

National Executive Committee
October 11-12 2008

VA&R Commission

The meeting was opened at 10:20 am 11 October 2008 by Chairman Bruno Williamson

Roll Call:

Chairman: Bruno Williamson (IL)
Vice Chairman: Thomas Kurk (NY) (East Division)
Members: David Mennell (MI) (Mid West Division)
Mark Tansell (IN) (Central Division)
Ronnie Grist (GA) (South Division)
Patrick Gryskiewicz (WI) (Western Division)

Guests: Ken Wederski (CO), Ernest R. Hoitt (LA), Tom Deal (MD), Steve Fischer (NH), Steve Pintaric (CT), David Mennel (MI), Andy Dadds (MD), John F. Bogart (NY), Joseph Cooper (ME), Ken Fleming (PA), Mark Severance (CA), Lawrence Cullen (DE), Mike Moss (CO), Earl R. Ruttkofsky (MI), Matt Christie (IL), Kent Hehl (NJ), Sam Farwick (KY), Tom Wigmore (MA), David L Downey (NY) Jerry Hjelle (WA), Bill Lewis (OR), Bill Sparwasser (MD) & Harold E. Thompson, Jr. (NE).

Reading of last minutes:

Ronnie Grist (GA) moved that the minutes be approved as printed. Second by Thomas Kurk (NY). Motion carried.

Resolutions:

No resolutions were presented.

Old Business:

V.A.V.S. we need one for every Veteran Hospital. Make sure that they get sent in and they have to be sign by the Department Adjutant and this need to done.

New Business:

2009 Budget Changes to the budget.
Communication for \$100.00 change to \$0.00 coming out different part of budget
Donation for VAVS- James Park Award \$2000.00 to \$1000.00
Call-in VAVS National Advisory Committee \$2,200 to \$900.00
Chairman Expenses to two Legion VAR meetings, Fall & Spring \$170.00

Ronnie Grist made motion to approve the budget with reversions seconded by Mark Tansell
Motion Carried.

Fisher House by Mark Tansell. The Fisher House program is a unique private-public partnership that supports America's military in their time of need. At least one Fisher house is located at every major medical facility to assist families in Need. Annually, Fisher House serves 10,000 families and has made available 2.5 million days of lodging to families in need. By law, there is

no charge to stay at a Fisher house. Do you know you can donate your airline miles Fisher House to assist military and their loved ones transportation. Several airlines are participating in the program. Presently, there are 37 Fisher Houses. The foundation plans to increase the number to 62 by 2011. New Fisher houses are being constructed at the Boston VA Health Care System in West Roxbury, MA; North Texas Va Health Care System in Dallas, TX; Fort Bragg, NC; Camp Lejeune, NC; Elgin AFB in Florida; and a second home at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, OH.

Mark Tansell move approve the report and seconded by Thomas Kurk Motion Carried.

The American Legion “Heroes To Hometowns” program was established to assist our nations young warriors with their family needs and their transition to civilian life. The mission of H2H is to encourage State and Local communities to create a positive transition home, and establish a local support network for returning severely injured service personnel and their families so they can lead productive lives. More information can be found at WWW.legion.org/h2h or by contacting the Heroes To Hometowns program directly at (703) 908-6250 or e-mail heroestohometowns@legion.org.

Mark Tansell moved to approve the report and seconded by Patrick Gryskiewicz. Motion Carried.

NEADS program by Thomas Kurk. The NEADS Program is “Canines for Disabled Veterans” They are located in W. Boylston, Massachusetts and can be contacted by going to there web-site at WWW.neads.org by e-mail at veterans@neads.org, US Mail, Dogs for Disabled Veterans, PO Box 213, West Boylston, MA 01583 or by phone at 1-978-422-9064 Ext 22. On May, 2006 NEADS was the first Service Dog Program in the country to be invited to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, and has been chosen to begin training dogs for injured soldiers through their new Canines for Combat Veterans program.

National Suicide Hotline by Thomas Kurk. The VA launched the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (1-800-273-TALK) as collaboration with the United States Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and its Lifeline Program. When someone calls the National Hotline Number, They receive a message saying if they are a US military Veteran, or are calling about a veteran they should press “1” They are quickly connected to the VA Hotline Call Center In Canandaigua, NY. The Call center is staffed is Staffed 24/7 with 32 professional health care workers and 18 phone lines. Since the inception through August 2008, the Call center responded to 69,300 calls. 32,854 callers have identified themselves as veterans or veteran family members of friends.

Thomas Kurk move to approve the reports & Seconded by Ronnie Grist. Motion Carried.

David Downey National Vice Commander spoke to the group.

BVL by Ronnie Grist. Help Veterans with Bowling for Disabled Veterans Ronnie Grist move to approve his report & Seconded by Thomas Kurk. Motion Carried.

Homeless Veterans by David Mennell. In 1987 the Department of Veterans affairs officially started the Homeless Veterans treatment programs. All State are looking for help with their shelters and homes, they need clothing in personal items and help at all. You can go to their web site www.1.va.gov/homeless .

M.I.A.P. Missing in American Project Just started in 2006 looking for the remains of our forgotten veterans. To give them proper burial. David Menell move to approve his reports. Seconded by Tom Kurk. Motion Carried.

Creative Arts Festival by Patrick Gryskeiwick. The Creative Arts Festival will be in Riverside, California the week of October 20-26, 2009. This is therapy of arts for the Veterans Patrick Gryskeiwick move to approve his reports. Seconded by Tom Kurk Motion Carried.

National Commander Thomas Cisna spoke to the Group the report from the VA&R report has went up off the information has been report lets get more report this year.

National Veterans Assistant Day for next year is May 16, 2009. They were fewer than 5,000 veterans were assistance. Promote this day let everyone know about it and have more veterans help this year.

The USO (United Service Organizations) was founded 67 years ago in 1941. In response to a challenge by President Roosevelt, he asked 6 private organizations to handle on-leave morale needs for our Armed Forces. These organizations were the YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, Travelers Aid Association, National Jewish Welfare Board, & the National Catholic Community Service. The USO is a private, non-profit organization that is congressionally chartered. The USO relies on public & corporate sponsors for funding.

Ronnie Grist move to approve Bruno Williamson report. Seconded by Tom Kurk. Motion Carried.

Patrick to have information on Creative Arts on the web site for November and each commission member will be ask to have something to put on the web site.

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 am.
HET