

**Veterans Disability Benefits Commission  
Meeting Minutes**

**Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2006 and Thursday, February 16, 2006**

**Location: Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront, 333 First Street South, St. Petersburg, FL**

**Attendees:**

**Chairman**

James Terry Scott, LTG, USA (Ret.)

**Members**

Nick D. Bacon, 1SG, USA (Ret)  
 Larry G. Brown, Col., USA (Ret)  
 Jennifer Sandra Carroll, LCDR, USN (Ret)  
 Donald M. Cassiday, Col., USAF (Ret)  
 John Holland Grady  
 Charles "Butch" Joeckel, USMC (Ret)  
 Ken Jordan, Col., USMC (Ret)  
 James Everett Livingston, MG, USMC (Ret)  
 William M. Matz, Jr., MG, USA (Ret)  
 Dennis Vincent McGinn, VADM, USN (Ret)  
 Rick Surratt (former USA)  
 Joe Wynn (former USAF)

Topic	Key Points	Supporting Materials
<b>February 15, 2006</b>		
<b>Opening Remarks</b> Chairman Scott	The Chairman opened the Town Hall meeting at 7:00 p.m. with welcoming remarks and gave a brief overview of the Commission's Florida agenda.	
<b>Briefing on the Commission</b> Ray Wilburn, Executive Director	Mr. Wilburn summarized how the Commission was established and described its mission and objectives. He gave an overview on what the Commission had accomplished thus far.	<u>Commission Briefing</u>
<b>Town Hall Public Comments</b>	<p>The Commission held the Town Hall meeting to explain why it was established; what the Commission hopes to accomplish; and primarily to hear directly from veterans, service members, and their families who traveled from all over Florida. Approximately 200 people attended the town hall meeting.</p> <p>Thirty-three veterans requested the opportunity to speak. Some questioned the Commissioners about how the Commission's findings would impact them. Many requested that the Commission look at ways to make navigating the system easier. They commented on how the current system is enmeshed in</p>	

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	<p>“bureaucratic red tape” and better communication and appeal processes are needed. Many praised the quality of health care and rating decisions, while commenting that access to care and timeliness of decisions are the real problems.</p>	
<b>Chairman’s Close</b>	The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.	
	<b>February 16, 2006</b>	
<b>Opening Remarks</b> Chairman Scott	The meeting opened at 8:30 a.m. with welcoming remarks. The Chairman had the Commissioners introduce themselves then gave a brief overview of the Commission.	
<b>January 19-20, 2006 Meeting Minutes</b>	On motion by Commissioner Carroll, seconded by Commissioner Cassidy, the minutes were unanimously approved.	<u>Approved minutes</u>
<b>Brief Statements by Commission Members</b>	Statement for the record was presented by Commissioner Wynn.	<u>Statement for the record by Commissioner Wynn</u>
<b>Statement of Florida State Department of Veterans Affairs</b> Rocky McPherson, Executive Director	Mr. McPherson gave an overview on the veteran population in the State of Florida. He provided information on the duties and responsibilities of the Florida State Department of Veterans Affairs. He discussed how his department interacts with the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He discussed many of the programs that are ongoing throughout the state.	<u>Statement of Mr. McPherson</u>
<p><b>Tampa VA Medical Center’s Polytrauma Center Presentation</b> Steven Scott, D.O. Chief, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and the Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center Director</p> <p>Colonel Gwendolyn Fryer, R.N., Polytrauma Liaison Officer, Tampa VA Medical Center</p>	<p>Dr. Scott thanked the Commission for the opportunity to present information on polytrauma. He described polytrauma as a new approach to disabilities and impairments that are coming back from the war. He discussed the types of injuries seen in the center and how the polytrauma program was started. Dr. Scott discussed the care and rehabilitation of those presented to the polytrauma center. He summarized blast explosions, resultant pressure phenomena and the types of injuries that occur as the result of a blast explosion. He also discussed brain injury invisible wounds, nerve injuries and burns. He described how polytrauma works at the medical center.</p> <p>Colonel Fryer discussed her role as the Army Polytrauma Liaison Officer at Tampa VA Medical Center. She discussed the challenges and rewards of dealing with service members and their families. She gave a brief history and duties of her position and the sharing agreement between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). Colonel Fryer described the transition process for the service members and their families. She works with various military</p>	<p><u>Dr. Scott’s Presentation</u></p> <p><u>Colonel Fryer’s Presentation</u></p>

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	organizations to ensure service members and their family members receive all of their entitlements.	
<b>Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) Update/Institute of Medicine (IOM) Update</b> Ray Wilburn, Executive Director	Mr. Wilburn gave a brief update on the CNA and IOM contracts. CNA has provided a draft detailed work plan and a draft of the Veterans survey instrument. IOM had its first meeting on the PTSD study.	<u>CNA Presentation</u>  <u>IOM Presentation</u>
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	Mr. Murray Wheeler commented on the history of VA and funding. Mr. Tim Ivers spoke about the caseload of veteran's claims and the efforts of the VA to improve service to veterans. Mr. Ed Dement commented about the James Haley (Tampa) VA Medical Center. Mr. Jerry Klein commented on the VA rating schedule. Mr. Craig Tonjes commented on funding and PTSD. Mr. Fredrick Peck commented on funding for veterans of past conflicts. Ms. Charlene Sanders discussed her experiences during and after her service. Mr. Delbert Landers discussed the co-pay for medications, survivor's benefits and had general remarks regarding the commission. Mr. Keith Young commented on the James Haley (Tampa) VA Medical Center and about co-pay for medications.	
<b>Chairman's Close</b>	The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, March 16-17, 2006, at the Holiday Inn National Airport, 2650 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202	
Adjourned at 11:30a.m.		

The minutes of the February 15, 2005, town hall meeting and the February 16, 2006, meeting of the Commission were unanimously approved by the Commission members in attendance at the March 16, 2006, meeting in Arlington, VA.