

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Saturday September 24, 2016

The Department of Illinois Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission met at Legion headquarters in Bloomington, Illinois on September 24, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 10:00. The following members were present:

Rodger Bennett (4th. Div.) Chairman
Tom Nebgen (3rd. Div.) Vice-Chairman?
Charles E. Lee (5th. Div.)
Raymond P. Toczek (1st. Div.)
Ashley "Dave" Davis (2nd. Div.)

Bennett will continue on as chair, Nebgen as vice-chair and Toczek as Secretary.

The Dept. Commander, Cheri Stanton stopped by for a few moments to give us words of encouragement and thanked us for our commitment to veteran's issues.

Our Commission had 28 resolutions passed at the State Convention. At the National Convention 22 were approved and 4 were referred to the VA&R National Commission for further study. They will be discussed at the next NEC meeting. Only 2 were rejected. Here are the results with the National resolution number:

APPROVED

Res. No. 243 "Compensation for vets requiring hearing aids".

Res. No. 244 "Exempt Purple Heart and Medal of Honor recipients from copays".

Res. No. 245 "Extend eligibility for cemetery medallion"

Res. No. 246 "Blue water Navy Vietnam Vets and Agent Orange".

Res. No. 247 "Authorize disclose to 3rd. parties".

Res. No. 249 "Extend eligibility time for RH insurance".

Res. No. 250 "Increase maximum RH insurance".

Res. No. 251 10% rating for vets taking hypertension medication".

Res. No. 252 "Pay interest on appeal grants".

Res. No. 253 "Eliminate benefit loophole for certain incarcerated vets".

Res. No. 254 “Raise ceiling on Veterans Administration home loans for two married vets”.

Res. No. 255 “Reduce DIC requirement from 10yrs. to 5yrs.”.

Res. No. 262, “Grant a 10% Rating for Veterans Who Must Take Daily Medication for Hypertension,” was approved.

Res. No. 259 “Extend caregiver benefits to include vets before 9/11/01”.

Res. No. 261 “Exempt certain income from pension rate determinations”.

Res. No. 262 “Service dog allowance”.

Res. No. 263 “WWII vets and group 6”.

Res. No. 265 “Automatic waiver of debts under \$300”

Res. No. 266 “Means test for married veterans”.

Res. No. 267 “Allow beneficiaries to retain \$90 while on Medicaid”.

Res. No. 268 “Urn markers”.

Res. No. 271 “Request study on depleted uranium”.

Res. No. 272 “Extend dental care to vets 50% or more”.

REFERRED

Res. No. 256 “Add Agent Orange component to CFR 4.16”.

Res. No. 257 “Include females for smc-k award”.

Res. No. 260 “Increase amount of smc-k awards”.

Res. No. 276 “Sequestration of funds”.

REJECTED

Res. No. 264 “Change of tinnitus rating schedule”.

Res. No. 275 “Minimum compensation for all Iraq and Afghanistan vets”.

Those wishing to see the full text of these resolutions can visit www.legion.org

Camp Lejeune update. Regulations are now proposed to consider certain diseases associated with contaminated water at that camp. Veterans, reserve and National Guard members who served for no less than 30 days between Aug. 1, 1953 and Dec. 31, 1987 (once the regs become final) will be eligible for compensation if they have:

Adult leukemia bladder cancer kidney cancer and liver cancer.

Also Parkinson's disease. Once the complete list is published it will appear in our Dept. newsletter. These changes will also include surviving spouses whose husband or wife died of the above.

"Veteran" status can now be added to Illinois veterans driver licenses for Army or Air National Guard, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard reservists. See the August Dept. newsletter (page 13) for more detailed info. Copies are online at www.illegion.org.

Our free \$1,000/\$5,000 Accidental Disability & Death insurance policies need to be reconfirmed. A new program called "One and Done" will now allow us to recertify only once and never again. Call 1-800-235-6943 to do this. And if you wish the proceeds to go to an individual instead of your estate ask for a beneficiary form.

Our budget for the Legion 2016/17 was discussed and passed in April. Those who will be going to the DC conference in 2017 will divide up \$3,000 by as many that go with a cap of \$1,500 each of only two attend.

The new Department web site does not archive previous "Did You Know" articles. Toczek talked with Marty Conatser after the meeting. He will discuss this issue with our web master.

Karen Henry is retiring as finance secretary and we met her replacement Toni Hernan.

Tom Nebgen gave a report on his visit to Hines Veterans Health Administration hospital with Roscoe Butler from our National Headquarters. This was part of the system worth saving program. Tours of the grounds were given; he attended a town hall meeting and met the new Hines director, a retired Colonel. Various staff members also spoke to the group. The impression was that Hines has no long range strategic plans, each department needs an organizational chart and the budget should be more transparent.

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:45. The next meeting will be held in the spring, date to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond P. Toczek
Secretary, VA&R Commission