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STATE OF MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS

OCT 15 1974

ANNUAL REPORT

1972-1973

1973-1974

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April 1, 1974

The Honorable Wendell R. Anderson
Governor, State of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Anderson:

Minnesota statutes call for the submission of an annual report by the Department of Veterans Affairs to cover its operations and activities.

We herewith submit our report for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 1972 through June 30, 1973.

Every effort has been made to prepare this report on a narrative basis and in a concise manner for easier readability. It is our hope that this report will convey an over-all summary of the Department's missions and its accomplishments for that fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,

Elmer L. Childress

ELMER L. CHILDRESS
Commissioner
MN Department of
Veterans Affairs

ELC:PDN:jk

30TH ANNIVERSARY

Thirty years have passed into history since the formation of our Department of Veterans Affairs.

The agency was created from the efforts of very dedicated selfless veterans organization members who convinced the Legislature and the administration in 1943 of the necessity of such an agency.

The first Commissioner of Veterans Affairs was William E. Revier who pioneered the Department and served for nearly 14 years.

We dedicate this annual report to his memory in recognition of his outstanding achievements. It is our fond hope, as it was his, the Department would remain a completely independent agency of state government in order that the identity of the veteran and his dependents would not be lost but be maintained indefinitely.

The Department heads who have served in the 30 years since its inception are as follows:

William E. Revier, Commissioner - July 1943 to April 1957
St. Paul

Lyle E. Kinvig, Commissioner - April 1957 to May 1959
St. Paul

Wilbur T. Lindholm, Commissioner - May 1959 to April 1961
Mahtomedi

Robert G. Hansen, Commissioner - April 1961 to September 1964
Roseville

Phillip D. Nygren, Acting Commissioner - September 1964 to February 1, 1965
Minneapolis

Alcuin G. Loehr, Commissioner - February 1, 1965 to April 1969
St. Cloud

Joseph T. Hartel, Acting Commissioner - April 1969 to December 1969
Sauk Rapids

Herbert K. Anderson, Commissioner - December 1969 to April 1971
Virginia

Elmer L. Childress, Commissioner - April 1971
Minneapolis

VETERANS BENEFITS DIVISION

Financial Assistance - Under certain limitations temporary financial aid is administered by this Division and is granted to applicants who qualify through grants which are principally in cash and provide realistic assistance allowances for maintenance. Every effort is placed on minimizing any stigma which could exist for the veterans and their families, single veterans, widows and/or dependents. No case is closed arbitrarily but the Department policy calls for closing the case when the client once again becomes self-supporting or returns to a condition where he or she could be self-supporting. In cases of long-term need because of disability, every effort is exerted to secure Veterans Administration benefits or federally supported funded aids. In this connection, the expertise of the Department is used to facilitate and expedite the securing of whatever benefits seem to be applicable. We have kept a watchful eye on the allowances to assure that they were at least adequate for maintenance, nutrition and personal necessities, also attempting in every way to live within our assigned or allotted funds which are fixed. In the fiscal year covered by this report, there was a downturn in the number of cases which enabled us to meet the needs of the persons who qualified; the fund for this fiscal year was some \$80,000 less than appropriated because of the fact that in the previous year we had had to secure approval of the Minnesota Public Relief Advisory Committee, the Governor and the Commissioner of Administration to use funds to complete the preceding year. No further financial crisis was encountered which was fortunate from the standpoint of the fact that we had a smaller amount of funds to administer and a decrease in our staff due to the retrenchment in the emergency employment program.

The average case load was 1120 persons per month or 380 cases per month. As a matter of general practice this is calculated on a monthly basis. With certain exceptions, our assistance is generally granted for a period of one month at a time, and our statistics are expressed in this manner. \$57.00 was spent each month for the recipient as an average, and we show the breakdown of expenditures in the fashion as shown below:

Food	31.6	Medical	23.3
Shelter	36.3	Personal Needs	5.9
Clothing	.3	Miscellaneous	2.6

A great deal of the success which we have encountered in administering such a program is in part due to the efforts of the county veterans service officers and social service agencies at the local level who provide realistic reports to the Department so that those who are deserving of assistance for maintenance and health care may receive it as needed.

In operating a program on a state-wide basis from one central point, it becomes obvious that there will be certain delays in individual cases. In all but a few instances, delays have been created because of the fact that some vital piece of information such as a medical report, military service record or verification of need was missing. When the data is all available on a current basis, delays are held to a minimum.

Educational Assistance -- War Orphans and Veterans - Under certain conditions educational aid is available to war orphans and also to veterans. (A war orphan is defined as a person who has lost a parent due to death in service or death as a result of a service-connected disability.) The law provides that the war orphan must reside in Minnesota, and the deceased parent must have entered service from Minnesota. Under present law, \$250 per school year may be paid for expenses incurred by each war orphan. This can be directed to any accredited institution of higher learning, or on a reimbursement basis to the war orphan, provided proper receipts are submitted. Past experiences have shown that in many instances our program, which runs concurrently with the federal program of war orphans assistance, means the difference between whether or not the student can remain in school or must postpone his or her educational plans.

On behalf of the war orphans one very valuable adjunct to this program is the free tuition which is available at a state school of college grade when the student is certified by this Department. Unfortunately, the University of Minnesota is not included in this category, nor are any of its branches.

In the case of veterans who are attempting to conclude their educational program and attain their objectives, \$250 is available on a one time basis. This grant cannot be made until their federal education assistance program has been exhausted through actual use. Service in the military forces must have occurred subsequent to December 7, 1941. The program is reserved for Minnesota veterans only, to complete an educational objective. Because of the use of the G. I. Bill by the recent veterans, we have a great deal of increased usage of this program by veterans.

For the last fiscal year we had 49 veterans and 108 war orphans who received such educational aid. To conclude our remarks about our educational assistance programs for veterans and war orphans, we wish to point out that Minnesota was one of the first states to pioneer such programs and it has been continued. The system of handling the paper work has been reduced to its simplest forms and as a rule the student does not need any outside assistance in applying for and receiving this benefit so long as he or she is able to comply with written instructions with respect to the submission of documents.

Bronze Star Markers - County Veterans Service Officers in the many counties are the distributing points for flag holders or bronze star markers which are installed at grave sites for veterans interred in private cemeteries in our state. This past year, as has been our practice, they are distributed on a "first come, first served" basis. Each County Veterans Service Officer is required to submit an actual list of the name of the deceased veteran, the war and cemetery in which the veteran is buried.

The markers are obtained on a bid basis through the State Purchasing Division and each year the cost factor has increased markedly.

Miscellaneous - As part of the over-all functioning picture concerning our agency, we are compelled to become involved in many different ways on referrals for benefits as to services which are available through other state, county or federal departments. For example, we are greatly concerned with employment referrals, loans, training programs, vocational

rehabilitation and matters of such nature. The Department is charged with providing supportive assistance in individual cases concerning the proper application of veterans preference where a state or municipal law covers. Unofficially, on a number of fact questions, we are called upon to render interpretations. This has been rather effective and an increased volume has been experience. In each case there are charges and counter-charges which are leveled and it is time consuming to sort out the facts and render an opinion of an advisory nature. Often, this is extremely effective and accomplishes the purpose.

We take the stand that we are the "veterans advocate" and do everything in our power to provide support to the veteran who is seeking employment or reemployment whenever his or her requests seems legitimate. In all reemployment cases which are referred to us, which do not involve the private sector as in private industry but the State of Minnesota or one of its political subdivisions, we are prepared to intercede on behalf of persons who are attempting to avail themselves of the protection of the law in securing a return to their former jobs upon their release from military service. In this connection we receive assistance from the office of the Attorney General in an informal way. During the past year our efforts have been rather effective, especially on behalf of the members of the teaching profession, where there has been an over-all cutback in the demand for teachers.

With the exception of the Vietnam Bonus Act, we are charged with the correspondence, record keeping and other authorized state bonuses which are officially over with respect to administration. There is an aftermath which lingers which is inescapable. As a result of this we must deal with correspondence on payments, late claims, denials, etc. Furthermore, certain individuals are constantly providing additional correspondence to ascertain whether or not they were paid such a bonus. All this requires activity on the part of our staff. The service data contained in the bonus records on microfilm or in the actual files are becoming more and more valuable when a veteran or his dependent wishes to apply for some other form of benefit and cannot locate service data. Apparently, this type of activity will continue for many many years to come because of the fact that it is such a rich authentic resource for service data.

During the period that this report was being prepared, a disastrous fire took place at the General Services Administration, Military records office in St. Louis, Missouri, which destroyed thousands of service records on persons who served in the military. Much of this data cannot be duplicated elsewhere and as a result we are receiving frequent contacts from them and expect to have much more in the future.

WAR VETERANS ASSISTANCE

For Year Ending June 30, 1973

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Aitkin	8,709.17	Meeker	6,850.58
Anoka	35,340.79	Mille Lacs	4,847.28
Becker	6,718.42	Morrison	3,238.49
Feltrami	16,851.70	Mower	20,679.47
Benton	10,521.08	Murray	3,391.16
Big Stone	671.26	Nicollet	8,868.45
Blue Earth	3,358.12	Nobles	6,820.06
Brown	8,445.43	Norman	4,327.95
Carlton	7,001.78	Olmsted	1,606.50
Carver	10,209.31	Ottertail	12,043.25
Cass	18,994.63	Pennington	413.84
Chippewa	5,890.63	Pine	2,274.25
Chisago	5,847.04	Pipestone	1,278.80
Clay	3,655.90	Polk	1,841.28
Clearwater	10,272.45	Pope	2,593.55
Cook	768.45	Red Lake	-
Cottonwood	1,407.00	Redwood	6,449.13
Crow Wing	17,090.78	Renville	5,960.00
Dakota	24,379.64	Rice	4,721.59
Dodge	1,325.02	Rock	435.99
Douglas	4,901.05	Roseau	482.75
Faribault	6,060.46	Scott	10,217.61
Fillmore	3,864.05	Sherburne	2,595.54
Freeborn	7,727.50	Sibley	1,086.50
Goodhue	2,156.83	Stearns	42,202.09
Grant	1,766.14	Steele	11,937.34
Houston	1,262.25	Stevens	773.51
Hubbard	3,080.30	Swift	6,458.49
Isanti	10,534.32	Todd	15,318.04
Itasca	7,310.78	Traverse	634.16
Jackson	4,117.99	Wabasha	2,955.27
Kanabec	8,058.70	Wadena	1,772.92
Kandiyohi	10,306.74	Vaseca	5,527.02
Kittson	1,945.11	Washington	6,323.31
Koochiching	11,318.52	Watsonwan	3,552.55
Lac Qui Parle	5,273.44	Wilkin	564.25
Lake	3,778.77	Winona	5,180.85
Lake of the Woods	54.59	Wright	15,435.29
Le Sueur	8,473.20	Yellow Medicine	4,313.60
Lincoln	791.74	St. Louis	40,481.89
Lyon	6,847.55	Ramsey	55,438.86
Lahnomen	3,879.33	Hennepin	114,418.38
Marshall	120.45		
Martin	871.33		
McLeod	4,547.38		762,818.96

CLAIMS DIVISION

Large numbers of veterans and their dependents seek, and receive, consideration for benefits from the Federal Government. Our Department acts to represent these claimants when they so designate. This service, often as a "power of attorney", is provided through our offices at the Federal Building Veterans Administration Regional Office at Fort Snelling, and our Moorhead branch office located very close to the Veterans Administration Center at Fargo, North Dakota. The Fargo Veterans Administration office serves claimants in the northwest counties of Minnesota.

Our claims representatives are specialists and conduct thorough reviews of Veterans Administration files. This enables them to present valid and valuable evidence to Rating Boards. This specialized service helped many deserving veterans to obtain a successful result to their claims. As of June 30, 1973, we had 137,887 powers of attorney. We often made appearances before the Veterans Administration Rating Boards. This trained service enabled us to maintain a record that was not only successful in a large percentage of claims, but in comparison to other states showed a superior representation.

It is also essential to maintain a good rapport with the many county veterans service officers. Where we have this harmony and efficiency with the county officers who initiate most of these claims, results are remarkably good. Our Department maintains training classes and offers all available aid, to keep this record of harmony and cooperation.

FIELD SERVICES DIVISION

This Division has been divided into geographical areas to provide services and representation more efficiently throughout the state.

Duluth Branch Office - The manager of the Duluth branch office, with his secretarial assistant has many and varied functions to perform. He makes calls in the immediate area, gives necessary supervision of county veterans service officers in the seven northeast counties, provides all forms of service for hospital calls to disabled war veterans and works closely with the St. Louis County Welfare Department in seminars to provide their new employees with procedures in state and federal programs for veterans.

Moorhead Branch Office - This office is designed to assist veterans and their dependents residing in northwestern Minnesota. He assists them in their dealings with the Fargo Veterans Administration Hospital or helps them with the securing of federal and state procedures in individual cases, counsels veterans, makes daily trips to the Fargo Veterans Administration Hospital to offer help to hospitalized Minnesota veterans and files claims when needed. He appears on behalf of the veteran, when authority has been given to our agency or to the American Legion, before the Adjudication Division of the Veterans Administration. He also supervises all county veterans service officers in his area in functional procedures and trains all new officers in this capacity. He also must establish constant communication with them, concerning the procedures in new laws and those being revised!

Institutional Work - Periodic visits are made by the Field Service Division at State Institutions with emphasis on helpless children of veterans. Arrangements are made so that the children would benefit should the veteran parent die or eligibility occur while living. They also file informal claims in some instances. This Division has fine cooperation with the state institutions in this respect.

Liaison Between Department of Veterans Affairs and County Veterans Service Officers - By law this Department is required to supervise and train all county veterans service officers in our methods of operation and procedure. In this way the Field Services Division represents the Commissioner in carrying out this responsibility to county veterans service officers in their respective areas. In the past fiscal year six area meetings were held with an attendance of 15 county veterans service officers at each meeting. They also had an opportunity to meet with the Commissioner and staff members to discuss all aspects of state procedures together with federal benefits and services. This will be continued.

The hospital contact representative calls at the Minneapolis Veterans Administration Hospital daily to assist hospitalized veterans in all procedural matters. This fits in with our war veterans assistance program - relief to veterans who are disabled and unable to follow gainful occupations.

Also, this Division is called upon to act as a liaison with veterans organizations and other federal, state and county governmental agencies and attend meetings and seminars when called on to do so. This function continues throughout the year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

This Division is responsible for all fiscal and budgetary functions of the Department. These functions include; disbursement of all financial grants to our clientele, personnel leave records, payroll, the planning, audit and program budgeting coordinated from information obtained through a survey of Departmental needs and from meetings. All statistical data is assembled and disbursed.

Supervision of the Guardianship section is contained in this Division, with the accounting and disbursement of funds from the individual account of each person who is designated to be a financial ward.

This Division has the responsibility for the purchase of equipment and supplies. Whenever possible, efforts are made to update and modernize our equipment and to promote efficiency.

GUARDIANSHIP

The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs by law will act as guardian for a minor or incompetent person receiving money from the federal government in certain cases. Each year new cases are added and other cases closed. A certain percentage of new cases are minor children. During this past fiscal year there were 160 cases regarding 165 persons. As a rule, social and behavioral

problems are present in each case. No other suitable guardian could be found to cope with the chronic problems of the wards. The Commissioner can serve as guardian of the estate only to the extent as conservator of their financial interests. In this vein living costs are important in the disbursement of funds. Every effort is made to control the individual budget; excess funds are invested; and all properties managed as efficiently and prudently as possible.

Staff members are sometimes involved in court activities and personal visits are made periodically to wards living in the Twin Cities area. Our Field Services Division performs these visits in other areas of the state.

We have performed all these programs with a minimum of administrative cost and, we believe, successfully.

REST CAMP

Although this Department has no involvement in the rest camp at Big Marine, policy representation is given in connection with their meetings and planings. This camp affords eligible Minnesota veterans and their families a vacation for a short period of time in simple wholesome surroundings at a minimum cost.

The association of this Department and the camp spans a period of many years, in which our interest has continued.

SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 1972 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1973

<u>General Revenue Fund</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Unexpended Balance</u>
Extra Session Laws 1971 Chapter 3, Sec. 45			
Approved Complement - 41.5			
Salaries			
FICA, MSRS & Insurance	\$ 411,023.00	\$ 374,460.15	\$36,562.85
Supplies and Expenses	22,956.00		
Rents, Repairs, Insurance, Etc.		462.82	
Communication and Travel		17,525.81	
Materials and Supplies		2,836.70	
Equipment Purchases		1,430.00	700.32
Big Island Rest Camp	none		
Marine on St. Croix Rest Camp	none	none	none
War Veterans & War Orphans			
Educational Aid	50,000.00	34,957.34	15,042.66
War Veterans Relief	860,000.00	807,004.90	52,995.10
Headstones, Markers, & Sockets for Soldiers and Sailors Graves	<u>6,000.00</u>	<u>5,994.00</u>	<u>6.00</u>
GRAND TOTALS - All Funds	\$1,349,979.00	\$1,245,545.17	\$105,306.93

CONCLUSION

Due to a number of problems in connection with the proliferation of programs, meetings, and unforeseen staff activities, a delay was experienced in assembling this report. It is intended to fulfill the requirements of the law but also to serve as a history which at future dates will be helpful for anyone doing research with respect to the activities and projections of the Department.

In the fiscal year covered by this report, we made every effort to improve services to our clientele through work experiences and training. However, we were compelled to more or less reduce our participation in the Emergency Employment Act because of the unrealistic demands in the form of reporting on the fiscal aspects of the additional positions to the federal funding agency. This created problems for our staff and was coupled with the fact that there was a significant turnover. With respect to the Emergency Employment Act, we did however absorb a number of people into our complement who are now classified state employees. Subject to limitations imposed by other laws and regulations involving public employment, the Department has carried on a positive Affirmative Action program in all areas. Minorities, women, and Vietnam veterans are well represented on our staff.

Intensive efforts were made to the direction of setting up a Vietnam Bonus Administration which was of considerable magnitude. This will be covered in detail by the report for the following fiscal year since operations did not commence until after July 1, 1973.

As has been our practice in the past, the Department is constantly in contact with the veterans themselves, with the County Veterans Service Officers, and with active veterans' organizations exploring every avenue so as to adjust to the problems of the moment. In this respect, larger numbers of veterans are attempting to obtain educations which will assure them of employment rather than the traditional four-year course of instruction which failed to provide them with a marketable occupational classification now in demand by employers.

Emphasis was given to the needs of the Vietnam Era veterans who have problems differing somewhat from those of the middle-aged or senior veteran. The 1973 Session of the State Legislature gave the Department authorization to provide limited enforcement in veterans' preference problem cases and in time it is expected that this law will be effective in a tangible way. In the meantime, it was our practice to use the Department as an advocate on behalf of the veteran in the area of preference in employment and reemployment with significant results in a number of cases.

Finally, we are convinced that we have been able to obtain a generally satisfactory performance record based on the funding given and staff limitations. Health problems continued to plague some of the staff personnel which undoubtedly affected service and production. Also, it was necessary to gear ourselves to the adoption of a new system under the State-Wide Accounting System. The experiences encountered in this respect will be described in the

subsequent annual report. We have the impression that in the final analysis, the Department of Veterans Affairs of this state with its diversified activities and broad spectrum of services compares very favorably with any similar agency in the other 49 states both from the standpoint of legislative support, staff responsibility, and overall awareness of our obligations to the large segment of the population that we are expected to serve.

September 1, 1974

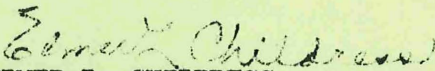
The Honorable Wendell R. Anderson
Governor, State of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Anderson:

In accordance with Minnesota statutes we herewith submit our report on the following pages for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 1973 to June 30, 1974.

It will be noted that we have combined the annual reports of 1972-1973 and 1973-1974 under one cover for convenience. It is our sincere desire that this report reflect an accurate history of the work load and accomplishments of the agency in the same fashion that we have endeavored to follow in the past.

Respectfully submitted,


ELMER L. CHILDRESS
Commissioner
MN Department of
Veterans Affairs

ELC:PDN:jk

Enclosure

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STATE OF MINNESOTA

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

August 1974

In 1943, the Legislature saw fit to take action to create an agency of State Government out of concern for the problems encountered by veterans and their families. This agency was designed to provide services of many types and to administer certain prescribed state benefits to the citizens of our state who had earned distinction by virtue of individual responses to call to serve the nation in time of war. It is apparent that years ago the State Legislature elected to establish this type of a meaningful award to those who served instead of erecting costly marble or granite monuments and statuary as had been the custom in the past.

The Department is financed entirely from state appropriations and combines activities that were formerly carried on as separate divisions of other agencies. It has jurisdiction on every conceivable type of veterans' service and benefit except in the area of care afforded by the Minnesota Veterans Home which is a separate agency.

The activities of the Department are divided into Field Service, Veterans Benefits, Claims, Administrative Services and Guardianships. Offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, State of Minnesota, are maintained in the Veterans Service Building, St. Paul, Minnesota, Fort Snelling, and branch offices are maintained at Moorhead and Duluth.

Through the Field Service, the Department of Veterans Affairs maintains liaison between the home office and the county veterans service officers. The law authorizing the appointment of county veterans service officers states that the Department of Veterans Affairs shall supervise the county veterans service officers as to methods of operation. Our Field Service informs the service officers of any new laws affecting veterans and any additions or changes in the regulations of the United States Veterans Administration. Also it assists in securing evidence for claims, represents the Department at meetings of veterans organizations and is responsible for visiting mental and penal institutions where the veterans are patients in order to assist with claims for federal benefits and also supervises our Moorhead and Duluth offices.

The Veterans Benefits activities provide for the furnishing of Disabled War Veterans Assistance to those veterans who are disabled to the extent that they are unable to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families. Also limited aid is given to veterans or their families in need of medical, dental and optical care, who are not eligible for Disabled Veterans Assistance, but cannot meet the expense of the necessary care from their own resources.

Educational assistance to veterans and orphans of veterans who died as a result of service-incurred disability is provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. This aid is granted to veterans after all federal benefits of a like nature have been exhausted and they have not completed the course in which they are enrolled. Reasonable need must be shown.

The Department maintains statistics on its operation and provides public information releases covering veterans benefits.

Records of state bonus paid are maintained and correspondence is continuous and includes the Vietnam Bonus administration. (See Addendum)
Bronze Star Markers are furnished for graves of veterans interred in private cemeteries in the state.

The Department maintains an Administrative Services Division in which records are kept covering salaries, supplies, operating expenses, appropriations, and expenditures of benefit funds. It also covers guardianships of incompetent veterans. The law provides that the Commissioner may act as guardian for any veteran when no other suitable guardian can be secured. The Department also is concerned with the rest camps located at Big Marine and Big Island.

The Department maintains Claims Service to assist veterans and their dependents in securing all benefits provided by law to which they may be entitled because of service in the armed forces. Assistance is given in completing necessary forms or applications and in obtaining the evidence necessary to establish the right to such benefit. A representative of the Department appears before rating boards of the United States Veterans Administration to represent veterans in the prosecution of claims for benefits. Claims representatives work very closely with the county veterans service officers to assist them in handling claims of veterans and dependents living in their counties.

The Moorhead branch office provides claims service for the veterans living in the old Ninth Congressional District and for those veterans who are confined in the Fargo Veterans Hospital. This office also acts as a contact office for veterans in this area applying for disabled veterans assistance. The main activity of the Duluth branch office is assisting in administering disabled veterans assistance program for veterans in that area plus a variety of other services such as field service for several northeastern counties.

The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for all activities of the Department and assigns assistants to administer such activities.

The Department of Veterans Affairs was created by the State of Minnesota to assist the veterans of Minnesota to secure all benefits from every source to which they may be entitled and to administer all funds appropriated for veterans by the Minnesota Legislature.

LOCATIONS - Main Office & Office of Commissioner (296-2783) 296-2562
State Veterans Service Building - St. Paul Capitol Complex
Claims Office, 613A New Federal Bldg. - Ft. Snelling - 725-4171
Moorhead Office, 34 No. 3rd St., Moorhead - 236-2824
Duluth Office, County Court House, Duluth, Mn. - 727-3600

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FROM A STATISTICAL STANDPOINT 1973-74

In the preceding report for the fiscal year 1972-73 we have accurately described the functions of the Department to each of its divisions in a narrative form with statistics where necessary. On this page we will attempt to merely summarize our activities for the latest year statistically so that repetitious narrative information concerning the programs of each of the divisions can be avoided.

They are as follows:

VETERANS BENEFITS DIVISION

Case load was 863 persons per month or 296 cases per month for the year. The funds expended were spent for the following commodities:

Food	33.8	Medical	18.5
Shelter	37.5	Personal Needs	6.2
Clothing	.3	Miscellaneous	3.7

Educational Assistance -- War Orphans and Veterans - War orphans totaled 95 cases and veterans totaled 116 cases. This showed a marked increase in the number of veterans which more than doubled with a small drop off in the number of war orphans.

CLAIMS DIVISION

As of June 30, 1974, the Department had 140,164 powers of attorney. These are authorizations for representation before Veterans Administration Rating Boards.

Meetings held were seven involving county veterans service officers with the main focus on the County Veterans Service Officer meeting at Rutgers Bay Lake Lodge, where there was attendance of 75 service officers.

GUARDIANSHIP CASES THE DEPARTMENT HANDLED

175 Guardianship cases were serviced.

The foregoing summary of activities has been quite brief. However, they represent a continuation of all of the various duties of the Department as described under the description of the Department and as initially described in the division by division report of 1972-73 annual report which is combined in this volume.

WAR VETERANS ASSISTANCE

For Year Ending June 30, 1974

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Aitkin	4,666.94	Meeker	8,612.38
Anoka	37,802.03	Mille Lacs	3,693.43
Becker	12,430.20	Morrison	8,991.77
Beltrami	16,510.38	Mower	12,407.18
Benton	14,142.90	Murray	1,081.64
Bigstone	1,132.60	Nicollet	4,883.06
Blue Earth	6,169.44	Nobles	10,249.77
Brown	5,518.50	Norman	5,424.03
Carlton	6,898.10	Olmsted	3,484.91
Carver	6,023.52	Ottertail	14,889.56
Cass	23,608.48	Pennington	2,710.59
Chippewa	7,088.12	Pine	1,453.43
Chisago	12,399.77	Pipestone	5,034.93
Clay	4,077.95	Polk	3,115.23
Clearwater	5,373.50	Pope	4,125.35
Cock	2,361.67	Red Lake	-----
Cottonwood	434.90	Redwood	5,737.31
Crow Wing	14,767.92	Renville	6,734.53
Dakota	19,871.46	Rice	5,276.45
Dodge	3,856.37	Rock	372.76
Douglas	5,211.07	Roseau	2,704.35
Faribault	12,555.84	Scott	3,957.64
Fillmore	7,846.34	Sherburne	1,520.12
Freeborn	5,216.99	Sibley	1,985.35
Goodhue	4,632.09	Stearns	42,540.79
Grant	1,346.34	Steele	5,544.49
Houston	1,350.80	Stevens	619.20
Hubbard	6,462.87	Swift	6,303.73
Isanti	7,183.85	Todd	6,218.27
Itasca	12,592.75	Traverse	170.94
Jackson	621.10	Wabasha	3,498.84
Kanabec	11,247.22	Wadena	6,737.79
Kandiyohi	12,577.79	Waseca	744.71
Kittson	518.50	Washington	13,926.18
Koochiching	7,409.74	Watsonwan	6,588.41
Lac qui Parle	4,128.61	Wilkin	385.40
Lake	1,193.25	Winona	4,797.82
Lake of the Woods	280.70	Wright	20,718.41
LeSueur	7,138.37	Yellow Medicine	1,206.74
Lincoln	334.20	St. Louis	33,483.84
Lyon	2,604.42	Ramsey	58,943.48
Mahnomen	839.61	Hennepin	131,327.13
Marshall	1,761.12		
Martin	6,535.68		
McLeod	3,867.02		
		Total	792,792.96

SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 1973 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1974

<u>General Revenue Fund</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Unexpended Balance</u>
Laws 1973 Chapter 720, Sec. 40			
Approved Complement - 41.5			
Salaries			
FICA, MSRS & Insurance	\$ 388,179.55	\$ 387,177.93	\$ 1,001.62
Supplies and Expenses	67,072.00		
Rents, Repairs, Insurance, Etc.		42,472.36	
Communication and Travel		17,625.47	
Materials and Supplies		2,485.79	
Equipment Purchases		2,190.92	2,297.46
War Veterans & War Orphans			
Educational Aid	40,000.00	39,588.80	411.20
War Veterans Relief	860,000.00	818,515.05	41,484.95
Headstones, Markers, & Sockets for Soldiers and Sailors Graves	<u>5,000.00</u>	<u>4,999.95</u>	<u>.05</u>
GRAND TOTALS - All Funds	\$1,360,251.55	\$1,315,056.27	\$45,195.28

CONCLUSION

Following past practices, emphasis has been given to the problems encountered by the Vietnam veterans, and the fiscal year recently closed meant that added attention was given to consideration of their problems. It is satisfying to note that a larger number of students took advantage of the G.I. Bill benefits in spite of the inadequacies of the present allowances which hopefully will be changed in the near future.

Meetings were conducted with county veterans service officers and veterans organizations together with considerable time spent with the Legislature to make certain that Minnesota continued to be in the forefront in the way of dealing with the matter of providing a wide range of services and benefits. We acknowledge the cooperation of the veterans organizations together with the Legislature which has provided adequate funding for financial assistance programs principally.

The actual authorized complement of the Department has remained unchanged since 1961 at 41 persons plus a physician consultant whereas our responsibilities with respect to the number of veterans that we attempt to serve has increased enormously by the addition of the Vietnam Era veterans and the multiplicity of problems posed by the fact that the World War II veterans are now coming into the age category where they are beset with a higher degree of illnesses and economic problems.

Great emphasis was placed on an effective administration of the very large undertaking of the Vietnam Bonus which was carried on by the Vietnam Bonus Division, and their efforts were followed, where necessary, on individual cases by the Vietnam Bonus "Board of Review". As an addendum to this report, a separate Vietnam Bonus Division progress report has been assembled which gives a comprehensive review of the history of their first year of operation which was effective with a high percentage of the eligible claimants paid. That Division will continue to function effectively with a staff which has been reduced by considerable numbers.

Insofar as the regular activities of the Department are concerned and the duties which have been prescribed by law plus the duties which are ours through tradition or on an implied basis, we will ask for legislative consideration for an increased staff and realistic additional funding. It is also essential that some attention be directed to the improvement of the west wing of the building in terms of much needed interior repair on plaster, painting and general maintenance of the St. Paul Veterans Service Building. The Moorhead Branch Office has moved and is now located in an approved location in that city. We have redoubled our efforts in securing proper office space at the Minnesota Veterans Hospital for the work which is done there by our staff members, but our efforts have not borne fruit. The branch office arrangement at Duluth is not entirely satisfactory in the St. Louis County Courthouse. The Claims Division located at the New Federal Building, Fort Snelling has been allotted adequate operating space for its activities except for a lack of room for record storage.

In closing we wish to state that it will be our objective to attempt to prepare our own legislative changes on laws affecting the Department, seeking the full support of the United Veterans Advisory Committee. Working closely

with that committee, we hope to be able to attempt to coordinate with them effectively and obtain their support so that a package of reasonable legislative changes can be adopted to bring about the improvements so necessary if we are to maintain the high standards of service that this Department has offered since its inception.

(We look forward to improvement in participation in the Statewide Accounting system or an alternate system to speed payments to our assistance clientele.)



STATE OF MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VIETNAM VETERANS BONUS DIVISION
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155

VIETNAM BONUS DIVISION

PROGRESS REPORT

July 1, 1973 to June 30, 1974

On July 5, 1973 Mr. George W. Winter was appointed as the Administrator of the newly created Vietnam Bonus Division of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Immediately he proceeded to hire key people to assist him in implementing the 1973 Minnesota Statutes, a mandate of the Minnesota voters, to provide a Bonus payment to Vietnam Era veterans.

All told, 112 persons were employed in the Bonus Division at one time or another. At peak load we had a high of 84 employees. This was reduced to 48 as of March 31, 1974, 28 on May 31st, and as of June 30th down to 16. There will be continuous reduction of personnel as the work load decreases. Hopefully all of the present employees will leave due to obtaining other employment, and with their qualifications, this is a good possibility.

Every effort was made to hiring veterans and in particular Vietnam Era veterans. 82 percent of all employees hired were veterans with 57 percent of these Vietnam Era veterans, a sizable number of whom had been unemployed for a year or more. 18 percent of all employees were disabled, 14 percent were minorities and 25 percent were women. As of June 30, 1974, 9 veterans were still working in the Bonus Division. Of the veterans laid off due to reduction in work load, 25 are presently employed by government agencies, 5 are working for private industries, 1 is self employed and a good number returned to school. To our knowledge only 6 veterans did not have jobs at the time of their layoffs.

Bonus applications became available on August 15, 1973. Since that time a total of 145,379 veterans and beneficiaries have filed applications for the Minnesota Vietnam Bonus. 135,194 claims have been paid for a total of \$57,866,743.00, and the overall average payment is \$428.03. During this same period 845 veterans and beneficiaries have yet to sign and return their acknowledgement cards for a total of \$364,945.00. Also, during this period 1,128 acknowledgement cards were returned as undeliverable. The Bonus Division located all but 18 of these applicants. During this same time 1,175 checks were returned and of these all but 30 have been located and paid. A survey of Bonus applications processed indicated one out of every five applicants moved between the date of application and the date the check was received. This posed an unanticipated delay and an increased cost factor for the Bonus Division.

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Vietnam Bonus Division's
Progress Report

Another problem in processing Bonus applications was due to the number of claims (27,512) which were classified as irregular. The largest reason for this was the lack of military information such as entitlement to the Vietnam Expeditionary or Service Medal, not shown on the separation papers. The Military Personnel Center in St. Louis was unable to furnish information required promptly due to the fire which destroyed an untold number of records and the fact 16 other states are paying Vietnam Bonuses and are requesting similar information. As of June 30, 1974, there was a total of 1,378 Irregular claims still pending. It is estimated 85 percent will be resolved in favor of the claimant.

The examining section of the Vietnam Bonus Division denied 4,408 veterans claims for the following reasons:

2,659 Denied - The veterans service was before August 5, 1964 and the veteran was not entitled to the Vietnam Expeditionary Medal.

1,373 Denied - The veteran did not meet the 6 months residence requirements prior to entry into the service.

117 Denied - The veterans service was active duty for training purposes only.

117 Denied - The veterans discharge was not honorable.

51 Denied - The veteran applied for, and received a Bonus from another state.

42 Denied - The veteran failed to furnish information requested by the Vietnam Bonus Division to resolve the claim successfully.

39 Denied - Public health service, red cross or conscientious objectors applied and did not meet eligibility requirements as a veteran.

10 Denied - The veterans service was before July 1, 1958.

The beneficiary examiners denied 101 applications of beneficiaries for the following reasons:

61 Denied - Not eligible beneficiary (father filed instead of the living mother).

25 Denied - The deceased veteran did not meet the 6 month residence requirements prior to entering the service.

6 Denied - The deceased veteran served prior to August 5, 1964 and was not eligible for the Vietnam Expeditionary Medal.

6 Denied - The deceased veteran's brothers and sisters filed and they are not eligible beneficiaries under the law.

3 Denied - The deceased veteran's discharge was not honorable.

4,509 veterans and beneficiaries were denied payment of a Vietnam Bonus, and 608 have filed an appeal. The Vietnam Bonus Board of Review, appointed by the Governor, has held 235 record and public hearings. 133 decisions of the Vietnam Bonus Division's denials were up-held, 89 decisions were reversed in favor of the claimant and 13 decisions are still pending additional information to be furnished by the claimant. \$43,310.00 has been awarded to claimants on denials reversed by the Board. Additional personnel have been added to the Review Board to speed up Board meetings and decisions. It is hoped that all appeals presently on hand will be disposed of by November 30, 1974.

It has been determined \$5 million dollars additional will be needed in the Veterans Adjusted Compensation fund to complete payment of the Vietnam Bonus. The 1975 State Legislators will again be asked to authorize additional bonding for the foregoing purpose. We will also request the Legislators provide a deadline for filing applications for the Vietnam Bonus.

Due to the anticipated shortage of funds, Bonus payments were suspended for a short time the second week in May 1974. A comprehensive examination of the financial condition of the Bonus Division was conducted. As a result, sufficient funds have been reserved to complete payment of all Bonus claims received by the Bonus Division prior to May 1, 1974, regardless of their present status such as Irregular claims, Appeal claims, and those approved claims with acknowledgement cards still outstanding. All beneficiaries will be paid regardless of the date their claim is filed.

It is hoped we will still have funds available to commence payments for those eligible claimants who filed after May 1, 1974 on a day-to-day basis until funds become exhausted.

New applications will continue to be examined and acknowledgement cards mailed along with a letter explaining the delay in payment and a postcard enclosed to be used to notify the Bonus Division of any additional change in address prior to receiving payment.

On the following page is a list of Minnesota counties and the amount of Bonus dollars paid into each county. The address to which the Bonus check was mailed determined the county, state or country to which payment was made. \$12 million dollars plus were paid to veterans outside of the state, due to the large number who applied while still in the armed forces.

VIETNAM BONUS ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Personnel (Salaries, Insurance & Fringe Benefits)	\$ 508,998.00
State's Services (ISD & Office Machine Rental)	65,094.11
Postage & Communications	41,765.62
Review Board Costs	16,715.53
Equipment Purchased (Typewriters, Recorders, Furniture)	12,177.35
Printing, Office Supplies	18,912.77
Coping Service, Lease OCR Typewriters & Repair	7,358.30
Security	5,645.85
Travel	3,498.65

TOTAL = \$ 608,166.18

VIETNAM BONUS DOLLARS PAID TO MINNESOTANS BY COUNTIES

<u>County</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Amount</u>
AITKIN	\$ 135,765.00	MARSHALL	\$ 145,615.00
ANOKA	2,501,970.00	MARTIN	267,350.00
BECKER	312,855.00	MEEKER	242,355.00
BELTRAMI	370,015.00	MILLE LACS	202,110.00
BENTON	360,035.00	MORRISON	325,605.00
BIG STONE	66,355.00	MOWER	529,150.00
BLUE EARTH	732,115.00	MURRAY	126,350.00
BROWN	369,265.00	NICOLLET	314,015.00
CARLETON	336,920.00	NOBLES	242,135.00
CARVER	383,905.00	NORMAN	97,075.00
CASS	201,630.00	OLMSTEAD	977,155.00
CHIPPEWA	141,860.00	OTTERTAIL	497,545.00
CHISAGO	270,990.00	PENNINGTON	197,550.00
CLAY	487,295.00	PINE	224,215.00
CLEARWATER	126,675.00	PIPESTONE	98,770.00
COOK	36,205.00	POLK	368,960.00
COTTONWOOD	166,295.00	POPE	99,175.00
CROW WING	426,160.00	RAMSEY	5,506,885.00
DAKOTA	2,001,025.00	RED LAKE	74,770.00
DODGE	146,700.00	REDWOOD	191,680.00
DOUGLAS	295,690.00	RENVILLE	202,095.00
FARIBAUT	205,805.00	RICE	407,225.00
FILLMORE	206,875.00	ROCK	99,395.00
FREEBORN	417,375.00	ROSEAU	133,970.00
GOODHUE	353,185.00	ST. LOUIS	2,591,730.00
GRANT	71,380.00	SCOTT	493,920.00
HENNEPIN	11,243,280.00	SHERBURNE	292,610.00
HOUSTON	179,170.00	SIBLEY	167,300.00
HUBBARD	153,385.00	STEARNS	1,329,060.00
ISANTI	232,420.00	STEELE	300,155.00
ITASCA	462,420.00	STEVENS	92,455.00
JACKSON	118,530.00	SWIFT	135,945.00
KANABEC	137,755.00	TODD	253,840.00
KANDIYOHI	353,130.00	TRAVERSE	44,755.00
KITTSO	76,205.00	WABASHA	235,500.00
KOOCHICHING	213,130.00	WADENA	153,315.00
LAC QUI PARLE	92,755.00	WASELA	213,415.00
LAKE	144,930.00	WASHINGTON	1,153,600.00
LAKE OF THE WOODS	50,815.00	WATONWAN	145,060.00
LE SUEUR	236,450.00	WILKIN	64,430.00
LINCOLN	69,850.00	WINONA	506,585.00
LYON	281,545.00	WRIGHT	666,835.00
McLEOD	399,845.00	YELLOW MEDICINE	109,375.00
MAHNOHEN	61,460.00		

TOTAL by Minnesota Counties	\$ 46,152,555.00
Paid to Minnesotans without county designation	33,270.00
	<u>\$ 46,185,825.00</u>