

SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING

(Executive Meeting of Select Personnel)

Cedar Shores Resort, Chamberlain, SD

March 31, 2003

5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

The Commission Meeting was called to order by Chairman Keith Goodhope at 5:00 PM, March 31, 2003. Chairman Goodhope began the meeting with a prayer and then led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Goodhope said that he desired a meeting to ensure that the Commission is pro-active rather than reactive with matters that are tied to unit deployments and the current conflict in Iraq. Chairman Goodhope also asked for any suggestions that the service organizations might have in this critical area.

Director Foell spoke about the approximately 5,000 – 5,500 South Dakotans currently on active duty and said that the Commission when formulating plans of support should also be thinking of these young men and women in addition to the National Guard and Reserve troops.

Chairman Goodhope provided a letter with enclosures that he had written to the editor of the Argus Leader. (See attachment.) Chairman Goodhope said that he is extremely concerned with the way the press is sensationalizing their war coverage simply to sell newspapers. Chairman Goodhope is extremely concerned about the bias displayed by the Argus Leader.

A brief discussion was held about Veteran's Preference and a specific case in the Sioux Falls area was discussed.

Director Foell described the State of South Dakota Bonus Program and the requirements to reactivate the program for the current war in Iraq. Chairman Goodhope said that the wheels to reinstate the program should begin turning now. Chairman Goodhope said that he thinks the ceiling for this bonus period should be established at \$1,000.00. Director Foell also indicated that this bonus period should go back to the previous period (90/91 Gulf War) and pick up anyone that was missed.

Commissioner Loudner talked about the bonus and considering an exception to the residency requirement for certain service members that moved from South Dakota when they were minors. Commissioner Loudner indicated that if these service members moved back to South Dakota upon discharge they should be considered for the bonus.

Chairman Goodhope requested that a resolution be drawn up to reinstate the State of South Dakota bonus program. This resolution will include provisions to go back and pick up any applicants from the 90/91 Gulf War. Chairman Goodhope also requested that once the resolution is drawn up/completed that the Argus Leader be contacted to publicize this matter.

Director Foell spoke about changes to the South Dakota Organizational License Plate Program. Director Foell indicated that the current plates will be up for change in two years and now is the

time to begin planning. Director Foell recommended the possibility of having the various branches of service insignia displayed on the plates. Chairman Goodhope indicated that he was more in favor of one design for a Veterans' Plate rather than the various branches of service. Director Foell will speak with Deb Hilmer from DMV about the options available and report back at the May Veterans' Commission Meeting.

Chairman Goodhope spoke about the various troop support programs. Chairman Goodhope indicated that the support network that the National Guard has in place is very effective and working extremely well.

Mr. Ron Boyd, State Adjutant, American Legion, spoke about the support program the American Legion has in place. Mr. Rick Barg, State Adjutant, VFW gave information about VFW support programs and highlighted the Adopt-A-Unit Program.

Commissioner Loudner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Clarke to publish a resolution that encourages South Dakota residents to fly the United States Flag during the Iraqi War. Motion carried.

Chairman Goodhope spoke about the need to write a press release that discussed Gulf War Syndrome and the VA's inability to handle this problem. Chairman Goodhope is concerned that the VA is not doing enough to prepare for the influx/wave of new patients that are forthcoming from the current Iraq War.

Chairman Goodhope spoke about his endorsement of the letter writing program to service members. Chairman Goodhope encouraged everyone to participate in this valuable undertaking.

Commission took a break at 6:45 P.M. The Commission reconvened at 7:00 P.M.

Veterans Service Organizations:

Commissioner Clarke stated that he wants to see items discussed at this meeting presented at the various American Legion and VFW District Meetings.

Mr. Ron Boyd, State Adjutant, American Legion, displayed an example of a Blue Star Banner and discussed procurement procedure.

Mr. Rick Barg, State Adjutant, and Mr. Glen Walters, State Commander, VFW, spoke about projects underway by the VFW such as Adopt-A-Unit.

Commissioner Loudner spoke about the Veteran's Forum that was held at Gann Valley. Commissioner Loudner said there was a good turnout and went on to say that the veterans in attendance were very appreciative of the information that was made available. Commissioner Clarke was at the Gann Valley Forum and stated it was a top-notch presentation.

Chairman Goodhope stated that now is the time to examine resources within the South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs to ensure that adequate funding is available to serve the influx of veterans that is on the way.

Mr. David Wherry, Claims Office Supervisor, SDDVA, discussed projected personnel losses with the Commission. Mr. Wherry stated that worst case scenario is that the Claims Office could lose as many as five VSO's by March, 2004. Also discussed was the Bureau of Personnel replacement policy that prohibits advertising the positions until they are empty.

Chairman Goodhope stated that he would like a conference call with General Gorman to discuss what measures can be taken to ensure that the Claims Office is adequately staffed.

Commissioner Loudner stated that he felt it was appropriate for the entire Commission to meet with the Governor and discuss the items that were covered in this meeting.

Miscellaneous:

Chairman Goodhope said that he was pleased with the meeting and the items that had been discussed.

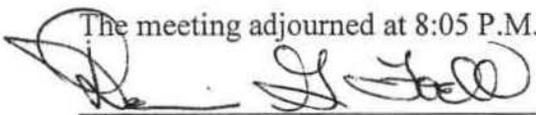
Commissioner Locken made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Loudner to draft a letter to Senator Daschle that discusses the Senator's negative remarks made immediately prior to the start of the Iraq War. This letter is to be signed by the Chairman of the Veterans Commission. Motion carried.

Chairman Goodhope indicated that he has submitted his resignation from the Veterans Commission effective December 31, 2003. Chairman Goodhope cited numerous outside responsibilities and job conflicts as the reason for the resignation.

Commissioner Loudner indicated that he wants to invite Dr. Petzel, Director VISN 23 to the next Veterans Commission meeting scheduled in May, 2003. Commissioner Loudner went on to state that Dr. Petzel does not know what is going on within the VISN. As an example Commissioner Loudner used the MOU that was discussed in Pierre with Dr. Petzel. Dr. Petzel didn't know about the MOU. The MOU was signed on 2/25/03 and promulgated to the field. Commissioner Loudner went on to say that he would like to have Dr. Petzel available at a Commission meeting for longer than just a few minutes.

Director stated that the Korean War Dedication scheduled for the State Fair this year has been postponed for one year. Director Foell cited budget constraints and the Iraq War (Unit activations). Director Foell went on to say that the Korean War Dedication may be conducted in Pierre.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

 , 4-01-03
Director, SD Division of Veterans Affairs / Date


Secretary

Attendees, SD Veterans Commission Meeting, March 31, 2003
Chamberlain, SD, Cedar Shores Resort

ATTENDEES

Gene A. Murphy
Don Loudner
Donald Clarke
Rick W. Barg
Glen Walters
Bill Locken
Kay Ducheneaux
David Parr
Ron Boyd
Dennis Foell
Keith Goodhope
Dave Wherry

ORGANIZATION

SD Veterans Commission, Sioux Falls
SD Veterans Commission, Mitchell
SD Veterans Commission, Wessington
VFW A/Q Department SD, Sioux Falls
VFW State Commander, Sioux Falls
SD Veterans Commission, Spearfish
SDVSOA, Secretary, Winner
SD Division of Veterans Affairs, Claims Office, Sioux Falls
SD American Legion, Aberdeen
SD Division of Veterans Affairs, Pierre
SD Veterans Commission, Winner
SD Division of Veterans Affairs, Claims Office, Sioux Falls