

MICHIGAN VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Rehabilitation & Veterans Service Committee



**Annual Report of
Combined Recoveries And Activities
For Fiscal Year
2009 - 2010**

INTRODUCTION

This document reports our combined Recoveries and Activities for October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. Each respective recovery section was completed by the Service Director of the participating Veterans Organization. This year, our cumulative recoveries rose to \$395,908,087.

The grants from the State of Michigan for the eleven Congressionally Chartered Veteran's Organization for 2009 – 2010 totaled \$3,029,600. Dividing this amount into the cited recovery figure will show that we are bringing \$130.00 for each dollar received, back into the state's economy. This money is paid directly to individual veterans for their economic use or paid to the Michigan Veterans Homes for member care.

On April 1, 2010 the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) created a new program to provide benefits counseling to veterans in the state for the purpose of assisting veterans to obtain all federal, health and financial benefits due them. In doing so, the DMVA solicited individual contractual agreements that would extend through September 30, 2011. Five contractual agreements with Veteran Service Organizations were established within geographical boundaries called Grants.

Grant 1A the Upper Peninsula, \$1,000,000; Grant 1B the Lower Peninsula, \$1,000,000; Grant 2A the 131 Corridor \$500,000; Grant 2B the Thumb and Metro Area \$ 400,000; and A special grant for paralyzed veterans \$129,600.

Grants 1A, 1B, and 2A were awarded to a Coalition of Five (American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of The Purple Heart and the Veterans of Foreign Wars). Grant 2B was awarded to the AmVets and the specialized grant went to the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

The Vietnam Veterans of America were not awarded a grant, but still provide advocacy services at the Detroit Regional Office. They continue to be an active participant of the Rehabilitation and Service Committee that addresses issues with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Therefore, their activities are included in the report.

PURPOSE OF THIS COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Michigan Veterans Organizations' Rehabilitation and Veterans Service Committee is to provide an instrument for the recording of service information so that it can utilize as (1) a basis for measuring range and quality of services rendered; (2) a control to prevent unnecessary field coverage; and (3) a means of informing the Executive and Legislative branches of the State of Michigan and other interested parties of the combined activities and recoveries.

The Committee is comprised of the State Service Directors of the American Legion (AL), American Veterans of World War II and Korea (AMVETS), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Marine Corps League (MCL), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA).

Additionally, the Assistant Service Director of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, are also members of the Committee.

DEFINITION OF A SERVICE OFFICER

Definition of a Service Officer is taken from the United States Department of Labor Dictionary of Occupational Titles:

“Advises and aids veterans or their dependents in presenting disability insurance or pension claims for benefits under Federal, State or Local laws; evaluates and determines validity of claim by reviewing legislation, regulations, and precedents, and by studying veteran’s medical reports and service history. Obtains claimant’s power of attorney. Prepares claims forms and briefs and assembles pertinent evidence. Requests hearings before the Government Boards and presents briefs. Reviews Board decision for grounds for appeal. Advises veterans on insurance, vocational and other matters working in cooperation with the VA and other government agencies. Prepares bulletins and correspondence to acquaint field representatives with current activities and legislation. Participates in or initiates civic functions such as panel discussions and mass communications programs to inform the public of services rendered and rights and benefits of veterans and dependents. May offer technical advice on Congressional or other governmental hearings.”

The above description pertains to all full-time accredited representatives, who have been certified to practice cases before the VA, Social Security Administration and Civil Service Commission.

Our volunteer Service Officers from local Posts, Chapters or Detachments are a vital part of our organization structure. Their duties are to assist the members of the posts, widows, orphans and other worthy cases brought to their attention in obtaining rightful benefits from the Federal and State Governments. To assist them in the preparation of the proper forms in applying for such benefits and assembling of evidence required in connection therewith. He/she will further carry out duties as outlined in the Manual of Procedures of his organization. These Service Officers do not restrict their activities to members only. As we have indicated, they will assist any worthy case that comes to their attention.

METHOD OF COMPUTATION AND DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGY

COMPENSATION

NEW CLAIMS: monthly payments made by the VA to a veteran because of service connection disability. Service connection is a particular injury or disease resulting in disability that was coincidental with military service. If the condition pre-existed service, aggravation of that condition may be service connected. Recoveries are computed on the basis of the total monthly amount for one year, plus retroactive.

INCREASE IN COMPENSATION: compute the increase only over the previous credit.

EXAMPLE: Previous recovery shows 50%, second credit award shows 70% rating. Method of computation $70\% \text{ less } 50\% = 20\%$ computation times 12 months, plus retroactive. **WE DO NOT COMPUTE THE ENTIRE AMOUNT – ONLY THE DIFFERENCE IN INCREASE.**

HOSPITAL RATINGS – PARAGRAPH 29 & 30: Temporary 100% assignments. Step #1, compute 100% monthly payment (less scheduler rating times hospital and convalescent period). **EXAMPLE:** 30% prior to entrance into hospital, temporarily assigned 100% recovery. $100\% \text{ minus } 30\% = 70\%$ times period of time involved. Further, since the action constitutes a reopened service connected case it is proper to take the restored Scheduler Rating of 30% and times it by 12 months and report this as a recovery amount under Confirmed and Continued category (providing there was no other recovery report during the past 12 months).

CONFIRMED AND CONTINUED COMPENSATION: a veteran is re-evaluated on his/hers compensation claim and the VA does not reduce or increase his rating. This is considered as a recovery because we have assisted in maintaining the award by our representation. Compute the Confirmed and Continued rating by using the monthly amount multiplied by 12.

PENSION

NEW CLAIMS: monthly payments to wartime veterans who became permanently and totally disabled from disability or disabilities not related to military service. In order to qualify, the veteran must also meet certain income and net worth limitations. Recoveries are computed on the basis of the total monthly amount for one year, plus any retroactive amount.

CONFIRMED AND CONTINUED: any time a veteran, widow or child/children case has been reopened and is subject to continued entitlement by the VA and the award is maintained or increased, then a recovery is proper because of our representation on the claim. Compute by monthly amount times 12 months.

NOTE: Eligibility Verification Reports processed by our office on Protected Pension. Section 306 cases meet the definition of Confirmed and Continued and can be computed. In the event you elect to report on the Eligibility Verification Reports, please show separately under Confirmed and Continued category

INSURANCE

Benefits paid to survivor(s) under the provisions of the various forms of Government Insurance. Recoveries are computed on the basis of the actual amount paid.

RATING BOARD APPEARANCES

Daily, a member of our staff appears at each of the VA Rating Boards and reviews all of their ratings for that particular day. On those ratings that are challenged, the Service Officer doing the review will either have an informal hearing with the Board member, on the spot if possible. If this is not possible, a formal process of disagreement will be initiated. In addition to the regular review, we include all formal appearances before the Rating Board on appellant action.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS

Administrative Review pertains to a case where we are not satisfied with the rating. We want to enter a protest, and it does not necessarily fall within the appellant category. Therefore, we would ask our National Office to call the case into the VA Central Office for administrative intervention.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Assistance paid by the VA for institutional, cooperative on-the-job, on-the-farm, for apprenticeships programs. Recoveries are computed on the basis of the actual amount paid.

DEPENDENTS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE: education and training benefits are available to veteran's dependents if the veteran has a service connected permanent and total

disability rating. These same benefits are afforded to dependents of veterans who die of a service connected condition.

MISCELLANEOUS

Medical care benefits, specially adapted housing, automobile allowance, waivers and Social Security recoveries secured through the appellate process. Compute recovery on actual amount. Identify in your report the benefits.

DEATH BENEFITS

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation – benefits are paid to a widow, children and dependent parents when a veteran dies of a service connected disability. Recoveries are computed on the basis of the total monthly amount of one year, plus any retroactive amount.

DEATH COMPENSATION

Benefits are paid to the widow, children and dependent's parents if the service connected death took place prior to January 1, 1957. (These claimants have a right to elect to receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation if it is to their advantage). Recoveries are computer on the basis of the total monthly amount for one year, plus any retroactive amount.

DEATH PENSION

Benefits are paid to a widow and/or children based on a period of the veteran's wartime service. Income limitations and net worth are factors in this benefit. Recoveries are computed on the basis of the total monthly amount for one year, plus any retroactive amount.

BURIAL AND PLOT ALLOWANCE

BURIAL ALLOWANCE: The law provides an allowance of \$2,000.00 in the case of a service connected death and when certain eligibility features can be met. A \$300.00 burial allowance is provided for a non-service connected death providing the veteran was in receipt of pension benefits or died in a VA Hospital.

PLOT ALLOWANCE: The law provides a \$300.00 plot allowance for veterans who were medically discharged from service for a service connected disability/disabilities, in receipt of compensation or pension at time of death, died in a VA hospital, or is buried in a State cemetery.

**COMBINED WORK ACTIVITIES
FOR FISCAL YEAR REPORTING PERIOD
OCTOBER 1, 2009 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2010**

VA CLAIMS FOLDERS REVIEWED (RATING BOARD & OFFICE)	34,198
INTERVIEW (INCLUDING FIELD OFFICES)	40,982
*PERSONAL	
*TELEPHONE	
INCOMING:	151,189
OUTGOING:	101,848
RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	18,120
LETTERS SENT	89,016
LETTERS RECEIVED	
OUTSIDE:	81,171
VA	200,134
NEW COMPENSATION (VA FORM 21-526)	16,456
NEW PENSION (VA FORM 21-526)	2,266
NEW DEPENDENCY & INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (VA FORM 21-534)	572
NEW DEATH PENSION (VA FORM 21-534)	1,431
NEW EDUCATIONAL (INCLUDES DEPENDENTS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE)	1,178
BURIAL ALLOWANCE (VA FORM 21-530)	899
INSURANCE	51
NEW CLAIMS - MISCELLANEOUS	4,987
POWER OF ATTORNEY (VA FORM 21-22)	14,920
APPEALED CASES (COMPLETION OF VA FORM 646)	1,502

**COMBINED RECOVERIES
FOR FISCAL YEAR REPORTING PERIOD
OCTOBER 1, 2009 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2010**

	Total Number of Cases	Total Award Dollars
COMPENSATION - NEW CLAIMS	6,785	\$ 101,537,824
COMPENSATION - INCREASES IN AWARDS	6550	\$ 125,546,535
COMPENSATION - CONFIRMED & CONTINUED	7688	\$ 86,037,874
PENSION - NEW CLAIMS	1990	\$ 25,130,151
PENSION - CONFIRMED & CONTINUED	2206	\$ 24,218,440
EDUCATION BENEFITS	2025	\$ 3,730,379
MISCELLANEOUS	538	\$ 4,206,659
DEPENDENCY & INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (Include death compensation)	1058	\$ 9,549,091
DEATH PENSION - NEW CLAIMS	1411	\$ 15,455,800
BURIAL ALLOWANCE	553	\$ 495,334
TOTAL	30,804	\$ 395,908,087

STATE BUDGET VS. VSO RECOVERIES 10 YEAR PERIOD

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NEW CASES</u>	<u>TOTAL RECOVERIES</u>	<u>STATE BUDGET</u>
10/1/2000 – 9/30/2001	10,516	\$152,938,093	\$3,884,400
10/1/2001 – 9/30/2002	10,086	\$185,174,991	\$3,912,200
10/1/2002 – 9/30/2003	11,031	\$203,602,900	\$3,912,200
10/1/2003 – 9/30/2004	13,975	\$218,562,285	\$3,912,200
10/1/2004 – 9/30/2005	13,532	\$242,544,379	\$3,912,200
10/1/2005 – 9/30/2006	27,624	\$248,404,063	\$3,912,200
10/1/2006 – 9/30/2007	21,000	\$293,458,274	\$3,912,200
10/1/2007 – 9/30/2008	22,372	\$331,305,715	\$3,912,200
10/1/2008 – 9/30/2009	19,953	\$342,844,433	\$2,934,150
10/1/2009 – 9/30/2010	30,804	\$395,908,087	\$3,029,600