



EAGLE NEWS

The official Newsletter of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
Central Minnesota Chapter 115

January thru March 2010

RALPH DONAIS ELECTED TO NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Chapter 115 was proud to support their President Donais' election at the National Convention in September 2009 to the National Board of Directors. At the Board meeting following the election, he was then appointed to the position of National Public Relations Director by TREA's President Charlie Flowers.

Director Donais will bring his years of leadership to the national level by assisting President Flowers in the area of Public Relations; by increasing the awareness of TREA among all active, retired and reserve components personnel of the Armed Forces; to enhance TREA's image and reputation through involvement in our local communities; by increasing Chapter and MAL membership; and helping TREA Chapters in establishing or expand their public relations programs. His committee is composed of Chapter and MAL members from throughout the United States. Congratulations!

In January 2010, he was elected to the chairmanship of the United Veterans Legislative Council of Minnesota for a term of two years.

STATE OF MINNESOTA HOLDS "VETERAN'S DAY ON THE HILL"

The Veterans Day on the Hill for 2010 will be Tuesday, February 9, 2010 starting at 10:30 am in the Capitol Rotunda.

Public metered parking is available in Lot Q, north of the Capitol at Cedar Street and Sherburne Avenue; Lot AA, across Rice Street from the State Office Building on Aurora Avenue; Lot F, directly behind the Transportation Building; Lot H, west of the Veterans Service Building; Lot K, across from the Armory on Cedar Street (enter from 12th Street); Lot L, east of the Judicial Center; in the 14th Street Lot at the corner of North Robert Street and 14th Street; and on the orange level of the Centennial Office Building Ramp at Cedar Street and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. There are a few metered parking spots in front of the Capitol along Aurora Avenue. Capitol Security personnel will issue tickets for expired meters.

Tips to Ensure a Successful 2010 Veterans Day on the Hill

1. **Schedule a meeting with your House and Senate members ahead of time.** Don't know who represents you? Visit the Minnesota State Legislature's "District Finder" at <http://www.gis.leg.mn/mapserver/districts/>. If you don't have Internet access call Senate Information

Office: (651) 296-0504 or (651) 296-2887 – OR – ii. House Public Information Office: (651) 296-2146 or 1 (800) 657-3550.

2. **Review your notes ahead of time – have your selected key messages ready.**
3. **If there is a group meeting with one legislator, designate a spokesperson.**
4. **Be on time. Be patient and polite.** Legislators have many demands on their time, so appointments can change last-minute. And even if you disagree with what a legislator is saying, work to keep the conversation polite.
5. **Keep the meeting brief.**
6. **Let the legislator you are meeting with know who you are – how you connect to their district (for example, you are a resident and constituent) and how what you are advocating for helps others in the district.** Tell stories about how you or others in the area have benefitted from past legislation or programs the state is funding.

7. **If a legislator asks a question and you don't know the answer, don't speculate.** Tell them you will follow up. And then be sure to do so with a phone call, e-mail or letter.
8. **Before you leave, ask the legislator where there level of support/opposition is regarding the issues you discussed.** Thank them again for their time. Leave a handout or some other type of information with them.
9. **After the meeting.** Report back to your organization's leadership on how the meeting went – What topics were discussed, key comments of support/opposition from the legislator, and any other meeting highlights. Send the legislator a thank you note. Work to become a long-term resource for your legislator. Cultivate and maintain relationships with them. Invite them to Veterans' events in their district. Provide opportunities for positive publicity (meetings/photo ops/events).

EXPRESS SCRIPTS MONTHLY EXPLANATION OF BENEFITS (EOB)

Tricare EOBs Update 04: The new pharmacy contract requires the contractor; Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI), to mail, on a monthly basis, an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) which provides Tricare beneficiaries information on all pharmacy claims filled through either the retail or mail order program in the previous month (The EOB will not include any prescription information for items filled at Military Treatment Facilities). The first distribution of the monthly EOB's was scheduled to begin on 10 DEC. EOBs are an important tool in identifying potential fraudulent activity and it is important that you read each one carefully. In the event you find that Tricare has paid for any services you

did not receive, or you were charged by a healthcare professional you did not see, call the Express Scripts Fraud and Abuse Hotline at 1(866) 759-6139. General questions regarding the pharmacy EOB should be directed to Express Scripts at 1(877) 363-1303 (note that this number should NOT be used if fraud or abuse is suspected. For that purpose, use the one listed above). Additionally, all medications might not be included in the document. Per Tricare policy, medications used to treat certain conditions may not be included in the Explanation of Benefits (EOB). For additional information about these exclusions, call the Express Scripts general contact line (877-363-1303) and they will

be more than glad to help you. A final note: If beneficiaries want to receive EOBs via the web instead of paper, they can, by going through the Express Scripts website. Health care fraud is a pervasive and costly drain on the entire healthcare system and beneficiary involvement is critical in the fight against it. Everyone should play an active role in the fight against it. Note: To avoid delays at a local pharmacy, make sure you take your Military ID card with you. Ask the pharmacy to enter your name and date of birth exactly as it appears on your Military ID card when they submit your prescription. [Source: NAUS Weekly Update 18 Dec 09]

TREA CHAPTER 115 CENTRAL MINNESOTA MINUTES OF 10 OCTOBER 2009

Call to Order by President Ralph Donais.
Invocation by Dell Fuller. Pledge of Allegiance by Jim Gray.

Announcements & Welcome Guests

29 August 2009 meeting Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report by Dennis Rock.
Checking \$2,683.62, Savings \$3,62.65.
Total \$5,746.27. Motion made to accept report. Passed.

Legislative Report Veterans Day on the Hill will be held next session in February. Watch for the exact date in January newsletter.

Membership Report by Mark Davidson - 275 members as of the August National report. We are waiting for the next report to see how many new member applications from the August AFRAD were recorded at National HQ.

Chaplain's & Metrovets Report - None

Health Benefits Advisor Update - None

Presidents Report
2009 National Convention at Sioux Falls, SD. - Dave Christenson, Dennis Rock and Ralph Donais attended. This was one of the best conventions held in the past years. Sessions were held on Social Security and TRICARE. The by-Laws were modified this year to allow anyone who has been a member for at least three years in good standing to run for office.

Old Business

1. Motion was made by Mark Davidson to pay for lodging of attendees to the convention. Second by Dennis Rock. Motion carried.
2. JROTC - We will support the program again this year. Motion made to order 11 awards from National HQ for upcoming year by Dennis Rock, second by Mark Davidson. Motion carried. Dennis will handle the order.
3. Fund Raisers (Cub at Elk River) Discussion held to have a booth at Elk River Cub. It was suggested to try for a date in June next year (not Fathers Day).
4. AFRAD 28 August 2010 - Contract will be submitted with Mr. Krousey. Keep same set-up as this year. Everything worked well this year do the workers that attended. Jim Gray mentioned that he had spoken with AFEES regional director about no one showing up at the RADs this year. He was assured that someone will be attending next year or at least send information for their local PX.
5. Several of those attending our meeting agreed to attempt to represent TREA at other military related organizations meeting.
6. Election of Chapter Officers - Motion made to elect officers nominated at the August meeting by white ballot. Motion carried. President Ralph Donais, 1st Vice Mark Davidson, Treasurer Dennis Rock and the Secretary position is open at this time. Del Fuller was

appointed Chaplain and Parliamentarian.

New Business:

1. Motion by Dennis Rock for 2010 Budget. \$800.00 for newsletter, Membership \$100.00, JROTC Awards \$121.00, National Convention (for three delegates) \$2,250.00 and AFRAD start up funding of \$229.00. Second by Mark Davidson, Motion Carried.
2. Discussion held about having a Membership Party following our May 8th meeting.
3. The January newsletter will include MALS, so that the upcoming Legislative agenda can be included.

For the Good of the Order -

Rosemount RAD 2010 date will be decided next month. Duluth RAD will try to be held the Friday before Mystic Lake. Legislation for Wisconsin and Minnesota should be presented.

Congratulations to Ralph Donais for being elected to National Director for TREA. Ralph has been appointed to the position of Chairman of the Public Affairs committee.

Ralph will be attending a dinner meeting with retirees in Fairmont, MN on Friday 16 October. He will discuss the possibility of having a new chapter in their area.

Benediction - Del Fuller. Meeting Adjourned - Next meeting to be held 13 February 2010.

A LITTLE KNOWN VETERAN BENEFIT "AID AND ATTENDANCE"

Regardless of your personal status, consider passing this along to all veterans, families of veterans or individuals with veterans in their family. "Aid and Attendance" is an underutilized special monthly pension benefit offered by the Veterans Administration for veterans and surviving spouses who require in-home care or live in

nursing homes. To qualify, a veteran (includes the surviving spouse) must have served at least 90 days of active military service, one day of which is during a period of war, and must be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. The veteran's benefit is \$18,234 annually (paid monthly) and increases to \$21,615 if a

veteran has one dependent.. The surviving spouse alone is \$11,715 annually. For more information, call 1-800-827-1000 Visit <http://www.va.gov/> (type "Aid and Attendance" in the search block), or contact your local VA office. Apply on-line at <http://vabenfits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>

HAVE YOU HEARD

On some bases the Air Force is on one side of the field and civilian aircraft use the other side of the field with the control tower in the middle. One day the tower received a call from an aircraft asking, 'What time is it?'

The tower responded, 'Who is calling?'
The aircraft replied, 'What difference does it make?'
The tower replied, 'It makes a lot of difference.....'
If it is an American Airlines flight, it is 3 o'clock.
If it is an Air Force plane, it is 1500 hours.
If it is a Navy aircraft, it is 6 bells.

If it is an Army aircraft, the big hand is on the 12 and the little hand is on the 3.
If it is a Marine Corps aircraft, it's Thursday afternoon and 120 minutes to 'Happy Hour.'

VA POSTPONES SCHEDULED DRUG COPAYMENT INCREASE

On New Year's Eve the VA announced in the Federal Register that they were going to postpone until July 1, the scheduled co-pay increase from \$8 to \$9. The co-pay is charged for 30 day prescriptions to Veterans who are outpatients being treated for non service connected conditions. (Co-payments are not charged for prescriptions for service connected conditions; or to veterans for any prescription if they are 50% or more service

disabled, or for some low income veterans). A \$2 co-pay was originally instituted in 2002, then rose in 2008 to \$7 for a 30 day supply; and then increased again last year to \$8. The governing regulation states that the copayment will increase every January 1 based on any increase in the prescription drug portion of the Medical Consumer Price Index calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The VA delayed the increase so it

can look at other ways it might chose to calculate the co-payment cost. The temporary freeze will apply both to the copayment and to a scheduled \$120 increase in the present \$960 copayment cap for treatments of non-service connected conditions. We need to keep an eye on whatever proposal for new modification of the regulations might be attempted in the summer- but at this time it is good news.

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www.trea.org

Eagle News is an unofficial publication of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), Chapter 115, Inc located at 906 Lookout Place, Elk River, MN 55330. It is a quarterly publication. Articles may be reprinted wholly providing the intent is to promote the well-being of military retirees and/or

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FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 13, 2010
Saturday, May 8, 2010

August 28, 2010 at Camp Ripley after the Saturday AFRAD
Saturday, November 13, 2010

Central Minnesota Chapter 115
The Retired Enlisted Association
906 Lookout Place
Elk River, MN 55330

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All 1100 meetings are held at the VFW Sports Complex 7350
Quaday, Otsego, MN 55330. Phone 763-241-5225. Spouses
and guests are always invited to attend.

From I-94 in Rogers: Go north on highway 101 towards Elk
River to CR 42/River Road. Turn Left at the light. Second
road on the Left is Quaday Ave NE. Turn Left. Follow
Quaday until you see several brown buildings which is the
VFW Sport Complex on your Left.

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From Highway 10 in Elk River: From Elk River take Hwy 101
South towards Rogers, exit on CR 42/River Road, turn right at
the light onto River Road. The next road on the left will be
Quaday Ave NE. Turn Left. Follow Quaday until you see
several brown buildings which is the VFW Sport complex on
your Left.

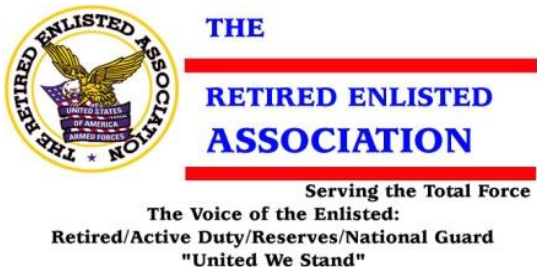
VA EYE GLASSES AND HEARING AIDS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) not only covers eye examinations and audiology tests and writes eyeglass and hearing aid prescriptions for all its eligible patients. **In many cases it also covers eyeglasses and hearing aids---even for some non-service-connected Priority 5 and 7 patients** (generally, veterans honorably- or generally-discharged after at least two years' service with incomes under about \$35,000). The little-known Veterans' Health Administration Directive 2002-039 of July 5, 2002 [paragraph 4.a.(1)] authorizes eyeglasses and hearing aids for:

1. those getting service-connected compensation for any reason or at any percentage;
2. former prisoners of war and Purple Heart recipients;
3. those getting Housebound or Aid and Attendance increments to needs-based disability Pensions;
4. those needing eyeglasses or hearing aids due to any other (even non-service-connected) medical cause; and
5. those with any other functional or cognitive impairment-- as shown by Activities of Daily Living (ADL) functional deficiency(ies) --who need eyeglasses or hearing aids to participate in their own care.

Replacements are allowed in cases of loss and breakage and for new or changed prescriptions. Hearing aids, without a prescription change or loss, must last 4 years. Issuance of spares is determined by the VA audiologist or eye care specialist. Although general information on the VA website may wrongly suggest that the above benefits are restricted to those with service-connected disabilities and other limited groups, in fact Directive 2002-039 remains fully in force.

The VA ordinarily offers comprehensive dental services only to 100% disabled, service-connected veterans and those held as prisoners of war over 90 days; but other, non-service-connected veterans may apply to the VA, no later than 3 to 6 months after discharge, to get dental treatment that wasn't completed while on active duty. For qualified cases, the VA may then pre-authorize some treatment with approved private dentists. VA health centers are listed at www.VA.gov.



IF your mailing label contains incorrect information, or if you are not receiving the Chapter e-mail announcements, notify Mark Davidson at ldavidson77@msn.com