

**NINETY-NINTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Reno, Nevada
August 22, 23, 24, 2017**

Resolution No. 13: Improve VA Communication with Service Officers

Origin: Minnesota

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Prior to 2012 the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was efficient in communicating with power of attorney (POA) and veterans service offices (VSO) while adjudicating veteran benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA correspondence including, yet not limited to, notices to the claimant, rating decisions and appeals notices were in paper form and a copy was delivered in every case to the POA or VSO of original regional office jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, In 2012 VA announced, "VA Transformation" and VA's intention to digitize all information including claims folders and information submitted on behalf of claims and appeals; and

WHEREAS, Scanning of information post 2012 was mandatory for all cases being initiated or considered; and

WHEREAS, Since, VA has established an information system in where work is digitized and issue to a National Work Que (NWQ), delivering work to regional offices not of original jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, In M-21-1MR1, I.3.B.1.b, "Notices that must be provided to the Representative: Unless representation is limited by the claimant, power of attorney (POA) representatives are entitled to notice of any VA decisions affecting the payment of benefits or relief sought by the claimants whom they represent. Representative also must receive other forms of correspondence sent to claimants. These include, decision notices, statements of the case and supplemental statements of the case, notice of certification and transfer of appeals to the board of veteran appeals (BVA), intent to file a claim notice and requests for information and evidence needed to substantiate a claim(e.g. development letters)"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Reno, Nevada, August 22, 23, 24, 2017, That The American Legion hereby endorse efforts to establish provisions in law enforcing the mandatory issuance of all correspondence, both electronic or in paper form, to the original Power Of Attorney (POA) of submittal; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the claimant be copied to the original regional office of jurisdiction and to the applicable POA authorized to represent the claimant.