

Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee

By Gregg Burden

Executive Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs

January 31, 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee. I am Gregg Burden, Executive Director of the Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs. Briefing the Committee in my absence today will be Wayne Bollig, Veterans Services Director, and attending with him is Marshall Kennedy, Chief Fiscal Officer and Kafer Peele, Cemetery Program Director.

The Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs (KCVA) is privileged to support the quarter million veterans who live in the State of Kansas. Our mission is to serve Kansas veterans, survivors, and their dependents with dignity and compassion. The KCVA is a principal advocate in ensuring that they receive information, advice, direction, and assistance through the coordination of programs and services on state and federal benefits: medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials in recognition of their service to Kansas and the nation.

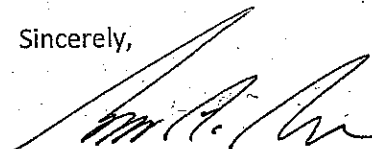
The KCVA provides services to include long-term nursing and assisted living care to eligible veterans and dependents, interment options and maintenance of four state veterans' cemeteries, and coordination with federal agencies to provide financial assistance to Kansas veterans for health care and disability income.

The agency also administers the Veterans' Claims Assistance Program, a system by which the eligible residents of Kansas can obtain assistance and advice in procuring benefits from the state and federal governments in the area of veterans' or survivors' benefits. These services are provided through 13 field offices located throughout the state, a Quality Assurance Office, two Mobile Vans, and six Veteran Service Organizations offices (funding provided by a State Grant) located in the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers in Topeka, Leavenworth, and Wichita.

That is just a brief overview of the services and programs the KCVA provides. KCVA recognizes that there are growing issues in our State concerning our veterans such as access to medical and mental health services, job opportunities, education, and many other concerns. Our goal is to support the State in addressing these very important needs required for our Veterans. The Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs has the ability to work with and inform Veterans and/or their families through our Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) throughout the State. The VSRs can provide information on resources available and specific points of contact to help with their particular issues. This is also accomplished through our partnerships with other state and local agencies and various veteran service organizations that disseminate information for the KCVA through their local post.

On behalf of the KCVA, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to brief the committee and for your continued support. I look forward to working with the Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee and other parties as we move forward working together helping veterans and their dependents. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Gregg Burden
Executive Director
Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs

Veteran/Military/Homeland Security Comm

Date: JAN 31, 2013

Attachment #: 12

KANSAS COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS OVERVIEW

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Agency: On July 1, 1986, the Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs was created by K.S.A. 73-1208a, and amendments thereto.

Veteran Services: The Service Agency was established in 1937 as a Division of Social Welfare to assist veterans and survivors in obtaining federal benefits. The Approval Agency was established in 1945 to implement the G.I. Bill. On January 20, 1946, Governor Schoeppel transferred the responsibility of accrediting institutions and business establishments to the Office of Veterans' Affairs, as the "State Approving Agency (SAA)".

On April 20, 2006, Governor Sebelius signed SB 396 (K.S.A. 73-1234, K.S.A. 73-1235, & K.S.A. 73-1236) creating the Veterans Claims Assistance Program (VCAP).

In SFY 2006, K.S.A 74-8724 established the appropriation for the Veterans Enhanced Service Delivery Program. This program began receiving funds from scratch ticket sales in SFY 2011.

In SFY 2009, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Medallion Program was established by K.S.A 73-1238, which required our agency to set up a fund and take applications for a medal, medallion, and certificate of appreciation for Kansas Vietnam Era Veterans.

State Veterans' Cemetery Program: Kansas Senate Bill 19 passed during the FY 1999 legislative session and was signed by Governor Graves on April 14, 1999. On April 22, 1999, the Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs was authorized by K.S.A 73-1232 to establish and maintain a state system of veterans' cemeteries.

Kansas Veterans' Home: KSA 76-1951 et seq., established the Kansas Veterans' Home (KVH) in 1997 on the grounds of the former Winfield State Hospital and Training Center located in Winfield, Kansas.

Kansas Soldiers' Home: On February 7, 1889, the Kansas Soldiers' Home (KSH) at Fort Dodge was established. Article 19, Chapters 76-1901 to 76-1941 Kansas Statutes Annotated, set forth the criteria for establishment and operation of the KSH.

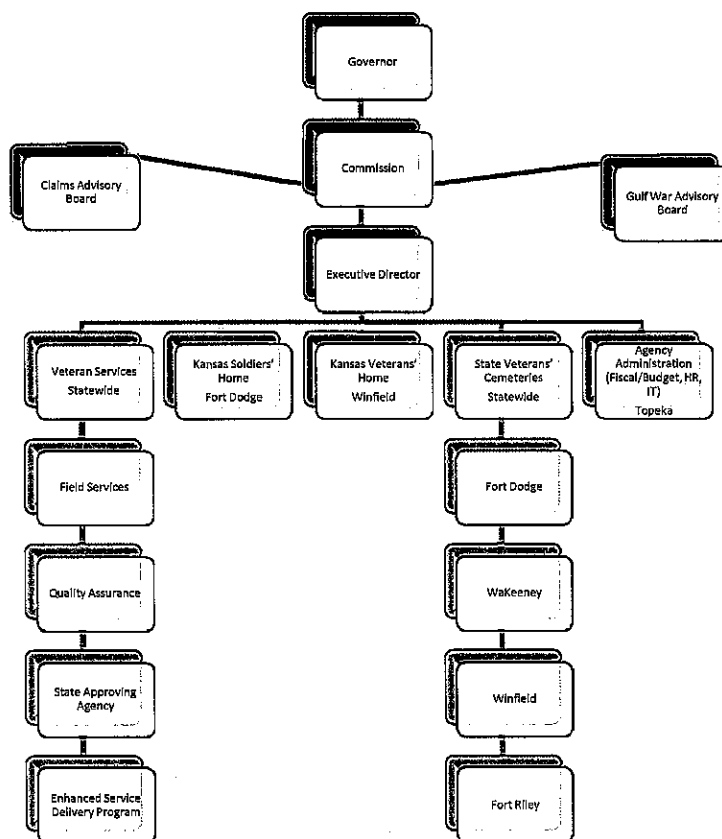
AGENCY

The mission of the Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs (KCVA) is to provide Kansas veterans, their relatives, and other eligible dependents with information, advice, direction, and assistance through the coordination of programs and services in the fields of education, health, vocational guidance and placement, and economic security. These programs include nursing and domiciliary care and veterans' cemeteries. This mission is accomplished within program areas of Agency Administration, Veteran Services, the State Veterans' Cemetery Program, the Kansas Soldiers' Home, the Kansas Veterans' Home, and the State Approving Agency.

ORGANIZATION

The Commission is composed of five members, each of whom is a veteran and is appointed by the Governor. This Commission, through its Executive Director, serves as the appointing authority.

The Governor appoints one commissioner from each of the four federal legislative districts and one “at large”. Members are appointed to four-year terms. The Commission designates an Executive Director to administer the activities of the agency. The following graphics provide more detail on agency line of authority of the commission.



Veteran Services

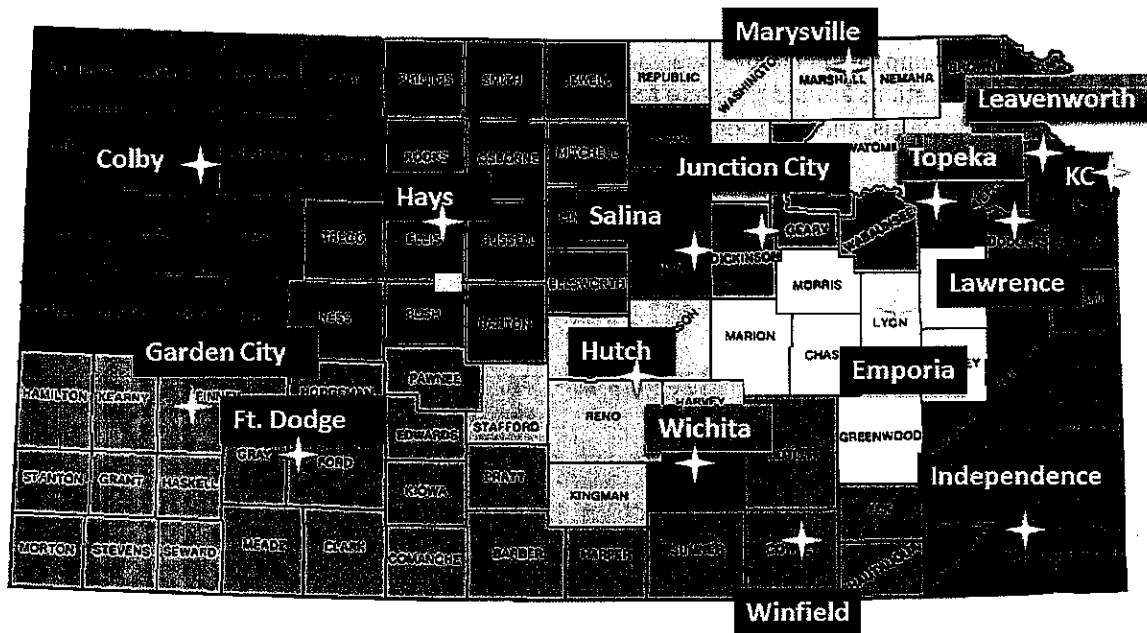
Veteran Services is the outreach arm of the KCVA on all aspects of veterans’ benefits for the State of Kansas. The KCVA Veteran Services Program can help you file VA claims for Education Benefits, Non-Service Connected Pension Benefits, Service-Connected Disability Compensation Benefits, Spouse and Dependent Benefits, State VA Benefits, and VA Health Care Benefits.

❖ **State Approving Agency**

The Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs is the State Approving Agency for the State of Kansas. Its’ mission is to determine whether an educational institution or training establishment is qualified to provide education or training in accordance with the provisions of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations.

❖ **13 field offices (throughout the state)**

To help obtain these benefits, the KCVA provides Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) free-of-charge to assist veterans and their families with applying for benefits. The State VSRs are available in strategic locations across Kansas or through grants provided to National Service Organizations, such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars.



- 13 Field Offices are highlighted in blue.
- Topeka and Leavenworth VA Medical Centers are highlighted in green and have VSO offices located there.
- Wichita VA Medical Center is highlighted in green and has VSO Offices and the KCVA Quality Assurance Office located there.
- The KCVA Field Offices and VSOs provide services and benefits to 225,000 Kansas veterans and their dependents (47,000 are currently in the KCVA database).

Note: Statistic provided by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (website), Veterans Center for Veterans analysis and statistics.

❖ **Quality Assurance Office (Wichita)**

The Quality Assurance Program (QA) performs a key role in reviewing claims from field office staff and participating service organizations, thus ensuring veterans' claims meet standards for development and completeness. Quality Assurance is a quality measurement program used by Veteran Services to assess claims actions submitted by the Service Grant Program participants and KCVA field service staff.

❖ **VCAP (grants provided by the state through the KCVA)**

The Veterans Claims Assistance Program awards annual service grants to eligible veteran service organizations (VSOs). The VSO service officers are funded through this program and provide support in the three VA hospitals. Grants are awarded annually through grant agreements entered into with the Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs. Each year the agency is required to solicit participation from all veteran service organizations that have a presence in the VA Regional Office in Wichita.

Currently, two chartered veteran service organizations, the American Legion and the VFW, have elected to participate for SFY 2011, SFY 2012, SFY 2013, and SFY 2014.

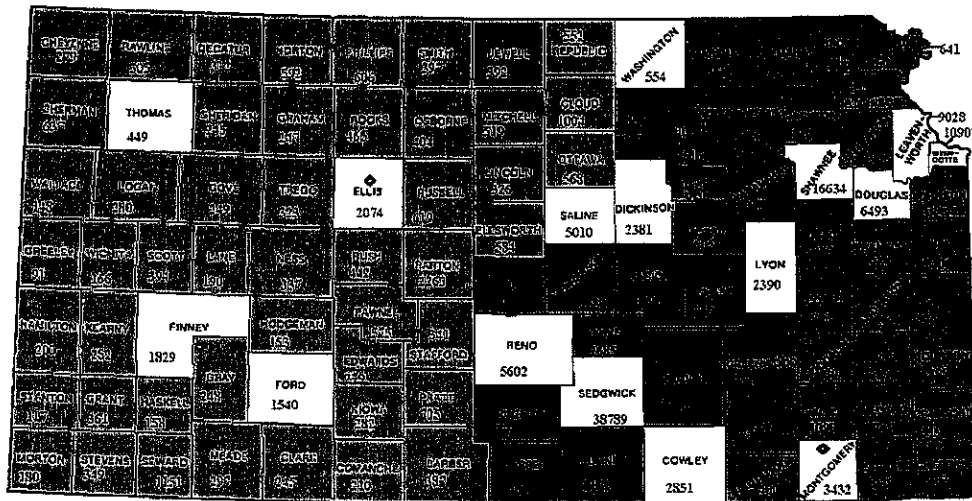
❖ **Veterans Enhanced Services Delivery Program**

- ❖ The KCVA administers the Veterans Enhanced Services Delivery Program that makes applying for VA benefits more accessible to state veterans and eligible family members. This program has two fully equipped and handicapped accessible vans (offices on wheels) that can set up shop at designated locations around the state to attend community or special events such as fairs, parades, festivals, and participating retail vendors.

MOBILE SERVICES PROGRAM TERRITORIES

West Region

East Region



Kansas Veterans' Cemetery Program

The Cemetery Program provides veterans and their eligible dependents with interment opportunities for burial in any of the four Kansas Veterans' cemeteries. The Cemeteries are located at Fort Dodge, WaKeeney, Winfield, and Fort Riley. The program manages and operates the four veterans' cemeteries, and provides staff support and assistance to veterans statewide regarding their interment options and the procedures for pre-certification.

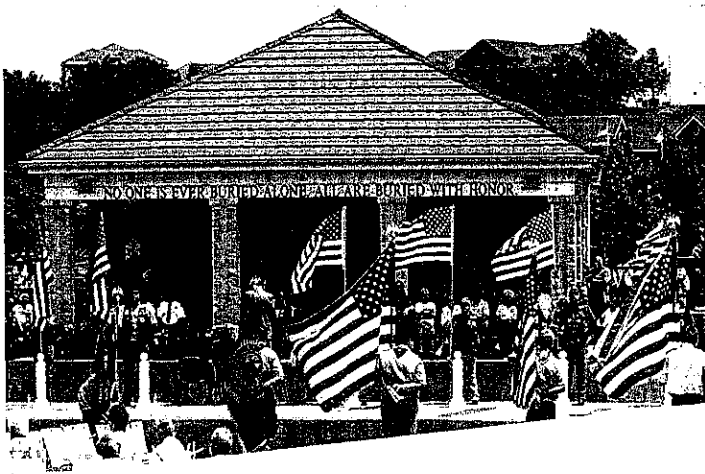
The Construction of these cemeteries was funded 100% by federal grants from the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, State Cemetery Grants Programs.



Kansas Veterans' Cemetery at Fort Dodge (opened in 2002)

The Agency and its governing Commission believe that veterans deserve to be interred with dignity, respect, and honor for their service. In that regard, the state cemetery is not only a burial site, but also a fitting memorial for service to country, and full compliance with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs standards ensures that these cemeteries are indeed memorials.

The VA National Cemetery Administration conducted a Triennial review of all four State Veterans Cemeteries during the week of July 9 -13, 2012. All four cemeteries passed the Triennial review and received the *"Excellence of Appearance Award"*.



Kansas Veterans' Cemetery at Winfield (opened in 2004)

Eligibility:

Eligibility is based on a veteran meeting military service as listed.

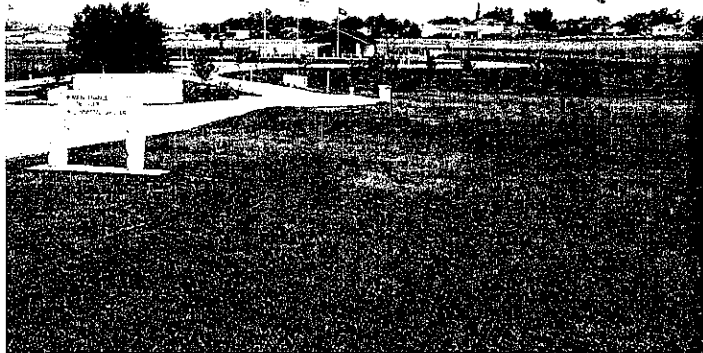
Military service requirement for burial in a Kansas State Veterans' Cemetery must be in accordance with the eligibility standards as set by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – National Cemetery Administration and, as a minimum, must meet one of the following:

- Veteran was discharged from "active duty" under other than dishonorable conditions, or
- Veteran died while on "active duty", or
- National Guard or Reservists members with 20 years of qualifying service, who are entitled to retired pay or would be entitled, if at least 60 years of age.

Kansas state residency requirement: None

Eligibility for Veteran Dependents:

Spouse, surviving spouse, and dependent children are eligible for interment, even if the veteran is not buried in a Kansas State Veterans' Cemetery. The veteran must have met military service requirements. This includes lost or buried at sea, missing or missing in action, or a veteran whose remains have been donated to science or cremated and the ashes scattered.



Kansas Veterans' Cemetery at WaKeeney (opened in 2004)



Kansas Veterans' Cemetery at Fort Riley (opened in 2009)



Kansas Veterans' Cemetery at Fort Riley

BENEFITS

- Burial space
- Grave liner
- Opening and closing of the grave
- Placement of cremation remains in either columbarium niche or in-ground burial
- Scattering garden
- Perpetual care
- Headstone and inscription



Wreaths Across America (Kansas Veterans Cemetery at Winfield)

State Veterans' Nursing Homes

The KCVA has two state veterans' nursing homes, one in Fort Dodge, Kansas, and the other in Winfield, Kansas. Veterans seeking admission must have active federal service. Active service means full-time service as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard. The discharge from the period of active federal service on which the application is based must have been under conditions other than dishonorable. On a space-available basis, spouses and surviving spouses may qualify for admission.

Kansas Veterans' Home (Winfield, Kansas)

The Kansas Veterans' Home is located in Winfield, Kansas. This community has a population of approximately 12,000 and is located 35 miles southeast of Wichita, Kansas. Friendly people are one of the community's greatest assets. Winfield has a growing business community and excellent schools, including Southwestern College.

- ❖ Part of Winfield State Hospital was converted over to the KVH in 1997 and opened in 1999.

- ❖ Services Offered:
 - Nutritious meals individualized to meet each resident's needs
 - Transportation to and from local health care providers, including the Robert J. Dole Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Regional Office Center in Wichita
 - 24-hour security systems and grounds patrol
 - A trained and professional staff that receives ongoing education to meet the needs of the residents
 - Private and semi-private rooms
 - Activity rooms with internet connected computers
 - Affordable costs
 - Social opportunities with other veterans
 - Qualifying medications provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs at no additional charge to veteran residents
 - 48 bed domiciliary unit
 - 75 bed long-term care unit
 - 20 bed special care unit for Alzheimer's and related dementia



Bleckley Hall (Long-term Care and Special Care)



Donlon Hall (Assisted Living)

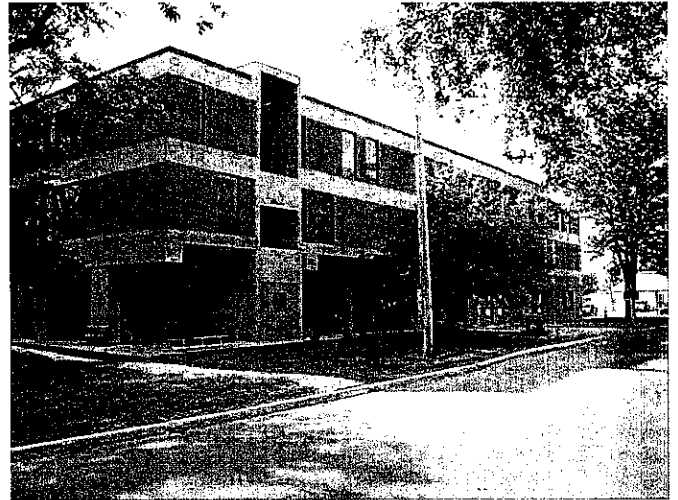
Kansas Soldiers Home (Fort Dodge, Kansas)

The Kansas Soldiers' Home at Fort Dodge, Kansas is located approximately 5 miles east of Dodge City, Kansas, on Highway 400 (formerly 154). Fort Dodge dates back to 1865 when it was ordered to be built as a supply post for people and wagon trains traveling the Santa Fe Trail. Fort Dodge was strategically located to the wet and dry routes of the Santa Fe Trail.

- ❖ Fort Dodge was an old Calvary post converted to the KSH in 1889
- ❖ One of several VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics in Kansas is on grounds at the Kansas Soldiers' Home

❖ Services Offered:

- Restorative care
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Laundry
- Activities
- Dietary services
- Social services
- Nursing
- Psychological services
- A library/museum
- a recreation center
- Resident/staff fitness room
- Three domiciliary residence halls
- 32 bed domiciliary unit
- 86 bed long-term care unit
- 51 Cottages



Halsey Hall (Long-term Care)



Lincoln Hall (Domiciliary)



Grant Hall (Domiciliary)