

FY09 REPORT FOR VETERANS SERVICES

In FY09, The Veterans Services Department assisted 159 cases, including financial and medical assistance. The total amount expended was \$87,910.13. We can expect 75% of this money to be reimbursed next year by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This year \$47,020.42 was reimbursed for last years services to veterans and their dependents under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 115, as amended. The amount received from Federal VA expenditures through pensions and compensations was \$1,998,000.00.

We lost 16 veterans this past fiscal year. All were buried with Military Honors and with a representative from the Veterans Services Office and the Veterans of Martha's Vineyard present.

Veterans participated in 4 parades this past fiscal year: Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Holy Ghost Society Parade and Veterans Day. Our guest speaker for Memorial Day this year was Col. Anthony Schiavi, Commander of the 102nd Intelligence Wing at Otis Air National Guard Base.

We also participated in the Wreaths Across America Program sponsored by Worcester Wreath Company, which has been decorating wreaths on graves at Arlington National Cemetery for 18 years. Seven ceremonial wreaths were placed to remember those who served, honor their sacrifices, and teach our younger generations about the high price of our freedoms. Specially made wreaths for Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines and POW/MIA were placed on memorials during a unique ceremony that was coordinated simultaneously at over 400 participating locations all across the Country and around the World. American Legion Post 257 in Vineyard Haven conducts this ceremony at Oak Grove Cemetery at the Directory for the Avenue of Flags.

We thank the membership of the American Legion Post 257 in Tisbury for the use of their space at Seamen's Bethel Annex for the satellite Veterans Office.

I continue to write every month on veterans benefits for the 55 Plus Times, be involved with the Dukes County Health Council, go to all veterans organizational meetings, go to training with the Department of Veterans Services. This year DVS went to a web based VSMIS (Veterans Services Management Information System) program to expedite efficient processing of benefit claims. I am still sending care packages to island soldiers with the help and generosity of the people of Martha's Vineyard, especially Farm Neck Foundation and The Dukes County Deputy Sheriff's Association. Thank you to everyone who donated to our troops. As of this date we have 9 island men serving in Iraq or Afghanistan and numerous others serving in the U.S. and around the world. If you know of someone serving please call my office with the address.

This year a student at M.V.R.H.S. received a scholarship from Southeastern Massachusetts Veterans Service Officer's Association, which was presented on class night.

Respectfully submitted,
Jo Ann Murphy
Director of Veterans Services