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June 13, 2026

## Meeting Minutes: Northern District Caucus

**Organization:** Disabled American Veterans, Department of Arizona

**Meeting:** Department Convention Business Session

**Date/Time:** June 12, 2026; 1430

**Location:** Crowne Plaza Phoenix-Chandler Golf Resort, Chandler, Arizona

**Presiding Officer:** Northern District Liaison Ray Drake

**Recorder:** Adjutant Carl Forkner

### 1. Overview

The meeting focused on the responsibilities of the Northern District Liaison, the coordination of veteran support resources across chapters, and the election of a new district liaison. Discussion included chapter-level outreach, support for Native American veterans, coordination with department leadership, and clarification of district caucus voting procedures.

### 2. District Liaison Role and Responsibilities

The district liaison role was described as a coordination and communication position rather than a command position. The liaison serves as a connection between district chapters and the department by gathering common issues, identifying shared needs, and helping communicate department information back to the chapters.

The group discussed that the position was formerly known as district commander, but the role has since changed. The current purpose is to help chapters work together, elevate collective concerns, and strengthen coordination across the district.

### 3. Veteran Support and Community Outreach

A candidate for the liaison position emphasized a desire to work directly with chapters, identify local resources, and connect veterans with community assistance. Examples discussed included scooters, wheelchairs, homelessness resources, help with utility bills, compensation claims, and other support services.

The candidate also discussed experience as a certified Chapter Service Officer and noted an interest in mentoring others, particularly in Globe, to help develop additional service capability and prepare communities for stronger chapter participation.

## 4. Native American Veteran Outreach and Reservation Considerations

The group discussed outreach to Native American veterans and the challenges associated with forming chapters on or near reservations. Participants noted that traditional, spiritual, governmental, and financial practices may affect how chapter structures are implemented. The discussion also addressed the requirement that chapters be inclusive, which may present challenges when working with reservation governments.

Remote service stations were discussed as a practical approach to supporting veterans on reservations. Planned or proposed service locations included San Carlos, the Fort Apache area, and White River.

## 5. Chapter Service Officer and DEC Responsibilities

The meeting clarified the relationship between Chapter Service Officer duties, District Executive Committee responsibilities, and the district liaison role. The DEC role was described as relaying the wishes and needs of the chapter to the department, while the district liaison gathers and communicates broader district-level concerns.

The candidate noted that if elected as district liaison, she expected to step away from her DEC role and focus on the liaison responsibilities.

## 6. Candidate Background and Qualifications

The liaison candidate described her experience assisting veterans directly, including discussing compensation claims, helping veterans file intent-to-file documentation, and connecting individuals to resources. She also described educational and professional experience in therapeutic recreation, vocational rehabilitation, traumatic brain injury considerations, substance abuse treatment, criminal justice, and community-based work.

Participants discussed the distinction between hands-on service work and district-level policy coordination. The discussion was brought back to the broader question of why the candidate should serve in the district liaison position.

## 7. Voting Procedure

The caucus was reminded that voting for district liaison is conducted by chapter, with one vote per chapter rather than one vote per individual. Chapters were instructed to confer internally before casting their votes.

The group also discussed the possibility of a second vote if an elected liaison were later elected to a higher office. It was noted that the caucus could stipulate that, in such an event, the second-place candidate would assume the liaison role.

## 8. Election Result

After chapter caucuses and votes were completed, Debbie Roberts was announced as the new Northern District Liaison by a 4 to 2 vote of the chapters. The group congratulated her, and she expressed appreciation and a desire to meet the expectations of the role.

## 9. Additional Candidate Introductions

Several individuals introduced themselves as candidates for department or state-level positions. These included candidates for department commander, senior vice commander, inspector general, finance committee at-large, and department treasurer. Candidates summarized their experience, service records, current roles, and reasons for seeking office.

Participants were informed that individuals who submitted letters of intent would meet with the nominations committee, while others could still be nominated from the floor during the election process.

## 10. Key Decisions and Outcomes

- The caucus confirmed the district liaison role as a coordination and communication position between chapters and department leadership.
- Chapters cast votes by chapter caucus, with one vote per chapter.
- Debbie Roberts was elected as the Northern District Liaison.
- Additional candidates for department and state-level offices introduced themselves and requested support for upcoming elections.

## 11. Follow-Up Items

- Continue coordinating with chapters to identify shared district-level needs and concerns.
- Support development of service capability in Globe and other communities preparing for expanded chapter participation.

- Continue planning and coordination for remote service stations serving Native American veterans.
- Proceed with nominations committee activities and upcoming department elections as scheduled.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carl B. Forkner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Carl B. Forkner  
AVHOF Class of 2025  
Adjutant & CEO  
Department of Arizona  
Disabled American Veterans