

Rosenberg, Anna M.
1945 - April 1951

Miss Anna Marie Rosenberg

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt -
I can't tell you what
a deep sense of satisfaction
it is to me that you
have accepted to serve
as a Representative of the
United Nations Organization.
It is the first ray of
hope in a sadly muddled

situation. I know
everyone is grateful to
you and looks with
new hope to the coming
year.

With deep affection -
Anna

The Veterans  Service Center *Hed*

500 Park Ave.
~~20-22nd St~~, New York 16, N. Y.

Sponsoring Agencies: *Telephone: MURRAY HILL 3-5760*
RETRAINING AND REEMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION, THE WELFARE COUNCIL OF NEW YORK CITY

Mayor ~~Franklin D. Roosevelt~~ HONORARY CHAIRMAN *Anna M. Rosenberg, CHAIRMAN*
William O'Dwyer,

acknowledged 1/17/46

January 10, 1946

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
29 Washington Street
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

In the past, these Monthly Reports have gone only to Committee members. It occurred to me that you might find them useful. If you do, I'll be happy to send them to you regularly.

Sincerely yours,

Anna M. Rosenberg

Anna M. Rosenberg
Chairman

VETERANS' SERVICE CENTER

MONTHLY REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

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September
1945

Bertrand Davis
Executive Director

Anne E. Rosenberg
Chairman

VETERANS' SERVICE CENTER NEW YORK

VETERANS' SERVICE CENTER

10 East 40th Street

New York City

MONTHLY REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

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Bernard Davis
Executive Assistant

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Preface

With this issue of the Monthly Report, we begin a new form of presenting the activities of the Veterans' Service Center. In this issue, and in those to come, we will try to present a broad and comprehensive picture of veterans, the community, and the Center's progress in working with both.

A section entitled, Veterans and the Community, will begin each report. In it we will try to gauge the reactions of both veterans and the civilian community to which they are returning. These are important intangibles which have a profound influence upon much of the efforts and results of the Center.

The second section, The Veteran and the Center, will cover the principal features in the Center's operation. The number of veterans handled, the types of services they want, and how they were provided, and what the Center is doing in the community to help them will be detailed. Additional tables, charts and graphs pertaining to this data will be presented in the appendix.

The concluding section, Problem of the Month, will discuss a particular type of problem which confronts many veterans and will analyze the important implications that grow out of it. This month's space is devoted to a discussion of the D-vet (demobilized veteran) and the O-vet (veterans discharged for all other reasons.)

I. Veterans and The Community

Less than a month after World War II became grist for the historians, the men who had carried the war through to its end were coming back in force to New York City, and to the Veterans' Service Center. Prior to this time, most of the men were discharged from the services for such reasons as overage, dependency, family hardships, medical disabilities, ineptitude, and psychoneurosis. Now in September, these demobilized vets, advanced elements of millions more to come, gave the Center and the community a first actual glimpse into what the full scale demobilization of eleven million men would entail. The O-vets were being supplanted by a host of D-vets and all indications pointed to the fact that from now on the D-vet would be "the" vet.

As alert prophets had long been predicting, the first step in readjustment for most of these men would be finding a place in the peaceful economy of a nation that had done without them for years. If there were any magic words to solve the problems of the transition, they were "full scale gainful employment". For veterans and the Center alike, September was the beginning of the long Battle for Jobs.

The psychology of the D-vet, admittedly susceptible to many different interpretations, reflected the state of his hopes and fears in returning to civilian life, and also his own estimate of how well the Battle would go for himself and his buddies.

For the men who had done the fighting more than anyone else, the war's end meant sudden and important changes. The post war world, so evanescently full of dreams

and distant before, was suddenly in the here and now. Like anything else which men have wished for long and hard, the fact that it had come true was hard to accept at first. Peace upset the first plans of many D-vets,

It ended the high-paying wartime jobs that they had heard so much about. It meant that industries would be firing instead of hiring, that a period of entrenchment, reconversion, and hesitation would begin. Like everyone else, they wondered how long reconversion would take and how it would affect their chances of getting a good job.

Even before they left the country and then later while overseas, D-vets had heard much about the country's intentions to "take care of its boys." The much publicized "GI Bill of Rights", the promises of those in public life and the eulogizing columns in the daily press, the encouraging promises of Labor, Capital and the Public at Large all reassured the fighting man that he would not be forgotten on his return to civilian life. These promises, some legitimate, others half promises and shadows of promises-evoked a mixed response. All hoped that they would be fulfilled, but few veterans counted on them. A common evaluation was: "They're doing all that to keep up the morale of the folks back home." In general, these reassurances did not comfort all GI's. Many a serviceman, while still overseas, was inclined to take a belligerent view of the situation. A Congressional Medal of Honor winner said that many men had taken "foxhole oaths" to see that there would be enough jobs and opportunities for all veterans. "We feel there are enough of us this time to get what we should have", he told the press upon his return.

On the brighterside, these D-vets realized that they were getting a head start in the race for the choice jobs. "We talked about it on the boat coming over," said one veteran. "We figured that in a way we were getting the breaks. We had been in and got the points and now we're getting back ahead of the rest of the mob. Later on, it's going to be a rat race. Maybe this way we can get to the head of the line and take first pickings. The real war time gravy is gone but at least we'll be in on the ground floor for the first post war jobs. I hate to think of what chances we'd have if we came back a year later. I feel sorry for those guys. They're going to be "SOL" - (Scrubbed-up interpretation: So-Out-of-Luck.)

Thus in September, the picture of the veterans was almost as confused and contradictory as general conditions throughout the country. But as in the case of both, certain definite trends were becoming apparent and there were signs indicating the state of future developments. Perhaps more significant than anything else, the D-vet was beginning to dominate the veterans' scene and inasmuch as his major interests were employment and education, it set the tenor for the months to come. There were signs that the D-vet was not only job-conscious to a major degree, but that he was getting worried and afraid about how well he would make out in returning as a semi-stranger to the competitive strife of a civilian peace.

The other half -- the civilian population to which these veterans were returning -- had its own characteristic psychology. People still said "post war" out of force of habit as though it were a long way off, and when radio announcers quoted "Eastern Peace Time" it sounded unfamiliar. But in general, civilians made the transition from war to peace with less difficulty. To many, the end, dramatic as its

closing hours were, came as an oversustained anti-climax. Before the first days of feverish celebration were over, the post war planning departments of big businesses were resuming work that had started weeks and months earlier. Among ordinary people, there was a deep tendency "now that the shooting is over to settle down again."

So far as meeting all its veterans' needs was concerned, the country was optimistic about its good intentions, somewhat inclined to take the word for the deed, and also not a little perturbed over what the future might bring. In their very gratitude towards the victorious armed forces, civilians manifested the fact that they were appreciative of how much these men had sacrificed. They looked forward to greeting them, to welcoming them home again, but there were few veterans on hand and the nature of demobilization made it impossible to have the triumphant parades and brass band receptions that were symbolic of victory.

At the same time, the very disproportion of the sacrifices made on the home front as compared with those made by fighting men troubled civilians with deep feelings of guilt. This was enhanced by the fact that the nation was beginning to realize that not enough of its hastily made promises to veterans would be kept, or could be kept. Many people hoped that the veteran would come home and settle down without trouble, that he would not prove difficult or demanding. For the most part, the average American family went on waiting for its own particular servicemen to return. Meanwhile there was uneasy speculation about the veterans and the bonus, the veteran and the unions, the veteran and business, and how well the economy of the nation could stand the return of eleven million men.

II. Veterans and the Center

Such was the temper of the nation and its servicemen during September, a month in which nearly eight thousand veterans came to the Veterans' Service Center for help. By the time these first thirty days of the new atomic peace were out, the Center was verging on the ripe figure of 75,000 veterans served.

Almost lost in the flurry of figures was the fact that in a month foreshortened by a six day elevator strike, Labor Day and the two Jewish Holidays, more veterans came to the Center than any time before in its career. Were it not for these days lost, September would probably have seen a whopping 40 percent increase over August instead of the mild seven percent rise that actually occurred.

As usual, the first people to take the brunt of the load were the receptionists who by this time knew a dozen variations for the standard question, "Why have you come to us, Sir, and what can we do for you?" To keep up with the fresh loads that each elevator deposited on the eleventh floor, the receptionists became adept at accurate, fast-moving appraisals. Of every five veterans, one got the information he wanted right there and then from the receptionists, while two more were directly referred to other agencies which could serve them best. Each receptionist handled upwards of 70 veterans a day. Average time for each veteran: a neat six minutes.

For 30 percent of all veterans, the receptionists arranged interviews with personal or business consultants. That a number of veteran had problems too complex for one consultant to solve in an easy meeting could be seen in the fact that for 2414 veterans there were 2778 interviews. The services of the employment consultants and the Veterans' Administration in that order accounted for almost half these interviews

Most noticeable changes from August to September were:

1. Interviews with employment consultants showed a trend to climb steadily as more and more demobilized veterans returned to civilian life, the big problem of getting a job foremost in their minds.
2. Business interviews rose 50 percent as another consultant was added to the staff, thereby increasing the facilities available to handle veterans interested in that field.
3. Interviews with educational consultants declined some 30 percent, perhaps reflecting a temporary drop in interest because September's demobilized veterans were too late to catch the start of the academic year.

Despite the speed and efficiency of receptionists and interviewers alike, the number of veterans was always tantalizingly beyond the Center's capacity. As hard as each staff-member worked, there were always more veterans to be helped. For some 12 percent of the people who were routed through to interviewers, this meant returning several days later in order to see a consultant.

With the resources of the community at large at their call, the consultants drew upon the services of 145 various agencies and referred nearly two out of every five veterans to the particular organization or group which promised the greatest possible aid in meeting each veterans' requirements. Some 1576 referrals were made ranging from the Advertising Club to the Young Womens' Christian Association. Reflecting

the veterans' principal needs, almost half the referrals were to employers and employment agencies. Education and Trade Training Institutions, Guidance and Placement Agencies, and Business Agencies followed in that order. Referrals to Family Service and Relief Agencies, Medical and Psychiatric Care, as in August, remained in small but continuous demand.

As part of a far sighted program to insure that veterans will not be given the run-around when they seek aid, a committee to coordinate community resources was recently set up. Under the chairmanship of Stanley P. Davies, representatives of twenty federal, municipal, and private agencies are pooling the knowledge and prestige that comes of their long experience to make certain that the veterans are effectively and generously served.

Through studies of the veterans' needs and the success with which they are being satisfied, the committee will be accurately informed on the quality of services that the veterans are getting from the varied agencies in the community. Through their long experience in the diverse fields of employment, education, welfare, and social service, the committee members will be able to gauge the capacity of existing agencies to meet the needs of veterans and to uncover the supplementary services that must also be made available.

The broad program of the Committee for Coordination of Community Resources includes in its scope the following principal aims:

1. Through studies conducted by the Community Coordination Unit, and through an analysis of the needs as recorded by the interviewers, the Committee will compile a comprehensive survey of the area of the veterans' unmet needs.

2. Acting as an important means of liaison between the Center and the agencies in the community, it will try to stimulate interest in the veteran and also increase the scope and effectiveness of all resources available.
3. Working on an administrative level, the Committee will pave the way for a more successful use of follow-up forms. In accomplishing this, the Center will be greatly aided for it will thereby gain a much more detailed picture of how much or how little aid the veteran has received.

In working according to this program, and always striving to improve the extent and worth of the services given to veterans, the Committee will be acting as an informed and alert guardian of the public conscience. It will endeavor to see that the good intentions of the community will actually be translated into concrete and direct aid for the veteran. Through the caliber of its Committee members, and their intimate knowledge of the veterans' situation, they will be making certain that in the critical months and years to come, the veteran will get more than statues in the park and political speeches on Memorial Day.

III. Problem of the Month: The D-Vet and The O-Vet

The war's end together with public pressure on Congress and subsequently on the War Department have speeded up the demobilization program to the point where a million men will be released every thirty days. The majority of these will be veterans of several years service -- men with overseas and combat experience. How will the influx of these demobilized vets affect the future operation of the Center? Will the D-vet present different problems than the O-vet (veterans discharged for all other reasons?)

To answer these questions, we studied the case records of a sample of 288 men interviewed during September to see how the O-vet and the D-vet differ in the use of the Center.

1. Why Do They Come?

When men stop shooting and start commuting, they face a number of common problems. Returning to civilian life means facing and solving new situations. The four common areas which present difficulties to most men are: closing out a service career, getting an education, earning a living and making a personal adjustment. These account for 98 percent of all the services sought at the Center. This table offers a quick comparison between the two groups:

Services Needed		
Services	% D-Vet	% O-Vet
Military Rights & Benefits	18	22
Earning a Living	43	33
Getting an Education	28	19
Making a Personal Adjustment	9	23
Miscellaneous	2	3

The significant points for the Center are that D-vets are proportionately less interested in filing claims for disability than are O-vets and in getting help in the area of personal needs. Their chief concern is with employment and education.

2. When Do They Come?

Two out of three D-vets who come to the Center appear within two weeks after discharge. Almost half of the O-vets on the other hand, wait more than a month.

Time Of First Visit

Interval	% D-Vet	% O-Vet
Total	100	100
Less than two weeks	66	39
Two to four weeks	16	16
More than four weeks	18	45

3. How Often Do They Come?

While a majority of all veterans makes only one visit to the Center, D-veterans make fewer repeat visits than O-vets.

Number of Visits Made

Number of Visits	% D-vet	% O-Vet
Total	100	100
One Visit	83	74
Two Visits	12	12
Three or More Visits	5	14

IV. Conclusions

When the D-vet leaves his separation center a "free man" again, he evidently sees the folks, the girl, and the Veterans' Service Center in just about that order. Despite repeated barracks' promises and foxhole oaths to "take a heluva long vacation" when he's out, the D-vet is an eager beaver. Two out of three who come to the Center show up within the first two weeks after their discharge. By way of contrast, one out of every two O-vets waits a month or longer.

Thus, within a few weeks after an acceleration in the discharge program, D-vets will flood the Center, rushing the educational and employment consultants in particular. Those who handle veterans' benefits and problems connected with leaving the services are going to be almost as busy. The only person who won't feel the rush so much as the others will be the clerk who types the claims. Only four percent of the D-vets apply for disability claims whereas 14 percent of the O-vets file.

The D-veteran's immediate interest in making a place for himself in civilian life is evidenced by the fact that 71 percent of all his services concern education and employment. This percentage rating, however high and impressive it may be on paper is but a statistic -- an impersonal token at best of the deep concern that demobilized millions are taking in their economic future. Few veterans were so securely established in civilian life that they anticipate no difficulties in resuming their careers. Men of all ranks and ages are concerned with similar situations. The young officer wonders if he can equal his military pay as a civilian. The enlisted man who held no rating is afraid that this will weigh against getting

a responsible position. "I was just a kid when they drafted me," the young veteran says. "I can't compete against guys who had plenty of experience." And the 35 year old veteran sums up his own handicap by saying, "I'm fighting time. Who wants to hire an old man when they can get a younger one?"

Those three little words -- a good job -- sum up the returned veterans most pressing problem and the driving quest of several million men in the months ahead.

Because a statistical report cannot capture the intangible differences in the psychology of the two types of veterans, the figures do not reflect the D-vet's sense of urgency about getting a job. The temper of the veterans who come to the Center is changing now and will change more strikingly in the months to come. In the past, O-vets (apart from the psychoneurotics) often had guilt feelings because they were released while others were still in, because they were here and safe while others were overseas and facing death. Some felt, at times, like half-veterans, and this feeling served partly to check the O-vets' aggressiveness.

No such brake will restrain the D-vets. Most of them take a realistic, some even a pessimistic view, of the nation's post-war economy. They are not overly impressed by promises to give them jobs. One veteran summed up the situation saying, "In another couple of months, the people will be saying, "What, another boatload back? What do all these goddamned heroes want?"

If the job market dwindles, the problem of helping the veteran return to his community and make a satisfactory adjustment to civilian life will be greatly increased.

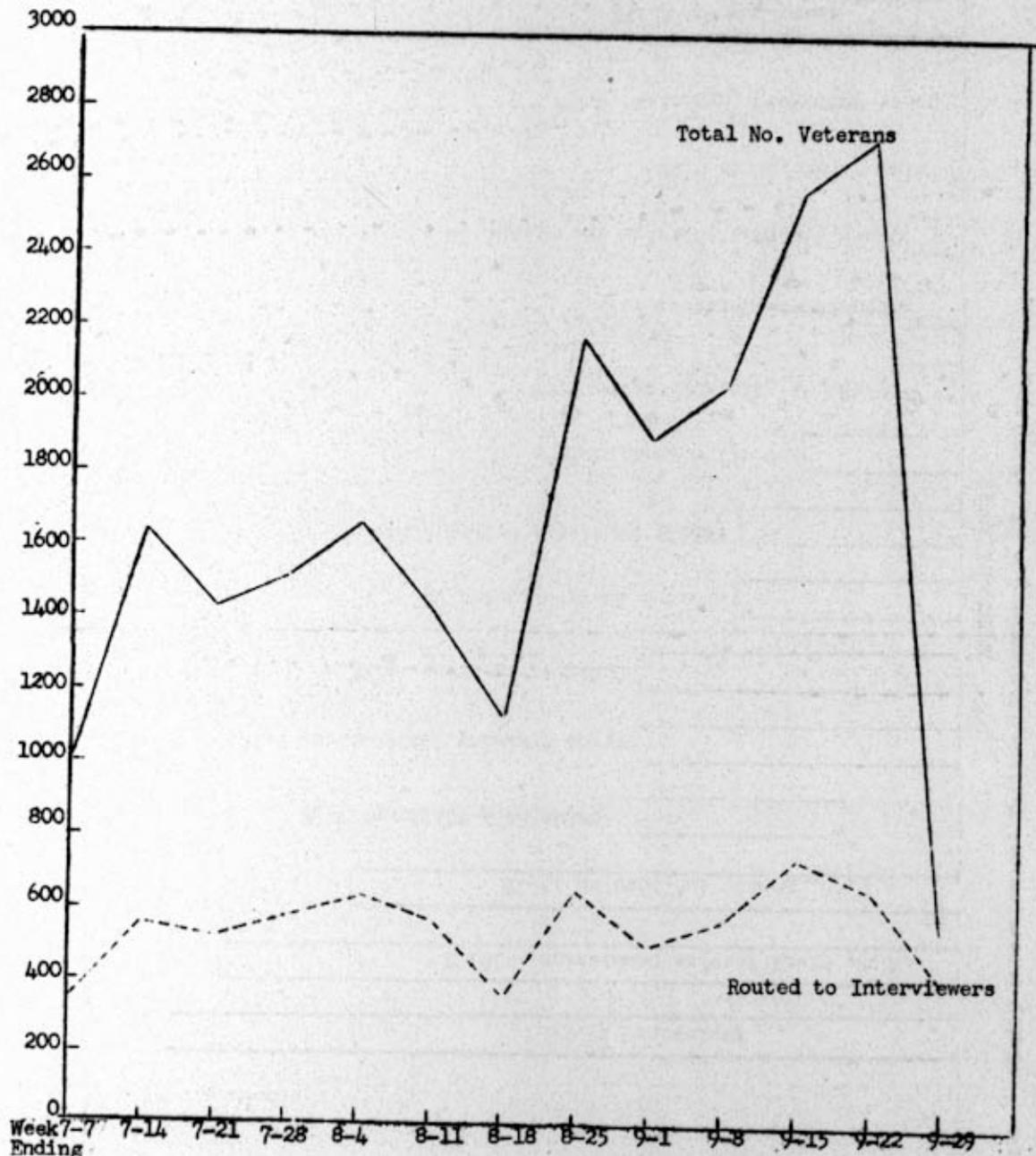
Diplomacy and soft answers will be hard put to conceal the basic fact that there are too many veterans for too few jobs, too many students for too few schools. And under these conditions, with the desire to do something for the veteran, each agency will send the veteran on to some other organization, hoping against hope "that something will turn up for him." Unintentionally but actually, the veteran will be given the run-around. And under this set of circumstances, as Bernard Baruch pointed out in his report to General Bradley, an unhappy set of antagonisms and discords between veterans and the rest of the Community may be generated.

At the present time, the D-vet's need for a job is so immediate and persistent that it almost obscures all his other needs. Since he comes to the Center with the ink hardly dry on his discharge, he has scarcely had time to discover the problems that personal adjustment to civilian life often entails. Many men, even if aware of these difficulties, are disinclined at first to take these very personal affairs to anyone at the Center. "I can handle my own troubles," is a common attitude. "I don't need help from civilians." This psychology is part of a defensive mechanism common among servicemen who have been subject to great personal stress. It reflects their desire to repress and negate their own feelings. The war with its consequent weakening, separation and frustration of family ties, the number of hastily contracted marriages and peculiar liaisons, the sudden changes in role and status, the fluctuations in income, to mention but a few factors, will all find their reflection in a multitude of personal problems. At a later date, as he becomes aware of the increasing seriousness of some of these problems or when he reaches crises which call for outside help, the D-vet may return to the Center for that kind of assistance. Psychiatric case workers, family guidance counsellors and similar groups will be handling more people than ever before. A generation hence, they will still be liquidating the various human problems which have arisen from this war.

CHART I - WEEKLY VETERAN LOAD

VETERANS' SERVICE CENTER

July - September, 1945



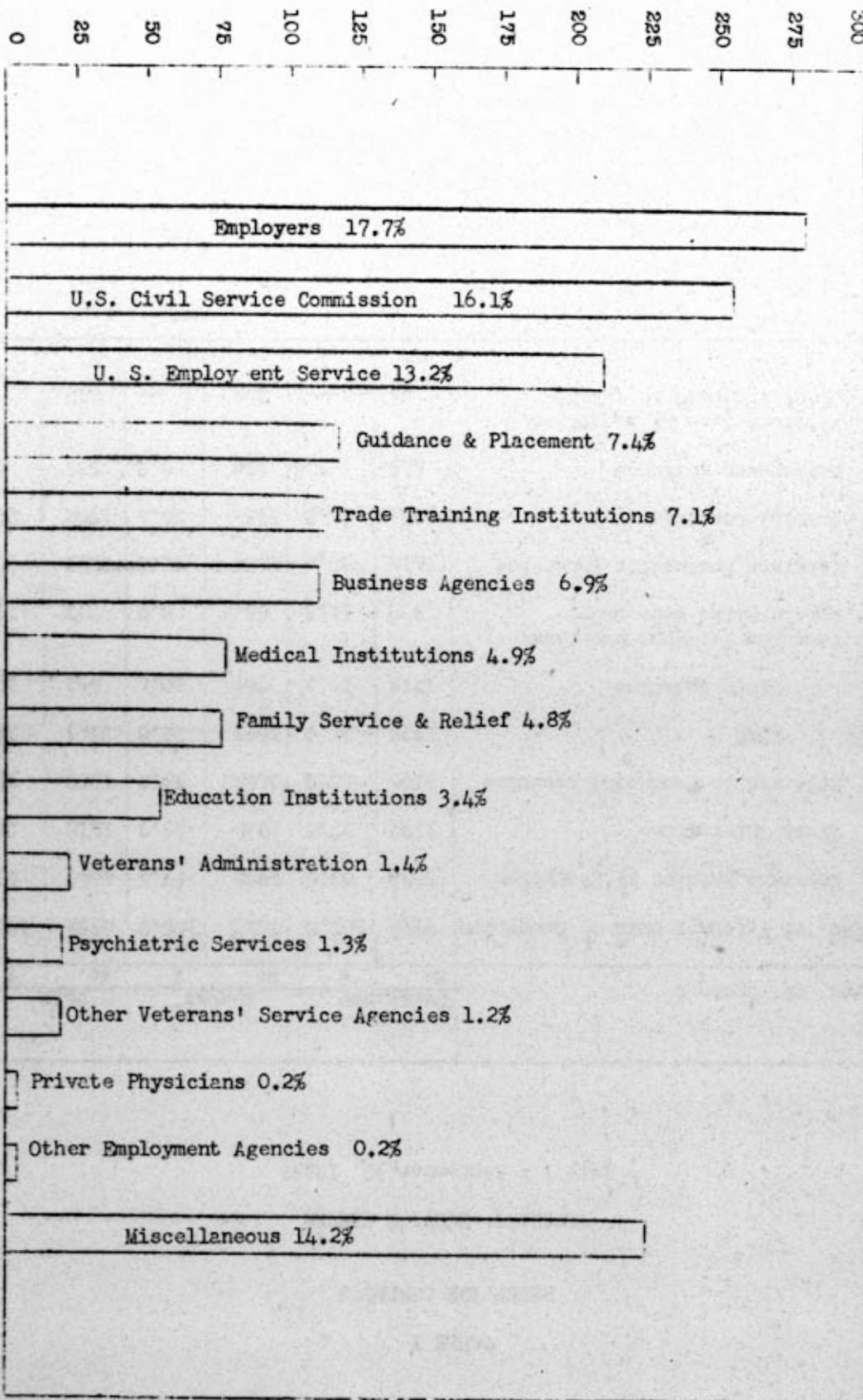
Week Ending

Source: Weekly Report of Operations, July-September, 1945

Decline in load result of Elevator Strike.

No. of
Referrals

CHART II • REFERRALS TO COMMUNITY AGENCIES
September, 1945



Source: Daily Interviewers' Tallies, September 1 - 29, 1945

AGENCY CATEGORY

TABLE I
RECEPTION CONTACTS

VETERANS' SERVICE CENTER
July 1 - September 30, 1945*

Type of Contact	September		August		July	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total No. of Veterans Seen at Reception	7946	100.0	7417	100.0	6355	100.0
Veterans Handled at Reception	5532	69.6	4998	67.4	4060	63.9
Given Information	1397	17.6	1876	25.3	1416	22.3
Referred to Community Agencies	3196	40.2	2460	33.2	1907	30.0
USES	1978	24.9	1691	22.8	1245	19.6
Other Agencies	1218	15.3	769	10.4	662	10.4
Veterans for Whom Overflow Appointments were made	939	11.8	662	8.9	737	11.6
Veterans Routed for Interview	2414	30.4	2419	32.6	2295	36.1
Initial Contacts	1961	24.8	1961	26.4	1762	27.7
Subsequent Contacts	445	5.6	458	6.2	533	8.4
Visitors Seen At Reception (not included in total)	44	—	169	—	212	—

*Source: Daily Reception Tallies, July 1 - September 30, 1945.

TABLE II

INTERVIEW CONTACTS

VETERANS' SERVICE CENTER

July 1 - September 30, 1945*

Type of Interviewer	September		August		July	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total No. of Interviews Held	2778	100.0	2612	100.0	2362	100.0
Personal Consultants	530	19.1	517	19.8	581	24.6
Employment Consultants	661	23.8	582	21.9	480	20.4
Veterans' Administration Consultants	545	19.6	547	20.9	400	16.9
Education and Guidance Consultant	197	7.1	267	10.2	187	7.9
Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant	301	10.8	285	10.9	257	10.9
Civil Service Consultant	275	9.9	248	9.5	207	8.8
Business and Loan Consultants	269	9.7	160	6.1	236	9.9
Medical Consultant	—	—	6	0.2	14	0.6

*Source: Daily Interviewer Tallies, July 1 - September 30, 1945.

TABLE III

REFERRALS TO COMMUNITY AGENCIES

VETERANS' SERVICE CENTER

July 1 - September 30, 1945*

Type of Agency	September		August		July	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total No. of Referrals	1576	100.0	1689	100.0	1589	100.0
Business Agencies	109	6.9	61 a)	3.6	115	7.2
Education Institutions	54	3.4	137	8.1	75	4.7
Employers	279	17.7	238	14.1	231	14.6
Employment Agencies	465	29.5	456	27.0	388	24.4
USES	208	13.2	214	12.7	181	11.4
USCS	254	16.1	223	13.2	191	12.0
Other	3	0.2	19	1.1	16	1.0
Family Service and Relief Agencies	76	4.8	80	4.7	111	7.0
Medical care Facilities	101	6.4	105	6.2	102	6.5
Medical Services	77	4.9	87	5.1	77	4.9
Private Physicians	4	0.2	6	0.4	14	0.9
Psychiatric Services	20	1.3	12	0.7	11	0.7
Guidance and Placement Agencies	116	7.4	99	5.9	72	4.5
Trade Training Institutions	112	7.1	174	10.3	164	10.3
Veterans' Services	41	2.6	142	8.4	119	7.5
Veterans' Administration	22	1.4	111	6.6	91	5.7
Other	19	1.2	31	1.8	28	1.8
Miscellaneous	223	14.2	197	11.7	212	13.3

* Source: Daily Interviewer Tallies, July 1 - September 30, 1945.

a) Excludes 70 special referrals to Wearing Apparel Panels while they were being formed.