

**South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting  
North Central Chapter Home, PVA  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105  
May 22-23, 2003**

The Commission Meeting was called to order by Chairman Keith Goodhope at 12:50 PM, May 22, 2003. Chairman Goodhope led all gathered in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Announcements:**

Director Foell indicated that lunch would be provided by the PVA on Friday after the Commission Meeting was adjourned. Director Foell then introduced MG Gorman, Adjutant General for the State of SD, to the audience. Director Foell also introduced Mr. Dale Bertsch, Governor's Office to the audience.

At this point Chairman Goodhope requested that everyone in the audience introduce himself.

**Minutes:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Evenson to approve the minutes from the January 27-28, 2003 Commission Meeting and the March 31, 2003 Executive Meeting of select personnel. Motion carried.

Agenda items changes were discussed and Director Foell requested that Gene Eiring, Director of the SD Veterans Home, be inserted as item #8c on the agenda. Request approved.

MG Mike Gorman spoke about his commitment to the Commission and his intention to attend future Commission Meetings. MG Gorman introduced SCSM Birnbaum and LTC Pasqualucci, JAG and Mr. Randy Meyers from his staff. MG Gorman went on to give the Commission background information about his career with the SD National Guard. He spoke about his intent to work with federal and local entities on veteran issues.

MG Gorman spoke about working with the Governor on reinstating the Bonus Program for those veterans that have participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom.

He also talked about National Guard personnel that had deployed overseas and stateside in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom. He thanked the Commission for their support of the National Guard. Chairman Goodhope asked MG Gorman about the National Guard Engineer mission in Iraq. He replied that this particular SD National Guard unit was the first unit at Talil Air Base in Iraq. Chairman Goodhope went on to give complimentary remarks about MG Gorman's background.

Mr. Dale Bertsch, Special Projects Officer, Governor's Office spoke about commitment to veterans in the State of South Dakota by the Governor. The Governor has stated that there will be a bonus.

Mr. Bertsch spoke about the ceremony that was being planned to honor Korean War Veterans. This ceremony will take place either in June or September 2004 in Pierre and will be an outdoor

event. There will be a Registry of Korean War Veterans established and there will be a Korean War Commemorative Certificate issued to each Korean War Veteran. (See attachment.)

Mr. Ron Boyd, Department Adjutant American Legion, State of South Dakota asked about Korean era veterans and would a certificate recognize them? The current certificate only recognizes in-theater veterans. Mr. Bertsch responded that the current certificate is a first draft and that he is willing to work with the various organizations and consider any suggestions.

Mr. Bertsch spoke about the model he brought to the Commission Meeting. He described where the full-scale statue would be displayed in Pierre. Mr. Bertsch went on to speak about the changes that will be made to the statue, e.g. helmet, rifle, and coat.

Mr. Bertsch went on to say he plans to attend the Commission Meetings in the future.

Commission Murphy spoke about the creation of videotape for the State Fair.

Ron Boyd stated that he thought the ceremony at the State Fair was to be the same as the WWII Ceremony that had been done at the State Fair. Mr. Bertsch responded that he was not sure of this.

Many comments and suggestions now followed from the audience about just what should be done at the State Fair and Pierre to honor Korean War Veterans.

Chairman Goodhope said that it might be a good idea to seek statements from the Korean populace.

Commissioner Locken stated that he appreciated what Mr. Bertsch is trying to do. Commissioner Locken spoke about the absolute need to have two separate certificates that recognize In-Theater and Korean War Era Veterans.

Commissioner Loudner wanted to know if Mr. Bertsch had heard anything about the Sioux Code Talkers legislation? Mr. Bertsch responded that he had no information on this subject.

Commissioner Murphy spoke about how the VFW is going to honor Korean War Veterans with two separate certificates.

Mr. Joe Dalpiaz, Director/COO, Black Hills Health Care System, gave a detailed briefing on Staffing/FTE, Veteran Employment, Budget, Program Initiatives, Clinic Wait Times, Workload, Challenges and Initiatives. (See attachment.)

Commissioner Locken had several questions on the budget.

Commissioner Murphy requested a report at the next Commission Meeting on equipment that needs to be purchased for the Home.

Commissioner Murphy wanted to know if BHHCS is ready to service veterans returning from the war in Iraq? Mr. Dalpiaz stated that he does not, at present, have a firm grasp on what the numbers will be.

Commissioner Loudner questioned the status of returning Iraqi war veterans and how long would they be covered? Mr. Dalpiaz responded that they are covered for 2 years for any active duty problems.

Commissioner Locken had several questions about the capacity of the CBOC in Pierre. Commissioner Locken also questioned waiting list times for the BHHCS.

Commissioner Clarke had questions about the CBOC's in Pierre and Winner.

Ms. Rose Hayslett Acting Director, VAMROC Sioux Falls, gave a detailed briefing on her operation. (See attachment.)

Commissioners Evenson and Locken had numerous questions about the waiting times for initial appointments at VAMC Sioux Falls.

Commissioner Loudner said that he believes Ms. Hayslett is lying in her report to the Commission. He stated veterans are not being called about available appointments. Ms. Hayslett responded and said that veterans are called prior to making the initial appointment.

Director Foell asked if veterans are contacted about making appointments. Answer-Yes. Director Foell asked if a veteran cannot keep an initial appointment, will that appointment be rescheduled when the veteran calls in to cancel? Answer-Yes.

Commissioners Locken and Murphy had questions about the Medical Care Collection Fund (MCCF).

Commissioner Murphy wondered if information about the pharmacy co-pay overpayments had been made available yet.

Commissioner Locken spoke about Long Term Care LTC and 70% Service Connected veterans.

Commissioner Murphy requested a list of VA approved nursing homes for East and West River.

Commissioner Locken spoke about the failure of the Pension Maintenance Center (PMC) St Paul to operate in a timely and efficient manner.

Commissioner Loudner wondered why nothing was mentioned about the MOU and why didn't Joe Dalpiaz and Rose Hayslett know about the MOU?

Chairman Goodhope asked what the construction budget was for VISN-23? Answer-\$11, 000,000.00.

Commissioner Clarke asked Ms. Hayslett how she likes her present position. Ms. Hayslett responded that VAMC Sioux Falls is a good hospital. Commissioner Clark then went on to explain that the Veterans Commission is frustrated because of the constant turnover of Director for VAMROC Sioux Falls.

Ms Amy Bilka, Representative from Senator Johnson's Office spoke about Veterans Healthcare Funding Act and Combat-Related Special Compensation.

Commissioner Murphy requested that Amy pass on the Commission's thanks to Senator Johnson for all of his hard work on behalf of veterans.

Commissioner Loudner had questions about the Sioux Code Talkers Bill. What is going on and why hasn't Senator Johnson signed the bill?

Mr Mark Gerhard, Representative from Senator Daschle's Office spoke about post Iraq funding for VA Healthcare, future VA Healthcare funding and National Guard Healthcare legislation.

Mr Dave Volk, Representative-Congressman Janklow's Office said he was at the Commission Meeting to listen and address any concerns by the Commission. Mr Volk told Commissioner Loudner that he would find out the status of the Sioux Code Talker's Bill.

Chairman Goodhope stated that he believed a study should be conducted on VHA and competition with private sector healthcare.

Commissioner Locken indicated that the Pension Maintenance Center (PMC) St Paul was a failure. Service from the PMC is unsatisfactory. Commissioner Locken requested that Congressman Janklow look into this matter.

Commissioner Murphy spoke about an independent budget/mandatory funding for VHA.

Commissioner Loudner thanked Mr Volk for allowing him to attend Tribal Council Meetings as Congressman Janklow's representative.

Mr Jon Schneider, VA Veteran's Liaison Office, Des Moines, IA, spoke about the turnover of Directors at the VAMC Sioux Falls. Mr Schneider spoke about Secretary Principi and his dedication to veterans and veteran's issues.

Commissioner Loudner spoke about his travels with Secretary Principi and confirmed what Mr Schneider had said about the Secretary's commitment to veterans.

Commissioner Locken described for Mr Schneider the problems with the Pension Maintenance Center (PMC) St Paul. Commissioner Locken stated that something needs to be done and quickly.

Commissioner Murphy spoke and emphasized the fact that a permanent Director is needed at the VAMC in Sioux Falls.

The Commission Meeting adjourned for the day at 5:50 PM, to reconvene at 8:00 AM on Friday, 23 May 2003.

Chairman Goodhope reconvened the meeting at 8:00 AM on May 23, 2003 and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr Robert Petzel, Director VISN-23 gave a detailed briefing on the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Program. (See attachment.)

Dr Petzel also spoke about Network integration and the hiring of network staff/elimination of duplicate positions. Dr Petzel also spoke about the purchasing of new medical equipment (CT Scanners).

Dr Petzel spoke about the services at Flandreau and indicated that those services would continue. He spoke about Fargo providing healthcare for Sisseton and the opening of a CBOC in Watertown.

Dr Petzel described the MOU with the Indian Health Service. (See attachment.)

Dr Petzel spoke about the number of veterans working in VISN-23. (See attachment.)

Dr Petzel indicated that the Director/COO position for VAMC Sioux Falls would be announced/open today and that it will probably take at least 6 months to fill this position.

Commissioner Murphy had numerous questions about the budget shortfall with the VISN and how will this be resolved?

Commissioner Murphy, Dr Petzel and Rose Hayslett discussed the waiting list for veterans at the VAMC Sioux Falls. Dr Petzel guaranteed that there would be no waiting list by October 1, 2003.

Commissioner Locken spoke about MCCF. Commissioner Locken went on to speak about the budget and distribution of money. Commissioner Locken indicated that he does not understand the procedures used by the VA for the allocation of resources.

Chairman Goodhope stated that he is concerned with the accuracy of the budget numbers that are being forwarded to the Commission.

Commissioner Locken questioned the status of the PSL's.

Chairman Goodhope asked about the renting of hospital beds and also questioned the cost of contracting for care in local hospitals.

Director Foell had questions about care for Iraqi War Veterans. Dr Petzel indicated that a plan has not been created.

Commissioner Clarke had questions on the hiring of the Director for the VAMROC Sioux Falls and just what the responsibilities for that Director will be.

Commissioner Loudner thanked Mr Schneider for attending the Commission Meeting and hoped that he would pass on the Commission's concerns to Secretary Principi.

Chairman Goodhope spoke about the March 31, 2003 Commission Meeting at Chamberlain for select personnel. He discussed the agenda at the meeting and indicated that he was very pleased with the discussions that were held.

Director Foell spoke about the new Public Affairs Officer (PAO) FTE position that is to be created within the SDDVA and located in Pierre. Director Foell also spoke about the number of FTE positions within the SDDVA.

MG Gorman spoke about beginning the procedures for reestablishing the bonus program within the State of South Dakota.

Chairman Goodhope talked about the letters of support that were sent out to the deployed National Guard units.

Mr Gene Eiring, Superintendent SD Veterans' Home, gave a detailed report on quarterly activities and significant events at the Home. (See attachment.)

Commissioner Locken spoke about overtime and the fact that the Superintendent of the Home should not have a problem approving overtime for personnel that work at the Home.

Chairman Goodhope had questions about the census and what is the target number. Answer-148.

Chairman Goodhope questioned how long does it take to process an application for admission. Answer-10 days to unknown. There are many factors that enter into this process, one of the major factors is when does the veteran/applicant want to move.

Mr Eiring gave a briefing on the Memorial Day Ceremony that will be conducted at the Home.

Commissioner Locken had questions about safety and was it required and possible to evacuate the Home in the allocated 3 minutes. Answer-Yes.

Commissioner Murphy had questions about the current status of the food quality. Answer-Good but undergoing continuous monitoring to make required adjustments.

Chairman Goodhope asked Mr Eiring about what had been planned for the residents to recognize the Korean War 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary? Answer-Had planned on taking residents to State Fair.

Commissioner Loudner had questions about the funding for CWT. Answer-Funded from budget contractual services. Commissioner Loudner also indicated that he would like to see some type of action to establish a Veterans Home on the East Side of South Dakota.

Commissioner Loudner stated that he thought it would be a good idea to position a Governor's Home at the State Home that could be used by visiting family members and friends. Answer-A house on campus has been made available.

Commissioner Evenson questioned if the traveling screening committee was still being used? Answer-Yes.

Dennis Foell, Director SDDVA, gave a report on budget, emergency loan fund and education programs. (See attachment.)

Chairman Goodhope had questions about the Joe Foss Memorial and what is going to be done by the State? Answer-Not really sure at this point, but there will probably be something done in Sioux Falls.

Dave Wherry, Supervisor Claims Officer SDDVA, gave a report on Claims Office personnel status, Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC), benefits paid and service officer training. (See attachment.) Mr Wherry also spoke about the Pension Maintenance Center (PMC) St Paul and the problems that were being encountered by the Claims Office and the C/TVSO's.

Commissioner Murphy made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Evenson to draft a letter to the Director, PMC St Paul to express the Commission's concern about the problems encountered since the PMC has been on line.

Lionel Torgrude, CVSO Brookings County, spoke for the SD Association of C/TVSO's. Mr Torgrude said that he thought it should be a priority to document the history of veterans, especially WWI and WWII veterans. Mr Torgrude also spoke about the SD Association C/TVSO's hosting the national convention for NACVSO in 2004.

Jerry Lolley, CVSO Meade County, spoke about the Avenue of Flags at the Black Hills National Cemetery. Commissioner Evenson spoke about a veteran that had been told by a CVSO that there was no point in enrolling in the VA healthcare system. The Commission requested that the Division write a letter to the field directing C/TVSO's to continue enrolling veterans into VHA.

MG Gorman spoke about the importance of Guard personnel working with their local C/TVSO.

Mr. Glen Walters, VFW Department Commander, State of South Dakota gave a report on Operation Uplink and also spoke about the upcoming State VFW Convention. Cdr Walters spoke about honoring of Korean War veterans at the State Convention. Commander also stated that VFW membership for the state was at 100%.

Walt Lindemann, American Legion Department Commander, State of South Dakota talked about the American Legion sponsoring the Memorial Day Program at the Black Hills National Cemetery, the Blue Star Banner Program and the Financial Aid Program.

Commissioner Loudner had questions for Commander Lindemann about the status of American Legion membership in South Dakota.

Mr Gene Murphy represented the DAV and requested the Commission send a letter of appreciation to Mark Nelson, Owner Maximum Promotions, Sioux Falls thanking him for his company's support of veterans.

Commissioner Murphy also gave a detailed briefing to the Commission on the DAV Convention that had recently been held in Sioux Falls.

Commissioner Murphy spoke about the Veterans Stand Down, Membership, Hospital Transportation Network, Mobile Service Unit, Flag Day and the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Joe Foss Day and Honor Our Trooper Day.

Jim Foster, DAV spoke about the upcoming Veterans Stand Down and made everyone aware of the Veterans Park located in Sioux Falls by West Avenue.

Joel Niemeyer, Director PVA talked the bowling tournament for paralyzed veterans that had recently been held.

Chairman Goodhope thanked Mr Niemeyer for hosting this meeting of the Veterans Commission.

Future dates and locations of Commission Meetings for 2003: July 15-16, 2003 Hot Springs  
October 1-2, 2003 Fort Meade

Commissioner Locken talked about access at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs SD website to vote on a Cold War Medal. This subject will be discussed at the July Commission Meeting.

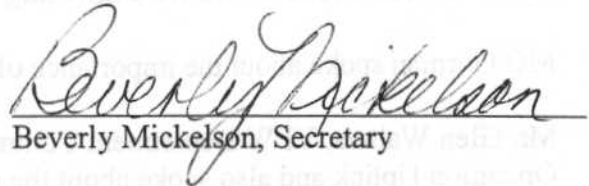
The Commission Meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM.



Dennis G. Foell, Director, SD DVA

6-10-03

Date



Beverly Mickelson, Secretary



Attendees: South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting  
May 22-23, North Central Chapter, PVA  
Sioux Falls, SD

Dennis Foell	Director, SDDVA
Dave Wherry	Supervisor Claims Office, SDDVA
Keith Goodhope	Veterans Commission, Chairman
Paul Evenson	Veterans Commission
Donald Clarke	Veterans Commission
William J Locken	Veterans Commission
Don Loudner	Veterans Commission
Gene Murphy	Veterans Commission
Jim Oster	DAV
Jerry Lolley	CVSO, Meade County
Wayne Vetter	CVSO, Faulk County, American Legion
Larry Person	Veteran Field Supervisor, SDDVA
Randall Meyers	SDARNG
Glen V Walters	VFW, State Commander
Dave Morgan	SD Veterans Council, State Fair Veterans Building
Dale Bertsch	Governor's Office
David Parr	SDDVA, Claims Office
Lionel Torgrude	CVSO, Brookings County
Dick Steams	VFW
Robert Pasqualucci	SDNG
Mike Birnbaum	SDARNG
Darrell Jepson	PVA
Ryan Green	PVA
Joel Niemeyer	PVA
Joe Dalpiaz	Director/COO Black Hills Health Care System
Jim Melgaard	CVSO, Sully, Stanley, Hughes Counties
Gene P Eiring	Superintendent, SD Veterans Home
Walt Lindemann	American Legion, Department Commander
Ron Boyd	Department Adjutant, American Legion
Rose Hayslett	VAMROC Sioux Falls Acting Director
Dave Volk	Congressman Janklow, State Director
Phil Ringstrom	VET CENTER, Sioux Falls
MG Mike Gorman	Secretary, Military & Veterans Affairs
Dr Robert Petzel	Director, VISN 23
Jon Schneider	Veteran Liaison to Secretary Principi
Amy Bilka	Representative of Senator Johnson's Office
Mark Gerhard	Representative of Senator Daschle's Office