

**PENNSYLVANIA STATE VETERANS' COMMISSION MEETING
KEYSTONE CONFERENCE CENTER, FORT INDIANTOWN GAP
ANNVILLE, PA 17003-5002
FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 2013, 1000**

The State Veterans' Commission (SVC) meeting was called to order by Chairman Brenner. The meeting was opened with an invocation and the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Awards: Major General Randall Marchi presented the Pennsylvania Commendation Medal to outgoing Member at Large - Mr. Edward Worjanaroski for his service on the State Veterans Commission.

Remarks by The Deputy Adjutant General - Army, Major General Randall Marchi: Major General Marchi provided the Commission members an update on the Pennsylvania National Guard current unit mobilizations, total deployments and future deployments.

Remarks from Mr. Gary Devansky, Director, Coatesville VAMC: Mr. Devansky provided the Commission an update on VISN4.

Review and Approval of April 5, 2013 Meeting Minutes: Vice Chairman Hawk stated that Commander Ryersbach was not present at the April 5, 2013 meeting. Commander Iacavazzi made a motion, seconded by Commandant Corley, to approve the April 5, 2013 meeting minutes with the requested change. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Chief Counsel Update by Mr. Dennis Guise: Mr. Guise briefed the Commission on the Veterans Trust Fund and the Disabled Veterans' Real Estate Tax Exemption Program Rebuttable Presumption standards. DMVA received a request that the Commission reconsider new standards and delay the effective date. A motion was made by Commandant Corley to defer the effective date to January 2014. The motion was seconded by President Haberkorn. Motion carried. Mr. Guise also extended an invitation to the committee to attend the Scotland School for Veterans Children State Historical Marker Ceremony on Saturday July 13, 2013 at 2:00 pm at the Scotland School Auditorium.

Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs Update by Mr. Dusty Durand: Mr. Durand briefed the Commission on the following topics:

- Armory/Real Estate Legislation
- Military Family Relief Assistance Program
- Civil Service
- Educational Assistance program
- Physicians Incentive
- Stolen Valor

Legislation of Interest Topics: Mr. Durand also discussed the following Legislation of Interest Topics with the Commission:

- Paralyzed Veterans Pension – President Appleby made the motion to send a letter of sponsorship from the State Veterans Commission in support of this legislation. Motion was seconded by Mr. Fidler. Motion carried.
- County Directors Act 5 of 2013
- Small Games of Chance – HB 290/SB 599
- Veterans Training and Mil Experience – HB 107
- Volunteer MH Professionals (Give an Hour) – SB 81 – A motion was made by Ms. Botta Guth to send a letter in support of this legislation. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Hawk. Motion carried.
- Combat to College – HB 841
- Veterans Lottery Game – Representative Barrar HB 1205 - A motion was made by President Appleby to send a letter in support of this legislation. The motion was seconded by Commander Iacavazzi. The motion carried.
- PayDay Loans – President Appleby made a motion that the Commission should send a letter vigorously opposing this legislation. Commander Cocco seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Office Administration Update by Ms. Debbie Stubljar: Ms. Stubljar briefed the Commission on the Honoring our Veterans License Plates. She also noted that the recent state budget did not include Pension Reform. Ms. Stubljar informed the Commission of her pending retirement and announced Ms. McPherson as her replacement.

Homes Update by Mr. Andrew Ruscavage: Mr. Ruscavage provided the Commission a Homes' update. The overall occupancy average is 90 percent. For Nursing Care beds, the overall average is 92 percent. For Personal Care/Domiciliary beds, the overall average is 81 percent. He also advised that the licensure status in each of the homes was current and in compliance with all legal standards. Mr. Ruscavage also briefed the Commission on State Veteran's Homes Week and informed the commission of the wide array of activities that would take place throughout the various Veterans' Homes during the week-long celebration.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Pennsylvania War Veterans Council Items (PWVC):** None
- **Hall of Fame Recommendations:** Ms. Botta Guth motioned that the committee approve candidates for the Hall of Fame. The motion was seconded by Commander Ryersbach, and the motion carried. The candidates are as follows:
 - SWVC Frederic Feldman
 - SWVC – Edward Kohler
 - GMVC – Carl Weinschenk, Jr.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF REPORTS AND GRANTS: Mr. Natali presented the following reports to the Commission:

The report for the Veterans' Emergency Assistance Program was reviewed. Commander Ryersbach made a motion, seconded by Commander Iacavazzi, to accept the report as presented. Motion carried.

The reports for the Blind and Paralyzed Veterans' Pension Programs were reviewed. Blind Pension Program: Commandant Corley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Appleby, to accept the report as presented. Motion carried. Paralyzed Pension Program: Adjutant DeSanti made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wojanaroski to accept the report as presented. Motion carried.

The report for the Educational Gratuity Program was reviewed. Commander Ryersbach made a motion, seconded by Commandant Corley, to accept the report as presented. Motion carried.

The report for the Disabled Veterans' Real Estate Tax Exemption Program was reviewed. Mr. Natali reported four Request's for Waiver to the five acre rule. Adjutant Watson stated that there is a standing motion that there are no exceptions to the five acre rule. Mr. Natali informed Adjutant Watson that every Request for Waiver must be presented to the Commission regardless of the standing motion. Five requests for waiver of the five acre rule tabled at the April 2013 meeting were presented for decision. The standing motion was upheld. Commander Hahn made a motion, seconded by President Haberkorn to accept the report as presented. Motion carried.

The report for the Persian Gulf Veterans' Benefit Program was reviewed.

Mr. Natali briefed the Commission on an inquiry from Penn D.O.T. regarding the eligibility dates for the Persian Gulf License Plate. A motion was made by Commander Ryersbach that the end date for the license plate eligibility be established as September 10, 2001. The motion was seconded by Commander Fairchild. The motion was carried. A letter will be issued to Penn D.O.T. from the Commission.

The report for the Military Family Relief Assistance Program was reviewed.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman Brenner reminded the Commission to send in the results of their respective organizational elections. He informed the Commission that new members will be sworn in at the meeting on Friday, September 6, 2013.

Commander Hahn announced the 2013 Memorial Day Event sponsored by the Catholic War Veterans.

Ms. Botta Guth discussed a Thank-You for Brigadier General Michael Gould. It was noted that the date on Meeting Agenda regarding the Time and Location of the next meeting needed to be changed.

TIME AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING:

Friday, September 6, 2013, at 10:00 am
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
KEYSTONE CONFERENCE CENTER
Annville, PA 17003

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Brenner adjourned the meeting at 11:42 hours.

The following members of the Commission were present:

MG Randall Marchi, Deputy Adjutant General – Army designee for The Adjutant General
Neil Appleby, President, Blinded Veterans Association
Jeannine Botta Guth, Member-at-Large
Samuel Blow, Designee for Commander, Disabled American Veterans, DOP
John Brenner, Chairman, Member-at-Large
Joseph Cocoa, Commander, The American Legion, DOP
Neil Corley, Commandant, Marine Corps League, DOP
Carmen DeSanti, Adjutant Disabled American Veterans, DOP
Gary Devansky, Director, Coatesville VAMC
Dominic DiFrancesco, Member-at-Large
Ruth Fairchild, Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars, DOP
Chris Fidler, Designee for Commander, Paralyzed Veterans of America, DOP
Harold Gennaria, Emeritus
John Getz, Adjutant, Veterans of Foreign Wars, DOP
Robert Gray, Designee for President, Military Officers Association of America
Tom Haberkorn, President, Vietnam Veterans of America, PSC
John Hahn, Commander Catholic War Veterans, DOP
Bill Harris, President, Military Officers Association of America
Gerald Hawk, Vice Chairman, AMVETS
Michael Iacavazzi, Commander, Italian-American War Veterans, DOP
Steve Ryersbach, Commander, AMVETS, DOP
Roger Snook, Designee for Pres, State Assoc. of Cnty Directors of Veterans' Affairs, Inc.
Kit Watson, Adjutant, American Legion, DOP
Edward Wojnaroski, Member-at-Large

The following members of the Commission were absent:

MG Wesley Craig, The Adjutant General
BG Michael Gould, Deputy Adjutant General, Veterans Affairs
Allan Abramson, Commander, Jewish War Veterans, DOP
Michael Mescavage, Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart, DOP

Others present:

Belinda Albright	Northumberland County Veterans Affairs
Anthony Carrelli	Deputy Adjutant General - Air
Bob Cudworth	Disabled American Veterans, DOP
David Cummiskey	US DOL VETS
Anthony DiFrancesco	Dauphin County Veterans Affairs
Dusty Durand	Legislative Liaison Office, DMVA
Hank Fiola	Marine Corps League, DOP
Ray Greene	Disabled American Veterans, DOP
Dennis Guise	Chief Counsel, DMVA
David Guth	Guest
Frank Hamm	Disabled American Veterans, DOP
Paul Hastings	Marine Corps League, DOP
Dave Johnston	Vietnam Veterans of America, PSC
Dan Kinsella	Somerset County Veterans Affairs
Mandy Kroh	Office of Administration, Office Services, DMVA
Diane McNaughton	Exec. Dir., Senate VA Emergency Preparedness Committee
Brian Natali	Office of Veterans Affairs, DMVA
Joe Palaia	Catholic War Veterans, DOP
Charles Rose	PA Department of Labor & Industry
Constance Snavelly	Lebanon VAC
Roger Snook	Snyder County Veterans Affairs
Debbie Stubljar	Deputy for Administration, DMVA
Jim White	Disabled American Veterans, DOP
Brenda Zechman	Schuylkill County Veterans Affairs

The minutes of this meeting are respectfully submitted by the undersigned.

SUSAN M. KENNEY
Executive Secretary
Office of Deputy Adjutant General
for Veterans Affairs