

REPORT OF THE VETERANS AGENT/DIRECTOR OF VETERANS SERVICES

To the Inhabitants of Abington:

As Veterans Agent and as Director of the Office of Veterans Services, Town of Abington, I am pleased to submit its annual report.

There are many services the Director is responsible for. I am providing a short summary of a few. Alcohol and Drug treatment; Veteran Employment and Training Services; V.A. Compensation and Pension matters; Hospitalization and Domiciliary care rehabilitation, plus many others.

Veterans Agent is responsible to administrate Massachusetts Department of Veterans Service program under Mass. General Law 115 to assist Veterans and their dependents in a time of need. Being a Veteran does not automatically make you eligible for benefits. Eligibility to receive entitlements has to be determined by the office of Veterans Affairs. My office will assist all Veterans with advice and paper work to help secure entitlements and benefits, if entitled. If you are a veteran, spouse, dependent widow/widower/parent of a deceased veteran or have a question on eligibility, please call or visit my office. My office is located at Town Hall, Room 207, next to the Selectman's Office. Phone # 781-982-0056. My email is jcolantoni@abingtonmass.com.

It is with great pride that I report that the Department of Veterans Service (Abington) has helped 292 Abington Veterans. Here is a summary of both federal and State Benefits. These records are provided by the Veterans Benefits Administration and by the office of performance analysis as of August 2007. I anticipate that the Town of Abington will be helping more Veterans as we have already seen an increase with the Afghanistan/Iraq War.

Department of Veterans Affairs compensation and pension, Federal Benefits:
Veterans served 242; Veterans net award total \$1,703,748.00; Veterans annual award \$2,059,296.00.

Massachusetts Department of Veterans Service, State Benefits under M.G.L. Chap. 115, (108) CMR: Veterans served 60; Veterans net award total \$33,211.00;
Veterans annual award \$355,548.

Total Veterans served 242; Total Federal and State beneficiary award = \$2,059,296.00.

By participating in training seminars and conferences, that I attend throughout the year, I have been able to learn about the availability of Federal funds and entitlements and save the Town of Abington a great deal of money and also help me to administrate Mass General Law Chapter 115, which assists Veterans and dependents and surviving dependents of deceased Veterans, when they become entitled to these benefits, and when a need arises to keep their dignity and pride for their service to our country.

For general information as of FY07 there are 1,699 Veterans who reside in the Town of Abington, not including family and dependents.

In addition to "business as usual" (assisting Veterans and their families with claims, visits to the Schools on Memorial and Veterans days etc.) this year the Town of Abington was privileged to host the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Moving Wall at the Abing-

ton VFW. Hosting the "Wall" in Abington was a moving experience that was shared by many people. I would like to thank Roger Woods and the other members of the fundraising committee who raised the funds necessary to have the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall come to Abington.

I would also like to take a moment and thank Elizabeth Shea, Nancy Hurst, all the Town Employees, some local businesses, private citizens, and local Veterans groups who all gave generously of their time and money for our Christmas Project. We were able to wrap and send gifts for Christmas to those service men and women from the Town of Abington who are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The response from those who helped was overwhelming and we hope to be able to continue sending gifts as long as they are serving. God Bless them all and I would like to thank those who are serving and their families for their sacrifice.

I want to thank the Abington Old Town Post # 5737, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Abington American Legion, Lewis V. Dorsey Post 112 and their Ladies Auxiliary for all the support they have given me all year. The Honor Guards from Post # 5737 Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion Post 112 attend all dedication ceremonies to Honor their "FALLEN comrades", from all Wars, with Full Military Honors. Thanks to Abington American Legion Post 112 Ladies Auxiliary for their generous donation during the Holiday for our needy Veterans and Families. I also want to thank St. Bridget's ST. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry for their work with our needy Veterans.

Thanks to both Veterans Posts and their Ladies Auxiliary's for all the local community projects they are involved with.

Thanks to the Selectmen for their recommendation to our local developers for naming Streets after our local Veterans "KILLED IN ACTION".

Also Thanks to U.S. Veterans Vietnam Era, Post #2 SSG. Richard A. Fitts Chapter, for volunteering to help honor our "Fallen Heroes" and the projects they are involved with in our community. SSG. Fitts was killed in action in Vietnam. His parents, M/M Walter Fitts, were lifelong residents of Abington. The Chapter is now part of the Abington Veterans Community and hold their meeting at the Abington American Legion Hall. (Memorial building).

A special thanks to Mary Johnson, my secretary, for all her expertise and constant support to this office, the Veterans and this great Town of Abington, God Bless.

Respectfully Submitted
"For the Love of Freedom"

Joseph D. Colantoni
Director of Veterans Services'