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I would like to call on Frank Bennett, who is here tonight representing the American Legion. (Mr. Bennett not present) How about Russ String, from the Fleet Reserve Association?

MR. STRING: Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee: I would like to thank you for being down here in Burlington County. You are quite close to my home for a change. I traveled to Trenton the first time, in a snowstorm, and waited for two hours to get the meeting started.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Why was that?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: I was there on time.

MR. STRING: Because no one showed up.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: I did.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: We showed up.

MR. STRING: Yeah, at 11 o'clock.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: Oh, no, I was there on time.

MR. STRING: I don't want to get into that.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: I was there on time.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: If you want your bill passed, you shouldn't get into that.

MR. STRING: Then we went to Vineland. I want to particularly thank Dr. Colburn and Assemblyman Azzolina for getting the bill into--

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: By the way, I see that is in our packet tonight.

MR. STRING: The Chairman told me it was in. I have been fighting with him for a long time to get it in. But, I want to thank you very much for that. I want to thank you for all you have done for the veterans. It is a shame -- and I found this out from a secretary of my branch -- that unless we get three or four weeks, we cannot get the word out to the people. I believe this is what is happening, so we do not get the local organizations to come to these meetings. I am very disappointed in the VFW and the American Legion in the local areas. We should have people here from Camden County, Burlington County, even Ocean County. Evidently they are not getting the word close enough -- or far enough in advance to make these meetings.

I also wanted to say something about the \$50 veterans' tax deduction, because it has been in for 45 years, and never changed. I think it should be raised; however, knowing what the financial situation is, I don't see how we can get it. I am glad to hear that Vineland is coming in.

I sat in at a meeting we had. The people from the JFK Hospital Association are trying to establish, with the Veterans' Administration, an outpatient clinic in the Camden

County area. I don't know whether they have ever approached this Committee. Their program looks very good. They say they do not have to have any buildings. They have all of the facilities available; they have the parking areas available in three separate hospitals -- one in Washington Township, one in Stratford, and the other one in Cherry Hill. They would have a building set aside for outpatients for the VA. They are going to promote this program. It is in the incubator stage, but they have it well-established. They have slides, they have a book, so I imagine you will be hearing from them soon.

I want to thank you again very much for inviting me to speak. Good luck getting back.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Russ.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: Mr. Chairman?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Assemblyman?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: One thing we can tell them we did, you know, in the last -- I believe it was a year or so ago -- as far as the \$50 tax deduction-- If you recall, when they used to hit 65, they used to lose it. Now it has been made possible to continue to get the \$50, as well as the--

MR. STRING: Two fifty.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: No, you continue to get the \$50 as a senior citizen, and as a veteran-- Before, you used to lose the veteran's when you picked up the senior citizen's.

MR. STRING: Yeah, but you can't pick up the senior citizen's, unless you are under a \$10,000--

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: No, no, the \$50 you still get. It would be the \$250 you wouldn't be able to get, unless you are under \$10,000, but the \$50 you pick up.

MR. STRING: I would like to come back to the Chair on that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's wrong.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: Pardon?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're wrong.

MR. STRING: There is a very funny situation that goes on. You go down to your tax office, and you talk to the girl. You say, "Give me the form for filling out the \$10,000" -- not the \$10,000 -- "for filling out the \$250 senior citizen's." She says, "Is your combined retirement pay and Social Security over \$10,000?" If you say, "Yes," it's "Then, you are not qualified." But, that is not true.

The Assembly has put out a formula to figure out how much is deducted and how much-- Unless you know -- and I happen to know the tax collector, and I talk to him personally, because somebody told me about this formula-- None of the girls in the office know about it. You have to go directly to the tax collector and find out what that formula is.

Now, the mayor up here in one of these towns in Burlington County, actually put out that Social Security and retirement pay were deductible. It didn't have anything to do with it. That's wrong, too, because you have to figure that in and get under that \$10,000. So, there is something wrong about the way the information is being distributed to the tax offices and the local communities.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Russ; thank you very much. I see, Charles, that your name is down on our list twice. Or, is there another Charles Meyers here, because one is spelled Meyers and one is spelled Myers? (Deputy Mayor Meyers responds from the audience; indiscernible, no microphone) Okay, well, they've got you down twice.

I recognize Sam Lo Bue. Hello, Sam.

MR. LO BUE: I did not come with a prepared statement. I just came here for one reason. It seems that everybody on this Committee and in this audience is bent on Vineland as a suitable VA facility which will satisfy the veterans of New Jersey.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: It's not VA; it's the State.

MR. LO BUE: What is it?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: It is a veterans' facility, but not a VA facility. Let's not get the--

MR. LO BUE: What would you call the Vineland Memorial Home?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: That is a State facility.

MR. LO BUE: But, it is funded by the Federal government to a certain degree, isn't it?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: They receive some matching funds from the Federal government, but most of it is funded by the State of New Jersey. Revenue transfers are sent into their--

MR. LO BUE: My outfit was very disturbed to hear Vineland. The word from the Commander of the VFW was that Chris Smith concurred -- Congressman Chris Smith. I approached Congressman Chris Smith, and I asked him, "Did you concur?" He said, "No." This is a policy that has to be settled by the VA, and I will talk to the VA to break it up.

Now, the VA is not going to-- He is going to try to persuade the VA to move it out of Vineland into a location that is more central.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Who is going to do that, Congressman Smith?

MR. LO BUE: He is going to help, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Congressman Smith has really no say-so in the matter. I believe there are advocates to locate a home in Ocean County somewhere. Is that Brick Township -- in that area?

MR. LO BUE: It is in Ocean County, right near Brick Town or Great Adventure -- someplace along there. Do you know that interstate road?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Just so you know.

MR. LO BUE: The reason we said that is, traveling from Trenton to Vineland took us a little longer to make the trip, and I had my co-pilot, who was the Commander of this place. He is a VFW man. I asked him to chauffeur me down,

because I did not know the place, and my eye-- I don't know if it was pink eye, or something, but it bothered me, and I wanted to be at that meeting real bad. So, he chauffeured me. He concurred with me that Vineland is not the proper location to help all--

First, you have to remember that Wilmington, Delaware is not too far from Vineland, and all the people around the bay area. Are they closer to that VA facility, or is Trenton closer to Vineland? That is number one that you have to think about.

Number two, you also have Baltimore, Maryland. You can still use the same bridge when you go to Baltimore, whether it is for outpatient, inpatient, for medication, or whatever it might be. You can still go there.

Now, we are very disturbed. The last time we were disturbed, I think the election was kind of lopsided.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: What election was that?

MR. LO BUE: November 4. You recall the election, Pete.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I don't--

MR. LO BUE: No, I am not talking about the State; I am talking about the general election. Fortunately, we only had one State man running, and he won, because the man is good -- Christopher Smith -- Congressman Christopher Smith, of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. He is the only one from the Congress who got in, in our State. (indiscernible comments from members of Committee) Wasn't he voted in?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: Yeah, but there are 14 Congressmen running in the State of New Jersey.

MR. LO BUE: I am talking about my district -- the one I fought for.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Well, whatever the point is--

MR. LO BUE: Don't say he don't carry no whip. He does carry some kind of a whip.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: No, I didn't say that at all.

MR. LO BUE: I have a good contact, also, with the POW hot line when I have a problem with the VA; for instance, on medication and a generic drug. And I get good results with these contacts. Take these contacts away from me, or put your outfit with me, and I will be a lost soul. In fact, I was ready to write, "If you are not going to help me, send me one revolver with one shell, and let me blow my brains out," because, to me, I was promised, even by Governor Kean, when I had the shovel on a ground breaking ceremony-- Now, I'm not going to go to any more ceremonies, because I was disgusted after the remark that was made afterwards. He said, "This place is going to be dedicated only for Jersey veterans who were inducted, or who lived here for more than two years."

Nothing is too good for the Jersey veteran. But when I asked your outfit about helping us with 1010 -- A-1010 -- and the other bill about the -- the other Assembly bill-- I don't want to repeat it, because it is on the tape from the last Vineland meeting. I haven't heard a darned thing. I can't even get a report to give to my people.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, I think I told you about A-1010. Are you referring to the sales tax bill?

MR. LO BUE: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: The sales tax bill-- This Committee will not recommend it because of the fiscal impact it would have on the State of New Jersey.

MR. LO BUE: It's not--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, I don't want to debate the bill. I'm telling you-- You said you haven't heard, and I said that at the last meeting, too. As far as Assembly Bill 2549, pertaining to the conformity of dates -- Federal dates and State dates -- that bill has been recommended--

MR. LO BUE: It was 647, wasn't it?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: No, 2549, Assemblyman DiGaetano, conforms dates of the definition of veteran to Federal law. That particular bill was released from our Committee. It is before the Assembly State Government Committee, awaiting Assemblyman Zimmer's -- Chairman Zimmer's--

MR. LO BUE: I hope it gets passed, because we have quite a few Vietnam and Korean vets who would like to see that pass.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay.

MR. LO BUE: I am not looking for myself, because I am a has-been now.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Well, I wouldn't say that. Sam, I want to thank you very much for coming before us again, as you did last time.

MR. LO BUE: Thank you very much for listening to somebody who has been hurt tremendously. But, I am able to be a little bit mobile. I am able to speak a little bit. That is not because of my doing. I think it was the Good Lord above us who guided me. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: He guides all of us.

Since I see no other names on our agenda here-- Yes, sir?

V I N C E N T B U R N S: I don't have my name on the agenda, but I would--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Would you like to come forward, please, and give us your name and who you are representing -- the branch of the service you are representing?

MR. BURNS: Oh, I represent a lot of things. I am Vince Burns, retired Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army. The reason I am here primarily is because during this past summer I was appointed to the Veterans' Services Council, or Committee, of this State, which advises the Division of Veterans' Programs, which is a part of Human Services, and so on.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: With Stan Wides?

MR. BURNS: Right, he is the Chairman. He notified me last week that you were meeting here tonight, and asked me to come in and just be present, just to observe and see, and if I had anything to say, perhaps say it.

Many of the things I have heard kicking around here, I have heard kicked around at the only two meetings I have been to since I was appointed to the Council recently, so--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Excuse me, please. Gentlemen, please? (attempting to quiet the people talking in the background)

MR. BURNS: I am still wet behind the ears, so to speak, but I am interested over the next four years, as I serve my term on the Council and try to be of help to the veterans in the State. From what I hear, it seems to me that there ought to be perhaps a little more coordination, whether between your Committee or the Senate Committee or us in the veterans' groups and the elements in the Human Services Department. Maybe it is already there, but I am just not aware of it yet because I haven't been on it long enough to find out enough about what is going on.

But, I wanted to let you know I am here. I've got a lot of interest in supporting the veteran. I would not have stuck my neck out and tried to get this appointment, if I weren't interested. We will try to do what we can. This Veterans' Services Council is trying to help. Some of the things you have mentioned, like the location of an outpatient clinic -- if you want to call it that -- in Vineland, or elsewhere. The installation of a new home in Paramus has been taken care of, so we are working to try to provide some guidance and assistance, and to get some input.

We are around to help, and I am sure that if we can help, we will be more than happy to.

Thank you.

New Jersey State Library

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much. We have had great cooperation from Commissioner Altman and from Leon Cheesman from the Division of Veterans' Programs, from Stan Wides, and from all of the veterans' officials in Trenton and throughout the State. We are very, very pleased with the cooperation they have extended to us, and we plan to do the same -- reciprocate it -- to them.

Anyone else? Yes, sir?

E D W A R D D E V L I N: I didn't know to put my name on the list.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Thanks for coming.

MR. DEVLIN: My name is Edward Devlin. I am from Mount Holly, and I am a private citizen.

I want to commend the State. I have lived in approximately 12 states in my life; New Jersey for the last six, but I also went to high school here. I think this State is way out front in Agent Orange research and, as Assemblywoman Cooper indicated, also in the special needs of atomic veterans. I think this State is doing a heck of a lot.

I am not a member of the Vietnam Veterans Association, but I get their newspaper. They are also aware of what you, the Legislature, and the Judicial are doing. I also want to say a personal thank you to you and to the Executive for the two rebate programs for Vietnam veterans. I was foolish enough to let my VA benefits for college go by, and this allows me now, as a working man, to go to college part-time nights.

I just wonder-- This is pure ignorance, but what kind of outreach programs are there for, specifically, Vietnam veterans, who are in disproportionate numbers in State confinement facilities, and Federal confinement facilities? I don't know whether there is or there isn't--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Are you talking about the incarcerated veteran, the veteran who might be facing some post traumatic stress disorders, or a variation of medical--

MR. DEVLIN: Those, or just-- Yeah, well, I guess that would come under the overall heading of PTSD.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: We haven't really-- Doctor, are you familiar-- Have any bills come before your Committee?

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: No. Donna, do you know of any? I can't think of any. (indiscernible response)

MR. DEVLIN: I am not trying to put you on the spot.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: No, no, you didn't at all. Donna reminded me that we did have Assembly Bill 3125, sponsored by Committee member Assemblyman Paul DiGaetano, which created a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Study Commission. That went through recently, I suppose, Donna, about a month or so ago. (affirmative response) That basically has been the only legislative action during the period of this particular session, that has been taken with respect to the-- But the Committee certainly recognizes the many needs of the Vietnam era veteran -- the Agent Orange controversy, the post traumatic stress disorder, health problems, the incarcerated veteran, the educational needs of the Vietnam veteran.

We are trying to illustrate to them that their service in Southeast Asia was certainly a respected part of their duty and obligation to the country they served. I am sure there are other pieces, Mr. Devlin, which are presently before the Legislature -- other bills -- which, in some way or another, have some kind of an indirect affiliation with the Vietnam veteran.

MR. DEVLIN: Okay. Again, I am not trying to put you on the spot. As a matter of fact--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: We enjoy that.

MR. DEVLIN: --the Veterans' Service Officers who I have met from the State are a particularly fine brand of public official -- or whatever you would like to call them.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Good. Thank you very much.

MR. LO BUE: May I interject? In Trenton, right across from City Hall, they have a vet center. Due to the fact that I was a POW, and they know what hell is, and I know what hell is, they respect me greater than they do other veterans.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I'm glad to hear that.

MR. LO BUE: I am welcome to use their transportation when I go to Lyons for therapy or a rap session. It falls on a Tuesday in Lyons, both for us and for them. Only theirs is in the evening, and ours is in the afternoon. When I stopped using their transportation, they thought that somebody offended me. They didn't offend me. No veteran could offend me, because if he is injured, I have pity for him. He couldn't offend me because of what he might do.

So, there is a vet center right across from City Hall, not too far from the State House. If you want to see the best center that is being operated, see the colonel there. They call them team leaders. I don't know his name. I am very poor in names -- I told you that before -- and I don't want to butcher anyone's name, no more than I want my name butchered.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. Thank you very much, Sam.

The next order of business the Committee will be conducting is releasing some legislative initiatives to the standing committees for consideration before their committees at some future date, and then for consideration by the Speaker of the General Assembly for posting in the Assembly, and on to the Senate committees.

Someone mentioned earlier, maybe you, Ed, or maybe Mr. Burns, about the Senate -- trying to get after the Senate to have better coordination between the veterans' facilities and their particular house. Well, I would hope that you people, as citizens, would lobby the Senators who represent you, and ask that they consider talking to the Senate President about creating a Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the State Senate. I think it was very, very necessary that the

initiative was taken by Chuck Hardwick. It has been done, and I feel that by virtue of our many meetings around the State, you have seen that many of the bills you have been concerned about have been addressed.

I am not saying that they move slowly once they go over to the Senate, but it would be a great -- I would like to hope that you think they do. That's a partisan statement. But, I would hope that you would lobby your Senators, and ask that those particular representatives talk to the Senate President, John Russo, about having the Senate create a Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs over there. You talked about coordination between the State offices and the veterans' councils and the Legislature. With a Select Committee in both houses of the Legislature like that, I am sure we would have a more cohesive group working together for all of the veterans. So, give your Senator a call, and ask him to talk to the Senate President about that. It would be worthwhile.

MR. LO BUE: They claim that the bills get stuck in committee and they can't get them out. (remainder of comment indiscernible; away from microphone)

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: You'll have to talk to them about that.

MR. LO BUE: Well, that is the problem we have.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: The first bill we would like to consider is Assembly Bill 1915, sponsored by Assemblyman Ozzie Pellecchia, from parts of Passaic, parts of Bergen, parts unknown. I am not sure. He and John Girgenti have many responsibilities. This particular bill is not new; it has been around for a while. It changes the age and service requirements the veteran must meet to qualify for special veterans' retirement allowances under the PERS.

I am not going to go into detail on this, but any bill that applies to retirement applications for veterans, this Committee certainly does support. I would ask, though, at the

time the communication is directed to the State Government Committee for consideration, that in that communication -- with a copy to the sponsor -- a fiscal note be requested by the Office of Legislative Services, and that at sometime in the very near future, OLS provide Assemblyman Zimmer, Chairman of the State Government Committee, with a copy, and his staff person with a copy of that fiscal note. That will be done automatically.

I would like to recommend the release by the Select Committee of A-1915. Any problems, members?

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: I don't think we have the bill, do we? If we do, I don't see it.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I must apologize. This particular bill was put on right at the witching hour.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Could we just take a quick look at it maybe?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: You wouldn't want to just go ahead with some other bills, and then come back to this, after we each have a chance to--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. We will just move on then, and wait for Assemblyman Colburn and Assemblywoman Cooper to review it.

As many of you know, we have been trying to conform the dates -- the Federal dates -- to the State, with respect to benefits and definition of veteran. We have a bill -- Assembly Bill 2253 -- which is a bipartisan bill, sponsored by Assemblymen Catrillo, Dario, and Arango from Hudson County, and Assemblyman Girgenti, who represents the Passaic district with Assemblyman Pellecchia. This particular bill will provide for the extension of eligibility for certain veterans' benefits to those veterans who have served in certain peace-keeping operations of the Armed Forces of the United States of America in Lebanon and Grenada. This is a bill which I recommend.

These particular veterans certainly do -- them and their surviving spouses and their families -- qualify for the same type of benefits that our other veterans who were on peace-keeping missions in the defense of this country are entitled to. It is something that will be governed by the retirement system of the police and firemen and the Civil Service and the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund.

So, I would move the release of Assembly Bill 2253 to the State Government Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: I second it.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Seconded.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: All in favor? (unanimous aye)

We do have a fiscal note on this bill. I am very pleased to see that staff had one prepared. As a matter of information to the members, according to the United States Department of Defense, the number of New Jersey veterans who were involved in Lebanon and Grenada total 276, with a fiscal obligation by the State of New Jersey of \$13,800. The State will reimburse the municipalities for the appropriate property tax deductions on this. I'm glad we have that.

Excuse me for a second, please. (Chairman confers with aide)

We have Assembly Bill 3229, sponsored by Assemblymen Chinnici and Guy Muziani, who represent Cape May County -- District 1. They have been influenced by my distinguished colleague over here from Atlantic County, to put this bill in. So, we are going to give her all the credit tonight. This particular bill makes a supplemental appropriation of \$2 million to the Division of Veterans' Programs and Special Services in the Department of Human Services of the State of New Jersey, to cover the State's share in the cost of renovating a facility at the Newcomb medical facility in Vineland. Of course, that will be adapted to an outpatient clinic for veterans.

Of the \$8,200,000 that is going to be required to construct this particular facility, \$1,600,000 will be received from the Federal government -- the VA -- \$2 million from the State, and the balance from the hospital. This facility would serve approximately 52,000 veterans who require outpatient care. Presently, there are two outpatient VA full-service facilities in the State -- one in northern Jersey, and the other one in Menlo Park. I just drew a blank there for a second.

What I would like to ask the Committee to do, though, in their recommendation for release of this particular bill-- In fact, this bill will probably be referred to Dr. Colburn's Committee--

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: That's true.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: --before it goes to Appropriations. I would like to ask that two things take place: Number one, that in the statement, Doctor -- and, Donna, would you please make a note of this? -- the word "construct" in the second line -- "of the \$8,200,000 required to construct this facility"-- This particular project will be a renovation of an existing facility; it will not be a new construction. So, you just might want to kind of clean that up a bit.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: I don't think it makes a whole lot of difference, but maybe there is something about the language that has to be used in the bill. I don't know. It may have to be "renovate and construct." I don't know. There might be something about construction attached to it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Well, it has to do with the SCAN equipment that is in the hospital already. They have to adjust for--

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: But, there is no actual creation of new walls beyond the confines--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: The building is there.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: No, I realize the building is there, but we will work on it.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Donna reminded me, Assemblyman Colburn, that we can't amend the verbiage in the statement anyway. That is the only place it appears, so that particular question is moot.

The second thing is, what I would like to do, at the time we send the official communication to Dr. Colburn, is send a carbon copy to Commissioner Drew Altman of Human Services, to advise him that this Committee has recommended the release of A-3229. That way the Commissioner will know of the action we have taken, and if there are any discussions with respect to moving forward with this project, he should take them up with Dr. Colburn's Committee, and not ours.

We have an AJR-80, sponsored by Assemblyman Hendrickson, who is from somewhere down in Ocean County; a hometown boy here, Assemblyman Foy, Dr. Colburn, his colleague, Assemblyman Shinn--

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was that number again?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Assembly Joint Resolution 80 -- AJR-80. It memorializes the public service of the late Brigadier General William C. Doyle, by designating the chapel at the State veterans' cemetery at Arnytown the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Chapel. Dave, would you like to say anything on that?

MR. RIVERA: We concur.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay, I just wanted to make sure. Doctor, I would hope, since you are a co-sponsor of this bill, that you will make sure the message gets out that we have moved this bill out of Committee. I would like to make the recommendation to release this bill.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: I move we second it.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: All in favor? (unanimous aye)

We have Assembly Bill 3281 -- Russell and Ed -- sponsored by Assemblymen Azzolina and Rafferty. This particular bill adds the Fleet Reserve Association and the Ladies' Auxiliary to the list of groups whose members are entitled to a leave of absence with pay to attend any State or national convention of such organization, if the member is employed by the State or by a local entity. I must say that the Fleet Reserve Association and its Auxiliary are the only veterans' groups not recognized. Russ, you have lobbied for one year for this particular legislation. It was just a matter of putting it together. I am sure you will be pleased to see that you people are not being treated as second-class citizens, as you once mentioned; that the State is recognizing your portion in the State, as far as your contribution to the veterans' community.

I would be very, very pleased at this time to recommend release of Assembly Bill 3281.

MR. LO BUE: May I ask a question, please?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: One second, please. Dolores Cooper is moving it. Do we have a second?

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Seconded.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: All in favor? (unanimous aye)

Yes, Sam.

MR. LO BUE: I have a question. When you say State and Federal -- I mean, national -- does that mean they take both, because the Federal government does not allow me to take a State and a national--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: State or -- or.

MR. LO BUE: Oh, okay. You're going to get Fort Dix and McGuire mad at you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That's okay. They can't draft me, I'm too old.

MR. LO BUE: They'll go after your son.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: He's too young. (laughter)

MR. LO BUE: He'll grow.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yeah, but by that time I'll be out of here.

MR. LO BUE: They can wait.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: He'll be in Vineland, resting.
(laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Right, I'll be in Vineland.

MR. LO BUE: Oh, that sounds good.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: We have Assembly Bill 3338, sponsored by Assemblyman Rocco -- Dr. Rocco -- distinguished speaker pro tem of the General Assembly, and his colleague, Tom Shusted. The purpose of this bill is to provide disabled veterans with identifying placards for their motor vehicles, which are similar to the cards presently issued to handicapped persons for their motor vehicles. They would, of course, be placed on the dashboard, and it is up to the law enforcement people to determine whether or not these cards are being misused.

The bill provides that the motor vehicle cardholders use the special parking places established for use by handicapped persons in municipalities whenever possible, so that the parking spot and the card are together. There is no fiscal note, obviously, on this. I would move release.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: They pay \$4 for it.

MR. LO BUE: Yeah, they pay \$4. If they destroy it, do they have to pay another \$4?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: That all depends on what our budget looks like. I don't know; I really don't know.

MR. LO BUE: The reason I say that is because someone could have his stolen.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. The next bill I would like to bring before the Committee is Assembly Concurrent Resolution--

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Did you want to vote on that?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: I thought we did. I had asked, and she had seconded it. Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: I don't remember voting on it.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay, just say yes. Did you say yes, Doctor?

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Finally, I did.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. I recommend the release of the bill. Do we have a second?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: Seconded.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Doctor, your vote is no good with a second.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: You're getting me all tied up with red tape.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: All in favor? (unanimous aye)

Assembly Concurrent Resolution 64, sponsored by Assemblyman Hendrickson, Dr. Villane, John Bennett, Assemblywoman Muhler, Speaker Hardwick, and distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Education in the Assembly, Joe Palaia. This particular bill memorializes the Congress of the U.S. to enact House H.R. 1918, providing for the payment of a service pension to veterans of World War I who have annual incomes of less than \$10,000, and to certain surviving spouses and dependent children of veterans of World War I.

This particular bill is before the House and, as a matter of practice, this Committee isn't going to get into any debate or dialogue on House Resolutions. If any member of our house -- any of our 80 members -- feels we should go on record as supporting any particular House Resolution, this particular Committee generally supports it. I just move that we release ACR-64.

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: Seconded.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: All in favor? (unanimous aye)
Doctor, how about that one you're looking at?

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: I passed it over to Dolores so she could read it, but it is okay with me.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Assemblyman Pellecchia's bill 1915 concerning retirement privileges of veterans. Now that Assemblywoman Cooper and Assemblyman Colburn have reviewed the bill, I would move that it be recommended for release.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Is that A-1915?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Yes, A-1915. We will give you copies. Are you from the press?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Oh, okay, then we won't give you copies. I would move that Assemblyman Pellecchia's A-1915 be released from this Committee. Do I have a second?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: Seconded.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Assemblyman Paterniti seconded it. All in favor? (unanimous aye) Okay.

Are there any other bills which any of our Committee members would like us to consider at this time? Not to consider now, but any you would like to bring to the Committee's attention, so we can consider them at our next meeting. (no response)

Okay, so we will close those up. Yes, ma'am?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: May I ask Pat a question?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Pat, I am not aware-- Do you have any direct line of communication to veterans' organizations, other than the basic information pamphlets we get?

MR. PASCULLI: We have a veterans' newsletter we send out to veterans' organizations. Do you know of anything else, Dave? (indiscernible response; both gentlemen speaking from the audience)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: The reason I ask is -- of course, I look for this -- in our local press there was a very

beautiful editorial on Veterans' Day. After some of the issues which have come up in the past, and some today, I feel it is never too late to have an editorial printed for State consumption. I would like to turn it over to you, unless anyone wants me to read it to them. It is a very unusual one. Shall I read it?

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: This is apropos of some of the controversial issues we have experienced: "This morning, at 11 a.m., on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, brief services will be held across the nation to honor our veterans. From the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington to Landis Park in Vineland, a few will mark the day as tribute to those who fought our armed conflicts.

"For most of us, however, today is a holiday -- no more, no less. Most of us will stay away from those brief ceremonies, but regardless of how the day is spent, we should take but a moment to think about the 39 million people who defended our nation. Nearly half of that total -- about 16 million -- fought in World War II alone. Those veterans, along with their colleagues from the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, are the ones who keep these Veterans' Day services alive, and they need some help.

"We can't callously ignore their contributions, nor can we ignore their needs now. Across the nation, there are about five million veterans, aged 65 and older, and that figure will grow by about two million over the next four years. The memories of their days in combat may be fading as the years pile up, but we can't let them think that the significance of what they did is of any less importance today."

I would like to turn that over to you for publication. I think it was very unusual.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Dolores.

I think we are going to conclude now. I have a series of bills that this Committee has recommended for passage, and also a listing of the bills the house has already addressed and passed over to the Senate committees. But, you are pretty much aware of those, because I'm sure many of you have attended our past meetings. So, what I would like to do in conclusion, is ask our members to say a few words again about the Committee or about anything else. Did you want to say something, Mr. Werner?

MR. WERNER: You're talking about the observance of Armistice Day -- Veterans' Day, whatever. Last evening, I had the privilege, along with Secretary String, to be invited to the Glassboro Kiwanis Club. They put on a very impressive ceremony about December 7. This is just for the information of the people concerned. Most people around here are veterans, or are involved with veterans' affairs. We'll see how much activity there is in the news media about December 7. You will probably see little or nothing. In fact, it was one of the most important dates in the history of the United States -- December 7. In fact, I looked in an encyclopedia to see what it had to say about December 7. I already knew what the school books had to say about it -- about two paragraphs, and that's all, for World War II.

But, I looked in an encyclopedia before I went to this affair last evening, because I was asked to speak. I found a write-up in the encyclopedia of four paragraphs. Guess who it was written by? Two Japanese. It wasn't even written by an American. The gist of the whole write-up they had was, the war ended after four years, when the United States dropped a horrible bomb on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. I wonder what those guys in Pearl Harbor thought, when the Japanese dropped those horrible bombs on them?

You won't hear anything to speak of, or you won't see much in the newspapers about December 7. On December 7, we lost more sailors and marines than all the casualties in

New Jersey State Library

New Jersey State Library

Vietnam -- all of them combined -- 56,000 sailors and marines were killed in World War II, versus about 53,000 casualties in the 12 years of Vietnam. But you never hear about World War II, because we won that one. All you hear about are the losers from there out. But that is the politics of the news media.

MR. STRING: How bad we did with Nagasaki and Hiroshima was four pages this year in the newspapers, and about honoring the Japanese for their deaths. But we get one little paragraph, about half a mention.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you very much. Doctor?

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: I was in the car outside a home. My father was making a house call on December 7 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. I had the radio on when he came out from that house call, and I could hardly believe what had happened. I think all of us who were around at that time remember what happened that day. It has troubled me a good deal that so much has been made of our use of the atomic weapons, because I don't think we had any choice at that time. If we had not used them, there probably would have been millions of people killed in the invasion of Japan, because we would have had to invade Japan.

MR. LO BUE: On both sides.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: Yeah, on both sides. They would have been fighting from little foxholes, and we would have had to kill them one at a time to take those islands. So, I don't really feel any sense of guilt about that myself. I think it is wrong the way it has been played up in the press. I am sort of glad you brought it up, because frankly I didn't know what else to say after all this thing tonight. You kind of struck a note with me this time.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Doctor.

ASSEMBLYMAN COLBURN: I am the veteran who was never shot at, by the way. I was in the service, but nobody ever shot at me. I was on a ship, and we were just in a little

patrol action. I remember that our ship would fire at the shore, and we were such a little ship, that the shells would land in the water. They never got to the land. (laughter) That is my war story.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Dolores?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Well, speaking of December 7, I was at Pearl Harbor in 1976; I spent an afternoon there. I saw all of the remains and the memorials. It had an emotional effect on all of our lives. However, veterans' organizations choose to memorialize those who mean the most to them, and World War II was the end, rather than Pearl Harbor being the beginning.

I must say I find serving on this Committee a very emotional experience, one which generates a variety of emotions, because it is not only the active veteran who got shot at, but now I am encountering the widows and the children and the genetics of those families whose children are suffering from the effects of war. We have a long way to go to help people who have been by-passed in the melee of trying to be a good public servant.

I know the results of this Committee will have an impact upon future legislators. We are probably laying the groundwork for the Assemblypeople who will follow us in the future.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: Decades ahead.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Nicely done, Dolores. Tom?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: No, thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Nothing at all?

ASSEMBLYMAN PATERNITI: No.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Okay. I would like to ask any of you who would like to be added to our mailing list, who have not already submitted your names and addresses to our staff, to do so after the meeting -- to Frank Parisi. He will make sure that you receive the proper notification of our meetings.

I would also hope that you will stay in touch with your veterans. It was my understanding that the commanders -- the State commanders -- of the veterans' groups would be notified, as well as many other people who have signed up. Maybe we can pass the word about our Select Committee hearings. Apparently someone fell through with respect to this particular meeting, and I am very, very disappointed.

I want to thank all of you very much for taking the time to come out tonight to share your evening with us. Yes?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN COOPER: I do have something very nice to say. I forgot to tell you all. Speaking of planning ahead, I am very proud to say that on February 1 -- which is a Sunday -- the Jewish War Veterans of Atlantic County are kicking off Brotherhood Month by inviting all the veterans' groups to Atlantic County to a brunch at Temple Beth El in Margate. I am very proud to say that General Gerard will be our guest speaker. He has already consented to come down. I don't know the topic of his address, but for all of you who would like to come down to Atlantic City, just cross over the bridge. It is 500 North Jerome Avenue, Temple Beth El, at 11 o'clock in the morning, for the first kickoff of Brotherhood Month. The veterans have done it again.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: Thank you, Dolores. Anything else?

MR. PASCULLI: Through the Chair, I would like to invite the general public to call the Division of Veterans' Programs for the State of New Jersey if you have any complaints and, on the other side, if you have any compliments. Please direct your calls to us, the management of the Division, or the management of the facility, because in the long run the facility will give you the answer directly, and perhaps you will not bother the very busy, busy group of legislators, who are doing a heck of a lot more for us, the veteran population of the State. So, if you care, please contact us directly. We

will be more than glad to give you an answer. If we do not know something, we will get you the answer somewhere.

Thank you.

MR. LO BUE: Mr. Chairman, I concur with him, because I, as a past State commander and a past Legislative Officer, have given his office a lot of business--

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: A lot of business for the business. (laughter)

MR. LO BUE: I was smacked in the mouth by an unruly guard. He busted my mouth. That is why I went to Wilmington, Delaware for a solid year to get my mouth fixed, and then I came back.

ASSEMBLYMAN GENOVA: It would not have been that much of an imposition if we had the facility in Vineland.

This hearing is adjourned.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

