

VETERANS SERVICES

The year of 2003 has been a year of many changes. Arthur Booth, who had served as veterans agent for five years, retired in June. He has been replaced by Robert Mathison. The Department of Veterans services in Boston, MA has relocated Causeway Street to new quarters on Washington Street in Boston. The Military Records Branch, Office of the Adjutant General moved from Boston to Milford, MA. Previously, records could be obtained by telephone inquiry. This has changed to written inquiry.

In addition to state and local changes, the federal government has imposed changes to the VA system, which changed some veterans' priority status for medical benefits. The benefits specifically targeted are the prescription drug program and healthcare.

Budgets for FY 2005 have been submitted reflecting the level funding for the Department of Veterans Services, and Benefit Line items have been maintained or increased slightly due to the potential of increased local activity.

During this report period, Hampden realized an increase in federal benefits totaling \$558,000. These monies are over and above local benefits and are for all levels of VA awards, such as disability payments. The veterans office, whenever possible, will transfer local benefit payments to VA payments.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert A. Mathison
Director/VSO