



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Charlene Cobb
Veterans Service Officer

April 27, 2009

To: Sheboygan County Board of Supervisors
County Administrator Adam N. Payne

Subj: **Veterans Service Department / Commission 2008 Annual Report**

Dear Board Members and Mr. Payne:

Enclosed is the 2008 Annual Report of the Sheboygan County Veterans Service Office and Veterans Service Commission.

Our department consisting of a Veterans Service Officer and Secretary; is one of the smallest departments in Sheboygan County government. However, our client base is not small. It consists of about 10,000 veterans from WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf War and our current involvement in OEF/OIF. In addition are the men and women of the "Cold War" and peacetime service and an untold number of qualified survivors and dependents of disabled and/or deceased veterans.

The year brought many additions and changes to the Veterans Administration programs available to our veterans and created substantial work to implement them.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Jim Riesenbergs for the dedicated service he gave to Sheboygan County and its Veterans for 22 years. I look forward to taking on the challenge of filling his shoes. Jim and I share a common philosophy that nothing is too good for those that are willing to sacrifice their lives to preserve the freedoms we hold so dear.

Very truly yours,

Charlene K Cobb
Veterans Service Officer

Enclosure

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED SINCE 1935

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2008 ANNUAL REPORT

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE DEPARTMENT

I MISSION STATEMENT AND SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Veterans Service Department's mission statement is:

The Sheboygan County Veterans Service Department will provide timely and quality service for veterans seeking assistance with local, state, and federal benefit programs. We exist to advocate for and support the military veterans and their families in our county.

“Serving Those Who Served”

The Veterans Service Department exists under Chapter 45, Wisconsin Statutes, which mandates that each county in Wisconsin shall elect/appoint an honorably discharged veteran of the U S military service to the position of County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO). These duties include:

Advise persons living in the service officer's county who served in the U S armed forces regarding local, state, and federal benefits to which they may be entitled.

Assist in resolving any problems veterans encounter accessing the programs provided by the federal or state Veteran's Administration.

Provide service and assistance to qualified dependents and/or surviving spouse to ensure they are informed of benefits they may be entitled to.

Maintain a record of burials of all veterans within the county.

Cooperate with other local, state, and federal agencies to provide services to veterans and answer questions regarding veteran's issues.

Serve as executive secretary of the County Veterans Service Commission (CVSC). The CVSC is comprised of three honorably discharged veterans who monitor a program to provide financial aid to needy veterans and their dependents.

II GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED IN 2008

Expand Outreach Effort with Service Providers

We made progress in this area. We have several partners in the local area for a variety of issues primarily dealing with health care. We also have established contact with the education coordinators at institutions of learning and businesses to provide assistance to veterans seeking employment or to further their education.

Staff Transition

2008 saw a complete turnover of the office staff. Julie Jekenewscz replaced Barb Hohn in April and Charlene Cobb replaced Jim Riesenberg in October. Thanks to the diligence of Adam Payne, County Administrator and the Human Resources department the positions were only vacant a short time.

Pass down binders were prepared for the positions to give an introduction to the job and some of the responsibilities and duties. Jim Riesenberg also returned as an LTE for three weeks to provide some one-on-one indoctrination for Charlene Cobb. This was an absolute necessity given the scope of the job.

Changes in Veterans Service Commission (VSC) Operation

The VSC is comprised of three honorably discharged veterans and their mission is to provide immediate assistance to needy veterans. There was an increase in the number of veterans needing assistance and the commission addressed the procedures involved to be able to accommodate the majority of the requests.

Volunteer Driver Program

The driver program is still required to transport those without adequate transportation to the Out patient clinic at Cleveland. We are also fortunate to have transportation to the VA Medical Center Zablocki provided by the VA and the Disabled American Veterans from Green Bay to Milwaukee daily.

Military Family Connect (MFC) Source

The CVSO is a member of the MFC Advisory Committee. We work together to get the information and assistance to our military, veterans, and their families. The year provided opportunities to share with the military families and to aid them in their endeavors.

III BUDGET

Even with the expenditure to bring Jim Riesenber in as an LTE, the Veterans Service Department operated within its \$153,234 tax levy budget for 2008. The overall positive variance was \$6,756.31. Savings were achieved in the areas of personnel-related expense (primarily due to the staff turnover), system operation charges including printing, and other operating expenses.

The 2009 department budget is \$158,715; an increase of 3.58% over the 2008 budget.

IV ISSUES, CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The Veterans Service Department will face many challenges in the year ahead. In 2009, Wisconsin will see the largest deployment of National Guard troops and Reservists since World War II. This will mean an increase in veterans seeking assistance upon their return.

Additionally, the office will relocate during 2009. The challenge there is to maintain availability to our veterans during this process. We will need to have access to our records and a confidential area to meet with the individual(s). My objective will be to make the transition as unobtrusive to our clients as possible.

V GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2009

Our goals and objectives include:

1. CVSO to earn certification as a Qualified Claims Representative.
2. Continue to work on outreach and partnering with agencies and organizations to assist veterans.
3. Initiate programs to increase public awareness and support of veterans programs.
4. Streamline the office filing system and prepare files to be electronically recorded and maintained.
5. Examine the VS Department process using facilitated Value Stream Mapping techniques.

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

I MISSION STATEMENT AND SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The County Veterans Service Commission (CVSC) exists under Chapter 45 (45.81) of the Wisconsin statutes which mandates that each county in Wisconsin have in place a three member CVSC to provide financial aid to needy veterans, their survivors and dependents. The Commission consists of three honorably discharged veterans who are (appointed/elected) to serve staggered three year terms. From among them they annually elect a Chairperson and Secretary.

II GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED IN 2008

The following is a composite of the activities of the Commission for 2008.

Cases Accepted	118
New Clients	32
Rejected Applicants	2

III BUDGET

In October we realized we had about exhausted our budget for the year. We went to the Finance Committee through our Liaison committee to receive an additional \$10,000 to see us through the end of the year. It was approved and in total we spent \$59,431 for the year. This was over our budgeted amount of \$55,466 by \$3,965.00. The CVSC gave out \$53,454 in assistance to needy veterans.

IV ISSUES, CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The state of our current economy is sure to create additional demands on our commission and we are already addressing the potential and looking for creative ways to help those in need while staying within our budget.

CVSC Members

Fred H Henckel, Chairman
Konrad K Kackowski, Secretary
David C Williams, Member

**SHEBOYGAN COUNTY
VETERAN'S OFFICE**

