

## **FY12 REPORT FOR VETERANS SERVICES**

In FY12, The Veterans Services Department assisted 194 cases, including financial and medical assistance. The total amount expended was \$95,699.09. We can expect 75% of this money to be reimbursed next year by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This year \$78,156.72 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 \$1,398,987.36.

We lost 14 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. All veteran's graves were decorated with flags per MGL 108 CMR 13:03. Thank you to all towns Veterans Graves Officer's for their assistance.

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 Mr. Richard Christopher, U.S. Marine Corps who served in Vietnam 1970 to 71. Mr. Christopher is a member of the Saugus DAV Chapter 115. He was the Chapter Commander, District 4 and then onto MA State Commander of the DAV 1995-96. At the end of his Commandership Richard was nominated as veteran of the year in 1996 by both the MA State House and State Senate. In 1996 at the National Convention in Louisiana, Richard was elected as the National 4<sup>th</sup> Junior Vice Commander of the DAV. At the end of his speech Mr. Christopher presented me with a citation from the DAV for my devotion to our nation's disabled veterans and their families.

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 20 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. This year we had our ceremony a day early to include the students from the Tisbury School. American Legion Post 257 in Vineyard Haven conducts this ceremony at Oak Grove Cemetery at the Directory for the Avenue of Flags. Veterans also participated in baseball this year by presenting the colors and throwing the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch at the Sharks Military All Star game. Veterans also threw out the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch at opening day of the little league season.

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. I am still sending care packages to island soldiers with the help and generosity of the people of Martha's Vineyard. Thank

you to everyone who donated to our troops. As of this date, we have only 1 island soldier serving in Afghanistan and numerous others are serving in the U.S. and around the world. If you know of someone serving please call my office with the address.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jo Ann Murphy  
Director of Veterans Services