

## VETERANS' SERVICES

The Department of Veterans' Services is designed to aid and assist veterans and their families as provided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services. All eligible veterans and their dependents can seek counseling and assistance with applications for federal and state benefits, financial aid, medical care at VA Medical Centers, educational/vocational benefits, and burial benefits.

On Memorial Day, 2006, the Vietnam Memorial was dedicated to honor those who were killed in action during the Vietnam War. The Arlington High School Alumni of 1966 conceived the notion and working with a committee of five, the dedication was a tremendous success. Over eighty family members were in attendance and the crowd was the largest for a Memorial Day Parade in many years. Shadow boxes containing each deceased's ribbons and awards were made and put on display in a showcase at Arlington High School. The class studying the Vietnam War at the high school read essays and unveiled the shadow boxes.

Also, in remembering the Vietnam War, the corner of North Union Street and Broadway was named David E. Williams Square on Veteran's Day. David grew up not far from the corner and was one of those killed in action in Vietnam.

As a result of interviewing over sixty veterans and/or dependents, a total of fifty-six clients received benefits under Chapter 115. Twenty-six veterans were awarded the Welcome Home bonus for service in the military since 9/11 and one 100% disabled veteran was advised of his eligibility for, and is now receiving, an annuity from the state.

After consulting with over a hundred veterans and/or dependents, twenty-seven claims were submitted to the VA for both service-connected and non-service-connected disabilities and/or pensions. Forty-five requests for either in-patient or out-patient care at VA Medical Centers and twenty-eight veterans' burial benefits were referred to the VA. All veterans buried in Mt. Pleasant should have received a bronze marker applied for from the VA.

Veterans' Services organized, coordinated, and participated in the Memorial Day Parade and the Veterans' Day Parade. It is the responsibility of the Veterans' Service Office to decorate the over 5,500 veterans' graves in the three cemeteries in town and assure the maintenance of veterans' lots and memorials. Services on Flag Day presented by The Lodge of Elks #1435 were assisted and attended.

Names are continuously being added to the Veterans' Honor Roll at Monument Square, which will be updated at the conclusion of the War on Terrorism. The Veteran's Agent also serves as vice-chair of the Patriots' Day Parade Committee.

The Department of Veterans' Services is located in the Town Hall Annex. The Department is continuing to purge old files and improve computerization, while reaching out to advertise benefits and advocate for volunteer opportunities at the Bedford VA Medical Center.