

# VETERANS' DISABILITY BENEFITS COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, September 5, 2007 - Friday, September 7, 2007

**Location:** Hamilton Crowne Plaza, 1001-14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 682-9525

### Attendees:

#### **Chair:**

Chairman James Terry Scott, LTG, USA (Ret) – Absent Wednesday morning, Thursday afternoon, and Friday

Commissioner Dennis Vincent McGinn, VADM, USN (Ret) Wednesday morning, Thursday afternoon, and Friday

#### **Members:**

Nick D. Bacon, 1SG, USA (Ret)

Larry G. Brown, COL, USA (Ret)

Jennifer Sandra Carroll, LCDR, USN (Ret)

Donald M. Cassidy, COL, USAF (Ret)

John Holland Grady

Charles "Butch" Joeckel, USMC (Ret)

Ken Jordan, COL, USMC (Ret)

James Everett Livingston, MG, USMC (Ret) – absent on Friday

William M. Matz, Jr., MG, USA (Ret)

Dennis Vincent McGinn, VADM, USN (Ret)

Rick Surratt (former USA)

Joe Wynn (former USAF)

#### **Staff:**

Ray Wilburn, Executive Director

Ed Andersen

Jacqueline Garrick

Kathleen Greve

John Harlepas

Steve Riddle

Dietra Shepherd

Kurt Von Tish

Jim Wear

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Topic	Key Points	Supporting Materials
<b>September 5, 2007</b>		
<b>Opening Remarks</b>  Chairman Scott	<p>The Chairman opened the meeting at 10:01a.m. and reviewed the agenda for the Commission meeting. He announced that new staff had been hired to work on the Final Report and that a PR firm would be assisting with the media.</p> <p>He turned the morning session of the meeting over to Commissioner McGinn to chair.</p>	
<b>August 22-24, 2007 Meeting Minutes</b>	Commissioners Cassidy and Jordan seconded the adoption of the minutes, which were approved by unanimous vote.	<a href="#">Minutes (August II)</a>
<b>Opening Comments</b>	None	
<b>Ancillary Benefits Recommendations</b>  Ms. Jacqueline Garrick	<p>Ms. Garrick reviewed the Ancillary and Special Purpose Benefits options that the Commission voted on at the August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting and presented recommendations for inclusion in the Final Report.</p> <p>The Commission modified and voted on those recommendations.</p>	
<b>Dole/Shalala Commission Recommendations</b>  Ms. Jacqueline Garrick	<p>Ms. Garrick reminded the Commission of the recommendations made by the Dole/Shalala Commission with an analysis of its ramifications for this Commission.</p> <p>The Commission drafted its position on the recommendations made by the Dole/Shalala Commission, which it agreed with in principle, but objected to the limited scope they set for combat disability compensation and to reduce veterans' benefits at age 65</p>	
<b>Public Comment:</b>	None	
<b>IOM PTSD Recommendations and Options</b>  Mr. Ray Wilburn	<p>Mr. Wilburn presented the options outlined in the reports from the IOM that pertained to PTSD. He reviewed issues with the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) score, training, psychological testing, data recording, the Rating Schedule, certification, minimum level of benefits, re-evaluations, and sexual trauma.</p> <p>The Commission voted to adopt several of the IOM recommendations, but not all.</p>	
<b>Closing Comments</b>	None	
<b>Chairman's Close</b>  Chairman Scott	The chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:30p.m.	

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<b>September 6, 2007</b>		
<b>Opening Remarks</b>  Chairman Scott	The Chairman opened the meeting at 8:34a.m. with a summary of the agenda. He recounted issues with PTSD, IU, the VA claims backlog, and the severely injured as reasons for establishing the Commission. He also announced a VSO reception for the Commission to take place during the last meeting.	
<b>Opening Comments</b>	Commissioner McGinn praised the HBO <i>Alive Day Memories: Home from Iraq</i> premier that he and Commissioners Wynn, Cassidy and Grady attended the previous evening.  Commissioner Cassidy also commented on the event and that the severely injured were the purpose of this Commission's work.	
<b>Final Report Recommendations</b>  Mr. Ray Wilburn	Mr. Wilburn presented all of the current recommendations in the Final Report and their present status.  The Commission adopted, modified, added, deleted, and consolidated recommendations.	
<b>Top 23 Recommendations</b>  Mr. Ray Wilburn	Mr. Wilburn discussed the top twenty-three recommendations that appear to be the most significant as previously discussed by the Commission.  The Commission requested that all of the IOM Medical Evaluation and Presumption Recommendations get added into the Commission recommendations. The Commission then parsed the top recommendations down into a list of twelve that should appear in a matrix in the Final Report.	
<b>Final Report Update</b>  Ms. Jacqueline Garrick	Ms. Garrick reviewed the sections of the Final Report that were transmitted to the Commissioners for their review, and the work in progress by the staff. She outlined a time frame for the remainder of September for completing the Final Report.  Commissioners provided their feedback on the Matrix and made suggestions for the Final Report. They also expressed concerns regarding press conferences, VA/DoD leadership and congressional meetings.	<a href="#">Slides</a>
<b>Closing Remarks</b>	Commissioner Cassidy requested information on a social event for the final meeting.  Commissioner McGinn, as acting chair, reminded the Commission about the VSO reception, but that they could also do their own social on the last night.	

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	Commissioner Jordan requested a schedule and a plan for visiting members of Congress and that appointments be centralized with the Executive Director. He also requested talking points.	
<b>Chairman's Close</b>  Commissioner McGinn, Chair	The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:03p.m. The final meeting of the Commission will take place at the Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, on September 19-21.	

The minutes of the September 5-7, 2007 (September I) meeting were unanimously approved by the Commissioners present at the September 19, 2007 meeting in Washington, DC.

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<b>September 7, 2007</b>		
<b>Opening Remarks</b> Commissioner McGinn, Chair	Commissioner McGinn opened the meeting at 8:31 a.m. and reviewed the day's agenda.	
<b>Opening Comments</b>	<p>Many of the Commissioners expressed their satisfaction with the Final Report process.</p> <p>The following Commissioners offered additional comments:</p> <p>Commissioner Joeckel questioned how recommendations were to be prioritized.</p> <p>Commissioner Jordan reiterated his concerns for an October plan and political visits.</p> <p>Commissioner Grady suggested that there be an overall vision for the recommendations.</p> <p>Commissioner Wynn wants to have an item-by-item review to address his existing concerns.</p> <p>Commissioner Carroll supported the Chairman's instructions for the roll out and that there should be a plan presented at the next meeting.</p> <p>Commissioner McGinn suggested that everyone block out October 2-4 for travel and roll out activities.</p>	
<b>Top 5 Commission Priorities Update</b> Mr. Ray Wilburn	Mr. Wilburn reviewed the top five priorities the Commission previously selected and for those to be considered along with the top priority recommendations.	
<b>Guiding Principles Review</b> Commissioner McGinn, Chair	Commissioner McGinn conducted an ad hoc review of the Guiding Principles so that those could also be considered when prioritizing recommendations.	
<b>VA Matrix</b> Commissioner McGinn, Chair	Commissioner McGinn shared a matrix produced by VA that highlighted recently introduced legislation in the House and Senate, along with the Dole/Shalala Commission recommendations.	
<b>Closing Comments</b>	Commissioner Wynn suggested that priorities include presumption and changing diagnostic codes in the Rating Schedule.	
<b>Closing Remarks</b> Commissioner McGinn, Chair	The chair announced the next meeting for September 19 <sup>th</sup> and adjourned the meeting at 10:13 a.m.	