

- **Department Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Winter Conference Committee Meeting**
- **Minutes      Friday February 15, 2008**
- The VA&R committee was called to order by Chairman Robert Doan at 1:00 p.m in conference room H of the Holiday Inn South/Convention Center Lansing Michigan.

After a moment of silence for our MIA and POW's, prayer and Pledge of Allegiance the meeting proceeded. Roll call of VA& R committee persons was taken by secretary Dick Chatman.

Chairman Doan shared a letter with those present from Department Commander Williams asking him to accept chairmanship of the VA& R committee, in which he did.

Roll call was taken.

Present were:

- Committee Chairman                      Robert Doan
- Committee Secretary                      Dick Chatman
- Committee Member                      Donald Chmielewski
- Committee Member                      Arthur Thompson
- Committee Member                      Wade Commish
- DVSO Emeritus                      Richard Morrison

No one from the VAVS/VHVS Subcommittee was present due to the fact that their meeting was scheduled at the same time as the VA&R committee. The committee agreed to have Chairman Doan talk to the Department Adjutant about not scheduling the meetings of the two committees at the same time. Ideally the subcommittee should meet prior to the VA&R committee so that they can not only be present at the VA&R committee but report on what took place at their meeting.

Representatives from 9 Districts were present along with 23 guests.

Minutes from VA&R meeting held September 14, 2007 read. Motion to accept the minutes made by Chmielewski, seconded by Thompson, motion carried.

Chairman Doan introduced Department VA&R Director John Nelson who introduced the DVSO's in attendance: Asst. Dept. Director Ray Moore, Pat Kline and Jim Topps. Director Nelson offered a special thank you for the service of our departed chairman Mr. Ken

Clawson and extended a hardy welcome to our current chairman, Mr. Bob Doane and our newest member Wade Comish. He then presented the Director's Report to those present.

Director Nelson stated that since our last gathering we have had two of our service officer staff retire from full time service. Simmons and Woodley. The Finance committee has approved the part time status of Woodley as well as authorized the hiring of 2 replacements. That process of hiring the 2 new service officers is presently taking place and hopefully they will be in place by the time of the annual training that takes place in Washington D.C at the end of March. Director Nelson concluded his report by thanking the efforts of the entire VA & R staff, the terrific Department staff, our dedicated committee member of the VA & R/VAVs Committee.

Chairman Doan turned over the floor to past National Department Commander Tom Cadmus who in turn introduced National Vice Commander Dave Korth. The National Vice Commander then addressed the committee and those in attendance.

Chairman Doan introduced two guest speakers Richard V. Briggs Jr. director of Brain Injury Association of Michigan and Sgt. Wentworth of the U.S. Army. Both guest gave a compelling and interesting presentation of the hardships suffered by our troops relating to injuries they suffer due to brain damage. After their presentation it was moved by Thompson that we have the gentlemen do a more detailed presentation as our guests at our committee meeting scheduled during the state convention in Grand Rapids. Motion was seconded by Chatman, motion carried. Chairman Doan will present this request to department along with an additional request to have facilities to accommodate a slide presentation and adequate space.

VAVS/VHVS Subcommittee chairman Ronald Pearson then joined the meeting and was introduced by Chairman Doan. Pearson then reported on what had occurred at his committee meeting and who was in attendance. He also requested that we include in the minutes that the two committee's meeting be held at different times so as to accommodate his committee being able to attend the VA&R meeting and reporting on his committee.

Unfinished Business:

John Nelson reported that the laptop computer issue for his service officers Mr. Fetish and Mr. Ratche was being handled and will be taken care of. Chairman Doan read correspondences from Department Adjutant concerning The American Legion support of the Missing in America Project.

New Business:

Chatman presented to the committee the University of Detroit Mercy Law school proposal to team with The American Legion in providing free legal service for veterans regarding assistance in filing disability claims. VA& R Director Nelson expressed some reservations about getting involved with lawyers in the VA appeal process, he has a meeting scheduled with Peggy Costello of U of D and will report back as to his recommendations on entering into such a partnership.

Joe Callahan reported that City of Detroit has opened up a domiciliary facility for veterans and they have just had their first graduating class. He also informed Director Nelson that the Dingell VA facility had expressed concern that there is no DVSO available 2 days out of the week. Director Nelson stated that this issue will be taken care of when the 2 new service officer replacements are named.

Committee member Thompson asked Director Nelson if the mileage issue for DVSO's has been resolved, the answer was yes.

Good of the order:

Next meeting will be doing the State convention in Grand Rapids. Hopefully with a presentation by Mr. Briggs of the Brain Injury Association of Michigan.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Chmielewski, seconded by Comish, motion carried.

Chairman Doan thanked everyone for their attendance, and declared the meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dick Chatman

Secretary.