

## DEPARTMENT RECONNECT COMMITTEE MEETING

June 23, 2011

The meeting of the Department Reconnect Committee was called to order by Gary Tanner, Chairman at the Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on June 23, 2011 at 1:10 pm. The following people were present:

**MEMBERS:** Gary Tanner, Chairman, James Maki, Kenneth Pierce, Sr., Wilson Coomer, Jack Helminski - SAL Rep.

**GUESTS:** Mike Globke, Lyle Shanks, Ralph Phillip, Ray McWilliams

Chairman Tanner led the meeting in the Pledge, opening prayer and a moment of silence for Jim Schutze and Charlie Head.

### **Minutes:**

It was moved by Jack Helminski and supported by Kenneth Pierce Sr. that the minutes of the 2011 Winter Meeting of the Department Reconnect Committee be approved. Motion carried.

### **New Business:**

Reconnect webpage is now up and working on the Department website. The Reconnect Program link is listed under the veteran's services link on the homepage. The Reconnect page contains links to the Elmobility room page as well as other Reconnect resources.

The Reconnect committee and the Michigan Psychological Association Foundation are planning to host a caregiver seminar in September 2011 as part of the Michigan Wounded Warrior Retreat Program.

Chairman Tanner discussed the recent National Guard workshops attended by the Reconnect Committee. Chairman Tanner thanked the committee for their hard work making these a success. Over 200 service members were seen at each workshop.

Elmobility recently attended the 416<sup>th</sup> GNG BN's and the 983<sup>rd</sup> GNG BN's combined family day/change of command ceremony through a military one source referral. Two new requests have come in from Yellow Ribbon workshops and they are scheduled for: July 9<sup>th</sup> 2011 in Battle Creek and August 6<sup>th</sup> 2011 in Big Rapids.

Jack Helminski requested table top display and table skirt for the Reconnect table during yellow Ribbon workshops and other committee functions.

Chairman Tanner was flown to San Antonio, TX by Army Onesource to attend their first ever community partners forum to help develop new initiatives designed to improve and enhance working support relationship models that can be replicated across the country in response to the joining forces initiative launched by Michele Obama and Jiu Bidon.

Chairman Tanner reported that temp. financial assistance requests were increasing with 5 new requests in the past 2 months. Most dealing with housing costs and eviction prevention.

Jack Helminski reported on 5/3 Banks credit score improvement assistance for service members and veterans.

Chairman Tanner discussed the acquisition of giveaway items for yellow ribbon events. These items would provide more contact with service members and family members attending and would allow added American Legion Branding in service members' homes.

Ray McWilliams discussed his efforts to work the Reconnect program as his district's reconnect chairman. Mr. McWilliams stated that he had made contact with the 125<sup>th</sup> Inf. Unit and has a face to face meeting scheduled for June 29<sup>th</sup> 2011 to discuss the TS2 brochure.

Chairman Tanner discussed the ACO Wounded Warrior Retreat program collection drive for 2011. ACO would like more veteran participation during this year's event. See Adjutant Lafferty's Keeping in Touch for all for the information on their requests.

Chairman Tanner spoke about a request from National regarding H2H and Reconnect success stories. Chairman Tanner will prepare and send in information about the Michigan Reconnect program.

Chairman Tanner passed out Elmobility shirts and pins to the Dept. Reconnect Committee members for use during future events.

Chairman Tanner discussed the need for extra reconnect representation in the northern half of the Lower Peninsula and eastern Upper Peninsula to reduce driving and travel related expenses. This would expand the Department Reconnect committee to 6 members and 1 chairman.

Chairman Tanner expressed his deepest sympathy to Jim Schutze's family to plans to draft a resolution to be heard at the Department of Michigan's 2011 Fall Conference that would establish an Annual Department Reconnect Award named after Jim Schutze. This award would be a lasting and fitting tribute to Jim Schutze and his dedication to serving Michigan's service members, veterans and their families. It would be awarded annually at the Department Convention.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before this committee, it was moved by Wilson Coomer and supported by Kenneth Pierce Sr. that the meeting be adjourned at 2:20 pm. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Gary Tanner, Department Reconnect Committee Chairman