Prepared by the North Dakota Legislative Council
staff for the Public Safety Committee
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HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The 1927 Legislative Assembly established an office known as the Veterans' Service Commissioner. The Veterans' Service Commissioner was appointed by the Governor and was to assist with the filing of federal veterans-related claims, pending claims, and representing veterans in the claims process.

The 1945 Legislative Assembly repealed the provisions relating to the Veterans' Service Commissioner and established a Department of Veterans Affairs under the supervision and control of a Commissioner of Veterans Affairs appointed by the Governor.

The 1971 Legislative Assembly repealed the provisions relating to the appointment of the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs by the Governor and established an Administrative Committee on Veterans Affairs responsible for organization, policy, and general administration of all veterans' affairs in the state, including the appointment of the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. The legislation passed by the Legislative Assembly was introduced as the result of a study completed by the Legislative Council's 1969-70 interim State and Federal Institutions Committee of the responsibilities and membership of state boards and commissions.

The following is a history of the Veterans' Service Commissioner and Commissioner of Veterans Affairs appointments:

Commissioner	Time Period Served	Reason for Leaving
Mr. T. O. Kraabel	April 1927-July 1937	Resigned to accept a position with the National Rehabilitation Commission of the American Legion in Washington, D.C.
Mr. Romanus J. Downey	July 1937-April 1947	Served until his death
Mr. Floyd E. Henderson	April 1947-December 1961	Resigned to assume the duties of commandant of the North Dakota Veterans Home
Mr. Lloyd F. Zander	December 1961-June 1985	Retired
Mr. Milton W. Kane	July 1985-January 1994	Retired
Mr. Ray Harkema	February 1994-April 2004	Retired
Mr. Bob Hanson	September 2004-September 2007	Removed from position