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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

FINAL REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ESTABLISHED (Under Section 291 Of Chapter 351 of the Acts of 1981 and most recently revived and continued by Section 81 of Chapter 289 of the Acts of 1983) FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING AN INVESTIGATION AND STUDY OF THE CONCERNS OF VIETNAM WAR VETERANS (received in the office of the Clerk of the Senate on Friday, December 30, 1983).

DECEMBER 30, 1983.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Commission would like to take this opportunity to thank the following groups and individuals for their participation at various points throughout the Commission's span:

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The Community Action Committee of the Cape and Islands, the Brockton Vet Center, Dunfey's Hotel of Hyannis, the Cape Cod Mall, Leen's Shoe Stores, Quality Printing of Cape Cod, Hospital Workers' Union Local 767 (SEIU), Nam Vets Association of Hyannis, Operation Outreach-480 Tremont Street, Vietnam Era Veterans Association, Vietnam Outreach Center Team 101-Brighton, Vietnam Era Veterans, Inc., Outreach Center-Fitchburg, Springfield Vet Center, Agent Orange Victims International, All American Gold Star Mothers, Vietnam Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts, Inc., Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program, Copy Cop, Brotherhood of Vietnam Veterans, Inc-Texas, National League of Families of POWs/MIAs, Blinded Veterans Association, Worcester County Vietnam Era Veterans, Ltd., Vietnam Veterans of Merrimack Valley, Vietnam Combat Veterans Combined Armed Forces-Dorchester Chapter, Vietnam Veterans, Inc., of Greater Lynn, Vietnam Veterans Association of Boston, Inc., Winchester Square Vietnam Era Veterans' Lts-Springfield-Vietnam Veterans Memorial Vigil, VEVA/Com Vets Leeds, MA, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day Committee, Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services/Boston.

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE CONCERNS OF VIETNAM VETERANS

The Honorable William M. Bulger
President of the Senate

The Honorable Thomas W. McGee
Speaker of the House

FINAL REPORT

The Honorable Francis D. Doris
Chairman

The Honorable Thomas J. Vallely
Vice-Chairman

MEMBERS

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Hon. Angelo M. Scaccia
Charles N. Collatos
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Stephen Zardis
Richard M. Ryan
Walter Cotter

Paul R. Camacho
Executive Director

Carmen M. Colon
Executive Secretary

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives

We, the undersigned, having voted in the affirmative to accept this report, do hereby transmit this final report on the results of that investigation and study, as our 'final report' of the commission. The commission was established by Section 291 of Chapter 351 of the acts of 1981. We believe that this report is of tremendous significance to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its citizens and are proud to submit this to you at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

FRANCIS D. DORIS
Senate Chairman

THOMAS J. VALLELY
House Chairman

JOSEPH B. WALSH

ANGELO M. SCACCIA

WALTER COTTER

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DONALD L. JERNIGAN

JOHN McCAHAN

MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO:
CHARLES N. COLLATOS
STEPHEN ZARDIS

DEDICATED TO

ALL

GOLD STAR FAMILIES

AND

FAMILIES OF

POW'S/MIA'S

TO: All Members of the Massachusetts General Court

FROM: Massachusetts Special Commission On The Concerns Of The Vietnam Veteran

In submitting our Final Report of the Special Commission On The Concerns of the Vietnam Veteran, I wish to, on behalf of all the Commission Members, express our sincere appreciation to all the Members of the General Court for their unqualified support of the Commission through funding, appropriations and legislation enacted into law.

A special debt of gratitude is extended to William M. Bulger, President of the Senate; Thomas W. McGee, Speaker of the House; Chester G. Atkins, Chairman, Senate Ways and Means and Michael C. Creedon, Chairman, House Ways and Means. Without their complete support the mandate of the Commission would not have been met.

At this time I would like to laud the efforts of all Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts whose leadership resulted in the establishment of this Commission. It was their strong advocacy for themselves, their fellow veterans and their dependents that resulted in the establishment of the Commission. Without them, the accomplishments of the Commission would not have become a reality.

Our Executive Director, Paul Camacho, deserves the gratitude of everyone concerned. In my opinion, there has been no stronger advocate for the Vietnam Veterans in Massachusetts or in the United States than he. His loyalty, devotion, dedication and leadership should be an example for all. A special thanks to his wife Chris and to their children. Without their sacrifice in allowing their husband and father to dedicate so much of his time, above and beyond, that which was required of him in order to fulfill the goals of this Commission.

Our Executive Secretary, Carmen Colon, worked diligently under very adverse conditions with little or no assistance. To her we extend our heartfelt thanks and say "thank you for a job well done."

It is most appropriate, on behalf of the Commission, that we extend our sincere thanks to Master Sergeant Jon R. Cavaiani, United States Army, Special Forces, Vietnam Veteran, Ex-

Prisoner of War and a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, for his outstanding service and encouragement in thought, word and deed. And to his wife, Captain Martha Cavaiani, for allowing him to work with us during the past two years. We are deeply grateful, and "we thank you Jon".

We shall always remember the lives that we touched. We fondly reflect in this Final Report on the question of MIA-POW. We acknowledge the great bond of friendship and love that we established with Gordon and Inger Hardy and our work with them on this very sensitive issue. We walked, talked and paraded together throughout Massachusetts to bring to the forefront of our people the need for a resolution to the MIA-POW question. Many said it was a dead issue, however, we, as a Commission, did not and do not believe that to be the case. No greater evidence of this can be in the fact that Captain Arthur Hans Hardy's remains were returned to Massachusetts and were buried on a high and windy hill on a rainy day in Ipswich, Massachusetts in November of 1983. Until that time Captain Hardy was unaccounted for the last eleven (11) years. Our fight must continue.

Finally, to all the Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts who have labored so long and so hard, we extend to you our sincere gratitude, — the accomplishments of this Commission are your accomplishments. The leadership that you have demonstrated during the past two years in advocating for your fellow veterans and their dependents, have developed you into the leaders of tomorrow as it relates to *all Veterans of all Wars.*

I feel confident, as the work of this Commission comes to a close, that the issue areas that remain will continue to be worked on to a successful conclusion.

To everyone who has worked in any way to assist this Commission, we say Thank You. God Bless America!

Respectfully,

Francis D. Doris
Chairman

COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I would like to thank the Chairman, Senator Francis D. Doris, for allowing me the opportunity to express some of my thoughts concerning this entire project. With his permission, I care to take some leeway to speak both specifically and generally, both subjectively and objectively as a Vietnam veteran and as a social scientist.

Those who are acquainted with me know I have been doing research on the Vietnam Decade and its aftermath in terms of consequences for the veterans for over the last twelve years. They also understand the conditions in milieu in which I was hired. That is, this Commission had a number of options or routes it could have traveled. When I was graciously extended an interview, I informed them that the issue area approach was in my mind the most important. Though less noticeable in the immediate sense, it would pave the way for the development of long range strategies and tactics necessary to achieve tangible gains for the Vietnam veteran community at large, and especially for that portion of the community most in need. Evidently, the majority of the Commission members were also of that mind for subsequently I was hired.

Given the task, priorities had to be established and in this I with the sanction of the Chairman, Senator Doris, opted for the practical and pragmatic. In short we (this Commission) expended resources where we could have effect and in areas where we could achieve consequence favorable to Vietnam veterans. Given the resources available and the life span accorded the Commission, I think the accomplishments were substantial. We developed and catalogued a large body of data on issue areas, both staple and particular with proposals for resolutions. Here I refer to all the data, i.e., eight public hearings, five special hearings, approximately three to four hundred pieces of incoming and outgoing correspondence, the more than three hundred letters pertaining to the POW/MIA campaign, miscellaneous items such as the most pertinent letters and documents on the Federal Jobs Training Partnership Act, advocacy for the Vet Centers, the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program, and individuals, as well as the statistical survey summary, the Interim and this Final

Report. I firmly believe that the body of data in its entirety will stand the Vietnam veterans in this Commonwealth good for at least the next six years, provides information for the development of strategies and tactics necessary to achieve the compendium of goals as outlined in this Final Report.

Yet, as a social scientist, I am of the position that beyond this, these documents collectively provide an important points of insight into interesting historical events, an insight which will be invaluable to historians and social scientists of the future. This is as a social and political phenomenon, the experience of the Vietnam decade and the impact its aftermath had for the Homecomers, the Vietnam veterans who accepted the horror of the responsibility, stands as unique in Modern American history.

The turmoil of the 1960's with its challenge to authority, followed by revelations of deceit and corruption, and culminating with the downfall of a Presidency and withdrawal from Vietnam is the social landscape against which the Vietnam veterans stand in profile or relief.

The number and impact of the situational and orientational themes here is almost incalculable. For example, there is the question of the "good people" and the "dirty workers". With the repeal of the Tonkin Gulf resolution, an entire country absolved itself of guilt and placed it squarely in the lap of the soldiers, now veterans. The bitterness of accusations and rebuffs were so severe that an entire generation of soldiers were on the verge of almost believing that responsibility for the entire affair was theirs and theirs alone. To look into the well is dangerous; yet it should be done, for all of this is of great symbolic and tangible importance for the future. America's war veterans have played a significant role in domestic politics, and have not been unaccounted for in connection with foreign policy. It comes to this as well, that certainly in the past the veterans of this nation have earned the mantel of ligitimacy to control the definition of patriotism in American life.

Now, the question at hand is this — given the fact that the history of the Vietnam decade is now a matter of debate among academics and key administrative officials of the past and present vis-a-vis the new Vietnam Scholarship, what role will Vietnam veterans play. They have become a matter of intellectual capital, utilized by both conservatives and liberals to

legitimize their position — and yet have no input into the development of either position per se; they have become pawns utilized by and for the purpose of others. As a researcher, I have looked at this from different vantage points and there is no doubt in my mind that the vectors come together around this — the lessons of Vietnam, the meaning of patriotism as an orientation directing national action of the future, and inexorably connected to these two — the positions and relations the Vietnam veterans have in connection with all of this. And who has, or claims more of a right to a voice in all of this than Vietnam veterans?

During the week preceding Veterans' Day in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, veterans from three conflicts were buried. Vietnam/Laos, Lebanon, and Grenada. The answer to the question posed above is obvious. It is my personal belief that Vietnam veterans are at the proverbial crossroads, they can slip into obscurity, make some gains of various impact along one or two directions, or move forward to take their rightful place as leaders in the community, state, and nation, and achieve in coalition with others — a community of vision in America — for the future.

It will require hard work, but to reiterate a point noted by many, Vietnam veterans represent *potentially* one of the largest bulge votes in the Commonwealth and in the nation. And noting this then, I care to return to the immediate. These documents in their entirety provide for everyone a picture of the situation as it existed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1982-1983.

It is with all of this in mind that as a social scientist and as the Executive Director, I strongly recommend that:

- THAT DATA OF THIS COMMISSION IN ITS ENTIRETY OF OVER 3000 PAGES OF DOCUMENTS BE PUBLISHED IN ONE VOLUME TO BE AVAILABLE FOR ALL THOSE INTERESTED.

INTRODUCTION

The concept to establish a commission to investigate the problems confronting Vietnam veterans originated with the work of Bradford Burns, late and past president of the Massachusetts Vietnam Era Veterans Association. A campaign to achieve this end was begun in mid 1978. Other Vietnam veterans and Vietnam veterans organizations joined in this effort. Working together this concern was brought to the attention of the legislative leadership and then to Governor Edward J. King. The Commission began to take shape in 1980 and early 1981; on November 11, 1981, Governor King allocated $100,000 from his discretionary budget to fund the Commission. By the end of February 1982, the membership of the Commission was fully established and the Executive Director was hired.

As it became obvious that there were multiple issues to be addressed, the scope of this Commission expanded accordingly. In short the mandate of this Commission required that our investigation touch on all the pertinent issue areas. A report of our findings together with legislative and administrative recommendations was to be filed with the General Court and the Governor upon completion. In addition the spirit of this mandate implied a strong, even bold advocacy component be undertaken in behalf of both individual Vietnam veterans and related organizational entities — in the Commonwealth when requested and where ever possible. These efforts included calls and correspondence, appearances before state and federal legislative committees and the like. The number of issues, their complexity and interrelationships presented this Commission with a formidable task. We endeavored to strike a proper balance with regard to our focus of attention and efforts at amelioration; unfortunately, some disequilibrium was unavoidable.

With regard to this Commission report, some qualifications should be kept in mind by the reader. For example, though we realize many are familiar with the problems confronting Vietnam veterans, we designed this report assuming other readers may have little in the way of prior knowledge. Also, this report has been designed for a legislative audience. Further, with regard to this, it should be noted that the work load of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is perhaps the heaviest in

the nation. Thus, we realized that our ultimate priority was to present a clear and concise presentation as possible. Consequently, it was decided to capsulate these concerns in digest form, to note the more established relationships among them, and tender resolutions where possible. This was the case for both the Interim and this Final Report.

I. HISTORY AND MANDATE OF THE COMMISSION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. **HISTORY AND MANDATE OF THE COMMISSION** 16
Efforts of the Commission 18
Public Hearings 21
Special Informational Hearings 21
Commission Survey 24

II. **THE ISSUES OF CONCERN** 29
The Range of Issues 30
Negative Public Image 30
Agent Orange 34
POW/MIA 40
Post Traumatic Stress 44
Governmental Services 50
Minority Concerns: Blacks/Hispanics/Women 59
Education 68
Employment 74
Housing 91
Vietnam Veterans in the Criminal Justice system 96
Less Than Honorable Discharge 104

III. **CONCLUSION — SUMMARY OF COMMISSION FINDINGS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS** 108
Administrative 109
Legislative 118
Bibliography 123

EFFORTS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission on the Concerns of Vietnam Veterans was established by Section 291 of Chapter 351 of the Acts of 1981, as amended by Chapter 191 of the Acts of 1982 for the purpose of making an investigation and study of the Concerns of the Vietnam War Veterans. This mandate required that a full report together with legislative and administrative recommendations be submitted to the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to its governor. The scope and range of this mandate has been necessarily far reaching, principally because of the extensive and interlocking nature of the problems. In addition to producing its study, this Commission attempted to perform as strong an advocacy function as possible where and when appropriate. This Commission believes it has been faithful to that mandate over the last twenty-two months.

The following constitutes a summation of the major efforts undertaken by this Commission between March 1982 and December 1983. The Commission:

- developed an initial brochure announcing the Commission's existence, purpose, and goals;
- held eight public hearings across the Commonwealth to gather testimony from Vietnam veterans;
- held five Special Informational hearings on particular issues areas; vital information was gathered from professionals and directed toward formulating workable solutions;
- conducted a needs assessment of Vietnam veterans Incarcerated at Massachusetts Correctional Institutions; this was done with the cooperation of the Department of Corrections and with the invaluable assistance of a volunteer working group, the Advisory Committee on the Concerns of the Incarcerated Vietnam Veterans, and Operation Outreach;
- conducted a Statewide Vietnam Veterans Profile Study; this 52 point questionnaire was sent out to 158,909 Vietnam/Vietnam Era Veterans residing in the Commonwealth. There were over 21,000 responses. When tabluations began, there were 16,636 responses; this represented a ten percent return rate. Another 4,500 returns came in to give us ap-

proximately 21,000 returns or 13%. This is a very significant figure in that the usual rate of return to large questionnaires is around 1.5% of sample size.

- obtain prioritization for Vietnam veterans:
  a) with the Executive Office of Communities and Development Fuel Assistance program;
  b) as an unserved population in the Mental Health portion Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Services Block Grant;
- through the Chairman obtained a line item appropriation of $350,000 for an Agent Orange Study to be administered by the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services;
- through the Chairman obtained a line appropriation of $80,000 for the establishment of two pilot project outreach centers in Fitchburg and Roxbury; with the disbursal and oversight of these monies to be handled by the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services.
- advocated in behalf of the University of Massachusetts/Boston Veterans Upward Bound Program along two fronts:
  1) for their re-funding from the Department of Education and (2) securing $136,000 for that program in the University of Massachusetts/Boston budget. Also full funding has been recommended for the 1985 budget.
- secured along with others an $18 million dollar portion of funds remaining in the Commonwealth's 1983 housing mortgage bond issue and have taken steps to secure 50 million dollars for 1984;
- initiated a Conference on the Concerns of Vietnam Veterans with our Congressional Delegation in April 1982 (and again in March 1983) which provided a face-to-face dialogue between the leadership of the Vietnam veteran community and the members of the Congressional Delegation. This Commission with the cooperation of the Speaker of the House of the United States Congress, the Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., and under his auspices has established this conference as an annual event.
- Initiated meetings with members of the Delegation staff to express concerns of Vietnam veterans with regard to pending Federal legislation and the administration of federal programs.

- Presented testimony before the Subcommittee of Hospitals and Health Care of the Veterans Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, August 9, 1983, in Boston (Honorable Bob Edgar, Chairman);
- Presented testimony before the Manpower and Housing Subcommittee (Representative Barney Frank, Chairman) Re: Federal Job Training Partnership Act;
- Presented a seminar on the concerns of Vietnam Veterans and their dependents for the staff of the Regional Office of Human Development Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region I;
- Lobbied for numerous pieces of legislation at both the federal and state level (see conclusion and recommendations);
- Worked closely with the Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts, Inc., with regard to the passage of H6731 which provided permanent space for the Vietnam Veterans in the Statehouse;
- Assisted the Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts, Inc., with the planning and execution of their organization retreat of August 1982;
- Advocated in behalf of the Vietnam Veterans of Barnstable County who desire the establishment of an Outreach Program Center in the Cape Cod area;
- Advocated in behalf of the Vietnam Veterans before the Executive Council in connection with the special circumstances of incarcerated Vietnam veterans;
- Assisted numerous individual Vietnam veterans with specific problems by means of referral or intervention;
- Participated in the National Salute to Vietnam Veterans held in Washington, DC;
- Initiated on behalf of the National League of Families of Prisoner of War/Missing in Action a kick-off campaign ceremony held in the Statehouse — January 27, 1983;
- Advocated in behalf of the Operation Outreach Program on several occasions;
- Has cooperated, advised, and advocated on several occasions for the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program of Massachusetts — a federally action funded program.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

One of the first projects undertaken by the Commission was to conduct a series of public hearings. The purpose here was to ascertain the nature of the concerns of the Vietnam veterans. Eight general hearings were held by this Commission at the following locations:

Fall River, MA ..... March 10, 1982
Worcester, MA ..... April 7, 1982
Springfield, MA..... April 15, 1982
Greenfield, MA ..... May 4, 1982
South End/Roxbury, MA ..... May 11, 1982
Lowell, MA ..... May 20, 1982
Gardner Auditorium
Boston, MA ..... May 27, 1982
Hyannis, MA ..... September 23, 1982

At each of these general hearings, the testimony of those in attendance was directly recorded by a Certified Public Stenographer (or transcribed from tape recording as was the case with the Fall River Hearing).

As noted in the Interim Report, at each of the eight general hearings, several themes or concerns were repeatedly brought to the attention of the Commission.

Assisting the Vietnam Veterans to overcome these problems by way of its investigations and recommendations to the General Court and the Governor and the administrative agencies under his authority was the principal purpose of this Commission.

SPECIAL INFORMATIONAL HEARINGS

The Commission also conducted a series of five Special Informational Hearings on particular issue areas. The purpose here was to gather testimony from experts in particular fields of endeavor all in connection with the problems most immediately at hand. Two staple and two particular issues were targeted because of their importance. In addition a hearing was conducted to secure input from the major veterans service organizations.

SPECIAL INFORMATIONAL HEARINGS

On Agent Orange..... November 17, 1982
On Employment..... March 25, 1983
With Veterans Organizations ..... June 9, 1983
On the Vietnam Veterans
and the Criminal Justice System ..... June 23, 1983
On Housing..... June 30, 1983

Agent Orange Hearing

At this hearing:

1) The complicated nature of the problem of sufficient medical evidence for a definitive statement on dioxin was addressed. It was noted that a principal factor here is the research protocol or methodology.
2) Mention was made of the failure of the Veterans Administration to follow up on the fatty tissue biopsy pilot study for which they commissioned chemist Michael Gross, University of Nebraska to conduct on thirty servicemen, despite the fact that there were definitive results.
3) The fetotoxic or teratogenic (causing malformation) effects of dioxin on animals was noted.
4) It was noted that a Vietnam Veterans' Children Study Questionnaire (a formal research protocol) has been developed; this instrument is being utilized in an attempt to assist concerned families. However, necessary monies are (at that time) lacking for a formal and significant study.

Employment Hearing

At the Special Hearing on Employment, four major themes were addressed: (1) state civil service/affirmative action; (2) federal civil service; (3) Employment Needs Programs, and (4) Federal Jobs Training Partnership Program.

1) The discussion pertaining to the State Civil Service focused on: (1) clarification of the misnomer of "absolute" veterans preference; (b) a comparison of the state and federal system; (c) the violation, abuse, and lack of enforcement of the existing laws; (d) recommendations to facilitate a monitoring system throughout the various state agencies and departments, (e) discussion concerning conflicting sections of the present Civil Service Reform Act (of Massachusetts).

2) The section on Federal Civil Service included: (a) discussion of federal employment opportunity for vetrans; (b) pros, cons, and general lack of understanding vis-a-vis the Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Act and consequent outreach methods, (c) problems concerning employment within and affirmative action for veterans in connection with the U.S. Postal Service.
3) The employment needs program section addressed: (a) the need for extensive employment/career outreach to the minority veteran community; (b) the recent efforts of the Small Business Administration to prioritize Vietnam veterans, and (c) a discussion of the networking employment efforts of the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program.
4) Discussion concerning the Federal Jobs Training Partnership Act involved: (a) a summary of the congressional interest; (b) comments on the need for Vietnam veterans participation on the Statewide Planning Council and the PIC's; (c) discussion of how the entire Federal Jobs Bill package will affect the Vietnam veterans, and (d) comments on pending legislation.

Veterans Organization Hearing

At the Special Hearing with the Veterans Organizations, this Commission received testimony on the efforts the major traditional veterans organizations have made assisting the Vietnam veterans.

Post Traumatic Stress/The Vietnam Veteran and The Criminal Justice System Hearing

The Special Hearing on Post Traumatic Stress/the Vietnam Veterans and the Criminal Justice System featured four main topics, (1) the phenomenon of P.T.S.D. (2) the legal issues involved, (3) sentencing and treatment, and (4) a view from other states.

1) Opening remarks on the Phenomenon of Post Traumatic Stress involved (a) a history of the work and projects attempted and accomplished over the last eight years; (b) a presentation on the relation of P.T.S.D. to criminal behavior, (c) comments and concerns from a spokesperson for the Vietnam veterans currently serving sentence at MCI Norfolk.
2) Discussion of the legal issues involved included (a) the pro

and cons of P.T.S.D. as a defense and (b) the discussion of the Special court diversion program for Vietnam veterans at the Lynn, Massachusetts district court.

3) the sentencing and treatment portion of this special hearing involved (a) additional discussion of initiating the District Court programs throughout Massachusetts; (b) discussion of P.T.S.D. — problems in treatment in MCI's; (c) special needs of those in high security facilities, (d) comments on all these efforts from the viewpoint of the Department of Corrections.

4) A view from other states was also provided in connection with the program being instituted by the Texas Department of Corrections.

Housing Hearing

The Special Informational Hearing on Housing included a discussion of viewpoints from the city, state, federal, and private sectors, as well as input from the Vietnam veteran community.

1) From local and state officials, testimony was gathered concerning (a) public housing for veterans in the City of Boston; (b) a past and present outline of state housing development programs affecting Vietnam veterans vis-a-vis E.O.C.D., and (c) a discussion of opportunities for veterans vis-a-vis M.F.H.A.

2) At the federal level two lines of inquiries were pursued (a) discussion of programs from HUD and (b) discussion of the V.A. Home Loan Guarantee Program.

COMMISSION SURVEY

One of the major efforts which this Commission decided to undertake was a survey questionnaire project. Massachusetts was one of several states to have provided its Vietnam/Vietnam Era servicemen and service women with a financial bonus upon their return to civilian life. The names, addresses, and so forth were as a matter of record kept on computer file; 235,409 records existed.

The Commission endeavored to obtain this computer tape and match it against the Registry of Motor Vehicles main frame

computer files so as to produce a current list of names and addresses of Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans in the Commonwealth. To facilitate this the Commission engaged in a series of formal and lengthy procedures in both the public, i.e., within various agencies of the Commonwealth bureaucracy, and private sectors, i.e., engaging in a bidding process to secure an appropriate vendor. In addition, there was the question of the scope of the survey. There was no majority consensus as to what the Commission could expect in the way of returns, or indeed knowledge as to the characteristics of the bonus population; in addition, there was a cost factor. With these reservations in mind, it was decided to limit the questionnaire format to a "four sider" with a maximum of fifty questions (there were actually fifty-two).

The categories of questions concerned (1) Agent Orange/health, (2) employment problems, (3) education levels, (4) housing factors, all were measured against (5) standard socio-economic status.

The questionnaire was mailed out in June 1983; the vendor began tabulation in July. The tabulations were based on 16,500 returns; though additional returns came in over the coming months. The project was closed in September 1983 with just over 19,500 returns in. The returns may be considered statistically significant and viewed as an accurate picture of the population *provided that certain reservations/qualifications are acknowledged.*

For example, it should be noted that *only individuals discharged under honorable or medical* conditions could have received a bonus and therefore be contacted. Secondly, many notes and/or letters (at least 3 to 4 thousand according to the vendor) were enclosed with returning questionnaires. These reveal other concerns, problems, etc., which did not lend themselves to tabulations. Alienation and distrust of the "system" (particularly the Veterans Administration) and the notion of the stress were the most frequently mentioned topics. Third, *only 1%* of the returning sample was Black; this low response is thought to reveal the alienation and distrust of the "system" felt by that population. Consequently, it is believed that *this report favors the population best able to cope* with conditions in the military and at home.

The following represents only a brief summary of the twenty-six page report of survey results provided by the vendor.

Health Issues Agent Orange

21.4% of the respondents claimed to have been sprayed with Agent Orange. 3200 or 87% of the respondents sprayed with Agent Orange were in Vietnam between the period of 1966 to 1971.

26.8% of those who claimed to have been sprayed with Agent Orange and tried to have children indicated that one or more children born after their return from Vietnam suffered from some birth defect, 52.5% were children of veterans who had been in an area sprayed by Agent Orange.

Agent Orange — Employment

39.6% of those respondents in areas sprayed with Agent Orange have had difficulty in obtaining employment. 57.2% have had 1-3 full time jobs since discharge, 24.2% have held 4-6 full time jobs, 8.1% have had 7-9 jobs and 8.8% have held 10 or more full time jobs. Since discharge, 52.2% of the veterans in areas sprayed with Agent Orange were unemployed for periods longer than 6 months between 1 and 3 times, 9.4% between 4 and 6 times and 4.7% for 7 or more times.

Agent Orange — Conclusion

Veterans who claim exposure to Agent Orange also report far greater risks in having children born with birth defects and greater difficulty in finding employment or housing. They earn less money, hold less skilled jobs and receive less education. In comparison to non-sprayed victims, there is only one area where victims of Agent Orange fare better and, that is Government or Civil Service Jobs which they hold in higher proportion than other groups. Although the information received from veterans *was uncontrolled,* the association that veterans make between exposure to Agent Orange and health problems is impressive and warrants greater investigation.

Health Issues

Of those respondents who served in Vietnam from 1966 to 1971, 70.1% have had or tried to have children. 17.5% of those serving in Vietnam from 1966 to 1971 who had children after returning had children with birth defects. Of the total respondents including Vietnam veterans and those sprayed with Agent

Orange, 72.7% have had or tried to have children since Vietnam and 16.2% of these respondents have had children with birth defects. Although there is no difference in the rate of various defects, the incidence of birth defects increases with exposure to Agent Orange.

Employment Issues

26.6% of all respondents indicated difficulty in obtaining a full time job. This difficulty is dispersed throughout the veteran population as one expects it to be in the general population. Age, race, education, marital status, and other demographic characteristics show no surprising deviation. There is very little deviation between the characteristics common to the entire sample and those peculiar to Vietnam veterans.

Employment — How Many Full Time Jobs

Stability in employment does not vary significantly between any single group of veteran. Expected differences do show up when groups are compared by marital status, education, or occupation. As with job procurement and stability of employment, periods of unemployment run similar patterns. Increasing difficulty in obtaining employment is exhibited among young, single, and transient. Education continues to correlate positively with difficulty in securing and holding a job. These groups tend to be unemployed more often and longer than the rest of the survey population.

Current Employment

11.8% of the respondents indicated that they presently do not hold a full time hob. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (C.P.S.) Current Population Survey for the 2nd Quarter of 1983 indicates that the national average was 10.4%; for Massachusetts, it was 6.8%. Education and race play significant roles in determining employment, but there is no indication that Vietnam veterans are more adversely affected than Vietnam Era veterans.

Civil Service

44.0% of the respondents have taken a Civil Service exam. 36.2% of the respondents have had their names placed on a civil service list and 23.1% have been hired to a civil service job.

58.1% of those who were hired served in Vietnam between 1965

and 1971, 31.9% of those hired to civil service jobs currently work for the federal government, 29.4% for state government, and 11.2% for local government; others are assumed to have left. (See employment issue area.)

Federal Job Programs

12.0% of the respondents have enrolled in a Federal Job Program. 8.6% have enrolled in the CETA Program, 1.6% in the Federal Readjustment Program, 1.8% in a Federal Career Program.

SBA Assistance

5.2% of all respondents have applied to the Small Business Administration for assistance. 35.6% to all applicants received the assistance that was sought.

11.0% of all Black respondents have applied for assistance, 33.3% of all Black applicants received the aid sought. 5.0% of all White respondents have applied for assistance, 35.8% of these respondents received the aid sought.

Assistance Awareness

Aside from V.A. mortgages or educational benefits, the majority of respondents did not indicate a substantial knowledge of programs available to them. 12.4% were aware of Chapter 707 and only .5% received it. 11.4% were aware of Chapter 705 and.8% received benefits from it. 12.5% were aware of Section 8 Housing and .5% received assistance. 14.5% are aware of the Federal 234FHA Program, .8% were recipients. 11.1% knew of 236FHA and .4% were recipients. 20.8% were aware of Farmers Home Chapter Loan and .8% were recipients. Finally, 40.6% were aware of the GI Home Loan Guarantees and 16.7% were recipients.

Housing

71.1% of all respondents own their home, 21.0% rent, while 6.8% live with their family. 96.5% of those who own their home have sought some type of mortgage. 96.3% of those who sought a mortgage obtained one.

7.9% of all recipients felt discriminated against when applying for a mortgage simply because they were veterans.

PART II.
THE
ISSUES
OF
CONCERN

THE RANGE OF ISSUES:

The issues of concern to Vietnam veterans in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts may be said to range from those particular to the fact of military service and the unique nature of the war, to those more stapel interests negatively affected as a result of the hostile Homecoming experience, and its most significant consequence — the unwarranted and unique negative status of Vietnam veterans.

The particular issues include such concerns as the problem of Post-Vietnam Delayed Stress, the difficulties faced by those with less than honorable discharges, the special problems of Vietnam veterans involved with the Criminal Justice system, and of course, the question of exposure to toxins such as Agent Orange, dapsone, and the like, as well as concern for our POWs and MIAs still in Southeast Asia.

The staple concerns, all of which are affected by combinations of the particular problems mentioned above, include such items as general health care, education, employment, housing, and access to the entire scope of governmental services.

Both an examination of the growing volume of literature pertaining to the problems faced by Vietnam veterans, as well as the testimony provided by the Vietnam veterans from the Commonwealth, indicate a strong set of linkages between and among the particular and staple issues of concern. In short there is no lynch pin problem which, if solved, will eliminate or resolve the others. Each of these difficulties has to be squarely faced and at least partially surmounted in order for a general improvement in the social condition of the Vietnam veteran to take place.

Negative Public Image

Obviously, it is fairly impossible to pinpoint a root cause for all the difficulties encountered by the Vietnam veterans since their return, now quite long ago. Ostensibly, it would seem that the shattering effects of war should be similar for any veteran of any war. Yet the veterans of Vietnam have encountered far more in the way of readjustment problems than those veterans from previous conflicts.

This Commission is of the opinion that two important differences mark this generation of veterans from others, the fact of guerrilla war and the fact of the negative Homecoming. There are obviously threads of connection from the former to the latter. Our purpose here is to make several facts pertaining to the latter. With this reservation understood, this Commission takes the position and cares to remind all (by way of the following brief synopsis) that one of the principal and general base factors negatively impacting the Vietnam veteran was the hostile Homecoming phenomenon.

As the public attitude toward the war reversed itself after the TET 1968 offensive, so also did the reception accorded to the returning veterans. To be very frank, tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans returning to America from mid 1968 on were verbally and even physically harassed; Vietnam veterans as a group became stigmatized. Further, such stigma came from both segments of a (then) very politically polarized society. At one end of the spectrum, "hawks" chided and rebuked the Vietnam veteran for "losing the war", and for being poor soldiers and harbingers of the permissive society. As for the "Doves," Vietnam veterans were damned as "killers of women and children", the representatives of the old ethnocentric, misdirected, even "criminal" patriotic ideology. Thus, it is no exaggeration at all to say that Vietnam veterans became the all-duty scape-goats for virtually every sector of American society, each seeking a way to absolve themselves from responsibility for the war, its outcome, and aftermath. That this was the case is irrefutable; any honest reflection and certainly even the most basic bibliographic research would substantiate that this was the case — part of the inheritance of the Vietnam Decade.

Furthermore, all this was exacerbated by the media in general. In the film industry, in the newspapers, and magazine publications, and *especially* in television programing, Vietnam veterans at large were (and to a lesser degree still are) portrayed as dangerous pathological figures — menaces to society.

For example, even a cursory glance through any of the old "T.V. Guides" of the early and mid 1970's would show at least one or two shows per month featuring a "drug crazed Vietnam veteran killer" as the principal villian. As several writers pointed out, Vietnam veterans suffered from the "Kojack syndrome",

i.e., if a crime has been committed, why then check out all recently discharged Vietnam veterans. In fact Tom Wicker of the New York Times noted in an editorial in *1975* that this new generation of veterans suffered from the "Vietnam disease".

As noted in Senate Committee reports and elsewhere, many Vietnam veterans "hid" their identity to control the information of their negative status and thus avoid stigma. Residuals of this entire phenomenon (the stigma and the veterans' reaction to it) continue into the present. Many of the veterans who testified before this Commission in its Public Hearing sessions noted that they found it necessary to remove veteran status from their resume in order to secure employment. Further, this Commission in its advocacy role had to intercede in behalf of one veteran where the employment problem (a state civil service position) was directly a result of this stereotypical media image.

It may do to summarize these past ten years by noting that this negative public image created a veritable mountain of negative privilege, heaping one stigma label upon another, so that by the late 1970's, there existed all the makings for a quasi-caste group. That so many, perhaps up to 75 percent, survived by general standard, i.e., they (the Vietnam veterans) gained some acceptable level of socio-economic status (some have done very well) is a tribute to their survival skills. However, that many collapsed under the pressure at home is a fact as well; as suicide is a fact; as Post Traumatic Stress is a fact; just as the bitter Homecoming and the antecedent guerrilla war were facts.

Obviously, this Commission is as pleased as is the entire Vietnam veteran community that this negative social condition is now reversing direction. Interestingly enough, the turning point occurred with the Homecoming of the Iranian hostages in 1981. Several of the embassy staff made comments with regard to the conditions endured by Vietnam veterans. The Vietnam veteran community is grateful; in their opinion these statements embarrassed an entire nation; we believe the atmosphere is changing — for the better.

Of course, Vietnam veterans organizations have been working to that end for years. This Commission has been proud to take its small part in this effort as well. Further, we care to inform all that among those working to change this negative image, none deserve more credit than the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program. This is certainly the case in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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Agent Orange

Agent Orange is the most common term given to several types of herbicides utilized during the war. All of these types and various batches of the same type (even if produced by the same corporation) contained various levels of the inevitable by-product of production — the contaminant dioxin. Dioxin, it is fairly well agreed, is one of the most vicious carcinogenic compounds known. As noted in our Interim Report:

1) The United States military used herbicide agents in Southeast Asia in a campaign to deny the enemy cover.
2) In consequence crops and waterways were destroyed or contaminated with dioxin, a carcinogenic.
3) During the 1970's, a number of veterans began to inquire about possible connection between numerous ailments and exposure to Agent Orange (one of several code names for the herbicide compounds used).
4) By early 1980 this concern became one of the foremost issues on the Vietnam veteran agenda.
5) As a result of this Commission's Special Informational Hearing on this matter (November 17, 1982), two avenues of approach were suggested (1) to do a pilot biopsy study on a sample of Vietnam veterans and (2) to catalogue the incidents of birth defects among children of Vietnam veterans in the Commonwealth. This Commission made such recommendations in its Interim Report.
6) The immediate bottom line for the Vietnam veterans is a two fold proposition. (1) The amount of exposure necessary to cause debilitating effects in humans in the short, medium, and long range has yet to be determined (only studies orientated to this end are of importance here) (2) the problem of service connection has become a complicated matter, for years have passed since Vietnam.

Profile Survey Results

A series of questions concerning Agent Orange were included in our profile survey questionnaire. Included in the summary of that survey is the following:

Health Issues Agent Orange

21.4% of the respondents claimed to have been sprayed with Agent Orange. 3200 or 87% of the respondents sprayed with Agent Orange were in Vietnam between the period of 1966 to 1971.

26.8% of those who claimed exposure to Agent Orange and tried to have children indicated that one or more children born after their return from Vietnam suffered from some birth defect. Of the total respondents whose children had birth defects, 52.5% were children of veterans who had been in an area sprayed by Agent Orange.

Veterans who claim exposure to Agent Orange also report far greater problems in having children born with birth defects, and greater difficulty in finding employment or housing. They earn less money, hold less skilled jobs, and receive less education. In comparison to non-sprayed victims, there is only one area where victims of Agent Orange fare better and that is Government or Civil Service Jobs which they hold in higher proportion than other groups. Although the information received from veterans was uncontrolled, the association that the veterans make between exposure to Agent Orange and health problems is impressive and warrants greater investigation.

It is important to note that this suggests a rate which is almost four times higher. That is 26.8% of those who claimed to have been sprayed absorbed 52.5% of all the birth defects. This is in contrast with 7% for the respondents who claimed *not* to be sprayed.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Agent Orange Study

As a result of the work of this Commission and, of course, that of the Vietnam veterans groups in Massachusetts, $350,000 was secured for an Agent Orange study. The responsibility for implementation of this has been delegated to the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services (O.C.V.S.). Given the superb nature of the medical community existing in Massachusetts, it is presently anticipated that the O.C.V.S. will be seeking proposals for Agent Orange study grants in early 1984.

Other Developments

As the issue of Agent Orange has gained visibility, the number of state Commissions established to look into this matter has increased. Currently, there are nineteen commissions in existence. Each of these commissions has pursued its own course. Several have produced booklets for consumption by the veterans community in general and reports of their work are generally available for those interested. Further, the V.A. has established a Veterans Administration Advisory Committee on Health-Related Effects on Herbicides. Finally, over fourteen major national studies have been designed and one to be initiated in the immediate future. Yet it is the opinion of this Commission that alone these studies will have only a muted effect at best. It should be noted that the medical literature is already so voluminous as to be unmanagable, and as yet, there is still no consensus in the medical/scientific community.

In terms of legislation, there are three important pieces currently being considered within the Veterans Affairs Committee of the 98th Congress, HR209, S374-S786, HR1961. The first would require another independent study to be conducted by the Health and Human Services bureaucracy; the Senate companion bills call for presumption of service connection for illnesses; HR1961 (the Daschle Bill) provides for presumption and treatment for soft tissue sarcoma, chloracne, and liver cancer. The Daschle Bill is now scheduled for mark up out of the subcommittee and is to be considered by the full committee on Veterans Affairs in the immediate future.

At the judicial level, there are several law suits pending. Perhaps the most important is being handled by the firm Yannacone & Yannacone of New York. Dow Chemical has taken the lead for the defense among the several corporations and is literally tracking down every piece of legislation and every study across the Union. There can be no doubt that this is perhaps the most important issue in terms of impact and scope. The whole concept of liability is at play. Billions of dollars are at stake. In a sense free enterprise is at stake. Finally, the issue here has tremendous spill over effect into the entire chemical waste/environmental concerns field. Quite frankly, it is the opinion of this Commission that the entire phenomenon of Agent Orange constitutes one of the most important political questions of the 1980's.

Testimony before the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care of the Veterans Affairs Committee

This Commission through the Executive Director had the privilege of presenting testimony to the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care (Representative Bob Edgar, Chairman) on August 9, 1983. At that hearing and for this Final Report, this Commission presses the following viewpoints and recommendations:

- ultimately Agent Orange must be viewed and addressed as a comprehensive political question;
- that the Agent Orange screening program is not only inadequate but not standardized;
- that the V.A. design an accurate screening program for Vietnam veterans which is truly relevant to determining facts about Agent Orange;
- that Congressional legislation of HR1961 or S374/786 be passed as a door opener;
- that Congressional legislation HR209 be passed authorizing an independent study by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- that the Veterans Administration gear its services for cancer care and presume service connection for the purposes of treatment;
- that a more comprehensive health care bill be developed in connection with the issue of Agent Orange;
- that the state legislature again appropriate sufficient monies for the Agent Orange study to be implemented by the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services.

The Commission cares to thank the following for their assistance on this issue:

Dr. Louis Bartoshesky, Dr. David A. Finkel, Phillip Girard of the Agent Orange Victims International, Dr. Francesca LaVecchio, Dr. John McCahan, Dr. Matthew Messelson, Dr. Richard, Mr. Ryan, and Warren G. McCrillis.

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POW/MIA

As noted in the Interim Report, over ten years have lapsed since the Paris peace Accords were signed. Despite the return of a number of POWs in 1973, it has been the position of the National League of Families of POWs and MIAs that the Communist forces in Southeast Asia have been less than cooperative in connection with the repatriation of United States servicemen. The League has contended for years that several hundred of the 2500 POW/MIAs are perhaps alive and being held as hostages. This stance was given additional corroboration by Vietnamese refugees; many of the "boat people" claimed to have sighted Americans in Southeast Asia; many of these "live sightings" are believed to be reliable. Naturally, all this has stirred up a great deal of hope and anxiety among the families.

As in the Interim, this Commission cares to note that this very sensitive issue has been virtually ignored over the past two administrations. Further, the problem has been compounded by a lack of accurate information due to (1) the existing situation of hostile relations between the United States and Vietnam, the position of the major powers to those regional client states and the fractions within client states. The Commission recognized that these factors obviously prohibited direct involvement on its part. However, we did engage in an awareness campaign in behalf of the League during 1983.

On January 27, 1983, this Commission initiated its awareness campaign with a ceremony in the Hall of Flags at the Statehouse. This included (1) remarks by the Senate President, and Speaker of the House of the General Court, (2) statements of the position of this Commission, and statement of support by the Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts, Inc., (3) a roll call of the sixty Massachusetts' servicemen still missing, and (4) distinguished guest speakers Don Levesque, of the Blinded Veterans Association, Irving Rittenberg of the X-POW Association, Mrs. Maureen Dunn spouse of Commander Joseph P. Dunn, U.S.N./MIA-February 14, 1968, and M.S.G. Jon R. Cavaiani of 10th S.F.G., recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor and former POW/1971-1973.

Over several weeks following the ceremony at the Hall of Flags, this Commission sent a letter to all the Congressional Delegation,

every member of the General court, and the Key administrative officials. We requested that each write a letter of inquiry and support to President Reagan with regard to the POW/MIAs; also we requested a letter of inquiry and protest be sent to the Vietnamese Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Hoang Bich Son. Further, we sent similar letters to every city and town in the Commonwealth asking the same of each, i.e., (a) letter of inquiry and support (b) a letter of inquiry and protest and (c) a request that a resolution be passed supporting the Commission's awareness campaign efforts. We are pleased to note that thirty-six legislators and one hundred thirty-three cities and towns responded to our request. We strongly believe that this campaign and others have had a direct effect on the State Department and particularly on the Vietnamese.

This Commission notes that on November 1, 1983, the remains of Captain Arthur Hans Hardy, United States Air Force-MIA February 14, 1972, were returned to Massachusetts. This Commission, and through this Commission every Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans, all veterans, and the citizens of the Commonwealth extend the deepest sympathies to the parents Gordan and Inge Hardy of Ipswich, Massachusetts.

This Commission finds it significant that after years of denial, that the remains of one American serviceman was returned in late October — early November 1983, and that it was Arthur H. Hardy. We are only left to conclude that the Vietnamese, the Laotians, and Cambodian communist governments have and have had knowledge of the whereabouts and/or possession of the remains of many United States servicemen. We are also of the opinion that there are indeed perhaps several hundred men held alive in Southeast Asia. If nothing else, loyalty to the National League of Families of POWs and MIAs would demand that the Commission take this position. Yet, this has been the stance of the membership of this Commission. The return of Captain Hardy has only strengthened our belief and resolve. The entire veteran community is united on this issue. This Commission cares to make the following recommendations:

- that the awareness campaign initiated by this Commission in 1983 continue in 1984;
- that the Governor of the Commonwealth proclaim July 20, 1984 as POW/MIA Recognition Day;

- that during 1984, under the auspices of all the veterans organizations in the Commonwealth, each city and town do whatever feasible to encourage a letter writing campaign by its residents;
- that the appropriate cities and towns in this Commonwealth follow the example of the City of Lynn (acting for the town of Ipswich) and adopt their respective POW/MIA servicemen from Massachusetts;
- that the United States Postal Service strike a POW/MIA stamp so as to remind the American public at large that our men, after a decade, are as yet unaccounted for.

The Commission would like to thank the following for their letters of support for our Prisoners of War/Missing in Action campaign:

Governor Michael S. Dukakis; Senator Peter C. Weber; Senator John W. Olver; Senator Paul V. Doane; Senator Chester G. Atkins; Senator Frederick E. Berry; Senator Richard A. Kraus; Senator William Q. MacLean, Jr.; Senator George Bachrach; Representative Argeo P. Cellucci; Representative William Constantino, Jr.; Representative Howard C. Cahoon; Representative John A. Businger; Representative Kenneth M. Lemanski; Representative Chester A. Suhoski; Representative Timothy A. Bassett; Representative William B. Vernon; Representative Joseph M. Connolly; Representative Henry R. Grenier; Representative William R. Keating; Representative Marie-Louise Kehoe; Representative Richard J. Rouse; Representative Mary Jeanette Murray; Representative Frank N. Costa; Representative Eleanor Myerson; Representative Walter A. Defilippi; Representative Angelo Picucci; Representative Marie E. Howe; Representative Elizabeth N. Metayer; Representative Michael W. Morrissey; Representative Marie J. Parente; Representative Peter A. Vellucci; Representative Philip Travis; Representative Barney Frank; Representative Nicholas Mavroules, Mr. James R. McIntyre.

For their participation within the POW/MIA Ceremony, January 27, 1983, we would like to thank:

Reverend Frederick D. McCormick, Kevin Roach, Irvin

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For the letters of support and letters of resolution, the Commission would like to thank the following cities and towns:

Cities of: Springfield, Fall River, Gardner, Haverhill, Peabody, North Adams, Northampton, Revere, and Beverly.

Towns of: Abington, Acton, Andover, Arlington, Athol, Avon, Ayer, Barnstable, Barre, Becket, Berlin, Blackstone, Bourne, Boxborough, Boxford, Braintree, Brewster, Buckland, Canton, Carver, Charlton, Dighton, Dover, Easthampton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Foxborough, Franklin, Freetown, Gay Head, Gill, Grafton, Granby, Halifax, Hampden, Hanover, Hanson, Harwich, Hingham, Hinsdale, Hopedale, Hull, Huntington, Ipswich, Kingston, Lakeville, Lancaster, Leicester, Lexington, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Lunenburg, Lunesborough, Lynnfield, Mansfield, Mashpee, Mattapoisett, Maynard, Medfield, Middleborough, Middleton, Milford, Millbury, Millis, Monterey, Needham, New Braintree, North Andover, North Attleborough, Northbridge, North Brookfield, Northfield, North Reading, Norton, Norwood, Oxford, Palmer, Pelham, Plainville, Plympton, Randolph, Rochester, Rockport, Rowe, Sandisfield, Sandwich, Saugus, Seekonk, Sharon, Sherborn, Sheffield, Shrewsbury, Shirley, Somerset, Southampton, Southbridge, Southborough, Spencer, Stoughton, Stow, Sudbury, Sunderland, Swampscott, Sutton, Templeton, Tewksbury, Tisbury, Tyngsborough, Uxbridge, Walpole, Ware, Warren, Wayland, Wenham, West Boylston, West Bridgewater, Westford, Westminster, Westport, Westwood, Weymouth, Wilbraham, Worthington, and Yarmouth.

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Post Traumatic Stress

As this Commission pointed out in its Interim Report:

1) The issue of Post Traumatic Stress first gained attention in the general social/psychological literature in 1973. The most significant research emanated from the consortium on Veterans Studies and especially the Disabled American Veterans Forgotten Warrior Project.

2) Continued research coupled with the activisim of Vietnam veterans from across the nation had several consequences. Those included the establishment of the DAV Outreach program in the late 1970's and proposals for the establishment of coordinated storefront outreach centers by the

National League of Cities/U.S. Conference of Mayors Vets Program.

3) In early 1980, the American Psychiatric Association officially recognized the phenomenon of stress and included the relevant symptomatic guidelines for the medical community in its official publication, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSMS).

4) Finally, the Veterans Administration responded to all this by establishing the VA Outreach Program a counseling program at 100 "storefront" locations across the nation; in October 1980 they officially recognized PTSD as a legitimate service connected condition for compensation purposes.

Since the Interim Report, a number of developments have occurred in this Commonwealth in connection with the issue of Post Traumatic Stress. These include: (1) the establishment of state funded (pilot project) Outreach Centers, (2) the developments within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Criminal Justice Systems, (3) the establishment of the pilot PTSD ward at the Northampton Veterans Administration Medical Centers, and (4) the testimony of this Commission provided to the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care, Representative Bob Edgar (Pennsylvania), Chairman, of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Pilot Project Outreach Centers

As the public hearings session proceeded during 1982, this Commission became clearly cognizant of the need for an expansion of this program. In our letters of advocacy and in our Interim Report recommendations, we strongly recommend expansion of that program. One avenue which later developed involved amending the budget for the present Fiscal year to provide $80,000 for community based project. Through the Commission Chairman, Senator Francis D. Doris, this was done for the present fiscal year. The prospect sites selected were in Fitchburg and Roxbury. Oversight authority was appropriately deferred to the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services. This Commission is pleased to note that the Governor of the Commonwealth personally signed the contract awards on November 10, 1983.

It is hoped that the Fitchburg and Roxbury centers will receive continued funding with the next fiscal year and that at least one new center receive start-up monies.

Developments Within the Criminal Justice System

This Commission, as already noted in its Interim Report, (and by way of its Special Information Hearing) is greatly concerned with regard to the correlation between P.T.S.D. and criminal behavior. Yet, we are pleased to note that in this Commonwealth some significant progress has been achieved as a result of the collective efforts of several individuals, committees, and agencies. In particular, we are referring to the development of the sentencing diversion program in Lynn District Court, and the recent implementation of the Mutual Agreement Program for one third consideration developed under the auspices of the Department of Corrections. In addition we care to announce our support of HR762 which would provide stress treatment for Vietnam veterans incarcerated at various Massachusetts Correctional Institutions. (See Criminal Justice Issue.)

P.T.S.D. Ward/Northampton

The establishment of pilot program Post Traumatic Stress Disorder wards has been one of the most exciting developments to take place at Veterans Administration Medical Centers in the last few years. Currently, ten (10) of 171 V.A.M.C.s have initiated a stress ward program. Virtually all of these pilot P.T.S.D. programs were established by interested professionals at the respective medical centers. The Commission is pleased that one of these sites is in New England at the Northampton, Massachusetts V.A.M.C. and was honored to advocate for this program. Currently, the Northampton V.A.M.C. stress ward has a nine month waiting list. We understand that this is the case at other stress wards as well. Obviously, there is indication of a need for expansion of this program across the V.A.M.C. system. We made such a recommendation at Congressional Hearings on August 9, 1983.

Commission Testimony before the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care

On August 9, 1983, this Commission provided testimony to the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care of the Committee on Veterans Affairs (House). At that hearing a variety of questions and comments were provided. The following represents this Commission's attitude toward P.T.S.D., which we expressed to the Subcommittee. That is, we recognized that combat stress is a

phenomenon common to all of America's veterans of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. However, this Commission cares to point out that we consider the phenomenon of P.T.S.D. to also include two other factors which differ markedly with the experience of other generations of veterans. First, we must note the fact of guerrilla war. The Vietnam conflict is the first modern war in which our soliders were confronted with the phenomenon of guerrilla war, the problem of civilian status, and all the other problems well known with regard to our nation's efforts to support the GVN/ARVN. Second, and just as important is the negative Homecoming experience. This Commission cares to note that the negative reception accorded to Vietnam veterans constitutes one of the most bitter and shameful legacies of the entire war. These two additional facts, i.e., guerrilla war and the negative Homecoming experience are considered by this Commission to be (as much as combat stress) intimately involved in the overall P.T.S.D. phenomenon.

With regard to P.T.S.D., this Commission made the following recommendations at these subcommittee hearings:

1) the Veterans Administration should do all that it can to encourage the initiation of P.T.S.D. wards at all V.A.M.C. locations, especially where the population warrants.
2) The Veterans Administration should recognize the strength of the Operation Outreach Program as an outreach mechanism and expand that program three-fold.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

As originally conceived in our Interim Report, the problem of drug and alcohol abuse, though closely connected to stress, constituted a separate issue area. Upon gathering more information, particularly from our special hearing on the relation between stress and criminal justice involvement, it has become the position of this Commission that the fact of substance abuse is a symptomatic condition of stress in general and P.T.S.D. in particular. As such, it is more appropriate to consider it as a subtopic of P.T.S.D. in this Final Report. As in the Interim Report, we care to note that:

> Many Vietnam veterans have unfortunately resorted to drug and/or alcohol as an escape from the bitter alienation

directly related to the negative Homecoming experience with all of its societal rejection and negative stigma. There is considerable documentation for this; it was brought to our attention directly or indirectly at all hearings. The most tragic problem, albeit rarely discussed (and hardly mentioned during the hearings) is that of suicide. There are no statistics, but since December 14, 1980, at least a dozen Vietnam veterans from the Commonwealth have taken their own life. While the debilitating effect of stress was no doubt the primary factor, the symptom of substance abuse must be seen as a contributing cause.

The Commission:

- has secured prioritization for Vietnam veterans in the Mental Health portion of Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Service Block Grant; we strongly urge that such priority be continued.
- recommends that mental health specialists from state, local, and private agencies and institutions (local hospitals, community health plan clinics, neighborhood services agencies, community based organizations, CAP programs, etc.) contact the Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program and together develop and conduct a symposium series which will help intake specialists, staff case workers, and clinicians to recognize and understand P.T.S.D. and deliver the appropriate services or referrals.

The Commission cares to thank the following for their assistance on this issue of P.T.S.D.:

Ashaq Asim, Dexter Bishop, Steven Blesofsky, Dr. William Boutelle, Pamela Brighton, David Butler, Patrick Guarnieri, Dennis Humphrey, Randal LePore, Leslie Pool, Karen Saunders, Dr. Richard Sette, Dr. Sheldon Zigelbaum, the staff members of the four Operation Outreach Programs in Massachusetts.

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Governmental Services

One of the most pressing sets of problems that Vietnam veterans confront are constituted in the poor allocation of values, the meager distribution of services afforded them by virtually all the various agencies and sectors of government, whether local, state, or federal. There can be no doubt that the history of the past decade is in part a bitter legacy of broken promises and official neglect for the Vietnam veterans of this nation — and that neglect in itself has generated a series of negative consequences for the population in question.

Yet, with the Homecoming of the Iranian Hostages in 1981, the social and political climate in America has started to change. It is important that this spirit of the time be seized by all those concerned, and that their actions be directed to a redistribtuion of values as concerns the Vietnam veteran as a client population of various government services.

One method to initiate this is for *all local, state, and federal agencies to not only prioritize but provide outreach services to Vietnam veterans for all programs.* With all of these efforts, it appears obvious that the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services, with its linkages to over 250 cities and towns in the Commonwealth, be taken as the focal point for all these coordination efforts.

We make this point for good reason. The result of our profile study indicated that excepting knowledge of the GI Bill and Home Loan Guarantee program the vast majority of Vietnam veterans in this Commonwealth were unaware of existing governmental services available to them. Consider these survey results.

> 12.4% were aware of Chapter 707 and only .5% received it. 11.4% were aware of Chapter 705 and .8% received benefits from it. 12.5% were aware of Section 8 Housing and .5% received assistance. 14.5% are aware of the Federal 234FHA Program, 8% were recipients. 11.1% knew of 236FHA and .4% were recipients. 20.8% were aware of Farmers Home Chapter Loan and .8% were recipients. Finally, 40.6% were aware of GI Home Loan Guarantee and 16.7% were recipients.

In some sectors change has begun to take place. Here in the Commonwealth Vietnam veterans have been afforded Affirmative Action. On December 7, 1983, the Office of Affirmative

Action sponsored a training seminar for Affirmative Action officers/all secretariats. *THIS COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT EACH OF THESE SECRETARIATS MUST DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN OUTREACH EFFORT FOR VIETNAM VETERANS.* In addition, for this Final Report, we care to highlight some of the most important areas in the follolwing outline. That is, the Commission recommends that:

State

- EOCD continue to coordinate the fuel assistance prioritization outreach effort initiated last year through all the various CAP entities.
- DOC continue to explore all possible avenues as to develop a comprehensive rehabilitative corrections program for Vietnam veterans currently incarcerated at Massachusetts Correctional Institutions.
- M.F.H.A. provide a percentage allocation to Vietnam veterans with respect to existing housing packages and programs and to prioritize Vietnam veterans in all new bonding issues.
- Office of Affirmative Action develop a brochure in conjunction with the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services which informs the veterans of their rights under affirmative action status.
- Office of Personnel Administration initiate the monitoring system proposed (see employment issue area).
- Office of Economic Affairs insure that Vietnam veterans have access to all F.J.T.P.A. titles and that all SDA PICs include Vietnam veterans in their composition.
- The Department of Commerce and Development initiate an outreach program to Vietnam veterans with regard to small business opportunities.

Federal

- That the Secretary of Labor insure to the fullest extent possible that pressure is brought to bear through all possible channels across all 50 states to insure that Vietnam veterans are not stonewalled from any F.J.T.P.A. titles as was the case with CETA.

As this point it may do to offer remarks concerning the two state and federal entities of most importance for the Vietnam veterans. First we will consider the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services and then the Veterans Administration.

Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services

This Commission cares to compliment the newly appointed Commissioner of Veterans Services John Halachis for his commitment to the Vietnam veterans. We applaud his initiative in connection with developing a new programs/services division in the central office which is orientated toward the needs of Vietnam veterans. This Commission supports these efforts and recommends that the legislature and the present (and future) administration do so as well.

This Commission recommends that sufficient funding and manpower be provided to O.C.V.S. so as to initiate, maintain, and expand the following studies and programs. In order to truly implement all that is required over the next decade and beyond for Vietnam veterans and the new veterans to come the Commission is of the opinion and strongly recommends that:

THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF VETERANS SERVICES BE RAISED TO SECRETARIATE STATUS BY THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION

As mentioned throughout this report, we had only 1% response from minority veterans and those with severe problems were unable to be reached. Thus, we recommend:

- that funding be provided through an RFP/grants procedure for a profile study on minority and "hard to reach" Vietnam veterans.

We care to add that the only feasible method is to seek the involvement of the local Vietnam veterans organization across the Commonwealth.

This Commission recommends:

- that the Fitchburg Outreach Program receive continued funding, that the Roxbury minority program receive full funding, and that outreach programs be initiated in the Cape Cod, the Merrimack Valley area, and in Berkshire County.

The importance of the Federal Jobs Training Partnership Act for Vietnam veterans could never be over emphasized. Certainly, it was the intent of Congress to include Vietnam veterans in *all titles*. In addition, they provided a special section for Vietnam veterans in Title IV Part C. With regard to that title, this Commission recommends:

- THAT THE O.C.V.S. BE THE ADMINISTRATIVE ARM WITH OVERSIGHT POWERS FOR ALL TITLE IV PART C

PROGRAMS TO BE INITIATED AND MAINTAINED OVER THE F.J.T.P.A. LIFETIME IN COOPERATION WITH THE PARTICIPATING SERVICE DELIVERY AREA VENDORS AND SUBGRANTEES.

The Agent Orange study to be implemented by O.C.V.S. will require careful review *before* implementation; this will demand considerable time. We recommend:

- that funding appropriations be continued through the next fiscal year and until completion.

The Veterans Administration

This Commission received numerous complaints concerning the treatment afforded to Vietnam veterans at various Veterans Administration facilities during all of its eight public hearings and on numerous occasions throughout its lifespan.

Very often these complaints were framed in the familiar format of generational conflict. That is, the "bad treatment" given to Vietnam veterans was contrasted to the "good treatment" accorded to the WWII veterans. Certainly a generation gap was operative and influenced subsequent actions which resulted in poor treatment for Vietnam veterans. *However, we care to note that the situation is changing and seriously doubt that such discrimination is now very much operative.*

This Commission is clearly aware of the bitterness of the Vietnam veteran community and given the history of the last decade, obviously, it was justified. However, commenting about the cruel and bitter Homecoming of our past will not help. Further, all the negative comments and complaints not withstanding, this Commission cares to remind all, especially Vietnam veterans, that the centerpiece, the most essential priority, for all the veterans of this nation is the *continued maintenance of the Veterans Administration system.* This Commission fears that a zero sum game situation could be set up whereby the needs of the Vietnam veterans generation are pitted against those of our fathers and uncles—the WWII and Korea generation—to the disadvantage of both and to the detriment of the structure of the Veterans Administration system.

Certainly, the Veterans Administration needs to gear itself to the different needs of the Vietnam veterans. This will require considerable innovation not a strength of any large established bureaucracy. Yet changes have and are taking place. The

Outreach Program is in place and will be maintained in its autonomous storefront mode until 1987. In the last year, the pilot stress ward program was initiated at seven locations across the nation; the Northampton V.A.M.C. here in Massachusetts is the only one in New England. Change will continue to occur at a rate roughly equal to the level of Vietnam veterans organizations, activism, and constructive criticism.

One such reasonable change which has been proposed is the federal legislation HR2936 which would affect VA judicial procedures by expanding the Board of Veterans Appeal from 55 to 65 members. This Commission supports passage of this legislation.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

At this point we care to comment on the following in a positive light with regard to Veterans Administration services and programs for the Vietnam veterans.

Veterans' Outpatient Clinic/Court Street

It is the understanding of this Commission that the status of the Veterans' Outpatient Clinic at 17 Court Street, Boston is in jeopardy. It may do to point out that the V.A.O.C. at Court Street is the largest independent outpatient clinic in the nation (currently providing $800,000 per year in rental fees to the G.S.A.).

This Commission cares to remind the entire membership of the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care and its full parent committee on Veterans Affairs that the necessity of maintaining a V.A. Outpatient Clinic in Downtown Boston is absolutely imperative. This Commission informed Chairman Representative Edgar of our support for this at the hearing his subcommittee held here in Boston on August 9, 1983.

Now it is our understanding that when the new federal building currently under construction is completed, several agencies now at the John F. Kennedy Building will relocate. This Commission supports the suggestion of Court Street Director Wilson J. Schuerholz and strongly recommends that:

- the Division of Veterans Benefits (now at J.F.K.) and the V.A.O.C./Court Street be provided the low rise portion of the J.F.K. while maintaining accommodations for the National Service organizations — above all that an Outpatient Clinic facility remain operational in Downtown Boston.

Stress Ward Program

With regard to V.A.M.C. services, the pilot program (7-Upper) stress ward at Northampton, Massachusetts ranks second only to Operation Outreach. This program enjoys the support of the entire Vietnam veteran community of this Commonwealth and has the full support of this Commission. We were pleased to testify to this effect before the Subcommittee for Health and Hospitals (Representative Bob Edgar-Chairman) of the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the 98th Congress. In our opinion there is no question that such a program is warranted. This Commission recommends:

- that the pilot stress ward program be expanded to all V.A.M.C. facilities in Massachusetts and across the nation.

V.A.M.C. — Jamaica Plain

The Veterans Administration Medical Center at Jamaica Plain has provided services to the veterans of this Commonwealth for well over thirty years. Currently, the facility is desperately in need of renovation or replacement. This Commission agrees with others that the facility should be replaced; this avenue would be much less expensive and can be completed in less than half the time that renovations would require. Our understanding is that the Office of Construction initially approved the concept of a replacement facility and that a site location team will be activiated in the near future. The Commission fully supports this decision.

We would be remiss if we did not mention a second and much more generic concern in connection with all Veterans Administration Medical Centers. This is more programatic in nature and touches very real quality of life issue — geriatric care. The Veterans Administration has proposed a fourfold treatment program attack here — geriatric day care, respite care, a hospital and home based care program, and an improved mental health services program with regard to access and after care. Now the immediate point is that there exist some fears that these programs will be blessed by Congress in the press but denied the *additional funds* necessary to bring them into full effect.

Now this Commission in its role as a voice for the Vietnam veterans notes that the Vietnam veterans of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts desire that everyone clearly understand — that the *Vietnam veterans support their older generation — their fathers and their*

uncles of WWII and Korea. The Vietnam veterans of this Commonwealth and (speaking for them) this Commission desires to see additional funding for all Veterans Administration programs. This Commission recommends:

- that the funds for the replacement of the Jamaica Plain V.A.M.C. be appropriated and that the plans go forward over the next year.
- that the Veterans Administration initiatives having to do with geriatric programs such as Adult Day Care, Respite Care, and Mental Hygiene receive the appropriate emphasis and funding.

Operation Outreach

No program is of more crucial importance to the Vietnam veterans in this commonwealth or in this nation than the V.A. Outreach Program. This is the only federal program that has successfully serviced the "hard to reach" Vietnam veteran. We attribute its success to the autonomous community based, storefront mode of operation, with its informal one on one and small peer group methods of counseling, and to the delivery concept operationalized — i.e., that the large majority of staff are professional and/or highly trained Vietnam veterans who, in short, know the score.

This Commission cares to inform the Chief Administrator of the Veterans Administration, the entire Veterans Affairs Committee, and all others that the *performance of the four V.A. Outreach teams here in Massachusetts has been nothing less than outstanding.* All of these men and women have been a credit to that program, this Commonwealth, and to all the Vietnam veterans.

This Commission takes pride in the small role we played here in Massachusetts through our Congressional Delegation with regard to the passage of federal legislation *HR2920,* which incorporated provisions of HR2323(1443) and HR1137 and 1) extended the life of the Operation Outreach program three additional years and provided that the Veterans Administration form an advisory committee on women veterans.

We are thankful for the extension of Operation Outreach, but must note that expansion is also necessary. This Commission has been proud to advocate on behalf of this program on several occasions and recommends:

- that this program be *expanded threefold* across the nation and

that the outreach teams be provided with more *autonomy* to work in the area of criminal justice and discharge upgrade.

VETERANS SERVICES — CITY OF BOSTON

Two points should be briefly made with regard to the city's Veterans Services. First and most obviously, it should be noted that as a consequence of the passage of proposition 2½ the cutbacks in the Veterans Services in the City of Boston have been particulary severe. They have lost approximately 75% of their personnel and this has made it virtually impossible to maintain the necessary level of services. Secondly, the characteristics of the population are changing. There are two distinct populations, i.e., that of the World War II veterans with their increasing geriatric health care needs and the "hard to reach" Vietnam veteran population for which an extensive outreach and assistance program must be developed. The Commission strongly recommends:

- that the incoming administration of Mayor Elect Flynn allocate sufficient resources for the Commissioner of Veterans Services of Boston to initiate and maintain these new programs.

The Abrams School Project

This Commission cares to commend the Vietnam Veterans Association of Boston and the City of Boston for their exceptionally cooperative efforts in this project.

Through the cooperation of the Boston City Council, the Boston Office of Veterans Services, and the Neighborhood Development Association of Roslindale, the Vietnam Veterans Association of Boston was enabled to obtain the abandoned facility of the Abrams School, 100 Maylar Road, Roslindale, for the purpose of opening and maintaining a multi-service center serving Vietnam veterans and the community at large.

One hundred twenty thousand dollars from Community Block Grant Funds has been set aside for renovation of the facility which will house offices for the Paralyzed Veterans of America, National Spinal Cord Injury Foundation, the Blinded Veterans of America, Home, Inc., and other groups. Still, with projected costs of $350,000 much work remains to be done, and it is hoped that both public and private foundations will continue to support this effort.

This Commission would like to make special notice of certain individuals whose names have become synonymous with the

project, particularly John Kelly, George Driscoll, Michael King, and Thomas Materazzo, Commissioner of Veterans Services for the City of Boston, and of course, John Halachis, State Commissioner of Veterans Services.

The Commission recommends that:

- THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO EXPLORING ANY AND EVERY POSSIBILITY FOR FUNDING THIS PROJECT.

VIETNAM VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

One of the most important special programs developed in the last two years at the federal level has been the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program. The principal focus of this program has been to develop employment opportunities for Vietnam veterans and improve the distorted public image.

Here in Massachusetts the V.V.L.P. has played an integral role in developing awareness and in resolving problems. The program currently has over 120 volunteers from across the Commonwealth. Thus far the V.V.L.P. in Massachusetts:

1) performed seventeen *direct career placements* for Vietnam veterans;
2) has advocated and developed over 300 employment opportunities in the public and private sector;
3) has established linkages with all existing public and private programs providing assistance for veterans;
4) is working closely with the O.C.V.S. to develop a successful F.J.T.P.A. Title IV program;
5) is sponsoring a series of five information seminars for Vietnam veterans across the Commonwealth in connection with S.B.A. business loans, VA home loans, and other SBA and VA services;
6) has designed and begun implementing a media awareness seminar for public consumption concerning the past, present, and *future* contributions of Vietnam veterans.

This Commission has been pleased to work with and advocate for the V.V.L.P. here in Massachusetts. It is the belief of the entire Commission that in the immediate sense it is performing a vital "second state" to the initial readjustment work of the Outreach Program in terms of providing career placement for Vietnam veterans motivated to re-enter society. Secondly, it is performing

a crucial leadership function for the Vietnam veteran community in this Commonwealth. Finally, it is the opinion of the majority of this Commission, including the Chairman, Senator Francis D. Doris, and the Executive Director, that the V.V.L.P. efforts are working to help Vietnam veterans take their rightful leadership role in society. This Commission strongly recommends that:

- the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program receive continued funding by the federal government for at least an additional two years. Should this not be forthcoming, that the Commonwealth design, fund, and implement a similar program or find a mechanism to match federal funding.

Minority Concerns: Blacks/Hispanics/Women

In January 1983 a large number of the leadership of the minority veteran community met with the Commission Chairman, Senator Francis Doris, to discuss the needs of the Vietnam veteran community of color. This Commission agreed with their position and collectively it was determined that the text of the Interim Report adequately expressed the history of the Vietnam soldier and veteran of color. Therefore, it was decided that the Interim Report text would remain intact. Other points of interest and recommendations follow its reintroduction here in this Final Report.

At the outset it should be noted that the overall character of race relations within the United States Military in Southeast Asia followed those racial experiences which unfolded in American society. The time lag (approximately two years) can be explained by reference to the "closed society" or isolated nature universal to any military structure. It is suggested here, that in this framework the racial experience of the American soldier in Vietnam constituted an intensified microcosm of the Homecoming experience. It is felt this parallel holds in terms of both structure and process — from Homefront to Battlefront to Homefront.

While never utopian, race relations between Black and White soldiers had developed to at least tolerable levels in the early 1960's. This held through the early war years; then Vietnam was viewed as an adventure rather than the quagmire it became.

Youth, bravado, and the inevitable comraddeship which develops under fire worked to counter or at least defuse most of the existing racial tension. Yet, as with virtually every issue or factor pertaining to our engagement in Vietnam, race relations within our military deteriorated as the war wore on. By the early 1970's, the hostility became even lethal, and spread throughout our military. There were a multitude of causes for all this, and no listing of specific factors would suffice as explanation. The overall cumulative external military and political situation exerted such crushing pressure on the American soldiers toward the end that it is quite surprising that racial conflict was not worse than it was. Further, it has been remarked that it was a credit to soldiers of Vietnam and the United States Military that they could withdraw under such pressing external circumstances and remain intact as a military force.

The factors immediately impacting upon the Black soldier of Vietnam and the consequent "Homecoming" are briefly outlined for this Final Report in terms of the induction phenomenon, the military experience, the discharge process, and the "Homecoming" paradox.

In terms of the induction process, project 100,000 is of particular importance here. It constituted a policy of the United States government whereby the military test entrance score requirements were relaxed. The ostensible operating rationale was that such a policy would move the proportionate armed services Black/minority population up from 8% to 11% and thus reflect the overall composition of our society. Further, it was advanced that such a draft formula would work to allow nominally deprived inner city youth to enter service, acquire positive social skills, earn veteran status, obtain the appropriate benefits, and advance in terms of upward social mobility. Of course, all this should be placed in relief against the landscape of the "Great Society" urban programs with their remedial accent on the minority family structure.

Yet this benevolent test score discrimination failed to operate beyond induction. Consequently, when in service, virtually all were assigned combat military occupational specialties. Few translatable skills were to be found. As military men of color generally faced more obstacles to promotion, those identified as project 100,000 participants were routinely by-passed unless

amazingly exceptional. Also, the "100,000" soldier was generally barred from re-enlistment; for all practical purposes they were coded to fail.

It is generally agreed that all the disparities and problems of Vietnam became readily apparent after TET 1968. Racial conflict within our military was no exception. The military response was severe. In 1971 the Congressional Black Caucus noted that half of all soldiers in military stockade were Black.

In 1970 the change in draft laws left the college student unprotected; this condition superimposed upon a national loss of purpose, and anxiety over the cumulative casualty toll. The administrative response was the program of Vietnamization and a step-up in the air war; ground troops became "obsolete". As troop withdrawal began, the "rear areas" in Vietnam became extremely tense. Facing an explosive and exploding personnel situation the military employed a streamlined administrative discharge procedure, which left many soldiers with "bad papers".

The paradox and tragedy of the Homecoming for the veteran of color consisted in this — the most racially integrated community they ever experienced was filled with violence and despair. Like all veterans they returned to a negative economic situation, without skills; further, those with "bad papers" were denied benefits altogether. The positive privilege and benefits of veterans status was not forthcoming; more shocking, they returned to the segregated community they left, now in ashes, unorganized — a Vietnam at Home.

Several studies reflect the consequences of this on the minority veteran. Seventy percent of Black Vietnam veterans returned home with one or more adjustment problems such as alcohol/substance abuse, nervous/psychological problems and the like. Eighty-three percent who did so still suffer. According to the same source, the figures are 59% for Caucasians.

With an unemployment rate in the high twenty percentile and no opportunities, reliance on other than legal opportunities was inevitable as the criminal justice system intervention which followed in turn. The cycle of disenfranchisement from benefits, alienation, and rejection has hit all veterans to be sure; yet, it would be remiss not to acknowledge the intensity and extent to which these negative effects have hit the minority veteran.

This Commission held a public hearing in the minority community, at the Harriet Tubman House/Boston on May 11, 1982. At that hearing, all the minority veterans who testified were very outspoken with regard to the lack of services. In their opinion, services to the minority community are characterized by a delivery system both insensitive and unresponsive to their problems and needs. Several examples of racial discrimination in employment within the essential service sector, i.e., city worker, fire, and police were presented to this Commission. One case of severe racial violence within the Boston Fire Department was cited.

Since the Interim Report, two significant gains have occurred. First, the Roxbury Vietnam Veterans Outreach Center is on its way to becoming a reality. This year through the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services, by way of the advocacy of this Commission, $20,000 "seed" monies were made available to the minority veteran community in order to help facilitate the development of a Vietnam Veterans Outreach Center specifically geared to minority veterans. It is the consensus of this Commission that such a center is essential to even begin assistance programs for the "hard to reach" Vietnam veterans. It is our hope that this center, only in the planning stages now, will be able to become a reality and growing concern in the next year and beyond. It is estimated that a nothing less than a fully operational community based treatment center is necessary to successfully attack the problems of the minority veteran community.

Secondly, the Commission is proud to convey to everyone that many efforts to create positive change in the minority Vietnam veteran community are coming from that community at large. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts three minority Vietnam veteran organizations have emerged and have started working together. It is encouraging to note that they have developed strong lines of communication with each other, and are developing collective strategies and tactics among themselves (and with other Vietnam community based organizations) for the resolution of the issue areas at hand.

One of the most exciting developments coming out of the minority Vietnam veteran coalition has been the formation of a working ad hoc committee to facilitate the organization of a non-profit minority Vietnam Veteran Economic Development Cor-

poration. As a non-profit, they would be eligible to receive technical assistance from state, federal, and private entities. As a grant recipient, they could focus on the networking of opportunities and services for the minority communities of Boston, Springfield, and New Bedford areas. This Commission applauds these efforts.

Based on input from the minority community, the Commission notes the following problems and makes the following recommendations:

- That the minority Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program receive full funding ($60,000) from the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services for the coming Fiscal Year and that additional funding be made available through various mechanisms in order to firmly establish the Roxbury Vietnam Veterans Center which goes beyond the full funding intentions of the O.C.V.S.
- That access to the system be provided through special outreach efforts. These should include the mandatory prioritizing and recruiting of minority veteran community service agencies as vendors to administer the delivery of various community services, as established in the Federal Block Grant programs. *Such* Vietnam veteran groups should be directly involved in veterans program design, implementation, and administration under the F.J.T.P.A. in their service delivery area. Further, funding mechanisms for Vietnam Veterans Outreach Services should be developed to assist with problems of stress, discharge upgrade, skills development. etc.
- That funding be made available through O.C.V.S. and the cities and towns with significant minority population for a special study on the status of minority Vietnam veterans. Further, it is the strong suggestion of this Commission that such a study be complimented by the minority Vietnam Veterans Community based organizations themselves vis-a-vis a grant allocation process. Only this method will insure significant participation.
- It should be noted that problems exist as to the accuracy of information potential clients receive when applying for benefits from local veterans service agents. Also administrative or legislative action should be taken to clarify

or repeal the "indebtness provision" — VS20A — agreement to reimburse in the case of retroactive payment from another source. As is, too much arbitrary discretion is left to the local veterans service agent.

- That the Office of Personnel Administration assemble a statistical profile on minority veterans so as to provide comparative analysis of hiring patterns among state agencies for all segments of the population in both civil service and non-civil service employment. This should include a comparison of minority Vietnam veteran hiring accomplished under affirmative action as against veterans preference.
- That the incoming Mayor of the City of Boston develop a funding mechanism and target monies for the development of an adult occupational training program for minority veterans. As a designated community school, the Hubert Humphrey Occupational Center of Roxbury is both ideally located and superbly tailored to implement such a project.
- That special programs for minority veterans be implemented within the university, state, and community college system of the Commonwealth. Upward Bound style programs should be established at Roxbury Community College, U-Mass, and Springfield Technical Institute.

The Hispanic veterans community is certainly larger elsewhere than in Massachusetts. To our knoweldge no accurate data as to the actual number of Hispanic Vietnam veterans residing in Massachusetts exists. They comprised only .2% of our profile study. Obviously, extraordinary outreach measures are needed as with other members of the minority veteran community. This Commission was aware of the existence of cultural and specifically potential or real linguistic problems and fortunately through our Executive Secretary Mrs. Carmen Colon was able to handle these situations on the few occasions that they occurred.

Obviously, other veteran organizations in Massachusetts and other states could better address the needs of the Hispanic community. Unfortunately, we are only able, and are pleased to offer a word of encouragement for that community in passing — may it successfully organize and pursue its agenda. This Commission makes the following recommendations with this regard:

- That an information brochure be developed which identifies the existing benefits available and clearly outlines the necessary procedures the veteran is to follow. Such brochure(s) should be culturally orientated, i.e., targeted for the particular community at hand — Black, Hispanic, Cape Verdean, and Women.
- That the Veterans Administration and other state administrations increase their bilingual staff.

It was unfortunate that in connection with the issues of concern to the women veteran community, this Commission could gather very little information. None of the women who testified before this Commission at the public or special informational hearing sessions identified themselves as a veteran. The one piece of correspondence we received came from the Women Veterans Information Network (WVIN) one link of which is located at Northampton, Massachusetts.

It is the position of W.V.I.N. network that women have been totally ignored by the mainstream veteran community and certainly this has been the case. They, like all other veterans, are concerned about the same issue areas, and in the sense that they constitute a minority population among veterans, they, like the racial/ethnic and cultural minorities have suffered a "double" neglect. First, they have been forgotten and secondly, if and when remembered, discriminated against.

By far the greatest specific area of concern involves the issue area of governmental services. On one hand, there is the problem of awareness and discrimination and on the other, there is a dire lack of service delivery capability. This has been specifically the case with the Veterans Administration. As noted elsewhere, this situation of poor service to the Vietnam veterans is changing across the board. The passage of HR2920 (which included the essentials of HR1137) provides that the Veterans Administration form an advocacy committee on women veterans within the VA. This Commission assumes that the Veterans Administration will pay serious attention to their recommendations. As for our position, this Commission takes cognizance of the concerns of the women veterans as expressed by the Women Veterans Information Network and cares to make the following recommendations:

- that the Veterans Administration hire more women veterans as veteran counselors;
- construct an awareness campaign for all current employees as to situation and needs of women veterans.
- *"PTSD":* Women are not included in PTSD studies to date. It must be emphasized that combat is not the only cause of PTSD among military members. State and local agencies who may be faced with a client population that include PTSD victims should screen women for veterans status. An effort should be made by Vet Centers to have operational hours and daycare referrals that will enable working women, single parents, and women veterans with children to utilize these facilities.
- *"Government Services":* The Veterans Administration does not maintain sufficient data on women veterans who use its services. V.A. Health Care does not address the needs of the growing female veteran population: Lack of OB/GYN facilities; PTSD wards closed to women; lack of information on access to V.A. paid civilian doctors; lack of sensitivity on part of V.A. personnel in regards to women veterans.
- Veterans' service officers, employment, and educational counselors are generally ignorant of the needs of women veterans and frequently alienate women from the pursuit of their entitled benefits.

The Commission cares to thank the following for their assistance on this issue:

Ron Armstead, Ralph Cooper, Donald L. Jernigan, David S. Peters.

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Education

In the Commission Interim Report, this Commission noted several facts. First, it was pointed out that the question of educational attainment for the Vietnam veteran was a controversial topic. That is, on one hand, the Veterans Administration feels that it has met its obligation to the Vietnam veteran in a most satisfactory manner. On the other hand, others contend that this is not the case at all; the argument of the critics has usually taken two forms. One tack involves a critique of the funding allocations and nuts and bolts procedural methods, while the other adapts a conceptual critique, i.e., that the Veterans Administration is behind the times (as are other institutions) in terms of the changing educational needs of the population.

The first line of argument plays on the theme of Veterans Administration inefficiency; the critics here work in references to VA bureaucratic insensitivity. In response the Veterans Administration points to their statistical data which indicate that Vietnam veterans have higher rates of GI Bill use and real educational level attainment than their WWII counterparts. This line of attack and form of response constituted the vortex of the Vietnam veterans educational issue during the early to mid 1970's. In fact is was the basis of rationale for the old HEW/Veterans Cost of Instruction Program.

The second line of argument is much more generic in nature. Here the principal theme is that of changing educational needs for the future. The argument is directly tied to questions of the cost effectiveness, the increasing specialization of professional knowledge, and the needs of growth industries and the roles they should play in the field of higher education. Accordingly, the Veterans Administration is just another institution, in fact "less guilty" than others since it merely dispenses benefits and for the most part readily adapts the prevalent national attitude toward higher education. The Veterans Administration program then is dismissed as being archaic in scope. The thrust of the argument is that the monies would be better utilized elsewhere, i.e., that the province of veterans education would presumably be better handled by another agency.

It is the opinion of this Commission that the first line of argument is not now relevant if in fact accurate to begin with. That is, ob-

viously, the history of the Veterans Administration's response to the Vietnam veterans with regard to the disbursal of educational benefits is rife with horror stories. Yet, by and long, the Veterans Administration more or less successfully delivered hundreds of millions of dollars in benefits to certainly more than several million Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans over the last fifteen years. As for the second line of thought, it, too, is viewed by this Commission basically unwarranted. The fact is that any veteran (presuming eligibility) wishing to enroll in any state approved program or institution of learning can receive Veterans Administation educational benefits. Procedures for VA benefits approval are basically straightforward. Frankly, this Commission questions the backstage motive of all those blue ribbon panels, task forces, commissions, and the like which recommend the shifting of Veterans Administation program proprieties over the other bureaucratic jurisdictions.

The focus of this Commission with regard to the issue of education was to examine the needs of the Vietnam veterans in the Commonwealth. The members of the Commission felt that these needs were articulated quite well at the eight public hearings and that the problem was not so complicated as to require special informational testimony from a panel of experts. However, as the Commission progressed in its research, other more general educational themes became apparent which, though separate from the needs of individual veterans, were directly related to the interests of Vietnam veterans. It may do to proceed by discussing the educational needs of Vietnam veterans, then to move to these other related matters, and finally close with our recommendations.

As mentioned in our Interim Report, educational (academic, technical, vocational) needs have substantially changed in our society, especially during the last decade. Naturally, these needs are inextricably related to the changing employment picture. For example, even ten years ago advanced degrees in the liberal arts almost guaranteed employment in the teaching and other related fields; obviously, this is no longer so. The educational/training skills required for technical professions were acquired in a "hands on as developed" atmosphere, though as those fields expanded, appropriate courses of training were established to meet demands. Finally, over the last decade, it has become in-

creasingly difficult to enter the vocational trades. This trend is increasing with the advancing deindustrialization of America. Massachusetts has been spared compared to other states, but this is little consolation to those veterans or others affected by plant and shipyard layoffs and closings.

To point out the obvious, an informational based society requires its citizens to possess multiple skills which require more technical and specialized formal training. Thus the educational needs, especially for those not economically established in an employment sector, increased accordingly. Transferable multiple skills are important to survive cutbacks and layoffs in the blue collar world; in the technical fields formal training and constant skills improvement is necessary to adapt to innovation; while advanced specialized degrees are ever more necessary to enter the white collar professions. The response totals to the question ... "Last grade of school completed"... reveal the following:

Last Grade of School Completed	
Grade School	1.4
Some High School	3.4
High School	18.3
Tech/Voc School	6.5
GED	5.4
Some College	18.7
2 Yr. College	16.3
College	18.1
Grad. School	11.0
Receive Educational Benefits from the V.A.	
Yes	66.7
No	33.3

It must be kept in mind that those Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans most in need — the hard to reach veteran — in all probability did not respond or perhaps have even the opportunity to respond to this questionnaire. Yet, from among those who did respond, the figures (low percentage with technical/vocational training and the high percentage for those with some but less than two years of college) are revealing.

Problems of Delimiting Dates

Again, as noted in our Interim Report, thousands of Vietnam veterans experienced a long period of disenchantment and

alienation upon arriving home. Ten and fifteen years later they have lost federal eligibility because of delimiting dates. We care to note that there are several pieces of federal legislation currently pending to address this problem. HR1326 and HR328 would abolish the delimiting date requirements altogether, while HR2204 would provide for extension, moving the delimiting date up to 20 years. In view of the changing educational and training needs of the present and future, this Commission sees no clear rationale justifying continuation of delimiting dates. If not one of the former bills (HR1326 or HR328) then certainly the latter (HR2204) should be passed.

This problem of delimiting dates was recognized by the General Court of Massachusetts some time ago. It is hoped that the brief overview presented here will provide encouragement for other states and the Congress.

In 1966 Chapter 601 was enacted which provided an original 10 years for Vietnam veterans at the state institutions of higher education. In 1977 this was amended to fifteen years in Chapter 842; in 1981 Chapter 804 the delimiting date was pushed to twenty years. Yet, in our hearings we discovered that many Vietnam veterans married and working who were attending evening and part time classes were not provided for. A board of regents memo of 1977 and later enactments of 1980 to provide for the part time and/or evening student have had a history of neglect.

This Commission received testimony (with appropriate documentation) to this effect in March of 1982; further, the numerous calls from Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans during our year and half of operation reinforced this testimony.

To rectify all of this, pertinent legislation was proposed by our Chairman Senator Francis D. Doris of Revere. This came out of committee as S2156 and passed; it provides that Vietnam veterans may attend part time and/or evening classes at state post secondary institutions without charge. Further, the Chairman of this Commission will be proposing an extension to twenty-five years during the next legislative year.

It may now do to turn to another, much broader aspect of "education" which is of vital concern to many Vietnam veterans, particularly in a collective sense. That is, this Commission has been informed and is obviously aware and very concerned about the recent phenomenon of the last few years nominally described

as the new Vietnam scholarship. In fact this Commission notes that nothing less than the control of the history of the Vietnam Decade is at stake. We acknowledge everyone's right to their view in this debate and carenot to take sides, especially where there exists weighty ideological assumptions and positions. However, what we are very concerned with is the very limited access Vietnam veterans have to this debate. Other than chronicles documenting this or that event, there is in fact little input. In short the Vietnam Decade, and more immediately the Vietnam veterans, have become a source of intellectual capital for others serving as voiceless pawns justifying academic and social policy positions. This is a very complex problem broad in scope, long in range, heavy with implications.

This Commission is proud to note that now opportunity exists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to provide a balance and countervailing force to all this. We are referring here to two programs currently in existence at the University of Massachusetts/Harbor Campus — the Veterans Upward Bound program and the William Joiner Center. Both deserve special mention.

The Upward Bound program has had an excellent track record for over ten years. Many of its students have matriculated into the undergraduate program while others joined the work force. Approximately 150 veterans per year are served by this program. In fact from October 1, 1982 to September 30, 1983, 150 students were involved; of this, 133 were deemed low income, and nearly 30% were of the minority community. Of all of these, 73% were placed in post secondary training. This exemplary record was possible in past *because of the support services provided* which have included reading clinics, tutorial support, and counseling. Altogether, the average student experiences 19 class hours and up to 6 counseling hours per week. A figure which surpasses that provided the average college student.

This Commission compliments all those involved with the recent establishment of the William Joiner Center at the Habor Campus of the University of Massachusetts. This is the first institution established to specifically examine the Vietnam Decade and its aftermath from all points of view and with regard to all possible implications. Most importantly, and especially with regard to the aftermath of the war and impact of the Homecoming as it relates to the Vietnam veterans, it not only is providing for, but also seek-

ing out the input of Vietnam veterans from various and appropriate professional fields.

Given all these considerations, this Commission makes the following recommendations:

- That an emulation of the Upward Bound Program be undertaken by the Commonwealth with the establishment of pilot programs regionally across the Commonwealth. Again, the emphasis here is G.E.D. preparation, developmental skill courses, remedial/fundamental, reading, mathematics, social studies. Further, this basic skills program be fortified with intensive counseling educational advocacy.
- That in the University of Massachusetts/Boston budget request for the next fiscal year include a line item for the William Joiner Center and that the appropriation (if not already) be at least $250,000. Sufficient seed monies are required for the Center to establish itself as a national forum.
- That the General Court be supportive of the delimiting date extension for educational benefits at state institutions, and that they be extended to twenty-five years.
- That our Congressional Delegation and the Vietnam veterans caucus in the Congress all work to pass HR1326 or HR328 or HR2204 (the former two eliminate the time period, the latter extends benefits to 20 years) or insure that an adequate amendment accomplishing this retroactively is added to the current GI Bill before the Congress HR1400.

The Commission cares to thank the following for their assistance on this issue:

Paul Atwood, Kay Shea, Richard Stahl, Daniel Whitcher.

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Employment

No staple issue area is of more importance to Vietnam veterans than that of employment. As this Commission has intimated or directly pointed out in its Interim Report, and in the numerous pieces of outgoing correspondence, the employment situation for Vietnam veterans has never been adequately addressed. A wide range of circumstances have contributed to this. The most relevant of these included a declining economic situation, a hostile and discriminatory social climate, an indifferent political/administrative system, and an abuse of the requisite skill levels on the part of the veteran. In spite of all these adverse factors, a large majority of the Vietnam veterans survived and some have done exceedingly well.

As the Public Hearing sessions proceeded, it was noticed that all the veterans testifying before the Commission, when addressing the topic of employment, not only cast the issue in various shades of light but also made threads of connection to other issue areas.It became apparent that a Special Informational Hearing would be required to even begin sorting out the numerous problems impacting the issue area of employment. As noted elsewhere in this report, the hearing was held on March 25, 1983. Discussion focused on state and federal civil service and problems relevant to access and outreach needs; also particular attention was given to the Federal Job Training Partnership Act. As a result of this hearing and subsequent and continued research and investigation, it became obvious that there existed a number of sub-topics all of which required con-

sideration. These include the question of statistics, the implementation problems of the Federal Job Training Partnership Act, and the Veterans Emergency Employment Act, the difficulties surrounding state and federal civil service employment, with special attention focused on the postal service, small business and small business programs at state and federal level, and, of course, the need for private sector involvement. It may be best to proceed with discussion of each of these topics and conclude with the Commission recommendations.

STATISTICS

The lack of accurate statistical data constitutes one of the principal difficulties in assuming the position Vietnam veterans occupy with respect to any issue area. This is particularly the case in the area of employment. The fact is that there really exist no accurate statistics at the state and local level for applicant groups.

The national unemployment statistics are gathered through the Household Survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and this is fine for assessing national percentages. However, these statistics are not translated geographically. The Labor Market Information pertaining to unemployment rates for standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas is not broken down to applicant groups. Further, it should be understood that unemployment rates for SMSAs are different from what is the case in any city or town — because the population mix is so different. All this has *very real implications* here for *all applicant groups* including veterans. The effect on the F.J.T.P.A. is just one example — it would be the case for all block grant funding disbursal. Thus, assessments of the universal need could be way off target; all this data is based on various extrapolations from 1980 census.

Again, with respect to the F.J.T.P.A., unemployment rates differ from labor force participation. That is, looking at the Planning Data for Massachusetts and Associated SDA's 1984 (and the publications for the geographic areas in the state — recently published by DES/DMD — job market research) we notice that the sources are used in an eclectic fashion, and interestingly enough the ratios are *consistently skewed* in one direction yet we venture that if one looked at numbers and rates according to the SMSA, the picture would turn 180°. The point is that there are a number of applicant groups and *all* are hurt by this statistical vacuum — because

an accurate demographic picture for applicant groups which would assist them in proposals/grants, etc., is unavailable. All these groups need to develop or work up the proportions, percentages, and ratios for their geographic area for any particular month. Given this situation, the Commission offers the following recommendations:

- that the Bureau of Labor Statistics develop a standard method for determining the unemployment rates for all applicant groups, including veterans, which can be easily applied to any geographic area — region, state, SMSAs, city, or town;
- that the Massachusetts Division of Employment Security and the Massachusetts Department of Manpower and Development update and improve the 1979 Massachusetts Labor Market Information on Veterans Report.

CIVIL SERVICE

In connection to *federal civil service,* there are two most important points to note. First, is simply to acknowledge the need to keep the important factor of veteran preference, and secondly, to point out the significance of the Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Act.

1) It should be recognized that at the federal level, civil service as such, has been reorganized under the Office of Personnel Management; that entity sets the policy and has oversight in hiring and personnel practices in all federal agencies. There exists such a number of applicants and so many agencies, departments, etc., that it has become virtually impossible to maintain any effective and current job or applicant bank.

At the federal level perhaps the most important item to mention here is the importance of the Standard Form SF171. For all practical purposes, this form serves as an application, examination, and resume. One cannot be hired without it. It behooves all to have several copies on file to submit when and where appropriate.

2) All should recognize the importance of the Vietnam Veteran Readjustment Act. Passed in the mid 1970's, the act provides considerable advantage for Vietnam veterans at the entry levels of federal services. For those over 30% disabled, examination is not necessary. Also it provides for training at these entry levels so that the veteran in question may become well qualified, secure permanent status, and advance. Now the principal problem here is one of visibility. It is the opinion of this Commission that few Vietnam

veterans are aware of this program and an even lesser number grasp all the implications and avenues it provides.

3) Further, it has come to our attention that the Office of Personnel Management desires to dilute or even eliminate veterans preference by implementing new procedures. This Commission recognizes veterans preference as a cornerstone of our nation's commitment to its veterans. Fortunately, two bills have been introduced in Congress to prevent this. We understand that HR2449 would specifically prohibit O.P.M. from implementing procedures detrimental to veterans; HR828/829 are similar though apparently more specific in that they would prohibit the contracting out of jobs held by veterans.

Given this situation, this Commission recommends that:

- our Congressional delegation do all it can to insure passage of HR 2249 and/or the companion bills HR828/829;
- that the Office of Personnel Management be more cognizant of the patriotic sacrifices veterans have made, reverse their position, and finally, provide the Veterans Readjustment Act program with higher visibility, especially in connection with job announcements.

At the *state level,* the problem of Civil Service in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was perhaps best described by one Vietnam veteran pundit as a legislative version of a massive topiary garden. When members of this Commission met with the Personnel Administrator last year to discuss problems with the new Civil Service Reform Act of 1981, he then indicated that the law as written was basically unadministrable. Indeed Section 26 is in direct conflict with that of Section 29, and has been used to circumvent veteran preference.

Yet this is nothing new; veteran preference has been neglected in some sectors of state employment for a number of years. The problem of the lack of veteran awareness as to the procedures and pitfalls of filing for civil service employment is only surpassed by this misinformation and lack of follow through on the part of various hiring administrators.

In short there are too many holes or gaps in the civil service policy implementation; these must be closed. This was the consensus of those experts who testified before this Commission in our Special Information Hearing on Employment with regard to Civil Service Problems. According to expert testimony at the hearing, there are six major problems — we list them here with solutions deemed appropriate.

PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
1) The veteran interest card must be filled out with specific job title to be at all valid. Even when veterans know this, exact job titles have not always been made available.	1) The Personnel Administration must make the list of authorized position titles available to Veterans' Services Officers, DES personnel, and veterans in general in order to assist veterans to properly file for vacant positions.
2) Chapter 31, Section 26 of the Commonwealth Civil Service Law, requires agencies to contact the Veterans' Coordinators (who manage the veterans register) and obtain from them a list of veterans and then mail to their house opportunities that they have in their agency. Frequently, a number of agencies do not recall names, or if they do, they do not follow through.	2) That the Civil Service Commission urge the Commonwealth and Personnel Administrator to issue a directive instructing all personnel officers, not authorities, but personnel officers, as the person accountable within the state agency to see that there is procedural follow through and that they be required to submit a statement under oath concerning compliance with Chapter 31, Section 26 of the Civil Service Law, and this statement be attached to all recommendations for appointment.
3) There exists no monitoring procedure with regard to Civil Service Laws; for the most part appointments are routinely approved.	3) Before approving appointments, the Department of Personnel Administration should verify with the appropriate veterans coordinator that the agency in question has called for names and that a compliance certification statement be attached to the application.
4) We have found that Vietnam veterans who apply for positions in state agencies are	4) The Department of Personnel Administration in conjunction with the Affirmative Action

often not welcome and in fact given less than adequate information.	officer develop a recruitment and assistance program for Vietnam Era veterans in all agencies and that sign off procedures be instituted which insure that the law has been complied with. Also that the Affirmative Action officers in state agencies be charged with the responsibility to inform Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans of their rights under the law, as they would with any group designated by law as deserving of Affirmative Action.
5) The Department of Personnel Administration frequently exempts positions from compliance Civil Service Law, for expediency or efficiency in government; these exemptions are frequently given with no expiration date.	5) It should be established that a list of all these exempt positions with expiration dates be provided and that these positions return to Chapter 31 unless specifically extended; and that Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans continue to be given priority.
6) Civil Service Enforcement Rights for Vietnam veterans in this Commonwealth are virtually non-existent.	6) The veterans coordinator must be given authority to collect data on the status of Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans in public civil service.

Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Act of 1979 allowed Vietnam veterans to take the police services civil service test (state and municipal) up to the age of 35. The Act has expired and Vietnam veterans between the age of 32 and 35 are now excluded. The Registry of Police qualifications allows applicants to take the civil service examination up to age 35. If a veteran is on a current police services list, he can be appointed to a full position up to age 35.

The Commission would like to make the following recommendations:

- that the legislature reinstate the Vietnam Veterans Readjust-

ment Act (1979) and raise the age limit upward;

- that modification to the Police Services Promotional Examination which currently gives two point bonus to their scores be more equitable by developing a system which differentiates between disabled veterans and non-veterans.

With regard to civil service, the profile survey conducted by this Commisson indicated that:

1) 44.0% of the respondents have taken a Civil Service exam. 36.2% of the respondents have had their names placed on a civil service list and 23.1% have been hired to a civil service job.
2) 58.1% of those who were hired served in Vietnam between 1965 and 1971; 31.9% of those hired to civil service jobs currently work for the federal government; 29.4% for state government; and 11.2% for local government.
3) 33.3% of those respondents over 49 have or had been employed in a civil service job. All other age groups were within a statistical margin of error.
4) In terms of race 60.4% Blacks took the exam, 49.4% were placed on a list and 32.9% were hired but again, only 1% of the survey respondents were Black and the percentage was even smaller for Hispanic. For White the corresponding percentages are 43.8/36.1/22.9%.
5) Thus 3811 equals N or the total number of respondents who at one time held a civil service position, out of that 2,786 still hold a civil service position at the federal, state, or local level out of 16,636 respondents.

POST OFFICE

It is unfortunate that this Commission finds it necessary to single out any particular agency. However, as we pointed out in our Interim Report, under the issue area of employment and with regard to federal civil service employment, by far the most complaints and/or inquiries made to this Commission involved the Postal Service.

This Commission has advocated in behalf of Vietnam veterans with regard to the Postal Service on several occasions and in fact met with Postmaster Mr. Phillip Sullivan of the Boston General Mail Facility in connection with all of this. It had been hoped by *all* that a more comprehensive meeting could have been arranged during the lifetime of this Commission; unfortunately, with no party at fault, this was not possible.

The Commission is fully aware that there exists a problem here which necessarily eludes a simple solution. On one hand, (especially with regard to the G.M.F.) there are millions of pieces to move; while in rural areas the situation is obviously different. Automation represents another problem, the method of management another. Frankly, we were unable to find any one particular factor to be resolved. For example, it is our understanding that:

1) there is a very real problem with ordinary sick leave and that which has service connection;
2) further, postal authorities have rejected Vietnam veterans certified as employable by the Veterans Administration;
3) there exists an absence of veterans on the Equal Employment Opportunity board despite the large veteran population;
4) also a problem exists with regard to casual labor — apparently, few veterans are hired — also casual labor is used for entry level career positions in the L.S.M. (letter sorting machine) area;
5) there is no real counseling program for P.T.S.D., no liaison position to coordinate with the V.A.;
6) the affirmative action guidelines for Vietnam veterans are not operative, also an obviously slow promotion rate exists;
7) above all there is certainly a problem of *attitude and awareness.*

We are, of course, sure that it is not one sided, but hasten to add that this Commission advocates for Vietnam veterans. Our original intention was to list a series of recommendations point by point; however, we felt that our level of information was inadequate. Therefore, it was realized that given the very problematic situation here, that this Commission had no choice but to *strongly recommend that:*

- THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON POSTAL PERSONNEL AND MODERNIZATION (REP. MICKEY LELAND, CHAIRMAN) OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE HOLD HEARINGS HERE IN MASSACHUSETTS ON THIS ENTIRE MATTER.

SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS

In both the Public Hearings and the Special Informational Hearings on Employment concern was expressed with regard to Small Business opportunities. Only 5.2% or 823 of the respondents of the Commission survey applied to the Small Business Administration for assistance; 35.6% or 293 of these applicants had received the assistance sought. A further breakdown shows that 11.0% of Black

respondents applied with 33.3% receiving the aid. (It should be mentioned that the relationship of these percentages and figures to any definite time span is *unknown.)*

It may do to discuss the situation by commenting on the initial and base level difficulty — that of definition, and following this note the situation at the federal and state level.

That there exists an unwieldy definition for what constitutes small business is beyond doubt. For example, this has been commented on a number of times, most recently at the White House Conference on Small Business (1980) and in the report, *The State of Small Business* (March 1982, in accordance with Public Law 96-302). For the purpose at hand, it is particularly noteworthy to mention the 7 fold typology of small business ranging from a family enterprise employing 0-4 people through various categories employing 5-19/20-49, etc., up to that enterprise employing 500 or fewer (the formal SBA definition). This wide scope of definition has given rise to the problem of access to capital.

The cost of entry small business is easily in the vicinity of 100-200 thousand dollars and higher. Currently, the standard rule of thumb is that the applicant secure 20% of the start up costs, i.e., $20,000-$40,000. For Vietnam veterans, this represents an almost insurmountable barrier.

Yet, federal and state programs are not tooled to size; often only the large-small firms are kept in mind. An ancillary problem here is level of expertise. That is, there exists no lack of ambition or good ideas; rather the problem is one of scope and level of professional knowledge. On one hand, there is simply little incentive for the banking industry to bother. On the other, those same institutions are wary of lending to the uneducated; that is the applicant is unknowledgeable about the system and unaware of the need to develop a comprehensive plan or business package.

Federal Level

It should be known to all that the "Special Consideration for Veterans" amendment (PL93-237/1974) of the Small Business Act lay dormant for virtually seven years. As a result of a Congressional Hearing on this matter in the spring of 1981, a special task force was organized by the Chief Council for Advocacy of the S.B.A.; one year later twenty-nine recommendations constituted an extensive outreach program to facilitate the entry of Vietnam veterans in small business. This Commission compliments the S.B.A. on this

effort in general and cares to note the extra efforts taken in this district by the S.B.A. Veterans Representative—William Littlefield.

State Level

At the state level, certainly the Department of Commerce and Development is the principal state agency changed with the role of advocacy for small business in the Commonwealth. In addition, there exists a number of quasi state agencies; such as the Massachusetts Industrial Finance Agency, Massachusetts Technical Development Corporation, the Community Development Finance Corporation, etc., all part of the state incentive package to business. However, the focus of these entities is a healthy, mature, expanding business. In terms of providing capital stimulus the minimum loan would be $250,000, and are low is virtually unheard of. Thus, the bottom line here again is the most small businesses are too small to qualify. The Commission recognizes the need for a Commission to study the state of Small Business in Massachusetts and recommends that:

- the provisions of H884 which would establish an interagency committee on veterans in business be kept intact in committee bill H3212 and passed.

SOMBA

The Massachusetts State Office of Minority Business Assistance (SOMBA) is one of twenty-one state and federally funded agencies in the country. In a general sense, SOMBA along with the Office of Affirmative Action and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination represents the governmental services arm for the minority community. SOMBA provides an outreach service seeking small business opportunities in accordance with the spirit of Chapter 521 of the Acts of 1975, and Chapter 579 of the Acts of 1980 and to a degree reflect federal efforts mandated in legislation such as PL9550. Also, SOMBA does follow through with respect to compliance. In short SOMBA tries to insure that the legislated 5% set aside of expenditures from the Division of Capital Planning go to minority owned businesses.

With regard to all of this several independent vectors have come into play. (1) With the imminent implementation of Executive Order 227 as amended on November 10, 1983, Vietnam veterans came under the affirmative action umbrella as a prioritized group. As mentioned elsewhere, implementation research is now taking shape. (2) With regard to effective implementation, there may be

problems with regard to SOMBA due to the fact that the federal funding sector allocation will be terminated at the end of the calendar year; thus, there is anticipated a staff services short fall. (3) Finally, another systematic governmental services problem exists in that like the SBA and at the state level with Commerce and Development, the focus on small business is almost exclusively placed on firms already solidly established. In effect those fledgling businesses in need of the most assistance are often frozen out; it was from this sector of the small business community that Vietnam veterans in general and minority Vietnam veterans in particular voiced their concern to this Commission.

With regard to this matter, the Commission cares to point out and recommend that:

- to insure Vietnam veterans and especially minority Vietnam veterans are serviced, Chapters 521 of the Acts of 1975 and Chapter 579 of the Acts of 1980 be amended to: (1) formally add Vietnam veterans to the SOMBA legislation including Vietnam veterans as an applicant group, and (2) that the Vietnam veterans category be added to insure at least 20% of the 5% set aside for small business is provided for businesses owned by Vietnam veterans;
- the Massachusetts Small Business Development Centers assign one individual at each of these centers with a liaison task for the Vietnam veteran community.

This Commission noted throughout its existence that the overall problem for Vietnam veterans has been one of lack of participation in the system. (This has been in part a problem of self alienation but no less also a consequence of societal rejection.) The fact that it has taken seven, almost eight years for the S.B.A. to begin to address the problem substantiates this latter statement. Further, we care to note that this is not to single out the S.B.A., but rather represents the situation with regard to governmental services in general at both the federal and state levels.

It comes to this: while the veteran possesses the experience, has the motivation, and is now viewed by others in a more favorable light, he lacks the resources. In effect Vietnam veterans, averaging thirty-five years of age, are just getting started.

The Commission cares to make the following recommendations:

- that the outreach efforts of the S.B.A. at the national and district levels continue in full force and that the veterans business

resource councils soon to organize immediately embark on an extensive awareness campaign of outreach efforts;

- that the S.B.A. revise its formula so as to lower the equity requirement for Vietnam veteran applicant. This Commission agrees with others that a "tandem loan program" should be developed. A formula which included 40% SBA direct loan, 50% bank involvement with SBA guarantee and first position and 10% from the Vietnam veteran applicant, would work to give the veteran a fighting chance.

- the Department of Commerce as the principal state agency responsible for the marketing of programs with the Small Business Development Centers develop a well advertised outreach package tailored to address the start-up problems associated with small business;
- some mechanism must be developed to provide for those in need of start-up capital. The legislature should reconsider the notion of a "small business bank" exclusively geared to produce the under $200,000 loans.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

One of the efforts this Commission had undertaken to redress the employment problem among Vietnam veterans was to establish affirmative action status for Vietnam veterans in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This would provide coverage for Vietnam veterans in the non-civil service sector of state employment. In addition, it was assumed that this would provide a double coverage for minority veterans.

In the closing moments of the prior administration, Executive Order #224 was signed by Governor King. However, implementation became problematic; under the new administration that Executive Order was sent to the Office of the Attorney General for clarification.

Over the following months, the question of Affirmative Action was discussed by this Commission and by those in the Vietnam veteran community with the Office of Affirmative Action for the Commonwealth. We were all informed then that Governor Dukakis would be signing an affirmative action order around Veterans Day. He did so on November 10, 1983.

It was anticipated early on that the principal remaining difficulty would be the problem of implementation. To address this ques-

tion an Ad Hoc Coordinating group, and later a more formal advisory committee to the Office of Affirmative Action were developed during the late summer and early fall. Currently, it is the understanding of this Commission that the Office of Affirmative Action will be hiring a Vietnam veteran to research the question of implementation.

It may do to note that this individual faces a problem of statistical information; as mentioned above, there exists no accurate picture of the numbers involved. Here as well then, exists evidence of need for the Division of Employment Security to conduct a comprehensive statistical study on the employment picture for Vietnam veterans. The Commission recommends that:

- prior to filling any position in public service by promotion or appointment of a new employee, a vacancy announcement must be provided to Equal Employment Opportunity offices for monitoring of staffing and recruitment;
- all position vacancy announcements must be approved and signed off by organization EEO officer;
- all position announcements must contain name, title, and phone number of EEO officer to permit job applicants to contact them if they wish;
- all organization EEO officers must contact the Veterans Register at the Department of Personnel Administration as part of their affirmative action recruitment efforts.

FEDERAL JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT

One of the most important federal programs of potential impact for Vietnam veterans of Massachusetts is the Federal Job Training Partnership Act. This Commission has spent considerable time following the implementation process of F.J.T.P.A. in the Commonwealth. Over 19 pertinent letters and documents have come to the attention of this Commission in connection with F.J.T.P.A., there are others as well. There have been a number of hearings and much discussion on this matter. With regard to all of this, the Commission cares to voice the following concerns:

1) That the F.J.T.P.A. has strong resemblances to CETA; the short falls of which should be already known. For example, a 1979 Job Market Research Service/Division of Employment Security publication noted that in Massachusetts under CETA Title VI only 4.4% of the participants were Vietnam Era veterans. The peridential mandate of that time was 35% Viet-

nam Era veterans participation under Title VI. Further, of all those employed, only 460 were actually "picked up" after the training period.

2) Statewide Council and SDA/PIC composition does not include sufficient Vietnam veterans or other non-veteran such as CAP agencies, SOMBA, or youth community based organizational input. Currently, only two of 15 Private Industry Councils include Vietnam veteran representation.
3) The legal/working relationships (line of authority and control) among the vendors, PIC, and the statewide council as outlined in the state plan are unclear.
4) That it is concerned over program accountability and evaluation. The Commission commends the Governor for establishing a Task Force for veterans in this area. Yet all those appointed are uncertain of the role of such a task force. Will it have access to all vital information; may it have monitoring function? This is essential if such a task force is to accurately assess quality of the delivery of F.J.T.P.A. and other block grant program services to Vietnam veterans.

As noted in our letters (1) to Representative Barney Frank of April 22, 1983, and (2) to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Joint Legislative Committee on Federal Financial Aid of August 8, 1983 — this Commission cares to note:

1) The Joint Legislative Committee on Federal Financial Assistance has not approved the state plan as of this date because of lack of pertinent data.
2) Where there has been no Vietnam veteran input and questionable input by other community based organizations this quality of SDAs and the Statewide Council remains a question mark.

And recommends that there be:

- careful monitoring of the administration of the F.J.T.P.A. by the DOL, the General Court, and the Joint Legislative Committee on Federal Financial Assistance;
- guaranteed increased representation on the State Planning Council and Private Industry Councils for Vietnam veterans community based organizations;
- guaranteed access to block grant information for the Governor's Task Force.

THE EMERGENCY VETERANS' JOB TRAINING ACT OF 1983 (E.V.J.T.A.)

This federal program was just recently approved by Congress; program implementation is imminent; one hundred and fifty million has been earmarked for the next two fiscal years. Assuming that each employer will seek the maximum $10,000 "matching training wage" or subsidy, this leaves a ball park figure of 15,000 positions. It targets the Vietnam veteran who is among the hard core unemployed.

This Commission has some concern with regard to implementation and reservations in connection with some of the eligibility requirements.

1) There are apt to be double ended outreach problems. On one hand, a good educational effort may well be needed to bring employees on board; on the other, the target veteran has to be informed. This Commission agrees with others that the DOL/VES and the V.V.L.P. offices work together at the employer end while the Veterans Outreach Centers (those official VA and the private community based operations such as Fitchburg); Division of Employment Security officer, as well as local Veterans Services Agents, all be charged with the responsibility to outreach the unemployed veterans.
2) This Commission also is in full agreement with those who point to the eligibility requirements, i.e., that the veteran must be unemployed 15 weeks. This penalizes the underemployed veteran who has taken even the most menial job to make ends meet. In fact it penalizes one for having a strong work ethic, and in effect rewards any who stayed out of the labor market or worked for "under the table" wages. This Commission strongly recommends that the Veterans Administration and the Department of Labor reconsider this entire line of thinking; perhaps reducing the number of weeks unemployed from half the projected jobs and eliminating their requirement altogether for the remaining number.

This Commission cares to thank the following individuals for their assistance on all topics pertaining to the issue area of Employment:

Kevin Bowen, Frank A. Cahill, Rep. William Constantino, Ralph Cooper, Thomas Dailey, Richard Ducey, James Ferguson, Richard Fowler, Charles B. Harris, Cleotha Jackson, Donald Levesque, William Littlefield, David Marchand, Robert Moakley,

Kenneth Rand, Scott Rine, Phillip Sullivan, and a special thanks to Paul Reade.

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Housing

The concern for adequate housing was repeatedly brought up in testimony during the Public Hearing series. As noted in the Interim Report, such testimony took on three basic forms. First and foremost, the problem in housing was connected directly to unemployment/underemployment and inflation. The rising cost of rental housing has placed many units out of reach. Secondly, it was noted that Vietnam veterans never had the advantage of the old state Chapter 200 program, which was of tremendous benefit for the WWII and Korean veterans. Chapter 200 had fallen into disuse by the early 1960's and was merged with other programs. Third, it was pointed out that there existed problems with the GI Bill Home Loan Program. It was alleged that many lending institutions were not interested in participating.

In addition to the above, the Commission found that there existed no data as to the extent of home ownership among Vietnam/Vietnam Era veterans in the Commonwealth. Given the importance of this staple issue, a decision was made to include a section on housing in our profile survey study, and to hold a Special Informational Hearing as well, while simultaneously seeking the involvement of various state and federal agencies, in addition to obtaining input from the Vietnam veteran community.

The following highlights the profile survey data on housing:

71.1% of all respondents own their own home. However, the figure is only 48.8% for Black veterans as compared to 71.5% for their White counterparts. Further, as expected, ownership was directly correlated with income. 21.0% rent, while 6.8% live with their family. 96.5% of those who own their home have sought some type of mortgage. 96.3% of those who sought a mortgage obtained one.

7.9% of all respondents felt discriminated against when applying for a mortgage simply because they were veterans. 75.5% of all respondents were aware of their eligibility for a V.A. Mortgage Loan. 40.6% sought or applied for a G.I. Home Loan. 16.7% received that loan.

Tandem to this is assistance awareness. That is, while 40.6% were aware of a G.I. Home Loan Guarantee program (only 16.7% were recipients), only 20.8% were aware of the Farmers Home Loan. Further, the figure fell to under 15% for awareness of all other (state and federal) housing.

Again, this Commission cares to note that our survey was never received by the "hard to reach Vietnam veterans". Thus, the total percentage of those that own housing is in all probability lower, especially in connection with the minority community veteran.

Further, we have no knowledge nor could we find any hard data on the homeless veteran population in Massachusetts. The profile of the homeless in Massachusetts published April 23, 1983, by the Office of Human Resources cites no figures on veterans. It is estimated that perhaps as many as 10 to 15% of Operation Outreach Boston's clients may be homeless.

In more general terms and relative to this, the Commission is concerned about the number of foreclosures on GI Home Loans. Though this is not a particularly acute situation here in Massachusetts, it has come to our attention that in more economically distressed areas of the country, there have been a considerable number of foreclosures. We care about these veterans as well and bring to the attention of readers the pending federal legislation HR2948. This bill would authorize the Chief Administrator of Veterans Affairs to provide mortgage assistance to veterans with the GI Home Loan Guarantee so as to avoid foreclosure.

Most of the Commission information on the problems in housing come directly from information gathered at our Special Informational Hearing on June 30, 1983. Testimony included data from city, state, federal, and private sector. Naturally, we heard a good deal in terms of the available existing programs. However, for the purpose at hand, we care to outline a few of the most striking points.

1) While there are several interesting programs available through HUD, none of these target Vietnam veterans as a population. Yet, it was indicated that the allocation of funds are in part based on interest.
2) Only four cities in Massachusetts participated in the Urban Homesteading Program — Boston, Springfield, Haverhill and Lawrence. The total dollar figure for all four cities here is abysmally low. That is under Section 810 (to purchase vacant buildings) only $80,000; for Section 312 (for rehabilitation) only $500,000.
3) Chapter 200 (Massachusetts) originally enacted in 1948 was diluted over the years. This included the transfer of monies to other program accounts. Currently, preference exists but it had

become obsolete, skewed in favor of the older generation of veterans no longer in need. In addition, much of this housing stock is now thirty years old and some of this is inhabitable. Also, it can be said (given statutory changes) that the Vietnam veteran has been "bumped" from his inheritance of veterans preferential position. Given the low vacancy rates in the habitable public housing stock, he is virtually excluded.

4) It was noted at several points in the Hearing that few banks participate in the GI Home Loan Program. For example, only one institution provided for VA mortgages in all of Franklin County. Further, it was claimed that at the time (of the Hearing) no lending institutions were handling VA mortgages in Hampshire County.

Explanation here points to a few principal problems:

1) Awareness — most lending institutions are apparently uninformed of what is involved in participating in the VA Mortgage Program.
2) Lending rates — it was intimated that the variance between mortgage rates was such that there existed a "profitability" factor.
3) The point system — that is the VA permits a one percent loan origination fee for the mortgage company. As a result, the seller accrues the points outstanding. The two avenues to surmount this consist of raising the original purchase price or for the veteran to assume them personally and privately. In either case the veteran "eats" the points.

To summarize the overall situation, there appears to be three key problems facing Vietnam veterans with respect to the housing issue. First, there is obviously an information gap. On one hand, Vietnam veterans are little aware of existing programs in housing. On the other, lending institutions are misinformed about the VA Loan Guarantee program or totally unaware of it. Secondly, there is a problem of prioritization. Practically speaking, Vietnam veterans have lost their position in public housing over the years and were never included in new state housing programs of the 1970's. This is apparently also the situation at the federal level vis-a-vis HUD. Third, there is a problem of finance. The minimum entitlement for the VA (currently $27,500 or 60 percent of the loan amount which ever is less) seems in fact to be becoming obsolete

given the dramatic changes taking place in housing values. In addition, new methods of financing the housing market have come into existence. The Veterans Administration understandably has a wait and see attitude. Nonetheless, the situation has changed and Vietnam veterans have come to disadvantage; they end up paying the points.

Since the Commission hearing on housing, one important development has taken place. That is, the advocacy and pressure exerted by this Commission, principally through the efforts of our Chairman, Senator Francis D. Doris, our Vice-Chairman Representative Thomas J. Vallely, and other interested parties from the General Court, the administrative sector, and the Vietnam veteran community — resulted in successfully securing 18 million of the remaining 37 million in the Commonwealth's mortgage bonding issue. This Commission, the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services, and others held meetings with administrative officials of the Executive Office of Communities and Development and from the Massachusetts Housing Financing Agency. The upshot of this was the development and implementation of a housing lottery program during the week of Veterans' Day. Over four thousand Vietnam veterans applied. This provided low interest mortgages for approximately 300 Vietnam veterans in this Commonwealth. With the need clearly established, this Commission through its Chairman, has continued to work for a 50 million allocation out of next year's new bonding package.

This Commission supports the following recommendations:

- that the Veterans Administration Loan Guarantee officer work to develop a comprehensive educational and outreach program directed at the lending institutions;
- that a study be conducted to determine the extent to which Chapter 200 housing facilities can be salvaged (as opposed to being demolished under Chapter 884) and that a modernization fund be appropriated;
- that a preference for Vietnam veterans be established for 30% of all existing and planned units of Chapter 705 housing;
- that there be established a set aside for Vietnam veterans in Chapter 707 (rental assistance);
- develop a pilot congregate housing project for veterans in the vicinity of VAMCs.

- that a pilot program for congregate housing for Vietnam veterans near VAMCs be established with monies for Chapter 689 (handicapped housing);
- that a 50 million dollar housing bond package be developed for Vietnam veterans and administered by MHFA (Massachusetts Housing Financing Agency) in a lottery fashion as was done in November 1983.
- through our Congressional Delegation recommend the passage of federal legislation HR2948, which authorizes the Administration of Veterans Affairs to provide Mortgage assistance to veterans (with GI Home Loan) threatened with foreclosure.

FUEL ASSISTANCE

In 1982 the Commission testified before the Joint Legislative Committee on Federal Financial Aid of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts responsible for all block grant procedure. At that hearing we brought to their attention the plight of the Vietnam veteran community vis-a-vis the under and unemployment situation. There, also, we specifically mentioned the multiple problems experienced by the "hard to reach" Vietnam veterans.

Following this, and through the efforts of our Chairman, a conference meeting was arranged with administrators from the Executive Office of Communities and Development in connection with the Community Services and Fuel Assistance Block Grants. Consequently, this Commission addressed the Fuel Assistance Operators across the Commonwealth, and suggested methods with which they could outreach Vietnam veterans in the Commonwealth. It is our understanding that prioritization for Vietnam veterans is again part of the current state plan. We commend the Chief Executive and that office and all the local entities for their annual commitment to this program.

The Commission cares to thank the following for their assistance on this issue:

Vito Amorelli, David Baker, John Blake, Joseph Flatley, Vincent E. Hayes, Jr., Michael McReaken, John Murphy, Marvin Siflinger, and a special thanks to Robert Carlsen and William Martin.

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Vietnam Veterans in the Criminal Justice System

This Commission is pleased to note that in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts a number of efforts to develop and initiate a well

constructed comprehensive criminal justice program for Vietnam veterans involved with the Commonwealth's criminal justice system have come to fruition. This has been possible only because of the involvement and dedication of so many individuals from the Vietnam veteran community and from within the Criminal Justice System. This Commission is proud to have been part of this comprehensive effort. For the purposes of this report, it is perhaps best to proceed by first presenting a brief history, to discuss the efforts of this Commission, and to comment upon the superb efforts of the Veterans Administration Operation Outreach/Boston and officials from the Department of Corrections.

Before proceeding, this Commission cares to let all readers be assured that this Commission is in no way interested in underestimating the seriousness of the offenses these men have commited. Obviously, the nature and scope of such criminal justice problems constitute a complicated and sensitive issue area which can be only carefully addressed. The Commission is interested in and supports only those programs developed from a careful, reasoned, and coordinated approach.

As this Commission noted in its Interim Report, the phenomenon of Vietnam veterans becoming involved as subjects of criminal justice systems across the United States is a tragic legacy that many would rather ignore. There exist several pieces of documentation which indicate that nationally, approximately 20% of the male population at state and federal institutions for the last 10-15 years is comprised of Vietnam veterans. The figures for Massachusetts have not been verified over all these years, but recent studies by the Department of Corrections put the total military veteran population at various MICs at 15%. This figure does not include those who may be at County facilities. There is no knowledge of how this may translate to total numbers, percentages, and the like, and perhaps little in the way of knowledge of types of crimes. The most important development over the last few years consists in the finding that the impact of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder may be closely related to the motivating factors of a majority of offenses committed by Vietnam veterans. This Commission is of the opinion that there is great validity in this research and in the contention of the linkage to criminal activity.

Beginning in 1975 an Ad Hoc Committee formed to discuss the phenomenon of the incarcerated Vietnam veteran. This little group

included a (then) parole board member, a Vietnam veteran, two professors from Boston College, and a half way house director. From that group, a study design was initiated and later reworked and implemented. This was the first study on incarcerated veterans in Massachusetts.

One of the principal consequences developed from this was that a new parole board policy of early review for special consideration was initiated. Also, the Vietnam veterans coming out were targeted for job-mart outreach.

Over the next few years, more efforts were developing. In 1980 — the Massachusetts Trying Together Coalition of the Office of Commissioner of Veterans Services for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts addressed this topic on two occasions; the COERS (Comprehensive Offenders Employment Resource System) and others became involved. During 1982, Governer Edward J. King became aware of the efforts in this area. He held meetings on several occasions lasting several hours each to help all concerned develop a proper approach. From these meetings, the various Ad Hoc Committees came together as the Advisory Committee on the Concerns of Incarcerated Vietnam Veterans. They were charged with developing a comprehensive plan bringing in all the relevant state agencies. It was all this history of work that set the stage (and here has been represented only the briefest sketch) for the work of the Department of Corrections and the Veterans Administration Operation Outreach.

The Commision saw its role as that of providing support and advocacy for all these efforts. We pursued this in two ways. First, we initiated a study on incarcerated veterans which would serve as a needs assessment for the Department of Corrections. Overcoming the inmates' wariness was not totally successful, and we fell short of achieving statistical significance in terms of acquiring enough responses. Nevertheless, the fact that we did this helped to develop rapport with various MCI superintendents and assure then that all of these developments were careful, reasonable, and positive in their scope.

Second, the Commission held a Special Informational Hearing to gather expert testimony from all those involved, each in their own specific area, all oriented to developing a comprehensive treatment program for Vietnam veterans in the Criminal Justice System. This was very successful in that it enabled all those involved to grasp the overall picture.

Now this Commission is proud to inform all of the excellent progress being made toward developing a comprehensive treatment program for Vietnam veterans at all stages in the criminal justice process — from arrest through corrections.

This fall the VA Operation Outreach Team, with assistance from the Department of Corrections, ran a P.T.S.D. seminar for an entire police department (Medford, Massachusetts). The focus concerned developing awareness of (1) the Vietnam veteran "on the street", and (2) the "double stress" of the Vietnam veteran police officer. Currently, a weekly stress management program is being designed for them.

Currently, the Outreach Teams, along with others from the Vietnam veteran community, are interviewing in behalf of Vietnam veterans coming before the court. This has occurred within the district and municipal system and at the superior court as well — across the Commonwealth. At virtually every stage from arrest to sentencing (conference, probable cause, arraignment, pre-trial, trial, and sentencing) they have provided expert testimony in connection with individual military and psychological backgrounds and recommended treatment alternatives at trial and sentencing. In addition, a program is being instituted to educate judges and juries as to the nature and relevance of P.T.S.D.

In fact, the first formalized alternative sentencing program for Vietnam veterans (where delayed stress was determined to be at play) was instituted in the Lynn District Court. The program inpatient/out-patient treatment as an alternative to incarceration. We understand that the Boston Municipal Court has endorsed the program and has developed plans for full implementation. Also the Outreach Centers and the Department of Legal Medicine have begun readjustment counseling for incarcerated veterans at state and county institutions on both an individual and peer group basis. Further, a training program for all corrections officers and staff is about to be implemented with respect to the area of P.T.S.D. and the special needs of incarcerated Vietnam veterans. Currently, the Commissioner of Corrections, the Commissioner of Veterans Services, and VA Outreach/Boton are negotiating with the Department of Mental Health to provide a *secure* hospital facility for exclusive treatment of incarcerated Vietnam veterans diagnosed with P.T.S.D.

Finally, the initial phase of a pilot project Mutual Agreement Pro-

gram about to be implemented. This will involve careful screening and selection for which 12-15 candidates for special consideration for a new treatment program, which among other things could provide for a possible early parole date eligibility. The Commission cares to make the following recommendations:

- that the police seminar program be expanded across the Commonwealth. The various chiefs of police should develop a seminar session for their departments; we further recommend that all major departments in the state consult with their local Outreach Center and develop a similar stress awareness program; as state mental health personnel become qualified in P.T.S.D. recognition on treatment, they can share the burden;
- that the Department of Mental Health together with the Department of Corrections reach an agreement in connection with providing a secure hospital setting for inmates diagnosed with P.T.S.D.;
- that the court diversion program be expanded to all courts in the Commonwealth and to other states and federal judicial bodies as well;
- the sanction of the Massachusetts Parole Board is crucial to the model prisoner program pilot project for Vietnam veterans vis-a-vis early parole consideration. The Commissioner of Corrections and the Governor should do all in their power to begin a dialogue with the Parole Board to insure their cooperation;
- that the booklets now being developed by the Vet Center/Boston and the Massachusetts Department of Corrections be distributed throughout the nation.
- that the Commonwealth require P.T.S.D. training for all mental health professionals involved in the Criminal Justice System, i.e., Corrections, Division of Legal Medicine, and Parole;
- that HR762 which would provide P.T.S.D. treatment for combat veterans referred by the court or incarcerated in state and county correctional facilities — be passed.
- that two bills currently to be proposed for the next legislative year concerning (1) an enabling act which provides for secure transfer of inmates to VA facilities, and (2) an act to provide ⅓ parole eligibility consideration for Vietnam veterans where P.T.S.D. was determined at play in the offense.

The Commission cares to thank the following for their assistance on this issue:

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Less Than Honorable Discharge

As noted in the Interim Report, the punishment and difficulty many veterans of the Vietnam conflict have suffered because of less than honorable discharges often far exceed the nature of their original infractions. Again, the Vietnam conflict was drastically different from that of nation's previous conflicts. It is still the impression of this Commission that the vast majority of these less than honorable discharges are held by those soldiers who fought late in the war, after 1969, when the entire war effort was beginning to collapse. For example, data on less than honorable discharge rates from the Department of Defense (DOD) indicates that up until 1969 the percentage of soldiers receiving less than honorable discharges from the Army was 5-7%, from the Navy was 6-8%, and from the Marines was 1-11%. Over the next four years, the percentage of soldiers receiving less than honorable increased — Army — 11%, Marines — 14%, (the Navy rate stayed around 7% but increased to 13% for 1975-1977).

There is literature which indicates that for *many*, the less than honorable discharge resulted from an inability to adjust to stateside reassignment for the few remaining months of service *after* their Vietnam service. The early release program employed by the Armed Forces was instituted because of this very problem, and therefore, automatically contained a built-in inequity.

The most recent *discharge upgrade rate* data from the Office of the Assistance Secretary of Defense indicates that there exists a significant difference among the various branches of service with respect to adjudication rates in favor of a discharge upgrade and that these percentages of discharge upgrades have dropped.

Branch	1981-82 Percentage of Application Upgraded	1982-83
Navy/Marine Corps	21.3%	7.5%
Army	33.8%	16.5%
Air Force	28.5%	23.5%

Overall, we have the case where less than honorable discharge rates *shot up* in the late 1960s and 1970s and discharge upgrade rates *shot down* in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

For the edification of those members of the General Court and the administration totally unfamiliar with the military discharge

system and the discharge upgrade review process currently operative, the following outline may be instructive.

The United States military issues several types of discharges. Honorable, general under honorable conditions, and medical (for a host of reasons) contain no penalties; the recipient is entitled to the full range of benefits from the Veterans Administration. Of course, in some cases, medical conditions may inhibit employment; yet, even here there are a number of safeguards to insure against discrimination in employment, etc. The dishonorable discharge is the most severe negative sanction applicable; it requires a full Court Martial hearing procedures. The recipient is prohibited from acquiring any Veterans Administration benefits.

There exists a third category, the so called "grey area" discharges. These include the categories of "undesirable" and "bad conduct". These can require court martial or be administratively handled. The former procedure was/is time consuming, the latter much less so. In effect a kind of plea bargaining procedure operated whereby the soldier, young and uninformed as to the long term consequences, opted for the administrative avenue. Thus the vast majority of those veterans of the Vietnam Decade who hold less than honorable discharges, possess either the undesirable or the bad conduct type.

Currently, there exist two avenues which the veteran holding a less than honorable discharge, i.e., undesirable, bad conduct, or dishonorable, can pursue to secure a discharge upgrade. The veteran can apply to the Discharge Review Board (DRB) or the Board for Corrections of Military Records (BCMR). Each branch of the service has its own DRB and BCMR.

The DRB is authorized to upgrade the character of discharges and to change the reason for discharge. This procedure allows for record review only hearing, (2) personal appearance without counsel, or (3) personal appearance with counsel. The veteran can apply to the DLB *if* his/her discharge is less than fifteen years old *and* if the character of discharge is general, undesirable, or bad conduct, from a *Special* Courts Martial.

The BCMR has broader authority; it can change the character of discharge or change the re-enlistment (spin) code. The BCMR hearings are usually based on a review of the existing military record and rarely grants requests for personal hearings. The veteran seeking a change in the quality of his discharge applies to the BCMR when the discharge is *older* than fifteen years or is a bad

conduct or dishonorable from the *General Courts Martial.* If a veteran has applied to a DBR but was denied, he/she can then apply to a BCMR. Further, there is a three year deadline from discharge or the last DRB decision in which one can file an application for an upgrade with BCMR, though this may be over looked if there is merit in the interests of justice.

The typical application for a discharge upgrade includes a statement of explanation as to the rationale for an upgrade. A brief or more detailed statement can be submitted with the application, or at a later time, but before the hearing. DRB hearings are held in the Washington, DC area. The DRB may and has scheduled traveling panels for a particular location where there are enough requests from that area for a traveling board. However, these have been few in number and are even less frequent now.

It must be recognized that the type of hearing the veteran has (records review, personal appearance, with or without counsel) is significantly correlated to the discharge upgrade rate. Data from the past two years demonstrates the marked advantage one has if he/she has a personal hearing. In 1981, 45.7% of applicants who appeared before the board for a personal hearing received an upgrade, while only 25.7% of those who had a records review or counsel only appearance were granted relief. Applicants who had a personal hearing in 1982-1983 again had a much better rate of receiving upgrades.

Obviously, the system of upgrading military discharges is governed by federal statutes and regulations; state legislators are limited in the ways they can affect the federal system. Yet, this Commission through the Congressional Delegation cares to make the following comments and recommendations:

- Since the cost of traveling to the Washington D.C. area precludes many veterans from exercising their right to have a personal appearance before the Discharge Review Board, and recognizing the fact that personal appearances by the applicant significantly affects the outcome of decision, this Commission recommends that the Discharge Review Board increase their frequency, the traveling panel schedules, and announce such appearances well in advance.
- That our Congressional Delegation (1) press the Department of Defense and (2) file legislation for an extension of the statute of limitations within which a veteran can apply to

both the Discharge Review Board and the Board for Corrections of Military Record.

- This Commission strongly recommends that here in Massachusetts the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services create a position for a military discharge specialist who will be responsible not only to handle individual cases, but also to form an advisory personnel, networking local veterans service agents, service officers from the established National and state organizations, and include personnel from Operation Outreach all in order to systematically approach this problem.
- That HR4254 be passed. This legislation would amend Title 10 U.S. code so as to eliminate the requirement that a request for correction of a military record be filed within 3 years after discovery of the error.
- This Commission implores the appropriate review boards and adjudication officers of the Veterans Administration to adopt a more lenient attitude in connection with approving application for benefits from those with bad conduct and undesirable discharges.

The Commission cares to thank the following for their assistance in this issue area:

Leslie Collins, Ed Dean, Edward Desimone, Paul Desmond, Phil Gavon, Richard Kimbell, Ron Lembo, Ed Peters, Ralf Woodward.

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PART III.
CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION FINDINGS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE

As stated in the introduction, this Commission found it necessary to expand its scope so as to cover as many of the pertinent and interrelated issues of concern as possible. Again, there is no one lynch pin problem which if resolved would rectify the whole cluster of structural problems that face Vietnam veterans in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or in this nation.

Rather than generalize, this Commission cares to summarize its findings and recommendations on an issue by issue basis. We do this with the explicit intention of again focusing attention on the full range of problems that remain to be resolved, and to provide a scorecard, or an agenda for action, against which the commitment of those who seek to implement the recommendations of this Commission may in the future be measured.

The following recommendations are presented in a compendium format. First, we will present our concerns with respect to the administrative steps to be pursued and secondly, address these same concerns in connection with pending legislation. In both instances we seek to separate those recommendations best handled at the state level from those which more obviously fall into the federal purview. Also for the sake of simplicity, this summary is additionally broken down by issue area as outlined in section two.

Agent Orange

Finding

VA screening exam inadequate and not standardized in VAMC system.

Recommendation

Accurate screening program designed and implemented throughout VAMC system.

Finding

VA not prepared for Cancer care.

Recommendation

VA start planning for increased cancer care capability.

Finding

Need exists for Agent Orange study in Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Recommendation

That this study be carried out under the auspices of the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services.

POW/MIA

Finding

Issue visibility is essential for the POW/MIA agenda.

Recommendation

That the POW/MIA awareness campaign continue and include:

1) proclamation by the Governor on July 20, 1984;
2) cities and towns "adopt" a Massachusetts POW/MIA servicemen;
3) veterans organizations encourage citizen letter writing campaign.

P.T.S.D. (State)

Finding

Substance abuse directly related to P.T.S.D.

Recommendation

That prioritization for Vietnam veterans continue in mental health portion of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Service Block Grant.

Finding

There exists little awareness about P.T.S.D. among mental health specialists.

Recommendation

That all appropriate state, local, and community agencies develop and conduct a symposium series on P.T.S.D.

P.T.S.D. (Federal)

Finding

P.T.S.D. cut across the entire Vietnam veteran population; Operation Outreach best mode of service delivery.

Recommendation

The VA expand Operation Outreach threefold.

Finding

P.T.S.D. stress ward program immensely needed.

Recommendation

That VA Division of Medicine and Surgery establish program implementation throughout the VAMC systems as rapidly as possible.

Governmental Services (State)

Finding

Vietnam veterans are unaware of the governmental services available to them.

Recommendations

The Governor issue a directive for all the secretariats, agencies, and departments to develop an outreach program for Vietnam veterans in the Commonwealth.

Finding

The problems confronting the Vietnam veterans are immensely complicated and interrelated; any administrative effort will require considerable resources and coordination from one central focal point.

Recommendation

The Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services be raised to secretariat status.

Finding

Several new projects of concern to Vietnam veterans must begin immediately.

Recommendation

The Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services:

1) fund a profile study specifically geared to the "hard to reach" Vietnam veteran population;
2) continue and fully fund the Fitchburg and Roxbury Outreach Programs and expand the state outreach center effort to Cape Cod, Merrimack Valley, and to Berkshire County;
3) that the O.C.V.S. be the administrative arm with oversight powers for all Title IV Part C to be initiated and maintained over the F.J.P.T.A. lifetime in cooperation with the participating service delivery area vendors and subgrantees;
4) conduct the Agent Orange Study.

Governmental Services (Federal)

Finding

The VA Outpatient Clinic at Court Street is an absolutely essential service for all veterans in metropolitan Boston.

Recommendation

The Division of Veterans Benefits (now at J.F.K.) and the V.A.O.C./Court Street be provided the low rise portion of the J.F.K. while maintaining accommodations for the National Service organization — above all that an Outpatient Clinic facility remain operational in Downtown Boston.

Finding

The VAMC at Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts is in disrepair.

Recommendation

That the VA Office of Construction follow through as is currently understood.

Finding

There exists an immediate and growing need for geriatric care capabilities.

Recommendation

The Congress must approve the level of funding necessary to fully implement these programs **without cuts** in other sectors of the VA system.

Finding

Need exists to expand Operation Outreach programatically.

Recommendation

Vet Centers must keep storefront mode of operation and be given more autonomy for advocacy aid intervention in areas where there is need.

Finding

The need for a P.T.S.D. "stress ward" program is unquestionable.

Recommendation

VAMC implement this program as rapidly as possible.

Finding

The Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program represents an invaluable program for veterans and the nation. Given only one year of operation and such spare funding, its incredible potential has only minutely been recognized.

Recommendation

Another two years of federal funding will be required before VVLP is solidly self sufficient.

Minority Concerns

Finding

Lack of awareness of benefits and programs exist in the Minority veteran community.

Recommendation

An informational booklet be developed by OCVS which targets all Vietnam veteran communities.

Finding

Veterans Administration needs to be more responsible to Minority veteran communities.

Recommendation

VA increase their bilingual staff, hire more minorities and women when possible, and construct an awareness campaign to sensitize all to the needs of Minority veterans.

Finding

Need for VA to address the health care needs of women veterans.

Recommendation

The VA employ the recommendation of its advisory committee.

Finding

A fully operational community treatment/outreach center is a *must* for the Minority veterans community.

Recommendation

That OCVS insure that *full funding* be made available.

Finding

Minority veterans also have little access to the network of governmental services state and local.

Recommendation

Various CAP agencies and the FJTPA/PIC in Boston should include Minority veterans in the board composition.

Finding

There exists no accurate knowledge about the Minority veteran community in the Commonwealth.

Recommendation

Through OCVS a Minority veteran profile field research study be conducted.

Finding

There exists a need for occupational training.

Recommendation

That an adult occupational training and eductional program for Minority veterans be established at the Hubert Humphrey Occupational Center/Roxbury and special programs be implemented throughout the state post secondary educational system.

Education

Finding

Need exists to expand the upward bound program across the state.

Recommendation

That the Board of Regents see to it that such programs are developed.

Finding

Funding is required for the William Joiner Center at U-Mass/Boston.

Recommendation

That the Chancellor provide a line item appropriation for the program in the next and all following budgets.

Employment (State)

Finding

There exists need to outreach Vietnam veteran community seeking to engage in small business.

Recommendation

1) that Chapter 521 of 1975 and Chapter 579 of 1980 (Massachusetts) be amended to formally include Vietnam veterans as an applicant group and provide 20% of the 5% set aside go to Vietnam veterans;
2) the Department of Commerce develop and employ an outreach package geared to the Vietnam veteran community;
3) that the administration and General Court reconsider the notion of a "small business bank" for the "start ups" and truly small firms.

Finding

Labor Market information on veterans is outdated.

Recommendation

That the Division of Employment Security Job Market Research update and improve the 1979 report.

Finding

Civil service for veterans has been circumvented for several years now.

Recommendation

The Office of Personnel Administration implement the steps recommended by this Commission. (See Affirmative Action section and Governmental Services Section)

Finding

Qualified Vietnam veterans are being ruled ineligible for civil service lists, i.e., fire and police because of current age requirements.

Recommendation

Reinstatement of Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Act of 1979

with modification of age requirement upward.

Finding

Lack of outreach effort to unemployed veterans and lack of awareness of problems among employers.

Recommendation

That DOL/VES, VVLP, initiate outreach efforts into employer community while Outreach Centers, private community based offices, e.g., Fitchburg, DES officers and local Veterans Services agents be charged with outreach responsibilities among unemployed veterans.

Finding

Requirements of FJTPA eligibility (15 weeks unemployed) may preclude participation of those veterans most in need of FJPTA services.

Recommendation

That requirement of 15 weeks continuous unemployment be dropped for a significant portion of program (up to 50%) so as to allow veterans underemployed and working in menial jobs to upgrade skills.

Employment (Federal)

Finding

Vietnam veterans desiring to start small businesses lack information and capital.

Recommendation

That the SBA redouble its commitment and outreach efforts to Vietnam veterans and revise its equity requirement formula and develop a tandem loan program.

Finding

No clear picture exists concerning Vietnam veterans in state employment.

Recommendation

The Office of Affirmative Action implement its study and secure the cooperation of all EEO offices so as to carry out and monitor the implementation of the Executive Order.

Finding

There are no clear statistics determining unemployment rates for applicant groups.

Recommendation

The Bureau of Labor Statistics develop a standard method for

determining the unemployment rates for all applicant groups including veterans — that is, applicable to any geographic area.

Finding

The Office of Personnel Management is considering making changes detrimental to the veterans.

Recommendation

That OPM notably reverse its position but also provide the Veterans Readjustment Act with higher visibility especially in connection with employment announcements.

Finding

There exists a number of labor relation problems in the United States Postal Service adversely affecting Vietnam veterans.

Recommendation

That the subcommittee on Postal Personnel and Modernization of the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service hold hearings here in Massachusetts on this entire matter.

Housing (State)

Finding

Lack of priority status for veterans under Chapter 705 housing program.

Recommendation

That 30% of all existing and planned units of Chapter 705 housing be targeted for veterans preference.

Finding

Lack of Chapter 707 rental assistance to veterans.

Recommendation

Establish a set aside for Vietnam veterans under Chapter 707.

Finding

Need for congregate housing for disabled Vietnam veterans.

Recommendation

Development of a pilot congregate housing project for veterans in vicinity of VAMCs with monies from Chapter 689 (handicapped housing).

Finding

Difficulty encountered by Vietnam veterans in entering housing market.

Recommendation

Creation of 50 million dollar housing bond package for Viet-

nam veterans administered by MHFA in the same lottery fashion as done in 1983.

Housing (Federal)

Finding

Lack of assistance awareness in banking community.

Recommendation

VA Loan Guarantee officers develop outreach effort aimed at lending institutions.

Finding

Deterioration of available Chapter 200 housing facilities.

Recommendation

Initiation of a survey to determine salvage ability of Chapter 200 housing, and if feasible, the establishment of a modernization fund.

Criminal Justice

Finding

There exists a lack of awareness of the relationship which can hold between PTSD and involvement in the Criminal Justice System.

Recommendations

PTSD seminars be developed through the cooperation of Outreach Centers and local and state police departments across the Commonwealth.

Establishment of a secure hospital settling for inmates diagnosed with PTSD.

Expansion of the Court Diversion program.

Implementation of the pilot project (MAP) program for incarcerated Vietnam veterans.

That informational booklets being developed are distributed throughout the system.

That all mental health professionals working in the Criminal Justice System be required to take PTSD training.

Discharge Upgrade (State)

Finding

There is a lack of personnel specialists within the Office of the Commissioner of Veterans Services to handle discharge upgrade services.

Recommendation

That the Commissioner of Veterans Services designate a

member of his staff or Discharge Upgrade Specialist to ensure all appropriate services are offered affected veterans.

Discharge Upgrade (Federal)

Finding

Cost of travel precludes many veterans from exercising right to personal appearance before Discharge Review Board.

Recommendation

Discharge Review Board increase frequency of traveling panel schedule and announce this schedule well in advance.

Finding

Existence of statute of limitations creates unwarranted impediment to the entire appeal process.

Recommendation

DRB increase their statute of limitation to 25 years.

Finding

Overly stringent application of rules by review boards of Veterans Administration vis-a-vis benefits awards for those with bad conduct and undesirable discharges.

Recommendation

That the Veterans Administration provide a survey to generate data as to decision on applications for benefits by those with less than honorable discharges and that such data be provided to the appropriate subcommittee within the Veterans Affairs Committee for Review of Policy.

LEGISLATIVE

In terms of fulfilling its advocacy role, this Commission was very aware of the importance of recommending legislative solutions to the problems at hand, and of supporting that legislation proposed by others designed to do the same.

However, our Chairman, Senator Francis D. Doris, noted that a much more fundamental effort was required. The Commission needed to develop a mechanism to directly involve the Vietnam veteran organizations themselves in the legislative process. Our effort was to help them start out and continue long after our Commission dissolved. Thanks to the entire Congressional Delegation of Massachusetts, and particularly the Speaker of the House, the Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., and to the leadership of our General Court, particularly Senate President, the Honorable William M. Bulger and the Speaker of the House the Honorable

Thomas W. McGee — this Commission feels that together we all have succeeded.

As a first step, this Commission was proud to advocate, along with others, for the passage of HR6731 (1982 legislative session) which provided permanent office space for the Vietnam veterans through the V.V.M.I. in the Statehouse. The Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts, Incorporated (an umbrella organization for over twenty-two community based Vietnam veteran organizations across the Commonwealth) was established in 1981. Its purpose is to track and follow legislation which benefits the Vietnam veteran community at large.

As a second step, this Commission began discussions with James Ferguson, the Executive Assistant to Speaker O'Neill — both long time supporters of the veterans cause — to co-sponsor with the Speaker, a Conference on the Concerns of the Vietnam Veterans in Washington for the entire Congressional Delegation of Massachusetts. We did this in April 1982 and again in March 1983. Both conferences were most successful in introducing the Delegation and the leadership of the Vietnam veteran community to each other and in beginning what we are sure will be a long standing tradition of open dialogue.

One of the developments of the second annual meeting in 1983 was the establishment of the bi-monthly meetings between the leadership of the Vietnam veterans community of Massachusetts and staff members here in Massachusetts. At these meetings pertinent legislation or public law enactment are thoroughly discussed. This constitutes a very important effort, and the Commission cares to thank all those staff members of the Delegation for their assistance and cooperation.

Finally, we are proud to note that plans are already under way for the third annual conference in 1984. Replacing the Commission as a co-sponsor with the Speaker will be the Vietnam Era Veterans Association of Massachusetts and the legislative umbrella organization Vietnam Veterans of Massachusetts, Inc.

By way of observation, it may be noted that much of the success Vietnam veterans have achieved on the national level may be attributed to two facts. First and most obvious is the existence of the Veteran Affairs Committee which provides a single coherent and consultant channel for review of legislation affecting veterans. Whatever the shortcomings of this committee may be, its very ex-

istence assumes a focal point for both lobbying and redress of grievances. Second, and perhaps less obvious, is the existence of the Vietnam Veterans Caucus in the Congress. The caucus is composed of 38 Vietnam Era Veterans who meet and advise on legislation affecting their peers.

In the Massachusetts General Court, we point out neither such a committee nor caucus currently exists. In fact only five members of the Court are Vietnam Era veterans.

THIS COMMISSION STRONGLY ADVOCATES THAT THE COURT AND ITS MEMBERS CONSIDER THE FORMATION OF SUCH A COMMITTEE AT THE STATE LEVEL.

In the meantime the importance of maintaining the V.V.M.I., format cannot be over emphasized. As the organization chiefly responsible for keeping track of legislation affecting veterans for the entire Vietnam veteran community in Massachusetts, that organization has come to consider the following legislation to be important to the Vietnam veteran community. The Massachusetts Special Commission on the Concerns of the Vietnam Veterans agrees and as such has advocated for and recommends passage of the following:

State Legislation

Agent Orange

H2138 — Petition of Thomas M. Gallagher for the adoption of resolutions of the General Court memorializing the Congress of the United States to investigate the use and effects of Agent Orange, so-called.

H612 — Amends and clarifies the Massachusetts Pesticides Act.

P.T.S.D.

H5347 — Petition of Marie J. Parente that provision be made for psychiatric services for certain veterans.

S762 — Petition of Jack H. Backman for legislation to provide treatment of delayed stress syndrome.

Governmental Services

S1611 — Petition of Francis D. Doris for legislation to exempt inpatients of veterans' hospitals from payment of the meals tax while away from the hospital.

S1147 — Petition of Daniel J. Foley, Sara J. Robertson, and Francis J. McGrath (with the approval of the Mayor and City Coun-

cil) for legislation to require the Commonwealth to fully reimburse municipalities for veterans' benefits paid to applicants therefore.

H1271 — Petition of Jonathan L. Healy for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to the feasibility of securing federal financial assistance for payment of veterans benefits.

S1095 — Petition of Joseph B. Walsh for legislation to make Vietnam Veterans Day a legal holiday.

H323 — So much of the recommendations of the Office of Commissioner of Veterans Services as relates to providing that certain cities or towns shall join a veterans' services district which has a full time veterans' agent or director of veterans' services or appoint a full time veterans' agent or director of veterans' services.

S1390 — Petition of Francis D. Doris for legislation to provide that certain veterans, upon becoming members of certain contributory retirement systems, shall have prior service in the armed forces credited as creditable service.

S1824 — Report of the Special Commission established (under Section 291 of Chapter 351 of the Acts of 1981, as amended by Chapter 191 of the Acts of 1982) for the purpose of making an investigation and study of the Concerns of the Vietnam Veterans.

S1608 — Petition of Francis D. Doris for legislation to exempt former prisoners of war from payment of the automobile excise and to provide for the issuance of distinctive license plates without the payment of a fee.

H742 — Petition of William J. Flynn, Jr., Angelo M. Scaccia, and Thomas W. McGee relative to increasing reimbursement by the Commonwealth to cities and towns for veterans' services.

H934 — Petition of Timothy Reid, A. Joseph DeNucci, Jack Backman, and others for legislation to provide certain benefits for surviving children of deceased veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Education

S355 — Petition of Francis D. Doris and Thomas P. O'Neill, III, for legislation to provide certain educational benefits for Vietnam veterans.

Employment

H3742 — Petition of Mary Jeanette Murray for legislation to permit certain public employees who are veterans to continue working after reaching mandatory retirement age.

S1391 — Petition of Francis D. Doris for legislation to allow the attendance at funerals of war veterans by employees of the Commonwealth who are also veterans.

H884 — Which would establish an interagency committee on veterans in business in committee bill H3212.

Housing

H1599 — Petition of Joseph M. Navin and J. Michael Ruane for legislation to increase the exemptions for property held by certain elderly, infirmed, blind, surviving spouses, veterans, and other property owners.

H1203 — Petition of Roger R. Goyette relative to the property tax exemption for disabled veterans.

S799 — Petition of Patricia McGovern and Kevin P. Blanchette for legislation to establish the veterans' farm and home purchase act in the Commonwealth.

Criminal Justice

That two bills currently to be proposed for the next legislative year concerning: (1) an enabling act which provides for secure transfer of inmates to VA facilities, and (2) an act to provide ⅓ parole eligibility consideration for Vietnam veterans where P.T.S.D. was determined at play in the offense.

Federal Legislation

Agent Orange

S374/S786 — Each would amend Title 38 of the U.S. Code to provide presumption of service connection for diseases related to exposure to Agent Orange.

HR1961 — Provides for presumption of service connection and treatment for soft tissue sarcoma, chloracne, and liver cancer.

HR209 — Would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to arrange for an independent epidemiological study of persons exposed to dioxin.

Governmental Services

HR2936 — This would provide for the expansion of the Board of Veterans Appeals from 50 members to 65 members.

Education

HR2204 — This would extend the delimiting date for educational benefits from 10 to 20 years for Vietnam Theater veterans.

HR1326/HR328 — These would abolish all delimiting dates for educational benefits.

Employment

HR2449 — Prohibits the Office of Personnel Management from implementing new procedures detrimental to veterans.

HR828-829 — Similar to HR2449 — would prohibit the contracting out jobs held by veterans.

Housing

HR2948 — This would authorize the VA to provide mortgage assistance to veterans in order to avoid foreclosure.

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