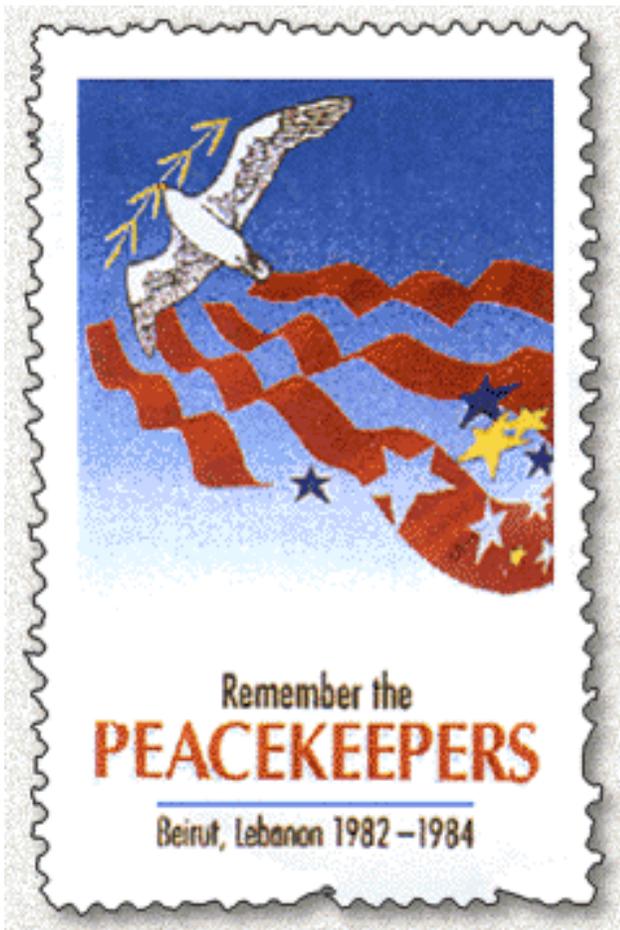


Lake County

Veteran Service Cen-
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2009



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Operational Information

The Veteran Service Office operates on an annual budget of approximately \$1,000,000. Of this amount, about \$320,000 is office expense with the remaining \$680,000 set aside for financial relief. While the office is a function of Lake County government, it has its own monthly expenses. Each year the Veteran Service Commission submits an estimated projection of the financial needs for the following year. The proposed budget is then reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners with the Budget Director and Assistant Budget Director. This review is mandated by law to ensure it is legal and appropriate. Upon completion of this review, the County Commissioners, Budget Directors, Veteran Service Commission and its Executive Director complete the final budget process.

The office expenses include those expected in any business environment: Supplies, salaries, postage, transportation, contract services and so forth. They also include expenses mandated by law, including funeral expenses for indigent veterans' burials, outreach programs and Memorial Day expenses. Also included in these expenses are continuing education and training costs. Training for both Veteran Service Commissioners and Service Officers is mandated by law. Service Officers must meet standards set by the Governor's Office of Veteran's Affairs and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. In addition, each Service Officer must meet certain training standards set by each of the National Veterans Organizations, such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Veterans, Disabled American Veterans and so forth. Lake County's Veteran Service Officers have met all these standards. Lake County has Service Officers accredited by all of these organizations.

Veteran Service Office Information

In addition to preparing, investigating and presenting Eleven Hundred Applications for Financial Assistance, the Service Office prepared and filed One Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Three forms on behalf of veterans or their dependents with the Department of Veterans' Affairs or other federal agencies. This work does not include the preparation and filing of Seven applications for admission to the Ohio Veteran's Home, One Thousand Four Hundred Ninety Seven referrals to other agencies, Three Hundred Thirty Two home visits with veterans or their dependents and sending or receiving almost Five Thousand Eight Hundred letters.

The extreme hard work demonstrated by the staff of the Veteran Service Officer has reaped huge rewards on Lake County's veterans and dependents. The main job of a Veteran Service Officer is to obtain all benefits that may be available to a veteran from federal, state and local governments. Veterans injured during their military service may be entitled to compensation for their injuries from the Department of Veterans' Affairs. These claims are prepared and filed by this office for compensation, pension, education, rehabilitation, insurance and indemnities. In fiscal 2003, Lake County's veterans or dependents received **\$16,591,000 in TAX FREE funds from the federal government!** This amount is **up more than 23%** from the \$13,457,906 received in 1999.

The compensation and pension funds received, included in the above figures, are spent at the discretion of the recipient for mortgages, rent, vehicles, food, clothing, taking in a movie or whatever they want. This amount totaled **\$13,751,000** in 2003 up from \$10,548,687 in 1999 or **an increase of more than 30%**. There was an increase of **\$1,029,000** or an 8.1% increase from 2002.

In addition, our veterans benefit from the Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Painesville that spent over \$15,231,000 for veterans' health care, up from \$13,391,000 spent the prior year for a 13.75% increase.

WOW!!! Job Well Done!

Financial Assistance

2003 Annual Statistics

During the entire 2003 fiscal year, the Veterans Service Commission expended **\$685,440.31** in financial assistance to 943 applicants.

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>
Total Financial Relief Applicants:	1100	1057	955
Total Relief Applicants Approved:	943	984	906
Total Relief Applicants Denied:	70	73	49
Applications Tabled (carryover to 2004):	87	n/a	n/a
Average grant:	\$727	\$678	\$652
Total Expenditures:	\$685,440	\$667,388	\$591,007

Breakdown of Expenditures by Category

	<u>2003</u>		<u>2002</u>	
<u>Category</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Household Expenses	\$382,928	55.87%	\$378,780	56.76%
Utilities:	\$110,403	16.11%	\$ 93,852	14.06%
Food:	\$ 88,122	12.86%	\$ 73,342	10.99%
Clothing Related:	\$ 55,371	8.08%	\$ 49,072	7.35%
Health Related:	\$ 22,125	3.23%	\$ 30,029	4.50%
Vehicle Related:	\$ 16,866	2.46%	\$ 28,995	4.34%
Miscellaneous:	\$ 9,625	1.40%	\$ 13,317	2.00%
Total Relief:	<u>\$685,440</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>\$667,388</u>	<u>100%</u>
Veteran Transports:	<u>2380</u>		<u>1840</u>	

Financial assistance grants are for the purpose of assisting honorably discharged veterans and their dependents who have met with an **unexpected** hardship resulting from illness, injury or lack of employment. The Veterans Service Commission, formerly known as the Soldiers' & Sailors' Relief Commission does not provide pensions but is intended to provide temporary support to those who are eligible for **basic** living needs such as food and shelter. Applicants are required to provide definite proof of their financial need.

The Executive Director and office staff **DO NOT** make determinations on the amounts awarded through our financial relief program. Each application is determined on its own merits in accordance with the intent of Chapter 5901 of the Ohio Revised Code and pursuant to the policies and procedures as established by the Veterans Service Commission.

PANEL CONDUCTS INVESTIGATION INTO SERVICE FOR CURRENT WAR VETERANS

Jonathan R. Warmeling, Executive Director and Service Officer in Charge of Lake County Veteran Services Appointed to Panel

The VA Regional Office initiated a meeting in Columbus, Ohio on January 13, 2004 between key members of the Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Labor, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, US Coast Guard, the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs, the Ohio County Veterans Service Office, and the Adjutant General's Office. The event was chaired by the VA Regional Office Director, Jack Ross. The intent of the gathering was to put faces to the names of key personnel throughout the state of Ohio providing vital resources to recently discharged veterans of Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF). Veterans have been returning to the state, after having served in either one or both of these operations, with health problems, financial problems, legal problems and/or occupational problems. Generally, one of the agencies within the newly formed OEF/OIF Coordinating Group has knowledge of these veterans' situations.

Director Ross identified four objectives to accomplish during the meeting:

- 1) develop a master list of points of contact (POC) for the OEF/OIF Coordinating Group;
- 2) For members to realize the importance of obtaining and sharing the knowledge of returning units from overseas as well as identifying those veterans returning individually;
- 3) Coordinating unified effort in providing veterans and their families benefits and service;
- 4) Coordinating joint visits to seriously injured veterans upon their return home.

Following a brief introduction by the Director, Mr. Ross, each participant was given an opportunity to summarize the benefits/services they can provide veterans as they are reintegrated into civilian life. The briefings generated discussions which generated issues requiring resolution. The issues identified were KIA vs. MIA, Legal Assistance, OEF/OIF Veteran Databases, sharing databases, Demobilization of returning units, the accessibility of information, and finally, County Veterans Service Officer involvement.

On the final issue, Mr. Warmeling expressed concern that County Veteran Service Officers be made aware of veterans issues and concerns as they are the "frontline" of interaction with the veteran. Mr. Ross recognized Mr. Warmeling's concern. VA has committed to inserting the County Veterans Service Officer within a returning veteran's jurisdiction into the OUTREACH Letter in order to ensure the veteran has a POC within his/her vicinity to assist in claims preparation.

This initiative has proven its value in the identification of veterans needing assistance, identification of units requiring assistance, and providing individualized attention to a veteran requiring specialized services. It is up to us to properly identify the individual's needs, determine who to get involved, and inform the appropriate agency/POC.

Duane A. Honeycutt, Veterans Service Center Manager, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Cleveland Regional Office. February 13, 2004

COMBAT RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION FINALLY ARRIVES!

Effective January 1, 2004, career military retirees with injuries or illnesses that are combat or hazardous duty related, and rated by the VA as 10 to 50 percent disabling, will also be eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC). Approved CRSC claims based upon the amendment made in P.L. 108-136 will be effective January 1, 2004. All other approved CRSC claims based upon the initial eligibility criteria in P.L. 107-314 will continue to be effective June, 2003. Retirees must continue to apply to their parent service for CRSC payments. The VA, VFW, DAV and DoD websites have links to the CRSC application.

Career military retirees who are eligible for retired pay who are also eligible for veterans' disability compensation for disabilities rated 50 percent or higher will have concurrent receipt (CR) of military longevity retirement pay and VA disability compensation phased in over 10 years. No application is necessary for CR, the phase in will begin effective January 1, 2004, in the following amounts:

- Disability rated as total, \$750 per month; 90% disability, \$500 per month;
- 80% disability, \$350 per month; 70% disability, \$250 per month;
- 60% disability, \$125 per month; 50% disability, \$100 per month.

Each following year, until 2014, the payment amount will increase by approximately 10 percent. In 2005, entitled veterans would get back another 10% of any remaining offset; in 2006, they would get back 20% of the remaining offset; in 2007, 30% of the remaining offset; and so on. By January 2014, disabled retirees with 50% and higher ratings will be entitled to full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation.

Disabled retirees who qualify for both CR and CRSC must choose one or the other. Because the CRSC program provides payment immediately, rather than the 10-year phase-in for concurrent receipt, legislators plan to allow an annual election period (referred to as an "open season") for CRSC-eligibles. This recognizes that a retiree, who is 100% disabled, but only 60% of that is due to combat-related conditions, may find it advantageous to elect CRSC payments for a few years until the concurrent receipt payment rises to a level that exceeds the CRSC payment. Because CRSC payments are tax-free and non-disability retired pay is not, this could also figure into qualifying retirees' election decisions. Although the exact procedures have not yet been established, once a retiree is determined to be eligible for CR, and they have already applied for or are receiving CRSC, they will automatically be given the option to elect one benefit or the other initially and again provided with the option annually during the open season, throughout the CR phase-in.

National Guard and Reservist career retirees eligible to receive retired pay for their creditable service will be treated the same as active duty retirees, and will be included in both the CRSC program and the phase-in of concurrent receipt for veterans rated 50 percent or higher.



Attention Veterans

Do you know a Korean War Veteran? Did he serve on land over the winter months? The winters in Korea were horrendous. Temperatures easily fell below zero and stayed there (sounds like Lake County this year). Many had frozen feet and hands, but not severe enough to be called "frostbite" or warrant evacuation. There was no medical remedy other than an attempt to keep warm. Many veterans filed for this condition upon return to the US, only to be denied. Now, more than fifty years later, doctors have discovered that these injuries were severe enough to damage the veins in hands and feet. This is known as "Cold Injury." If you experience constantly cold hands or feet, loss of feeling, loss of hair, pain, nail loss, etc, you may suffer from this condition. Contact the Veteran Service Office immediately @ 350-2567.

Our Office - A Brief History

After the Civil War, our Nation's bloodiest conflict, the Grand Army of the Republic returned home to devastation and ruin. Houses were burned or in a state of disrepair; crops were non-existent in barren fields, money was scarce and often the arms and legs of those who would fix the rusty implements of reconstruction were missing. It soon became evident that help was needed, and the Ohio Legislature passed the Soldier's Relief Act in 1886. In 1986 it was renamed the Veterans Service Commission.

"... to care for him that shall have borne the battle, and his widow and orphan." Abraham Lincoln

NEWS FROM IRAQ

Since President Bush declared an end to major combat on May 1..... On October 6 power generation hit 4,518 megawatts-exceeding prewar average. 22 universities and 43 technical institutes are open, as are nearly all primary and secondary schools. By October 1, Coalition forces had rehabed over 1,500 schools - 500 more than scheduled. Teachers earn from 12 to 25 times their former salaries. All 240 hospitals and more than 1200 clinics are open. Doctors' salaries are at least eight times what they were under Saddam. Pharmaceutical distribution has gone from essentially nothing to 700 tons in May to a current total of 12,000 tons. The Coalition has helped administer over 22 million vaccinations to Iraq's children. A Coalition program has cleared over 14,000 kilometers of Iraq's 27,000 kilometers of weed-choked canals, which now irrigate tens of thousands of farms. This project has created jobs for more than 100,000 Iraqi men and women. We have restored over three-quarters of prewar telephone services and over two-thirds of the potable water production. The wheels of commerce are turning. From bicycles to satellite dishes to cars and trucks, businesses are coming to life in all major cities and towns. 95 percent of all prewar bank customers have service and first-time customers are opening accounts daily. Iraqi banks are making loans to finance businesses. The central bank is fully independent. Iraq has one of the world's most growth-oriented investment and banking laws. Iraq has a single, unified currency for the first time in 15 years. Satellite TV dishes are legal. A nation that had not one single element - legislative, judicial or executive - of a representative government now does. In Baghdad alone residents have selected 88 advisory councils. Baghdad's first democratic transfer of power in 35 years happened when the city council elected its new chairman. Today in Iraq chambers of commerce, business, school and professional organizations are electing their leaders all over the country. The Coalition has completed over 13,000 reconstruction projects, large and small, as part of a strategic plan for the reconstruction of Iraq. Uday and Queasy are dead - and no longer feeding innocent Iraqis to the zoo lions, raping the young daughters of local leaders to force cooperation, torturing Iraq's soccer players for losing games, or murdering critics. Children aren't imprisoned or murdered when their parents disagree with the government. Political opponents aren't imprisoned, tortured, executed, maimed, or are forced to watch their families die for disagreeing with Saddam. Millions of long-suffering Iraqis no longer live in perpetual terror. Saudis will hold municipal elections. Qatar is reforming education to give more choices to parents. Jordan is accelerating market economic reforms. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded for the first time to an Iranian -- a Muslim woman who speaks out with courage for human rights, for democracy and for peace. Saddam is gone. Iraq is free. Iraq under US lead control has come further in six months than Germany did in seven years or Japan did in nine years following WWII. Military deaths from fanatic Nazi's, and Japanese numbered in the thousands and continued for over three years after WWII victory was declared. Taking everything into consideration, even the unfortunate loss of our brothers and sisters in this conflict, do you think anyone else in the world could have accomplished as much as the United States and the Bush administration in so short a period of time? SF, LtCol Scot S. Seitz, Commanding, MWSS-171 (to his Marines).

Regardless of your political affiliation, please support our Troops. They are in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere throughout the world under orders from our leaders, doing their jobs because they were told to do so, and they are doing it well - Jon

LAKE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION

105 Main Street, Box 490, Painesville, OH 44077

Phone (440) 350-2567 Fax (440) 350-5980

Email: veterans@lakecountyohio.org

Located in the Lake County Administration Building

Cut-n-Save!!

Cut-n-Post!!

VETERANS SERVING VETERANS

Providing assistance to the men and women who have honorably served our Country

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday, 8 am to 12:00 & 1 to 4:30 pm

Visit our Website: www.lakecountyohio.org/veterans/index.htm

Directions to our office:

Rt. 2 to Painesville/Fairport Harbor/ Richmond St. exit. South on Richmond St. to Rt. 20, turn left to St. Clair St., turn right. We are located on the corner of St. Clair & Main Streets in the Lake County Administration Bldg, 2nd floor. There is parking in back. Do not use numbered spots!

COMMISSIONERS

William F. Barrett, Sr., American Legion, Secretary * Richard A. Bishop, Veterans of Foreign Wars, President
Neal Huelsman, American Veterans * Chuck Law, Disabled American Veterans
Thomas J. Zmecek, Marine Corps League, Vice President

Executive Director/Service Officer in Charge

Jonathan R. Warmeling

Office Staff

Raymond Reiblein, Veteran Service Officer
Luci O'Neill, CVSO(IT) **Gini Geffert**, CVSO(IT) **Jami Abel**, CVSO(IT)
John Kish, Communications/Transportation Specialist

2004 Compensation & Pension Rate Table

Veteran rated 10%: \$106 monthly

Veteran rated 20%: \$205 monthly

Compensation Tables

	<u>30%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>70%</u>	<u>80%</u>	<u>90%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Veteran alone	316	454	646	817	1,029	1,195	1,344	2,239
Veteran with spouse	354	504	709	893	1,117	1,296	1,458	2,366
Veteran, spouse & one child	381	541	755	948	1,182	1,370	1,541	2,458
Veteran with one child	341	488	689	868	1,089	1,263	1,421	2,325

Pension Tables

Veteran alone	\$9,894
With one dependent	\$12,959
Housebound	\$12,092
Housebound w/one	\$15,156
Aid & Attendance	\$16,509
A&A w/one	\$19,570

Health Care Thresholds

Veteran alone	\$24,645
Veteran with one dependent	\$29,577
Veteran with two dependents	\$31,230
Property valuation threshold (personal residence not included)	\$80,000

Lake County Hospital Systems Veterans' Discount Policy

Did you know that the Lake County Hospital was once called Veterans' Memorial Hospital? Back in the early 1900's after World War II, Lake County's citizens pulled together and donated money to assist returning Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines and families that had experienced financial hardship, or worse, the death of the family breadwinner. After these families were taken care of financially, the money left over was donated to the hospital for additions and improvements. The amount totaled more than \$300,000. Remember, that's in 1930 dollars! Because of this significant and large donation, a discount policy was instituted for veterans.

The policy was modified from time to time until it took on its present form in accordance with a motion passed by the Lake County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees on October 10, 1949. Generally, it's as follows:

- The veteran must be a Lake County resident at the time of hospitalization
- A 25% discount will be allowed on costs NOT covered by insurance
- The veteran must have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions and provide proof of the same at the time of payment or before
- Veterans will be afforded all considerations offered other patients
- The discount applies only to the veteran's care and treatment, not family members
- The discount applies only on accounts or past due accounts in excess of \$5.00
- The discount applies equally to female veterans except for maternity cases where only the mother's day charges will be discounted

If you receive treatment at Lake Hospital System make sure you notify it of your veteran status and provide a copy of your DD 214 or other Discharge Certificate. In cases of an emergency, veterans should advise their loved ones to provide this documentation as soon as possible. **This is only one of the many reasons all veterans should file their discharges with this office and ensure family members are aware of our existence, purpose and location!**

*Veterans Service Office of Lake County, Ohio
105 Main Street, Box 490
Painesville, Ohio 44077-0490*

(440) 350-2567

Freedom is not free, but paid for with the blood of our Nation's children. Please do not let their loss be in vain.

Please VOTE and support all veteran causes!