



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Charlene Cobb
Veterans Service Officer

May 13, 2010

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

Subj: **Veterans Service Department / Commission 2009 Annual Report**

Dear Board Members and Mr. Payne:

Enclosed is the 2009 Annual Report of the Sheboygan County Veterans Service Office (VSO) and Veterans Service Commission.

Our client base consists of about 10,000 veterans from WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf War and our current involvement in OEF/OIF. 2009 saw the largest deployment of Reservist and National Guard troops in support of OIF/OEF since WWII. 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 challenges including the relocation of the office. We also lost over 300 Veterans from Sheboygan County, mostly WWII Veterans. This involved considerable work for the office to maintain the proper records for the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and ensure they received the proper Military Honors and benefits they were entitled to.

I would like to acknowledge Julie Jekenewscz (VSO Secretary) for her dedicated service to our Veterans. She goes way above what is required of her to ensure that our Veterans receive the best possible service in obtaining their benefits. Julie shares my 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

Courthouse

615 North 6th Street
Sheboygan, WI 53081-4612

Telephone (920) 459-3053
Facsimile (920) 459-3055

cobbckc@co.sheboygan.wi.us
www.co.sheboygan.wi.us

2009 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 2009

CVSO Certification as a Qualified Claims Representative

This is a work in progress as it will take a couple of years to complete the various training programs. I attended the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) training at the Fall Conference and received my WDVA Certification. I also have completed about 75% of the online Veterans Service Advisor training in preparation for the TRIP (Training, Responsibility, Involvement & Preparation of claims) training that I need for federal VA access.

Expand Outreach and Partnering with Agencies and Organizations

I have made contact with several of the Nursing Home/Assisted Living Facilities in the local area to talk about Veterans issues and provide information on benefits available to their Veteran residents. We have established contact with the Veterans education coordinators at our local institutions of learning to share information on helping Veterans access the new GI Bill the federal government instituted in August.

Initiate Programs to increase Public Awareness

2009 saw the first ever Sheboygan County Armed Forces Day celebration at the Aviation Heritage Center. Our intent was to honor our currently serving Veterans and educate the citizenry of their presence in our communities. We also have participated with our local Veterans Service Organizations on their programs and events.

Streamline the office filing system

The Veterans Service office relocated in October 2009. We are in the process of settling in and making adjustments to our new location. We have located all the files in the same room which is a substantial improvement over having them located throughout our offices. There are still logistics to be worked out and continued streamlining of the overall filing system.

III BUDGET

The Veterans Service Department operated within its \$158,715 tax levy budget for 2009. The overall positive variance was \$17,654.91. Savings were achieved in the areas of personnel-related expense (primarily still due to the staff turnover in 2008), system operation charges including printing, and other operating expenses.

The 2010 department budget is \$155,476.00; a decrease of 2% over the 2009 budget.

IV ISSUES, CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The Veterans Service Department continues to face many challenges in the year ahead. In 2009, Wisconsin saw the largest deployment of National Guard troops and Reservists since World War II. This means an increase in veterans seeking assistance now that they are returning.

We are losing our World War II Veterans at an alarming rate (332 in 2009) and that has increased the workload in our office to ensure they are honored at their passing and that their dependents receive all their entitlements. Looking at ways we can facilitate all the necessary paperwork.

V GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2010

Our goals and objectives include:

1. CVSO to continue with certification training to be 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. Organize the office to maximize our resources in helping our Veterans community.
5. Prepare the files to be electronically recorded and maintained.

2009 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) to serve staggered three year terms. From among them they annually elect a Chairperson and Secretary.

CVSC Members

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

II GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED IN 2009

The following is a composite of the activities of the Commission for 2009.

Cases Accepted	144
New Clients	26
Rejected Applicants	2

III BUDGET

In November 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 \$55,891 for the year. This was over our budgeted amount of \$47,632 by \$8,259.00. The CVSC gave out \$51,851 in assistance to needy veterans.

The 2010 CVSC general operating budget is \$52,882.00; \$3,000.00 less than was spent last year.

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.

V GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2010

1. Develop written instructions for processing a voucher from client application to check issuance.
2. Reorganize the files to facilitate claims processing.
3. Update the application to reflect current verification procedures.

**SHEBOYGAN COUNTY
VETERAN'S OFFICE**

