

Veterans
CHAPTER 196
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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196.01 CREATED.

There is hereby created and established a Department of Veterans' Affairs, hereinafter referred to as the department.

History: 1943 c 420 s 1

196.02 COMMISSIONER OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Subdivision 1. **Appointment; qualifications.** The department shall be under the supervision and control of a commissioner of Veterans' Affairs who shall be appointed by the governor under the provisions of section 15.06. No person shall be eligible to receive appointment as commissioner unless he has the following qualifications:

- (1) Residence in the state of Minnesota;
- (2) Citizenship in the United States;
- (3) Veteran of the armed forces of the United States as defined in section 197.447.

Subd. 2. **Bond of Commissioner.** The commissioner shall give bond to the state in the sum of \$10,000.

Subd. 3. **Deputy Commissioner.** The commissioner may designate one of his employees as deputy commissioner, who shall have the qualifications prescribed in this section, and may revoke such status at any time, regardless of the civil service status of such employee and without affecting such status. The deputy may exercise all the powers of the commissioner, subject to his direction and control.

History: 1943 c 420 s 2; 1949 c 739 s 20; 1951 c 713 s 18; 1969 c 275 s 1; 1969 c 1129 art 8 s 4; 1977 c 29 s 1; 1977 c 305 s 26

196.03 OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.

All officers and employees of the department shall be appointed by the commissioner and they shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them by the commissioner.

History: 1943 c 420 s 3

196.04 RULES.

Subdivision 1. **Promulgation.** The commissioner shall adopt reasonable and proper rules to govern the procedure of the divisions of the department and to regulate and provide for the nature and extent of the proofs and evidence and the method of taking and furnishing the same, in order to establish the right to benefits provided for by the law. Such rules shall become effective when

approved by the attorney general and then be filed in the office of the secretary of state.

Subd. 2. **Existing rules to govern.** Until modified or repealed by the commissioner, all orders, rules and regulations and permits or other privileges issued or granted with respect to any function consolidated hereunder, and in effect at the time of such consolidation, shall continue in effect to the same extent as if such consolidation had not occurred.

History: 1943 c 420 s 4

196.05 DUTIES OF COMMISSIONER.

The commissioner shall:

(1) Act as the agent of a resident of the state having a claim against the United States for benefits arising out of or by reason of service in the armed forces and prosecute the claim without charge;

(2) Act as custodian of veterans' bonus records;

(3) Administer the laws relating to the providing of bronze flag holders at veterans' graves for memorial purposes;

(4) Administer the laws relating to recreational or rest camps for veterans so far as applicable to state agencies;

(5) Administer the state soldiers' welfare fund and veterans' relief fund and other funds appropriated for the payment of bonuses or other benefits to veterans or for the rehabilitation of veterans;

(6) Cooperate with national, state, county, municipal, and private social agencies in securing to veterans and their dependents the benefits provided by national, state, and county laws, municipal ordinances, or public and private social agencies;

(7) Provide necessary assistance where other adequate aid is not available to the dependent family of a veteran while the veteran is hospitalized and after the veteran is released for as long a period as is necessary as determined by the commissioner;

(8) Act as the guardian of the estate for a minor or an incompetent person receiving moneys from the United States government when requested to do so by an agency of the United States of America provided sufficient personnel are available;

(9) Cooperate with United States governmental agencies providing compensation, pensions, insurance, or other benefits provided by federal law, by supplementing the benefits prescribed therein, when conditions in an individual case make it necessary;

(10) Assist in implementing state laws, rights and privileges relating to the re-employment of veterans upon their separation from the armed forces;

(11) Contact, at times as he deems proper, war veterans, as defined in section 197.447, who are confined in a public institution; investigate the treatment accorded those veterans and report annually to the governor the results of the investigations; and the heads of the public institutions shall permit the commissioner, or his representative, to visit any veteran; and, if the commissioner, or his representative requests any information relative to any veteran and his affairs, the head of the institution shall furnish it;

(12) Other powers as may be authorized and necessary to carry out the provisions of chapters 196, 197 and 198.

History: 1943 c 420 s 5; 1947 c 172 s 1; 1963 c 132 s 1; 1969 c 275 s 2; 1980 c 414 s 3

196.051 GUARDIANSHIP.

Subdivision 1. **Appointment of commissioner.** The probate court may appoint the commissioner of veterans affairs guardian of the estate of a veteran or dependent for whom the appointment of a guardian is found by the court to be necessary. When appointed and qualified, the commissioner may act as guardian of the estate. The probate court is not authorized to appoint the commissioner guardian of the person of a veteran. The word "veteran" as used in this section shall have the same meaning as it is defined in section 197.447.

Subd. 2. **Bonding.** Notwithstanding section 525.551 or other law, the commissioner is not required to file a bond when he acts as guardian pursuant to authority granted by section 196.051.

Subd. 3. **Funds.** The commissioner may commingle the funds of persons who are under his guardianship pursuant to authority granted by section 196.051. The commissioner shall keep complete and accurate accounts showing each transaction that occurs with respect to the funds of each person under his guardianship.

History: 1977 c 241 s 1; 1980 c 414 s 4

196.06 ANNUAL REPORT.

Subdivision 1. **To Governor.** The commissioner shall make an annual written report to the governor giving:

- a. An account of all moneys received and disbursed;
- b. A description of the work done;
- c. Administrative improvements;
- d. Activities of the department;
- e. The number of veterans who have, during the past year, received relief in any form;
- f. The number of veterans on relief rolls;
- g. The number of claims presented on behalf of veterans, and the disposition thereof;
- h. The recommendations he may deem necessary for the active performance of the duties and purposes of the department.

Subd. 2. **Available to legislature.** The report referred to in the preceding subdivision shall be made available to the members of the legislature.

History: 1943 c 420 s 6; 1969 c 275 s 3

196.07 TECHNICAL STAFF.

The commissioner's technical staff shall have the same qualifications as enumerated for the commissioner in section 196.02.

History: 1943 c 420 s 7

196.08 FILES AND RECORDS CONFIDENTIAL.

The contents of, and all files, records, reports, papers and documents pertaining to, any claim for the benefits of Laws 1943, Chapter 420, whether pending or adjudicated, shall be deemed confidential and privileged and no disclosure thereof shall be made, without the consent in writing of the claimant who has not been adjudicated incompetent, except as follows:

- a. To said claimant personally, his duly appointed guardian, his attorney in fact, or his duly authorized representative, and as to matters concerning himself alone, when, in the judgment of the commissioner, such disclosure would not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the claimant.

b. To the representatives of veterans' organizations recognized by the United States government, not exceeding five from each such veterans' organizations, and when such representatives have been duly certified as such by the state department of any such veterans' organizations in the state of Minnesota.

c. In any court in the state of Minnesota which has jurisdiction of the parties to, and subject matter of, an action or proceeding therein pending, as found by said court, when required to be produced by the process of such court, and then only in open court, as evidence, in such action or proceeding after a judge thereof shall have ruled the same to be relevant and competent evidence in such action or proceeding according to the laws and statutes of said state.

History: 1943 c 420 s 8

196.09 [Repealed, 1969 c 275 s 12]

196.10 POWERS OF COMMISSIONER.

The commissioner shall have the power to order, regulate, consolidate, eliminate, or redistribute the functions of the departments, agencies, divisions, offices or activities in the department of veterans affairs, and fix the functions thereof and the duties and powers of their respective executive aids.

History: 1943 c 420 s 10

196.11 CERTAIN POWERS OF ADJUTANT GENERAL TRANSFERRED.

All powers and duties now imposed by law upon the adjutant general with reference to war veterans and the Soldiers' Welfare Director are hereby transferred to the commissioner of veterans affairs and shall hereafter be exercised, performed, and administered by him.

History: 1943 c 420 s 11

196.12 [Repealed, 1969 c 275 s 12]

196.13 [Repealed, 1969 c 275 s 12]

196.14 EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS ENTITLED TO VETERANS' PREFERENCE.

The commissioner, whenever he deems it practicable shall employ persons entitled to preference under section 43.30. Upon request by the commissioner, the commissioner of employee relations shall certify for appointment to positions in the department from the appropriate eligible list only those persons entitled to preference under section 43.30. Otherwise employment in the department shall be governed by the provisions of the state civil service act.

History: 1943 c 420 s 14; 1973 c 507 s 45; 1980 c 617 s 47

196.15 OFFICE SPACE TO BE ASSIGNED TO DEPARTMENT.

The commissioner of administration shall assign the office space in the state veterans service building so far as necessary to carry out the purposes of Laws 1943, Chapter 420.

History: 1943 c 420 s 15; 1969 c 275 s 4

196.16 [Repealed, 1969 c 275 s 12]

196.17 TO ASSIST DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS OF ALL WARS TO SECURE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS.

Subdivision 1. **Soldiers of all wars defined.** Soldiers, sailors, and marines, who were disabled in military service during all wars and their dependents, are entitled to the same privileges as are now enjoyed by all other veterans.

Subd. 2. **Appropriation.** There is hereby appropriated from the general fund of the state of Minnesota, the sum of \$7,500 for each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1942, and June 30, 1943, to be expended by The Disabled American Veterans, department of Minnesota for the purpose of assisting war veterans and their dependents in the preparation and presentation of their claims to the United States government for compensation and other benefits to which they are entitled as a result of disabilities incurred in military service.

Subd. 3. **Purpose of section.** This section is hereby declared to be in the interest of the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, the support of the state government and the existing public institutions, and for the purpose of assisting veterans and their dependents who are entitled to compensation and other benefits from the United States government but have been unable to obtain it and in many instances have had to rely upon local assistance and charity.

History: 1941 c 425 s 1-3; 1943 c 618 s 1; 1969 c 399 s 49

196.18 VETERANS AFFAIRS; UNCOMPENSATED AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES; EXPENSES.

To assist in the discharge of the functions of the department, the commissioner of veterans affairs may accept uncompensated and voluntary services and enter into written agreements with private or public agencies or persons for uncompensated and voluntary services as may be practical. Persons rendering voluntary uncompensated services may be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the performance of official duties at the same rate per mile as state employees.

History: 1980 c 414 s 1