

VETERANS SERVICES

Richard Krug, Veterans Officer

The Veterans' Services program is mandated according to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 115 and is administered under State guidelines to provide information, advice and assistance regarding benefits to Veterans and their families. Every city and town in the Commonwealth is required to have a benefits program for its resident Veterans and their dependents, as well as a Veterans' Services Officer. The Veterans' Services Officer must be a war-era Veteran and be available to provide assistance. The Town is reimbursed by the State for 75% of benefits paid under this mandated program. With the support of the Commonwealth's House, Senate and Executive Office, Massachusetts is now recognized as having one of the most comprehensive Veterans' programs in the nation.

The Office of Veterans' Services, located at 105 Everett Street, provides critical services to those who have worn the uniform and to their loved ones. For decades, the Department of Veterans' Services has been the leading advocate for Veterans and their families in the Commonwealth. In addition to Chapter 115, the mission of the Veterans' Services Officer has grown to encompass the full range of VA federal benefits, rehabilitation, employment and training services, military records, tax exemptions, annuities, burials and care and decoration of Veterans' graves. Financial assistance to qualified Veterans and their dependents is provided, in accordance with State and federal regulations.

Program Implementation

The Veterans' Services Officer responds to daily calls requesting information, advice and assistance. With so many Veterans and their families facing profound challenges related to their service and the current economy, the Veterans' Services Officer has become more important than ever. Calls come from Concord residents as well as Veterans and dependents from sur-

rounding communities. The numbers are constantly increasing as a result of the aging Veteran population and the more than 26,000 Veterans who have returned to Massachusetts from Iraq and Afghanistan, according to State records. The Veterans' Services Officer often helps Veterans obtain assistance from Veterans' organizations as well as other local, State and federal organizations, such as community services, youth services and Social Security. The Veterans' Services Officer has also been called upon to provide transportation

to and from medical appointments for Veterans when there is no other transportation available. Currently there are six individuals receiving financial assistance for qualifying Chapter 115 benefits.

The Veterans' Services Officer currently serves on the Executive Board of the Massachusetts Veterans' Services Officers Association and has been networking with local civic groups, senior citizen groups and area Veterans' organizations as well as families of service members currently deployed. He has assisted at Veterans' funerals, worked with students during Veterans' Day and Memorial Day exercises, served as

a guest speaker in some high school and elementary school classes as well as for Rotary Club of Concord, the Lions Club of Concord, Concord Deaconess, and Concord Park Assisted Living. In addition to reaching out to Veterans in obtaining "alternative sources of income", he has generated Veteran related programming for the local cable television channel and human interest articles for the local newspaper about resident Veterans and their service to the country. The articles may include some facts and perhaps a bit of humor that might be of interest to residents, as well as information on how to contact the local Veterans' Services Officer.

For information or assistance on Veterans' Services please call 978-318-3038 or e-mail dkrug@concordma.gov. For information about services, events, and other veterans' organizations please visit Concord's web page at www.concordma.gov/clerk/veterans.htm.

VETERANS SERVICES APPLICATIONS

Aid & Attendance	20
Assisted Living	2
Chapter 115	28
<i>Concord Journal</i> Veteran Article	1
Death Benefits	20
Disability Filing	7
Disability Tax Abatement	7
Employment	8
Financial Assistance	15
Health Benefits	24
Hearing Aids	10
Post GI Bill	1
Housing Benefits	4
Hugh Cargill Trust	5
Military Medals and Flags	18
Military Records	14
Prescription Benefits	24
Social Security	7
Surviving Spouse	8
Upgrade VA Disability	5
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