

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. Interior Secretary Meets With Local Veterans

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ST. CROIX -- Virgin Islands veterans had the opportunity to meet with newly confirmed U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Thursday. Mr. Zinke, a retired Navy Seal and former Montana Congressman, said he makes a point to reach out to veterans on his travels around the United States. The Secretary garnered much national attention earlier this month [by riding a Park Service horse to work in Washington, D.C.](#)

During the meeting organized by the V.I. Office of Veterans Affairs Director Patrick Farrell, Mr. Zinke updated St. Croix veterans on plans to upgrade military equipment and expand services for retired and active duty personnel.

He pledged to work with Mr. Farrell to establish a Veterans park on St. John and to help develop the infrastructure of the territories. The Department of the Interior, through the Office of Insular Areas, is responsible for coordinating federal policy with the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The secretary said he understood there were some disparities in the treatment of U.S. citizens living in the Insular Areas, but that he was committed to fairness.

“We have an obligation as Americans – and we are all Americans – to do what is right,” Mr. Zinke told the veterans. He will be in the territory through Saturday to participate in Centennial Transfer Day activities.