

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MAINE PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

1952 - 1954

(in four volumes)

VOLUME IV

STATE OF MAINE
DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT



July 1, 1953 - - - June 30, 1954

FREDERICK P. O'CONNELL, Director

DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
State House, Augusta, Maine
July 1, 1954

To: Governor Burton M. Cross
and the Honorable Executive Council

The enclosed Annual Report of the Division of Veterans Affairs is for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1954, and is submitted to you in compliance with Chapter 386 of the Public Laws of 1947.

I sincerely hope that the statistics and tabulations on the following pages will be of interest to you and that we, in the Division, will continue to merit the support and confidence you have given us in the past.

Respectfully submitted,



FREDERICK P. O'CONNELL

Director

A N N U A L R E P O R T

DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

In preparing the annual report it is our thought that it might be well to give a brief sketch of the Division and why it was established. We are all aware of the fact that over the years there have been placed on the statute books many laws, federal and state, for the benefit of veterans.

These benefits that have been made available to our veterans and their families from the federal government and from our state are in no wise automatic, but must be properly applied for, and the claims properly developed in order that the awards may be made. Practically none are otherwise.

Because of the veterans' lack of knowledge regarding benefits, and the various channels which must be pursued in order to achieve ultimate success, the average veteran has found it difficult both to determine to which agency to present his claim and to properly prepare and present his cause. There are some 3000 federal laws alone, to say nothing of state legislation, affecting large segments of the veteran population. With such a staggering number of laws, each with its own form, requirement and pit-falls, it would be folly for an uninformed person to attempt to advise or assist the veteran.

The 1943 Legislature, realizing this, set in motion the wheels to establish within the state an agency whose job, among other duties, it would be to advise and assist the veteran in obtaining as quickly as possible any benefits to which he was rightfully entitled. They reasoned thusly: "The more expert the personnel handling such matters, the more successful will be the service rendered and the better our veterans will fare at the hands of the Veterans Administration and other agencies. There can be no job of more importance in Maine than that of providing the best possible service and assistance to the disabled veterans and their families in this grand state of ours. Again, there is no better investment that this state can make than to maintain an expert state-wide service organization to provide all of the deserving veterans of Maine with the kind of aid that they should receive from a grateful state they served so well in time of war." The question then is asked, why is it necessary for some agency outside the federal government to render service work and why should not the Veterans Administration perform this service for the veteran? The reason lies in the laws under which the Veterans Administration operates, which prohibits them from developing, presenting or prosecuting the claim against itself. It is likewise prohibited from procuring evidence such as vital statistics, affidavits and the like. Even if these prohibitions were not in existence, it would not be sound judgment to engage a firm's attorney in litigating against the firm. It is then quite natural for the veterans and their dependents to seek aid outside the federal government for this service. No person, intelligently hoping for success in a lawsuit, would attempt to try the case himself. He would look for one versed in the law. So, too, a veteran hoping to

see justice done for himself, would look to one who knew veterans' laws for advice and assistance. This is true, because half the battle is the manner in which the case is developed and presented. Many a veteran, just as many a litigant in civil courts, has lost out on his claim because he attempted to develop and prosecute his claim alone. They saw that if the veterans' claims were not properly developed there would be a tremendous loss of income to the veteran and his family, a great injustice perpetrated on the veteran, and a resultant loss reflected in the economy of the state in that money that rightfully belonging in the state would not reach here.

It was felt also by the Legislature that the matter of financial assistance to the dependents of totally disabled, indigent, veterans would best be handled by those equipped by temperament, education, training and experience to understand those with whom they dealt. Out of this reasoning arose the Division of Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Representatives, all of whom are veterans, in line with the thinking of the Legislature, have been trained to analyze, develop and follow through on any just claims of a veteran, as well as to administer the assistance programs. (It should be noted here that they also have the duty, when the analysis shows it, to frankly tell the claimant that his case has no merit.) The World War Assistance and General Law Pensions programs therefore were given to the Division for administration.

THE GENERAL LAW PENSION PROGRAM IS THE SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY DISBURSED TO THE NEEDY SURVIVORS OF CIVIL WAR VETERANS, AND SPANISH AMERICAN WAR VETERANS AND THEIR SURVIVORS. THE PENSION, UP TO \$12 PER MONTH, AUGMENTS THE INCOME IN THIS GROUP WHEN ALL OTHER SOURCES FAIL TO SUPPLY BASIC NEEDS.

THE WORLD WAR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS A PROGRAM WHICH SUPPLIES EMERGENCY BASIC NEEDS FOR THE DEPENDENTS OF INDIGENT, TOTALLY DISABLED OR DECEASED VETERANS OF WORLD WAR I, WORLD WAR II AND THE KOREAN CONFLICT.

There are many other responsibilities assigned to the Division. It would be pointless to go into detail on them all. But the more important laws which Veterans Representatives must be acquainted with and be prepared to advise on are as follows:

- Accrued military pay
- Benefits for employees
- Back Pay
- Bonds, lost or destroyed
- State bonus information (other states)
- Military decorations
- Lost or destroyed discharges
- Review of discharges
- Headstone and markers
- Missing veterans
- Personal problems
- Public records
- Welfare assistance (municipal)
- Prisoner of War claims

- Workmen's Compensation
- Selective Service records
- Reemployment Rights
- State Vocational Rehabilitation
- Emergency Army and Navy Relief
- Mustering out pay
- Lost or destroyed personal effects
- Gratuity pay
- Travel pay
- Return of war dead
- Request for military and naval retirement proceedings
- Review of military and naval retirement
- Social Security benefits
- Tax exemption.

It would serve no useful purpose to go into detail as to the workings of the organization as a whole. Suffice it to say that there are seven field offices headed up by a Veterans Representative, scattered strategically throughout the state, readily accessible to veterans or anyone else interested in veterans' legislation, problems and assistance.

In order to pin-point the value of the work done in these seven offices, we have presented the work accomplished this past year by individual offices. This breakdown is shown at the conclusion of these remarks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Last year we made three recommendations: (1) that itinerant service be established by this Division; (2) that one more veterans' representative be added; (3) that a clerk-stenographer be hired for the Togus office.

One of these, itinerant service, has been instituted. Although it is too early to give a full report, our preliminary examination has shown that it has been highly successful in some areas. We feel it will be just as successful in the rest of the state when the service officers of the various veterans' organizations and others learn to take advantage of this service.

We feel that the other two recommendations should be acted upon. This, of course, can be done only by the legislature acting favorably on our budgetary request. In support of these two recommendations we submit the following arguments: (1) in regard to the clerk-stenographer at Togus, at the present time the Claims representative there is doing his own clerical work - typing, filing, etc. This all takes him away from the work he is employed to do - namely, reviewing cases, determining course of action, contacting various offices in the VA for expediting information and service, and making, when necessary, hospital visitations. He also at the present time is called upon by the field offices to answer questions which could be answered by a clerk-stenographer. This again takes him away from his primary job - that of claims analysis and processing. At the present time one of the girls from State Office

will go over to Togus, whenever free, to help out. Even so, there is a terrific backlog in filing alone. Added to this is the fact that when it is essential for our man to be absent, either because he has to appear before the Rating Board or go to the file room or to be away from his desk for any of a dozen different reasons, his office is left uncovered.

(2) With respect to the additional Veterans Representative, the rate at which pressure on our office has built up makes it most important that we put on another man. For the past year, the Administrator has been spending, on the average, one day a week in Lewiston, doing nothing but Veterans Representative work. This is due to the heavy burden placed on our office over there by the closing of the VA Contact Office. We have a duty and a policy of watching World War Assistance cases closely. In line with this policy, Mr. Tardiff would, in fact, like to be on the road two days a week. The demands of the other offices, particularly Bangor and Rockland, preclude the Administrator from spending more than one day in Lewiston. The Administrator has been covering these offices, again on Veterans Representative work, whenever he can. In the long run, it would be cheaper for the state to hire another Veterans Representative, let him be sent to the offices where needed to handle the office calls, and release the Administrator to do the work he is equipped to do -- namely, supervise all the workers, review their work, keep them sharpened up, check their mistakes, ascertain where the program can be bettered and generally see that the state gets its money's worth.

When it comes to vacation or military leave, sickness or any of the other things that normally develop, again the Administrator is on the road on Veterans Representative work. Although this is to be expected occasionally, it is extremely difficult, when added to other demands, for the Administrator to keep on a routine of administration as opposed to Veterans Representative work.

We would add to these recommendations the following:

(1) We further recommend that the laws governing our assistance program be expanded to include foster children and foster parents. We are certain that this group was omitted through oversight. It is hard to believe that the legislature ever intended that a person's kindness in taking care of orphaned or deserted children should be ignored in time of stress. Certainly if in good times a person has accepted such a responsibility, the state should recognize this fact and assist these people when they are faced with sickness and its attendant reverses. If the law is changed, the cost will be negligible and an inequity will be removed.

(2) Another recommendation we would like to see acted upon is that the Personnel laws be amended to permit a service-connected disabled veteran to reopen an examination. This would place state employment rules more in line with Federal Civil Service. It is, to our mind, a small enough thing for the state to do for those who were disabled in its defense.

(3) Shortly after World War I it was deemed advisable to collect in book form the names of all those who served during the Great War. The compilation in two volumes has more than paid for itself in historical

benefit and as a reference for those attempting to establish their right to certain benefits. As time progresses we find that there is increasing need for a similar project to be instituted for World War II and Korean veterans. We, therefore, recommend that money be appropriated to this end.

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Since June 30th there have been some changes in our personnel. The list below is up-to-date.

Miss Mary P. Moran
79 Exchange Street
Portland, Maine

Mr. Roland A. Tardiff
14 Lisbon Street
Lewiston, Maine

Mr. John S. Lowe, Jr.
356 Main Street
Rockland, Maine

Mr. Fred W. Skinner
State House
Augusta, Maine

Mr. John E. Flynn
96 Harlow Street
Bangor, Maine

Mr. Harry A. Whitney
Post Office Building
Machias, Maine

Mr. Clement E. Lynch
42 Sweden Street
Caribou, Maine

Mr. John J. Buckley
P. O. Box 71
Togus, Maine

DISTRICT #1

(York, Cumberland and Western Oxford)

79 Exchange Street, Portland

Tel. 2-6612

Veterans Representative: Miss Mary P. Moran

Secretary: Mrs. Grace Pothier

A veteran of World War II, Miss Mary P. Moran is in charge of District #1. This district comprises York, Cumberland and Western Oxford counties. Miss Moran's background fits her admirably for this work. She is a graduate of Smith College with an A.B. degree and holds an M.A. degree from Brown University. She entered the Coast Guard in 1943 and served as Civilian Readjustment Officer in the Separation Center, Coast Guard, Boston, until her release as Lt.(j.g.) in 1946. Prior to her being appointed to her present position she served as secretary in the District #1 office.

Compilation of services rendered by District #1 office (including contacts for emergency financial assistance).

Total number of services rendered		1521
Service-connected compensation	29	
Non-service connected pension	74	
Widow's pension	100	
Parents' pension	26	
Employment	46	
Hospitalization	62	
Out-Patient service	19	
Loans	8	
Insurance	33	
World War Assistance	706	
General Law Pension	38	
Referrals to other Agencies	102	
Referrals from other Agencies	115	
Miscellaneous	163	
Total money obtained for veterans and dependents		\$79,658
Service-connected disabilities	\$56,376	
Non-service connected "	20,550	
Widows	1,832	
Parents	900	
Total money spent for emergency World War Assistance grants	\$	53,728.50
Total money spent for General Law Pension grants	\$	3,479.00

DISTRICT #2

(Androscoggin, Franklin and Eastern Oxford)

14 Lisbon Street, Lewiston

Tel. 2-9692

Veterans Representative: Mr. Roland A. Tardiff

Secretary: Mrs. Muriel White

Roland A. Tardiff, the veterans representative for this very crowded area is a veteran of both World Wars, with an outstanding war record. From the very beginning, Mr. Tardiff showed a keen interest in the military. After having served in World War I he signed up in the Maine National Guard in 1921 and remained with it until the induction of the Maine Guard into federal service on February 24, 1941. He served with the 103rd Regiment, 43rd Infantry Division from induction until August of 1942. At that time he was appointed executive officer of a combat team, which position he held until 1943. He was then placed in command of a replacement depot. He served in that capacity until release from active duty in 1945.

Not only has he had a very fine military record but he has been in continual contact with the public, having run his own retail business from 1932 to 1941.

 Compilation of services rendered by District #2 office (including contacts for emergency financial assistance)

Total number of services rendered		4,974
Service-connected compensation	437	
Non-service connected pension	275	
Widows' pension	435	
Parents' pension	592	
Employment	130	
Hospitalization	370	
Out-Patient service	347	
Loans	296	
Insurance	498	
World War Assistance	606	
General Law Pension	50	
Referrals to other agencies	81	
Referrals from other agencies	79	
Miscellaneous	778	
Total money obtained for veterans and dependents		\$160,029
Service-connected disabilities	\$33,449	
Non-service connected "	46,431	
Widows	22,319	
Parents	4,900	
Miscellaneous	52,930	
Total money spent for emergency World War Assistance grants	\$ 60,068.50	
Total money spent for General Law Pension grants	\$ 3,788.00	

DISTRICT #3
(Waldo, Knox, Lincoln and southern Sagadahoc)

356 Main Street, Rockland

Tel. 739

Veterans Representative: Mr. Philip H. Newbert
Secretary: Miss Jane Miller

It is with regret that we note at this point in our report the loss through death of our District #3 veterans representative, Mr. Philip H. Newbert. He died suddenly on June 20th. The report submitted herewith for this district is, therefore, entirely his.

This District covers from Sandy Point through Bath and Phippsburg. A native of Friendship, Mr. Newbert was quite familiar with this entire area. In his words, he graduated from Thomaston High in 1929 to the school of hard knocks, having worked at farming, undertaking, drug store clerk, ship's cook, filling station manager, furniture store clerk, marine electrician. He claimed cum laude and we can well believe it. In his spare time he joined the Maine National Guard and served with it until induction into federal service in September 1940. On his release in 1945 he rejoined the Guard and was a Lieutenant-Colonel in that organization at the time of his death. With a background such as this, he had a working knowledge of most of the activities in his area.

We cannot file this last report of Phil's without noting that he was one of the hardest workers the Division had. It was not at all unusual for him to work late into the night and at times when he rightfully could have been following his own interests. But, then, perhaps the answer lies in the fact that his "own interests" were the problems of those veterans less fortunate than himself. His loss will be felt greatly among those with whom and for whom he worked.

Compilation of services rendered by District #3 office (including contacts for emergency financial assistance)

Total number of services rendered		3,205
Service-connected compensation	190	
Non-service connected pension	224	
Widow's pension	231	
Parents' pension	218	
Employment	147	
Hospitalization	217	
Out-patient service	153	
Loans	279	
Insurance	213	
World War Assistance	467	
General Law Pension	50	
Referrals to other agencies	151	
Referrals from other agencies	88	
Miscellaneous	577	
Total money obtained for veterans and dependents		\$59,553
Service-connected disabilities	\$18,890	
Non-service connected "	26,786	
Widows	8,877	
Miscellaneous	5,000	
Total money spent for emergency World War Assistance grants		\$ 49,341.00
Total money spent for General Law Pension grants		\$ 3,452.00

DISTRICT #4

(Northern Sagadahoc, Kennebec and Somerset)

State House, Augusta

Tel. 3-4511

Veterans Representative: George V. Greeley
Secretary: Pauline L. Gruber

George V. Greeley, the veterans representative for District #4, has a long history of social studies, field work in assistance programs and military activities. A graduate of the University of Maine with an A.B. degree, Mr. Greeley has also done graduate work in the field of sociology. He is a graduate of the Army Medical Center Psychiatric Social Work School. A retread, like Roland Tardiff of our Lewiston office, Mr. Greeley served in the South Pacific during World War II and in Alaska during the Korean Conflict. He started working for this Division in September of 1945, working first in District #6, and then District #4, where he has worked continuously except for 18 months return to service from 1951 to 1953.

Compilation of services rendered by District #4 office (including contacts for emergency financial assistance)

Total number of services rendered		3,516
Service-connected compensation	300	
Non-service connected pension	564	
Widow's pension	60	
Parents' pension	48	
Employment	132	
Hospitalization	336	
Out-Patient service	24	
Loans	72	
Insurance	24	
World War Assistance	1104	
General Law Pension	204	
Referrals to other Agencies	72	
Referrals from other Agencies	180	
Miscellaneous	396	
Total money obtained for veterans and dependents		\$76,968.00
Service-connected disabilities	\$21,540	
Non-service connected "	27,252	
Widows	18,816	
Parents	1,560	
Miscellaneous	7,800	
Total money spent for emergency World War Assistance grants		\$70,064.50
Total money spent for General Law Pension grants		5,720.00

DISTRICT #5

(Western Hancock, Northeastern Waldo, Penobscot and Piscataquis)

96 Harlow Street, Bangor

Tel. 3692

Veterans Representative: John E. Flynn

Secretary: Joan Rimbach

A Navy veteran of World War II, John E. Flynn, the District #5 veterans representative, has worked for the Division of Veterans Affairs since 1950. Prior to that Mr. Flynn worked for a short time as a sales agent for an insurance company. His war experience took him from the Marshall Islands campaign through Okinawa aboard the USS Intrepid. After release from service he attended the University of Maine where he received his A.B. in business administration in 1950.

His first assignment with us was in District #7, our Caribou office. He was transferred to Bangor in September 1951 where he has worked since.

Compilation of services rendered by District #5 office (including contacts for emergency financial assistance).

Total number of services rendered		1,944
Service-connected compensation	83	
Non-service connected pension	76	
Widow's pension	69	
Parents' pension	117	
Employment	87	
Hospitalization	52	
Out Patient Service	63	
Loans	107	
Insurance	98	
World War Assistance	528	
General Law Pension	32	
Referrals to other Agencies	12	
Referrals from other Agencies	27	
Miscellaneous	593	
Total money obtained for veterans and dependents		\$60,538.00
Service-connected disabilities	\$4,941	
Non-service connected "	12,344	
Widows	10,729	
Parents	1,900	
Miscellaneous	30,624	
Total money spent for emergency WorldWar Assistance grants		\$48,073.00
Total money spent for General Law Pension grants		3,135.00

DISTRICT #6

(Eastern Hancock and Washington)

Post Office Building, Machias

Tel 336

Veterans Representative: Harry A. Whitney
 Secretary: Mary A. Clarke

Our veterans representative for District #6, Harry A. Whitney, is most familiar with his territory, having been born in Whiting, and attended local schools as well as Washington Academy in East Machias. He received his A.B. at Fitchburg State Teachers College. After graduation in 1939 he taught, as well as coached athletics, at Winthrop (Maine) High School. His military career in Infantry Communications carried him across the Pacific, engaging in most of the campaigns from New Guinea to the Philippines. He eventually wound up in Japan prior to his release in 1946. He then went to work for Public Assistance where he stayed until transferred to Veterans Affairs.

Compilation of services rendered by District #6 office (including contacts for emergency financial assistance).

Total number of services rendered		1438
Service-connected compensation	136	
Non-service connected pension	82	
Widow's pension	109	
Parents' pension	109	
Employment	38	
Hospitalization	140	
Out-patient service	65	
Loans	149	
Insurance	102	
World War Assistance	208	
General Law Pension	4	
Referrals to other Agencies	29	
Referrals from other Agencies	79	
Miscellaneous	188	
Total money obtained for veterans and dependents		\$57,373.00
Service-connected disabilities	\$9,029	
Non-service connected "	25,539	
Widows	9,737	
Parents	1,890	
Miscellaneous	11,178	
Total money spent for emergency World War Assistance grants		\$53,343.00
Total money spent for General Law Pension grants		796.00

DISTRICT #7

(Aroostook County)

42 Sweden Street, Caribou

Tel. 2-2231

Veterans Representative: Fred W. Skinner
Secretary: Mrs. Thelma Russell

District #7, covering Aroostook County, is under the supervision of Fred W. Skinner. Mr. Skinner came to work for us in 1951 from the Diamond Match Company where he had worked as Director of Public Relations. Prior to that he had charge of the Veterans Administration Contact Office in Rumford, where he had worked since his release from the service in 1945. His war record shows he had engaged in every major engagement in the Mediterranean theatre. After having served with the 720 Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, 15th Air Force, he was released with disability as a Master Sergeant.

Compilation of services rendered by District #7 office (including contacts for emergency financial assistance)

Total number of services rendered		3,229
Service-connected compensation	121	
Non-service connected pension	62	
Widow's pension	119	
Parents' pension	392	
Employment	126	
Hospitalization	275	
Out-Patient service	138	
Loans	392	
Insurance	291	
World War Assistance	493	
General Law Pension	1	
Referrals to other Agencies	143	
Referrals from other Agencies	144	
Miscellaneous	532	
Total money obtained for veterans and dependents		\$45,900.00
Service-connected disabilities	\$20,610	
Non-service connected "	21,397	
Widows	2,293	
Miscellaneous	1,600	
Total money spent for emergency World War Assistance grants		\$64,662.00
Total money spent for General Law Pension grants		144.00

WORLD WAR ASSISTANCE

Number of Active Cases by Months

1953	July	399
	August	419
	September	423
	October	418
	November	436
	December	463
1954	January	500
	February	507
	March	502
	April	484
	May	480
	June	463
Average number of active cases throughout the year		458
Applications pending beginning of year		11
Number of new applications received throughout the year		1261
Number of applications granted throughout the year		942
Number of applications denied		321
TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING AID DURING THE YEAR		3806
Average amount of grants (per month)		72.67
Number of pending applications at end of year		9

CASE LOAD SUMMARY OF GENERAL LAW PENSIONS

Number of Active Cases at the end of each month		
1953	July	168
	August	164
	September	158
	October	155
	November	154
	December	152
1954	January	150
	February	149
	March	150
	April	143
	May	141
	June	140
Average number of Active Cases throughout the year		152
Number of new applications received during the year		30
Number of applications granted		14
Number of applications denied		16
Average amount of grants		11.24
Cases closed during the year		42

FINANCIAL STATEMENT - Analysis of Expenses - July 1, 1953-June 30, 1954

Administrative Expense

	<u>Approp.</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Salaries	\$59,027.00	\$68,953.30	\$73.70
Other Expenses	16,741.00	**16,390.47	350.53
	<u>*\$85,768.00</u>	<u>85,343.77</u>	<u>424.23***</u>
* Appropriation by Legislature	\$81,171.00		*** of this amount,
Transfer from Surplus for Salary			\$67.82 is covered
Increases	2,570.00		by Purchase Orders
Purchase Orders Carried Forward	332.00		
Contingent Reserve, C.O. #322	1,695.00		
	<u>85,768.00</u>		
** ANALYSIS OF OTHER EXPENSES			
Travel Expenses	7,694.06		
Misc. fees & Janitor services	241.25		
Telephone, Telegrams & Elec. service	2,007.55		
Rent, (field offices)	2,701.00		
Repairs to Equipment	58.48		
Postage	1,187.80		
Printing (reports, bulletins, etc)	314.49		
Subscriptions, periodicals, dues	250.00		
Office Supplies	1,266.61		
Insurance	20.57		
Office Equipment	648.66		
	<u>\$16,390.47</u>		
	<u>WORLD WAR ASSISTANCE GRANTS</u>		
	<u>Approp.</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Grants of World War Assistance (incl. Physical Exams)	\$49,542.00	\$399,438.00	\$10,104.00
	<u>GENERAL LAW PENSIONS</u>		
Grants of General Law Pensions	\$ 25,000.00	20,516.00	4,484.00
	<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>	<u>\$505,297.77</u>	<u>\$15,012.23</u>