

Tele : 24102305
Fax : 26880943
Email : vsfdelhi@yahoo.com

Veteran Sailors' Forum
Directorate of Ex-Servicemen Affairs
Integrated Headquarters, MoD (Navy)
4th Floor, Chankya Bhawan
Chanakyapuri
New Delhi 110021

DX/VSF/47/GBM/DELHI/14

20 Aug 14

**MINUTES OF THE 6th GENERAL BODY MEETING OF VETERAN SAILORS'
FORUM (VSF) NORTH ZONE HELD AT VARUNIKA AUDITORIUM,
CHANAKYAPURI ON 27 JUL 14**

1. The General Body Meeting (GBM) of the VSF Delhi Charter was conducted from 0940 h to 1430 h on 27 Jul 14 in Varunika Auditorium, Nau Sena Baugh 1, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. The GBM was Chaired by Cmde Ajay Saxena, President, VSF Delhi Charter.

2. Following were present in the GBM:-

(a) **Invitees.**

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|-------|-----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| (i) | Capt DR Sharma | - | MS INCCB |
| (ii) | Capt SS Mann | - | Director, ECHS |
| (iii) | Capt HC Patro | - | JD(Policy), KSB |
| (iv) | Capt JK Chaudhary | - | CRSO(N) |
| (v) | Lt Cdr Sandip Murarka | - | Secretary, INBA |
| (vi) | Mr Harish | - | Representative, State Bank of India |

(b) **Charter Representatives.**

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|-----|--------------------|---|------------------------------|
| (i) | Cdr George Abraham | - | Secretary, VSF Delhi Charter |
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| (ii) | AK Singh POELP | - | Representative, VSF Jabalpur Charter |
| (iii) | Aswini Kumar POWTR | - | Representative, VSF Dehradun Charter |
| (iv) | Shivraj Singh, Ex-SCPO | - | Representative, VSF Associate Charter, Ghaziabad |
| (v) | Shivraj Singh, Ex-CPOWTR- | | Coordinator, VSF, NOIDA |
| (vi) | Pratap Singh Shekhawat | - | Poorv Nau Sainik Sanstha, Rajasthan |
| (vii) | JC Bhatt, ex-POMA | - | Poorv Nau Sainik Kalyan Samiti, Nainital |

Item I – President's Address

3. At the outset, President welcomed outstation Regional Charter reps, special invitees and VSF members from North Zone. He expressed his sincere gratitude to be amongst the Veterans, and acknowledged the contribution of the veterans in building the Navy to its present glory.

4. He emphasised the commitment of Navy and VSF towards the welfare of ex-servicemen and widows. He highlighted the fact that VSF is another platform to take up issues with various agencies. In this context, he brought out the necessity for all members and charters to reach out to the veterans and widows and provide them with necessary assistance to avail the welfare schemes provided by Government keeping VSF and DESA in the loop. The President informed the gathering of the various measures being implemented by VSF and Navy to reach out to the veterans and widows to ensure their honourable resettlement. He also highlighted the recent developments in areas of pension, One Rank-One Pension, Healthcare, and Welfare schemes by various agencies. He informed the gathering of the formation of NAVPEN and expressed his confidence that the pension issues of the veterans would be better addressed.

5. He updated the forum on the progress of Widows Hostel in Delhi and informed the gathering that the Navy is monitoring the case at the highest level.

6. He finally requested the members to actively participate and provide their much needed inputs during the deliberations.

Item II – Secretary's Report

7. Secretary VSF presented the organisational structure of VSF as well as its aims and objectives. He highlighted the activities undertaken by VSF at the national level as well as in the North Zone since the last GBM held on 06 Oct 13 at NHO, Dehradun. The presentation covered the following aspects:-

- (a) Introduction of VSF, Aims and Objectives of the Forum.
- (b) Organisation Chart and hierarchy.
- (c) Details of Charters and membership strength.
- (d) Initiatives undertaken by VSF at national level.
- (e) Initiatives undertaken by Delhi as Northern Command Charter.
- (f) Status of cases undertaken by Delhi Command Charter.
- (g) Actions to be undertaken by NOK on demise of veteran.

Item III – Presentation on Key Issues

8. Following presentations were made for the benefit of the members:-

- (a) Progress made in ECHS - by Director, ECHS.
- (b) New schemes / scholarships by INBA - by Secy, INBA
- (c) Indian Naval Placement Agency - by JDESA(INPA)
- (d) ESM Welfare schemes by Government - by JD(POLICY), KSB
- (e) Handling of pension by Banks - by SBI Representative

Item IV – Discussion on Agenda Points

9. The details regarding discussion on agenda points and decisions arrived at are placed at **Appendix 'A'**.

Item V – Vote of Thanks

10. The AGM ended with a vote of thanks by Secretary, Veteran Sailors' Forum, North Zone on behalf of the President, Veteran Sailors' Forum, North Zone.

Item VI – Veterans' Interaction with Various Agencies

11. The representatives of KSB, INBA, ECHS, CRSO(N) and State Bank of India interacted with the veterans and widows to resolve / clarify their queries as also provided an update on policy guidelines.

12. There being no further points, the meeting was adjourned with the permission of the Chair and all the members were requested to proceed for lunch. A folder containing brochures and important information on VSF, NRS, INBA, ECHS etc., was distributed to all veterans on their arrival.

13. These minutes have the approval of President, VSF Delhi Charter.

-Sd-
(George Abraham)
Commander
Secretary VSF, North Zone

Distribution: - Normal.

GBM AGENDA POINTS

Item I - Canteen Smart Cards (Jabalpur Regional Charter)

1. The purchasing limit of CSD smart card needs to be increased keeping in line with increasing inflation and growing purchasing power in general.

Discussions

2. MS INCCB informed that the limits have been revised twice (on 21 Aug 06 and on 27 Oct 08). The same notwithstanding, this issue is under consideration at IHQ MOD(Navy)/INCCB and IHQ MOD(Army)/DDGCS, keeping the aspirations and increased purchasing power of the beneficiaries in mind vis-à-vis the budgetary allotment to the CSD by the Govt. He recommended that the next review of the purchase limits should be undertaken after the 7th Pay Commission is announced.

3. President, VSF North Zone directed that the issue be reviewed by VSF Delhi for further action, after announcements of the 7th CPC recommendations.

Decision

4. VSF Delhi to review the requirement to take up case with IHQ MOD (Army) / DDG CS through INCCB after implementation of 7th CPC and update the forum.

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item II - Lack of Medicines in ECHS Polyclinics (Dehradun and Jabalpur Regional Charters)

5. Costly medicines are not available at ECHS and patients are referred to Military Hospitals for medicines, which takes 2-3 months. Local purchase also take long duration, which not only requires the patients to make repeated visits to polyclinics but also remain without medicine for this period.

Discussions

6. Director ECHS clarified that the primary reason for the shortfall is the error in placing the annual demand which arises due to the incorrect data on the strength of ESMs borne in the local areas. This reiterated the need for every ESMs to register

with local ZSBs. In addition, he intimated that ECHS is attempting to also resolve the issue through outsourcing of pharmacy services. A proposal for 'Outsourcing of Pharmacy Operations' in two Regional Centres (Delhi and Pune) as Pilot Project has been forwarded to DESW/MOD on 31 Jan 14 by the Central Organisation, ECHS. The same is pending for Gol approval.

7. One of the ESMS suggested that the medicines could be provided through CGHS. Director ECHS clarified that the medicines are provided through Service hospitals for purpose of accounting and demanding of medicines and therefore this cannot be routed through CGHS.

Decision

8. VSF Delhi to update the forum on progress of the case for outsourcing of pharmacy services in ECHS Polyclinics.

Action: VSF Delhi /Dir ECHS

Item III - Vacancies for Group C Posts in Central Govt (Jabalpur Regional Charter)

9. Increasing vacancies for Group C for ex-servicemen may be taken up with Central Government for benefit of all ex-servicemen.

Discussions

10. The forum was intimated that DGR has taken up a case for additional reservations in Group B posts for ESM in lieu of the posts lost after the merger of Group D and C. The case is still pending with Gol.

Decision

11. VSF Delhi to liaise with DGR and update the forum on progress of the issue.

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item IV - Separate Queue for Senior Citizens in ECHS (Dehradun Charter)

12. Separate queue for the patient above 60 years of age in Military Hospitals.

Discussions

13. The GBM was apprised that both DGMS and ECHS have issued clear directions to accord priority attention to senior citizens.

Decision

14. The point be closed.

Action: All concerned

Item V - Token System in Military Hospitals (Dehradun Charter)

15. The system of auto generated centralised token number from reception in Military Hospital for the patient needs to be instituted for various OPDs to avoid delays and to ensure transparency.

Discussions

16. The GBM was informed that the issue has been analysed at DGMS(Navy) and that suitable measures are already in place in all military hospitals. VSF Dehradun further clarified that though the tokens are issued centrally by the hospitals, physical presence of the patients is required in the OPDs to register themselves again. It was also brought out that similar system is in force in Base Hospital New Delhi.

Decision

17. VSF Delhi to obtain details of the existing system of registration at Base Hospital and thereafter take up case with DGMS(Navy).

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item VI - Exemption from Toll Tax (Sukhwinder Singh Ex-Hon S/LT and Satish Kumar Yadav Ex-POELP)

18. Presently, only serving personnel are exempted from Toll Tax. It would benefit all veterans if they are exempted from payment of Toll Tax.

Discussions

19. It was clarified that as per existing government regulations, only service personnel on duty are exempted from toll tax and ESMs are not eligible for this exemption. The representative from Poorv Nau Sainik Sanstha Rajasthan suggested that the case be taken up once again for the benefit of all ESMS. The Chairman recommended that a fresh case be taken up with NHAI for exemption of toll tax for ESMs.

Decision

20. VSF Delhi to take up a case with NHA to ascertain facts on ground regarding exemption of toll tax for ESM. If required to take up case for exemption, then it would be taken up as a tri-service issue through HQ IDS.

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item VII - Interaction with ESM by ZSB (SK Saxena Ex-MCAA-II)

21. Interaction with ESM by the Zilla Sainik Board (ZSB) on a quarterly or half yearly basis to bring forward/ resolve pending issues to the District Sainik Welfare Officer in order to initiate further action by the concerned civil authority.

Discussions

22. The KSB Rep informed the gathering that ZSBs are mandated to undertake monthly welfare meetings with the ESMs, preferably on a fixed day.

23. In this connection, it was brought out that the staff in ZSB do not understand the naval ranks and trades leading to slow response to queries and improper dissemination of information on jobs and other facilities offered through ZSB. The need to take up a case with KSB for educating the ZSB Staff on the Naval ranks and trades was highlighted.

24. It was also brought out that the facilities and job opportunities are not published by ZSB, for the benefit of all ESMS. It was also suggested by some ESMs that there should be a provision for ESMs to give feedback on the performance of ZSBs.

Decision

25. VSF Delhi to take up a case with KSB to familiarise all ZSB Staff on Naval ranks and trades as also to institutionalise the procedure of disseminating information on job opportunities and facilities offered by ZSBs on a common platform.

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item VIII - Support for Small/ medium Scale Business for ESM (SK Saxena Ex-MCAA-II)

26. There should be provision/procedure for government support for the ESM to begin with small / medium scale business.

Discussions

27. RSB/ZSBs are mandated to provide assistance to ESMs and widows to set up self-employment ventures. Further, assistance is also provided by Directorate of Self Employment of DGR for business ventures. The members were requested to contact the ZSBs or DGR Zonal Offices for further assistance or refer to the DGR website for details.

Decision

28. Point was closed.

Action: All concerned

Item IX - Signature on Forms for KSB Education Grant (Satish Yadav, EX-POELP)

29. ESMs should be permitted to get the forms for availing 'Education Grant' for their children to be signed by additional authorities like VSF and equivalent such organisations in Army and Air Force in addition to ZSBs alone due to administrative inconvenience. For example, it is very difficult for a person staying in Delhi to get the form signed from RSB.

Discussions

30. The GBM was informed that the application form for Education Grant deals with Government funds and therefore only Record Offices and ZSBs are authorised to sign the Education Grant application. Ex-servicemen associations such as VSF, being non-governmental agencies and not record holders, are not authorised to sign these applications. The Chairman directed that since the issue is as per government policy on handling of financial documents, no further action be initiated on the point.

Decision

31. Point to be closed.

Action: All concerned

Item X - Ex-Servicemen Identity Card (Satish Yadav, EX-POELP)

32. There must be a provision of issuing of identity card for ESM by CABS initially. Thereafter, the card could be reissued due to wear and tear by DESA or ZSB.

Discussions

33. The ESMs brought out that retiring Sailors could also be issued with ESM I-Card by CABS akin to the one being issued to officers by INS Kunjali. The GBM was informed that the ESM I-Card issued by ZSBs is the true identity of all ESMs for

availing Govt concessions / facilities. Due to its pan-India validity and being the legal proof for availing government welfare schemes, the ESM Identity cards need to be issued by ZSB as a single agency. The GBM was intimated that instances of non-acceptance of ESM cards issued by Navy to the officers on retirement, by certain government organisations, have been reported in the recent past and therefore DESA has taken up a case for a single officers' I-card for all purposes. Many ESMs supported the concept of single I-card.

Decision

34. VSF Delhi to monitor the proposal for single ESM Card for officers and follow up action for VSF members in accordance with the decision on I-card for officers.

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item XI - Education Allowance for JCOs (Ghaziabad Associate Charter)

35. NCO's who have served 8 years in his present rank as PO/equivalent get Grade Pay of 4200/-, which is same as that of JCOs, and hence the financial constraints of a JCO are same as that of NCOs. However, Education Allowance is provided only to NCO's. Therefore, Education Allowance should be provided to all ranks of PBOR and not only to NCO's.

Discussions

36. The 'Education Allowance' was instituted by the Government of India to alleviate the financial state of the NCOs existing at that point in time. However, if this gap has been bridged over the years, the case could be reviewed de novo. Since the subject comes under the purview of KSB, the matter could accordingly be examined by them for review. During the deliberations, it was also brought out that there is an inordinate delay from ZSB / RSB / KSB to respond to requests on welfare measures such as Children Education Grant.

Decision

37. VSF Delhi to take up the case with KSB for considering inclusion of JCOs towards award of Education Allowance to their wards. KSB may also be apprised separately on the inordinate delay experienced by ESMs in processing of their requests / issues.

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item XII - Classification Allowance for CPO and Above (Ghaziabad Associate Charter)

38. As per the Item XI of Minutes of the Meeting of 5th GBM of VSF North Zone held on 13 Oct 13 at NHO Dehradun, Classification Allowance for CPOs and above was taken up by IHQ MoD(N) in the 7th CPC. Please intimate the decision taken by higher authorities in this regards.

Discussions

39. The point was forwarded to Pay Commission Cell (Navy) (PCC(N)) for consideration. The PCC (N) is in the process of consolidating the inputs from various quarters for discussions in the Tri-Services forum and onward submission to the 7th CPC. DESA will keep the veterans posted on the issue.

Decision

40. The point was closed.

Action: All concerned

Item XIII - Benefit Scheme (Jabalpur Regional Charter)

41. Confirmation is required whether ESM patients are allowed to use service transport from Air Force Station Hindon to R&R Hospital or Base Hospital.

Discussions

42. The GBM was informed that Commanding Officer, 11 Air Force Hospital and Station Commander, Air Force Station, Hindon when contacted by VSF Staff has informed of the limited transport resources available with the Station. This has necessitated to restrict the use of transports for service personnel and their dependants. While alternative options are being considered actively, the Air Force Station is currently not in a position to provide transport for ESM patients from Hindon to Army R&R Hospital or Base Hospital. It was also clarified that the same restriction was applied by the Air Force for their own veterans.

Decision

43. The point was closed.

Action: All concerned

Item XIV – Deletion of Column (f) in VSF Membership Form (Ghaziabad Associate Charter)

44. Column (f) in the VSF Membership form pertains to registration number of an individual ESM with the KSB. In light of many ESMs not having the registration number with KSB, a letter was forwarded by VSF Ghaziabad Associate Charter in September 2008 to consider omission of column (f) of VSF Membership form. However, the same format of the earlier form is still being used. The decision on the proposal may be intimated.

Discussions

45. It was highlighted that registration with ZSBs is essential to facilitate maintenance of accurate records in respect of the ESMs and Widows as also to interact with the Government to seek additional funds for government welfare schemes. Therefore, the need to retain the column exists and cannot be diluted. Secretary VSF clarified that membership is not being denied if the ESM is not in possession of KSB registration number. However, the members were requested to expedite registering with ZSB/RSBs. The chairman again emphasised that KSB registration is essential not only to avail welfare benefits from Government but also for maintaining accurate statistics to seek better facilities for ESMs.

Decision

46. Point was closed.

Action: All concerned

Item XV - Action Delay on Official Matters in CABS (Ghaziabad Associate Charter)

47. In some cases a very prolonged time is consumed to initiate action on official matters. For instance, when a case comes for change of home address in ESM Discharge Book (I.N.S.A.D.C), it takes approximately 03 months to complete the action in GB section.

Discussions

48. The GBM was informed that the delay involved is primarily due to the requirement of verification of documents from police / other concerned agencies. It was also intimated that after the setting up of NAVPEN, the response time on requests of veterans has improved. Members were requested to report specific instances of delay to help plug existing loopholes, if any. The Chairman brought out that the manpower at CABS and NAVPEN is presently limited, which leads to unavoidable

delay in processing of cases. Notwithstanding this, the Chairman directed VSF Delhi to intimate CABS of the point being raised by the ESMs.

Decision

49. VSF Delhi to sensitise CABS/NAVPEN for early response to query from ESMs.

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item XVI - Upkeep of Family Morale of VSF Members (Ghaziabad Associate Charter)

50. The families of VSF members should also have an occasion to interact under the aegis of VSF. To keep up their morale and feel more involved, it is advisable to have occasional combined activities like get togethers, cultural program or site visit of some historical places in Delhi area.

Discussions

51. It was brought out that organising such activities at the Zonal or National level will require considerable financial resources as also large infrastructural organisation. Therefore, Secretary VSF recommended that such activities could be undertaken locally by respective Charters with assistance of local sponsors and seek concessions. The representatives of Rajasthan Poorv Nau Sainik Sanstha supported this view and intimated that same model is followed by them. The chairman appreciated the efforts of Rajasthan Poorv Nau Sainik Sanstha and requested local charters to undertake such activities and inform VSF Delhi for according publicity.

Decision

52. All regional / associate charters to undertake such events and inform VSF Delhi for according publicity. Point be closed.

Action: All concerned

Item XVII - Increase in Bus Pass Subscription (Pushkar Singh, ex-POA)

53. School bus pass subscription for ESMs has been increased by 400 % since 2007-11. The issue was previously brought up to INS India but did not receive any favourable decision. The fee structure may be re-looked into, especially when ESM are encouraged to enrol their children in NCS.

Discussions

54. It was intimated that the bus pass subscription for Ex-servicemen was increased for the year 2013-14 from Rs. 1000/- to Rs. 4000/- per year in compliance with observations of Test Audit Objection for providing government hired buses for non-entitled personnel. It was further highlighted that the amount collected is being deposited to Reserve Bank of India through MRO and no portion is retained with Navy. The methodology adopted in arriving at the current rates of subscriptions was also explained to the gathering. The school bus service has therefore not been stopped for Ex-servicemen, unlike Army and Air force. It was also intimated that INS India is considering the possibility of hiring more buses for Dwarka and Sagarpur route to reduce the problem of crowding.

Decision

55. The point was closed.

Action: All concerned

Item XVIII - Restriction to ESM for Canteen facility at Nausena Bagh I, II & III (Pushkar Singh, ex-POA)

56. The families of ex-servicemen staying in Palam and Naraina area are not permitted to avail canteen facilities through Extension Counters at NSB II and NSB III.

Discussions

57. It was clarified that due to limited warehousing facility, these Extension Counters cannot be stocked beyond a certain limit. Also, these are functioning as Extension Counters and not URCs due to limited manpower and space restrictions. Notwithstanding these limitations, naval widows are permitted as an exception to purchase grocery on humanitarian ground. The chairman directed that since India has already undertaken the necessary steps to the extent feasible, the point be closed.

Decision

58. The point was closed.

Action: All concerned

Item XIX - Separate Counter for Honorary Commission Officers

59. There should be separate counter for Honorary Commission Officers in Canteen.

Discussions

60. The veterans brought out that Army Canteens, at various locations, have separate counter for Honorary Commission Officers, which is not available in INS India Canteen. The Chairman clarified that as per extant regulations, Honorary Commission Officers are entitled for pay and protocol purposes for a commissioned officer but enjoy privileges / facilities as per the last rank held by them. Providing more than the entitled facility is a function of resource availability with the base unit. Notwithstanding this, the Chairman accepted the need to examine the provision of a separate counter for Honorary Commission Officers in the canteen.

Decision

61. VSF Delhi Charter to take up a case with INS India to examine feasibility of a separate counter for Honorary Commission Officers at INS India Canteen.

Action: VSF Delhi Charter

Item XX –Anomaly in ECHS Contribution

62. All personnel in the ranks between MCPO II and Lt Cdr including Honorary Commission Officers pay same ECHS subscription whereas the facilities admissible are different.

Discussions

63. After clarification from Director ECHS that the contribution of MCPO / Honorary Commission officers is Rs.39,000/- whereas that of Commissioned officers is Rs. 60,000/-, there were no other views on the subject.

Decision

64. The point was closed.

Action: All concerned

65. There being no other points, the meeting was adjourned. The minutes are being issued with the approval of the Chairman.

(George Abraham)
Commander
Secretary, VSF Delhi Charter