

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission Saturday September 30, 2017

The Department of Illinois Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission met at Legion headquarters in Bloomington, Illinois on September 30, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 1:00. The following members were present:

Rodger Bennett (4th. Div.) Chairman
Tom Nebgen (3rd. Div.) Vice-Chairman
Elizabeth Elliott (5th. Div.) Excused
Raymond P. Toczek (1st. Div.)
Ashley “Dave” Davis (2nd. Div.) Excused.

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

The Dept. Commander, Robert Henderson and Sr. Vice Commander Michael M. Carder stopped by for a few moments to give us words of encouragement and thanked us for our commitment to veteran’s issues. Commander Henderson will be pushing Boys State and Gifts to the Yanks who gave. These programs need support. The fee for Boys State is now \$300.

Our Commission had 2 resolutions passed at the State Convention. At the National Convention one was approved and one was received and recorded. Here are the results with the National resolution number:

APPROVED

Res. No. 47 “Research into delayed Bilateral Hearing Loss “

REFERRED

None

REJECTED

None

RECEIVED AND RECORDED

Res. No. 46 “Eliminating tax on student loan forgiveness”

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

Veterans wishing to see if they were affected by the Equifax Security Breach should go to www.equifaxsecurity2017.com to see if they were compromised. If so Equifax will offer for one year free credit monitoring. As an aside veterans 65 or older who live in Illinois can get “free” credit freezes. Contact numbers are TransUnion 888-909-8872, Experian 888-397-3742 and Equifax 800-349-9960.

Flu shots are now available at all VA hospitals. Last year over 6,000 Illinois veterans died from the flu or its’ complications. The Federal Benefits 2017 edition is now available. Veterans can call the National Call Center (1-800-827-1000) to obtain a copy. They are open M-Friday until 8:00 pm.

Highlights from the National VA&R Convention meeting; the Choice program is expanding, the Appeals process is being streamlined, veteran suicides will be a high priority and there will be increased access to Burial Benefits.

Secretary Shulkin of the VA will decide by November 1st whether additional presumptive conditions for Agent Orange will be added to the current list. Under consideration are bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension and Parkinson like symptoms.

Department will be selling an American Legion Centennial Coin to celebrate 100 years of veterans still serving America. The cost is \$100 and there will only be 500 issued. There are 408 Centennial Posts in Illinois and they will be given the first opportunity to purchase these. After 30 days the remainder will be available to other Posts and interested comrades.

A reminder that “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 as well as regular veterans. Contact your local Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs for more details.

Regarding the DC conference in 2018; we have budgeted \$3,000 and that will be divided by as many Commission members that attend with a cap of \$1,500 each if only two are able to make it.

The Chicago VA&R office has again lost a Service Officer. Al Pizarro took a new job with the Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County. The position has been posted on our Dept. site for those interested in applying.

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:45. The next meeting will be held in the spring, date to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond P. Toczek
Secretary, VA&R Commission