

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

Commissioner of Veterans' Services

for the year

1958

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MASSACHUSETTS



OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF VETERANS' SERVICES
15 ASHBURTON PLACE, BOSTON 8

September 15, 1958

To the Honorable Senate and the House of Representatives:

In compliance with the requirements of Chapter 115, Section 2, General Laws, as amended, I submit to you the annual report of the Commissioner of Veterans' Services.

The part relating to Veterans' Benefits is for the calendar year 1957.

The part relating to the work of the Pension-Compensation, Rehabilitation and Hospital Contact Divisions, is for the calendar year ending December 31, 1958; the report for the Blood Donor Service is for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1958.

This report also includes a detailed statement of the receipts and expenditures for personnel and incidentals for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1958.

Very truly yours

CHARLES N. COLLATOS,

Commissioner

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED

JUNE 30, 1958

RECEIPTS

Reimbursement for Services — Veterans' Benefits	\$5,456.60
Reimbursement for Services — Burials	4,517.07

EXPENDITURES

Salaries of Commissioner and Deputies	25,199.37
Administrative Expense	
Permanent Employees	\$384,133.95
Accounts Payable	75.00 384,208.95
Temporary Employees	8,947.57
Subsidiaries	36,534.17
Accounts Payable	2,353.12 38,887.29
Reimbursement to Cities and Towns on Account of Veterans' Benefits	4,307,259.05
Annuities to Blind and Paraplegic Veterans	102,045.63
Equipment — Bond Issue	154.77

Financial Statement Verified
 (Under Requirements of C.7, S.19GL)
 December 10, 1959

By Joseph T. O'Shea

Approved for publishing

Frederick J. Sheehan, *Comptroller*

VETERANS' BENEFITS

Chapter 115, General Laws, as amended

Application for Veterans' Benefits is filed in the city or town of legal settlement and referred by the local Agent to the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans' Services with recommendation. The Commonwealth reimburses cities and towns in settled cases to the amount of one-half authorized and actually paid.

In the case of veterans, or dependents, who are not settled, but have resided in the Commonwealth for three years next preceding the date of application, application is filed in the city or town of residence, and the amount approved and paid is reimbursed in full by the Commonwealth.

The number of persons aided during the year 1957 is as follows:

Settled	22,559
State Settled.....	699
War Allowance	5

Veterans' Benefits cases approved on monthly returns for the calendar year 1957 are classified as follows:

SETTLED CASES

<i>Civil War</i>	\$	43,645.27
Widows		48
Children		5
Total		53
<i>Indian Campaigns</i>		5,520.06
Veteran		1
Widows		9
Total		10
<i>War with Spain</i>		251,957.02
Veterans		79
Widows		391
Mothers		3
Children		5
Total		478
<i>Second Nicaraguan Campaign</i>		45.00
Veteran		1
<i>Dominican</i>		76.00
Veteran		1
<i>Mexican Border</i>		22,675.16
Veterans		18
Widows		22
Total		40
<i>World War I</i>		2,381,167.11
Veterans		3,057
Wives		74
Widows		2,439
Mothers		287

Fathers	55	
Children	38	
Total	5,950	
<i>World War II</i>		5,733,531.32
Veterans	7,566	
Wives	281	
Widows	449	
Mothers	3,787	
Fathers	919	
Children	77	
Total	13,079	
<i>Korean Emergency</i>		929,409.47
Veterans	1,749	
Wives	110	
Widows	41	
Mothers	779	
Fathers	260	
Children	9	
Total	2,948	
Total		\$ 9,368,026.41

BREAKDOWN OF VETERANS' BENEFITS APPROVED FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 1957

	<i>Approved</i>	<i>Cost to Commonwealth</i>
Ordinary Benefits	\$6,649,047.90	\$3,324,523.95
Fuel	559,120.59	279,560.295
Doctor	287,353.40	143,676.70
Medication	419,785.17	209,892.585
Hospital	1,307,016.72	653,508.36
Dental	50,523.15	25,261.565
Miscellaneous	95,210.23	47,605.115
Approved prior to deductions	\$9,368,057.16	\$4,684,028.58
Total reimbursement to Cities and Towns after adjustments		\$4,562,324.64

STATE SETTLED CASES

<i>Spanish War</i>		\$ 754.78
Widows	2	
Veterans	1	
Total	3	
<i>Mexican Border</i>		25.00
Veteran	1	
<i>World War I</i>		37,060.38
Veterans	86	
Wives	4	
Widows	20	

Mothers	2	
Total	<u>112</u>	
World War II		127,710.57
Veterans	330	
Wives	6	
Widows	6	
Mothers	46	
Fathers	7	
Children	1	
Total	<u>396</u>	
Korean Emergency		27,137.75
Veterans	139	
Wives	4	
Mothers	33	
Fathers	7	
Widows	1	
Total	<u>184</u>	
Total		<u>\$ 202,688.48</u>

BREAKDOWN OF VETERAN'S BENEFITS (STATE SETTLED) AS APPROVED FOR THE
CALENDAR YEAR 1957

Ordinary Benefits	\$156,191.84
Fuel	8,803.68
Doctor	3,235.85
Medication	6,611.38
Hospital	23,984.04
Dental	1,323.00
Miscellaneous	2,538.69
Approved prior to deductions	\$202,688.48
Total reimbursement to Cities and Towns after adjustments	\$202,681.07

ASSIGNMENTS AND LIENS

Chapter 493, Acts of 1954, captioned "An Act to Indemnify the Commonwealth and Cities and Towns thereof in certain Veterans' Benefits cases," enables Veterans' Agents and the Commissioner to protect the various municipalities and the Commonwealth from the eventual financial burden which some Veterans' Benefits cases may entail. It was an entirely new departure in Veterans' Benefits administration and, insofar as this office is aware, it marks the first Legislative change in the Common Law which holds that financial proceeds or financial damages in Personal Action claims and demands are not subject to lien, at least until after final judgment in Court.

From July 1954 through December 1958, returns from assignments amounted to \$69,157.74.

DETAIL OF BURIAL EXPENDITURES

Burial Allowance is provided in the case of a needy veteran and his dependents. The allowance is paid by the local authorities, on authorization of the State Office, and is reimbursed by the Commonwealth in the same manner as Veterans' Benefits.

The following represents the full amounts approved by the Commonwealth:

<i>Civil War</i>	\$	250.00
Widow	1	
<i>Indian War</i>		236.86
Widow	1	
<i>War with Spain</i>		3,490.05
Veterans	5	
Widows	13	
Total	<u>18</u>	
<i>Mexican Border</i>		250.00
Veteran	1	
<i>World War I</i>		26,377.48
Veterans	117	
Wives	7	
Widows	23	
Mothers	16	
Fathers	6	
Total	<u>169</u>	
<i>World War II</i>		19,754.81
Veterans	39	
Wives	8	
Widow	1	
Mothers	30	
Fathers	12	
Children	25	
Total	<u>115</u>	
<i>Korean Emergency</i>		4,230.70
Veterans	7	
Wife	1	
Mothers	5	
Fathers	6	
Children	9	
Total	<u>28</u>	
STATE SETTLED		
<i>World War I</i>	\$	900.00
Veterans	5	
Wife	1	
<i>World War II</i>		490.00
Mothers	2	
Total reimbursement to Cities and Towns	\$	28,604.12

Claims were filed with the Social Security Administration for Lump Sum Death Payment under Section 202, paragraph g. of the Social Security Act.

Receipts amounted to \$8,454.81 of which \$3,937.74 was paid to cities and towns in settled cases.

REIMBURSEMENT TO CITIES AND TOWNS FOR VETERANS' BENEFITS

<i>Monthly Returns</i>	<i>Date Reimbursed</i>
January 1957	October 2, 1957
February 1957	November 5, 1957
March 1957	December 10, 1957
April 1957	January 17, 1958
May 1957	February 18, 1958
June 1957	March 19, 1958
July 1957	April 16, 1958
August 1957	May 14, 1958
September 1957	July 1, 1958
October 1957	July 15, 1958
November 1957	August 22, 1958
December 1957	October 15, 1958

STATE WAR ALLOWANCE

State War Allowance was granted to the dependents of men serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. This was provided by Chapter 2, Acts of 1942, enacted by the Special Session of the Legislature.

Chapter 209 of the Acts of 1956 extended War Allowance to the dependent relatives of any person in the Armed Forces of the United States while the United States is engaged in hostilities under the flag of the United Nations, or in a state of war arising out of and as a result of such hostilities, until discharge of the serviceman or until January 31, 1957, whichever date is earlier.

State War Allowance is paid by cities and towns and is reimbursed in full by the Commonwealth.

<i>Expended in 1957</i>	\$248.00
Mothers	5

ANNUITIES FOR PARAPLEGIC AND BLIND VETERANS

Chapter 115 of the General Laws, as amended by Chapter 660, Acts of 1949, Chapter 530, Acts of 1953, and Chapter 567, Acts of 1956, provides for the payment of an annuity of \$500 per annum, to be paid monthly, to the following:

A veteran who, according to the records of the Veterans Administration of the United States government, has suffered permanent impairment of vision of both eyes of the following status: central visual acuity of 5/200 or less in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of 5/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees in the better eye; a veteran who is suffering from paraplegia and has permanent paralysis of both legs and lower parts of the body, resulting from traumatic injury to the spinal cord or brain, sustained through enemy action, or accident while in such military or naval service, and a veteran who has permanent

paralysis of both legs and lower parts of the body, resulting from malaria, anemia, other forms of disease, tumors or poisoning which may produce signs and symptoms similar to those resulting from traumatic paraplegia and certified by said Veterans Administration to be service-connected.

A veteran to be eligible must have resided in Massachusetts at time of acceptance for War-time service.

The cost for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1958 was \$102,045.63.

SPANISH WAR REIMBURSEMENT FUND

The sum of \$25.00 was expended during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1958, under the provisions of Chapter 280, Acts of 1928.

BLOOD DONOR SERVICE

Blood Donor Service was established in the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans' Services on July 1, 1948 with a Supervisor of Blood Donations in charge.

During the period from July 1, 1957 through June 30, 1958, there were approximately 3,719 donors. This represents a 7.7% increase over the previous year and the largest amount collected since the inception of the program. The monetary value is \$92,975.00.

The blood was donated within the borders of the Commonwealth to (1) the Blood Program of the American Red Cross and (2) the blood banks of private, State and Federal hospitals. This figure represents only the actual number of pints of blood reported to this office. We feel certain that the number of actual donors is significantly higher but it has been impossible to devise a system whereby all donors will be reported to this office.

The blood needs of 312 patients in private hospitals in Massachusetts, in addition to patients in Veterans Administration Hospitals and Soldiers' Homes were cared for. All qualified veterans and their dependents were covered to the full extent of our ability to do so.

CONTACT DIVISION

The following is a summary of the work performed by the section of the Veterans' Services known as the Claims and Pension Division located at the Veterans Administration Regional Office, Room 634, One Beacon Street.

This Division is charged with the important function of carrying out the provisions of Chapter 599, as amended by the Acts of 1946, namely: assisting veterans and their dependents in obtaining all the benefits they are entitled to under the Federal Laws administered by the Veterans Administration.

This office through the medium of Power-of-Attorney procured compensation and pensions for veterans and their dependents during the year 1958 in the amount of \$2,138,250.96, an increase over the previous year of \$242,046.20.

AATIVITIES PERFORMED DURING 1958

1. Personal visits by veterans and/or dependents to office	10,296
2. New claims for compensation and pension including live and death cases	3,692
3. Requests for review — old or disallowed claims	3,796
4. New claims for dental and medical Out-Patient Treatment	936
5. Arrangements for hospitalization	1,196
6. Arrangements made for Out-Patient Treatment	1,872
7. Arrangements made for Dental Treatment	208
8. Cases reviewed at Service Tables	7,436
9. Board appearances and hearings	3,224
10. Interview with agents	780
11. Federal insurance cases	936

12. Educational and Rehabilitation Problems	312
13. Handling physical evaluation board retirement cases for physical disability retirement	208
14. Loan Guaranty cases at \$10,000	430
15. Checking Veterans Administration Finance for Agents	3,848
16. Requests for Civil Service letters	728
17. Requests for Tax Abatement letters for five months' period from June through October	1,692
18. Veterans' Benefits referred from Veterans Administration and Service Organizations	1,084
19. Assisting veterans in preparing State Bonus applications	78
20. Contacting Legal Division regarding Appointment of Fiduciary of incompetent veterans	739

REHABILITATION DIVISION

SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The monetary value of benefits accrued to veterans and their dependents through the efforts of this Division include:

1. *Education and Training*

a. Application for training under P. L. 550 and P. L. 894	647
b. Application for training under P. L. 16, P.L. 190 and P.L. 610 ..	44
c. Total actions for P. L. 550, P. L. 894 and P. L. 15	5,638
d. Certificates issued for above 7-1993	1,022
e. Enrollment certificates received 7-1999	1,020
f. Appeals filed — Hearings	11
g. Monthly reports filed — 7-1996 a/b	923
h. War Orphans Education Program — P. L. 634	63
i. Out-of-State actions	61
j. Total amount issued on awards	\$744,446.00
k. Counseling applications filed	429

Due to the fact that we were to get the actual figures on all certificates of reasonable value, we have computed the figures for the year 1958 in dollars and cents at a minimum basis as follows:

2. *Loan Guaranty*

a. Certificates of eligibility	979
b. Restoration of entitlement	265
c. Certificates of reasonable value	979
d. Certificates of Guaranty	301
e. Total actions taken on loans	6,002
f. Approximated estimates of mortgages	\$15,325,000.00
g. Certificates of eligibility issued via Legislative reports	156
h. Actions taken via Legislative requests	870
i. Approximated estimate of Legislative loans	\$2,393,000.00

3. *Miscellaneous*

a. General information requests	428
b. Tax and Civil Service letters	304
c. Folders transferred — in and out	109
d. Finance queries re Compensation, Pension, Subsistence, overpayments, Education and Home Loans	5,726

HOSPITAL CONTACT DIVISION

This Division is dedicated to service to veterans within the hospitals and institutions of the Commonwealth and the Veterans Administration as directed

by the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans' Services, for the purpose of securing Federal compensation, pension and medical benefits, as well as State administered benefits to which they may be entitled.

Various departments of the Commonwealth, including Mental Health, Public Health, Public Welfare and Correction, are constantly seeking the assistance of the Unit in obtaining these benefits for veterans under their care. The Department of Health alone is presently caring for approximately 1,600 veterans, with the records reflecting an admission and discharge rate of about 2,000 annually. Visits are made to these hospitals to interview veterans and hospital staff members; to review records and case histories to acquire information and evidence useful in the development of claims for Federal benefits. As directed by the Office of the Commissioner visits are made to private and Veterans Administration Hospitals to interview patients and hospital officials for the purpose of assisting and advising in the development of claims for VA benefits, to discuss medical and other problems and to obtain medical reports for rating purposes.

On many occasions local Agents of Veterans' Services enlist the cooperation of the Unit in securing pensions and compensation awards for the dependents of hospitalized veterans, thus alleviating expense to the community, and to assist in effecting admissions and transfers to VA hospitals. This Unit is often requested to negotiate with the Office of the VA Chief Attorney for the appointment of guardians and fiduciaries in the release of funds withheld for the benefit of incompetent veterans and their dependents.

This Division receives numerous requests for assistance in achieving admissions to VA hospitals for treatment of neuropsychiatric disorders. VA officials have been most cooperative in extending every courtesy and consideration on requests by this Office for admissions and transfers from State Hospitals to VA Hospitals. A gratifying measure of success has rewarded the efforts of the Department in accomplishing admissions and transfers of service-connected cases with a minimum of delay. VA Hospitals which accept neuropsychiatric patients in Massachusetts are operating at capacity and facilities simply do not exist for accommodation of all who seek admission to such hospitals. Accordingly, a priority system is prescribed by VA Central Office to govern and control admissions where applications exceed available facilities. Principally non-service-connected applications are affected by the priority system which determines the positions such applications will occupy on the waiting list for admission. In fairness to all concerned, VA Hospitals adhere closely to the priority system. Delay must always be expected on applications for non-service-connected admission to VA Neuropsychiatric Hospitals.

LEGISLATION IN 1958 AFFECTING THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF VETERANS' SERVICES

Chapter 236

An Act extending the term for which a Commissioner of Veterans' Services shall be appointed.

Chapter 487

An Act creating a lien upon the real estate of certain recipients of Veterans' Benefits.

Chapter 127 of the Resolves

Resolve providing for an investigation and study by a special commission relative to certain matters relating to Veterans' Affairs.