

July 2, 1962

The Honorable
Ralph W. Yarborough
Chairman, Subcommittee
on Veterans Affairs
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Yarborough:

This concerns the Contact service being furnished by the Veterans Administration to the South Texas area which was the subject of your letter to me of June 5, 1962.

Our action is in line with a policy which has been pursued throughout the years as offices were closed. While admittedly service is a little less convenient to the veteran, there is certainly no evidence to indicate that as a result of withdrawal of personnel from these communities, veterans are being deprived of or are not receiving the benefits to which their military service entitles them.

For some years this Agency has endeavored to clarify instructional material and correspondence directed to the veteran and to the extent possible, to simplify procedures for the obtainment of the various benefits. This was done in the realization that the majority of applications based on World War II service had been filed, delimiting dates for many benefits had been reached, and that we had reached a point at which veterans could be expected to satisfactorily transact their business with this Agency by mail. Most veterans have a good understanding of the benefits available to them and in only a few instances do we feel that a personal discussion is necessary. These can often be handled by telephone.

To cite an example of what I mean, there is now in effect a procedure whereby in the case of an emergent medical need, a veteran's physician may call our nearest hospital to secure hospitalization for the veteran if indicated. We have also provided that a veteran who has established service connection for a disability and is in urgent need of treatment for this condition may secure it from his local physician without prior authorization from the Veterans Administration, provided the physician notifies us within fifteen days of the first such treatment.

The Honorable Ralph W. Yarborough

To answer your specific questions, a Contact Representative from our San Antonio Regional Office is visiting Corpus Christi, Brownsville, and Laredo once during the month of June, and thereafter a monthly trip will be made to Corpus Christi. The number of complaints on the withdrawal of service has been insignificant.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that our studies have indicated that the need for this service cannot be measured solely by the number of interviews but must take into consideration the nature and essentiality of assistance provided. I would like to assure you also that our Regional Office at San Antonio will make every effort to see that each veteran's request for information or assistance which they receive is promptly and efficiently handled.

This information is also being given to Congressman John Young in answer to his inquiry on the same matter.

Sincerely,

J. S. GLEASON, Jr.
Administrator

