



Mission

Structure

Advocacy

Assistance

Outreach

Numbers

Mission

Dynamic

Advocacy for Veterans.

“

To promote the welfare of honorably discharged Veterans of military service and their families through maximizing all possible benefits through effective and dynamic advocacy and by serving as a central office for all Veterans residing in the county of Lake.

MISSION

Est. 1926

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County was established in 1926, pursuant to *Chapter 330* of the *Military Veterans Assistance Act*. The act mandates the Commission to provide responsible aid, assistance and needed services to the Veteran community, acting as the central service office for all military Veterans and their families within the County of Lake.



A Central Office

Located in Gurnee, IL, the VAC of Lake County serves as the focal point of the Veteran community, with strong ties to local VFWs, American Legions, and other Veteran Service Organizations.



Empowering Veterans

The VAC works dutifully to ensure that the Veterans in our community are receiving the benefits and assistance they deserve after their honorable service.



A Hand Up

Financial and hardship assistance is allocated to assist Veterans and their families during difficult times.

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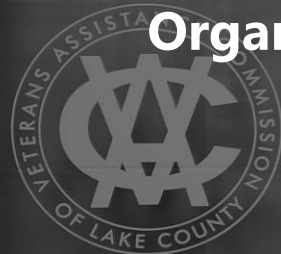
Numbers

Structure

For Veterans.

Community Driven.

A unit of local government, the VAC reports to an all-Veteran Commission comprised of members who are elected as delegates from all Veteran Service Organizations throughout Lake County.



STRUCTURE

The Commission.

Presently, the Veterans Assistance Commission consists of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Senior Veteran Service Officer, Veteran Service Officers, Administrative Assistant and Volunteers. General oversight of monies expended by the Commission is conducted by the Superintendent and the Chair of the County Board. Specific oversight of the Commission is conducted by the Executive Board of the Commission, elected from the delegates and alternates of the various Veteran Service Organization members.



Executive Committee

Local Veteran leaders are elected to an Executive Board for a specified period of time. Each board member holds a specific responsibility such as President, Treasurer or Secretary.



Veteran Delegates

Delegates from the various Veteran Service Organizations meet on a quarterly basis to discuss legislative advocacy, representation of Veterans, budget and staffing considerations.

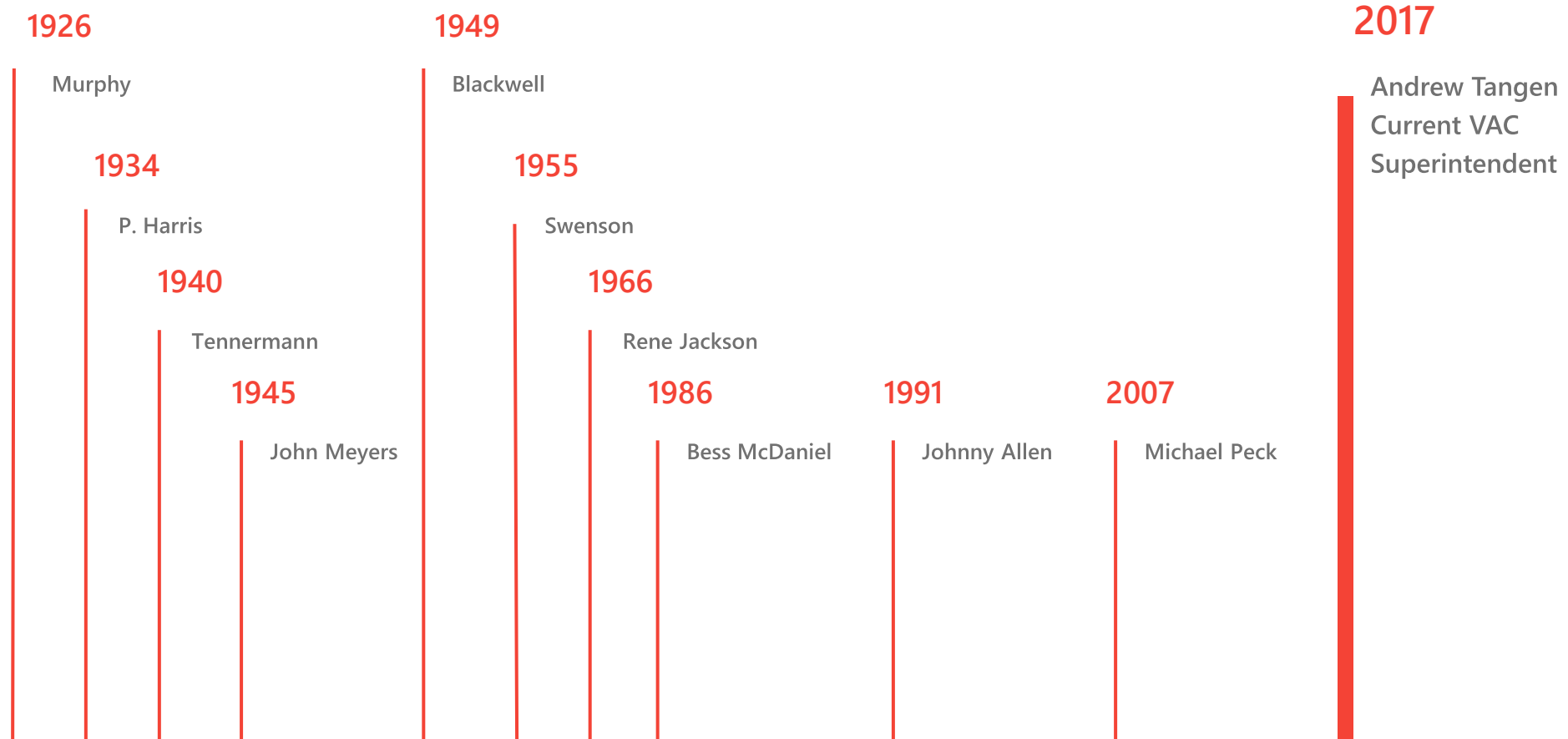


Oversight

Together, the Executive Committee and the delegates provide oversight for the short- and long-term operations of the VAC and its staff.

VAC TIMELINE

Record of Superintendents



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Representing Veterans.

Every Step of the Way.

The VAC utilizes its highly trained staff of Veteran Service Officers to represent Veterans on every type of claim, from an initial disability compensation claim, appeals of wrongfully denied claims to the Board of Veterans Appeals and specific Federal Courts.

ADVOCACY

Professional Advocates, there for you.

The brunt of the work that the VAC performs consists of advocating on behalf of Veterans for their compensation and pension claims. Filing a **successful** claim requires knowledge of the law, a keen eye for details contained in military medical service records, researching and understanding advanced medical research and treatises, and understanding complex court cases; traits that our Veteran Service Officers possess in spades.



Vetted

VSO candidates go through a selective screening prior to employment. This includes a stringent hiring process, competitive interviews and a Federal background investigation.



Accredited

Once selected, VSOs must pass an accreditation exam in compliance with VA laws. Our VSOs are accredited with the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO).



Trained

VSOs must stay up to date with current VA laws and regulations by attending continuing education classes. In addition, VSOs must go through a comprehensive, in-house training period upon selection.

Effective Advocacy at all levels.

Initial Claims.

Veterans filing disability claims for the first time can utilize the personalized services of our VSOs to interview, research, compile and submit a claim for compensation.

Administrative Appeals.

We stand ready to take action on wrongfully adjudicated claims. A thorough review of the decision is completed, followed by an administrative appeal.

Appellate Level Review.

Some appeals require the work of a specialist. Our Superintendent, a licensed attorney, will work with and represent you in the higher courts, such as the CAVC, CAFC or even SCOTUS.



VA Claims Process.

It's a **long** road.

01

Initial Interview.

Veterans and/or dependents meet with staff to discuss goals, current medical and financial issues, nature of service, and develop a personalized course of action specific to each Veteran's case.

02

Record Review.

A team of VSOs exhaustively reviews available medical records. Any and all evidence supporting claimed conditions is pulled from those records, categorized, and developed for submission to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

03

Research.

Staff reads and analyzes the United States Code and the Code of Federal Regulations, peer-reviewed medical literature, the latest scientific journals, and precedent-setting Veterans law cases in order to ensure compliance.

VA Claims Process.

It's a **long** road.

04

Additional Evidence.

In order to present the strongest possible case, staff will conduct a follow up interview based on what has been developed in the event additional evidence is required from the Veteran.

05

Final Interview.

Prior to submission, once all additional evidence has been received, staff meets with the Veteran and/or dependent to review the completed claim for final approval by the client.

06

Send it.

Once approved, the claim is submitted to the VA for processing. Our office uses state-of-the-art encryption software to ensure that Personal Protected Information stays private and secure during transmittal.

IT'S A GO.
NOW WHAT?

Oversight. Accountability. Follow up.

Once a claim has left our office, it will be processed by the VA Regional Office. A review of the submitted packet will be conducted by VA rating officers who will ultimately issue an approval or denial. Whatever the decision, we will be there, tracking the claim and ensuring that the proper follow up actions are taken, post-decision.

ADJUDICATION.

So the VA made a decision. Let's talk.

Although the VAC boasts a very high approval rate for claims, sometimes claims get denied. It can be for any number of reasons and can be discouraging, both for Veterans and advocates. Claim decisions are thoroughly scrutinized by staff in order to review for errors in law or fact and develop an effective appeal strategy.

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When Trouble Strikes

We've Got You Covered.

No one is immune from hard times. Layoffs, personal issues, emergencies, and even pandemics, can severely disrupt life. The VAC is here to help, whether its providing financial assistance, emergency shelter, or mobilizing our network of allies and partners, ensuring that no Veteran or family is left alone.



ASSISTANCE

Financial Assistance.

The VAC works hand in hand with the Lake County government and individual townships within the county to provide assistance to Veterans. Determining eligibility is simple: as long as the Veteran is honorably discharged and is a resident of Lake County, Illinois, that Veteran can apply for financial assistance through the VAC by submitting a completed Financial Assistance packet. A VSO will review the packet and the claimant will be notified promptly regarding the decision.



Utilities



Rental and Mortgage



Shelter

**SMALL DONATIONS.
BIG HELP.**

Not-For-Profit Fund grows thanks to community support.

The Commission oversees an NFP fund that is used to provide general assistance to Veterans. Funding for the NFP comes from a variety of sources, to include generous donations from local organizations, businesses and private individuals. Every dollar donated makes a difference in someone's life.

**WE'VE GOT A GUY
FOR THAT.**

Education. Health Care. Employment. Counseling.

The work that the VAC does extends beyond advocacy and direct financial assistance. Veterans coming in for assistance can get personalized referrals for other services such as small business grants, GI Bill information, health care enrollment and end of life counseling. If we can't help directly, we know someone who can.

Assistance

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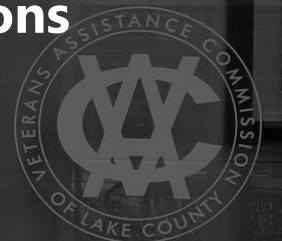
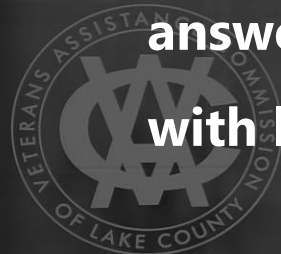
Numbers

Outreach

Boots on the Ground.

Making Connections.

Word of mouth can be a powerful thing, but it can only take you so far. Helping Veterans means getting out in the community, shaking hands, answering questions and making connections with local Veterans and organizations.



“
I never even knew you guys
existed or I would have come
a long time ago.

We hear this all the time.



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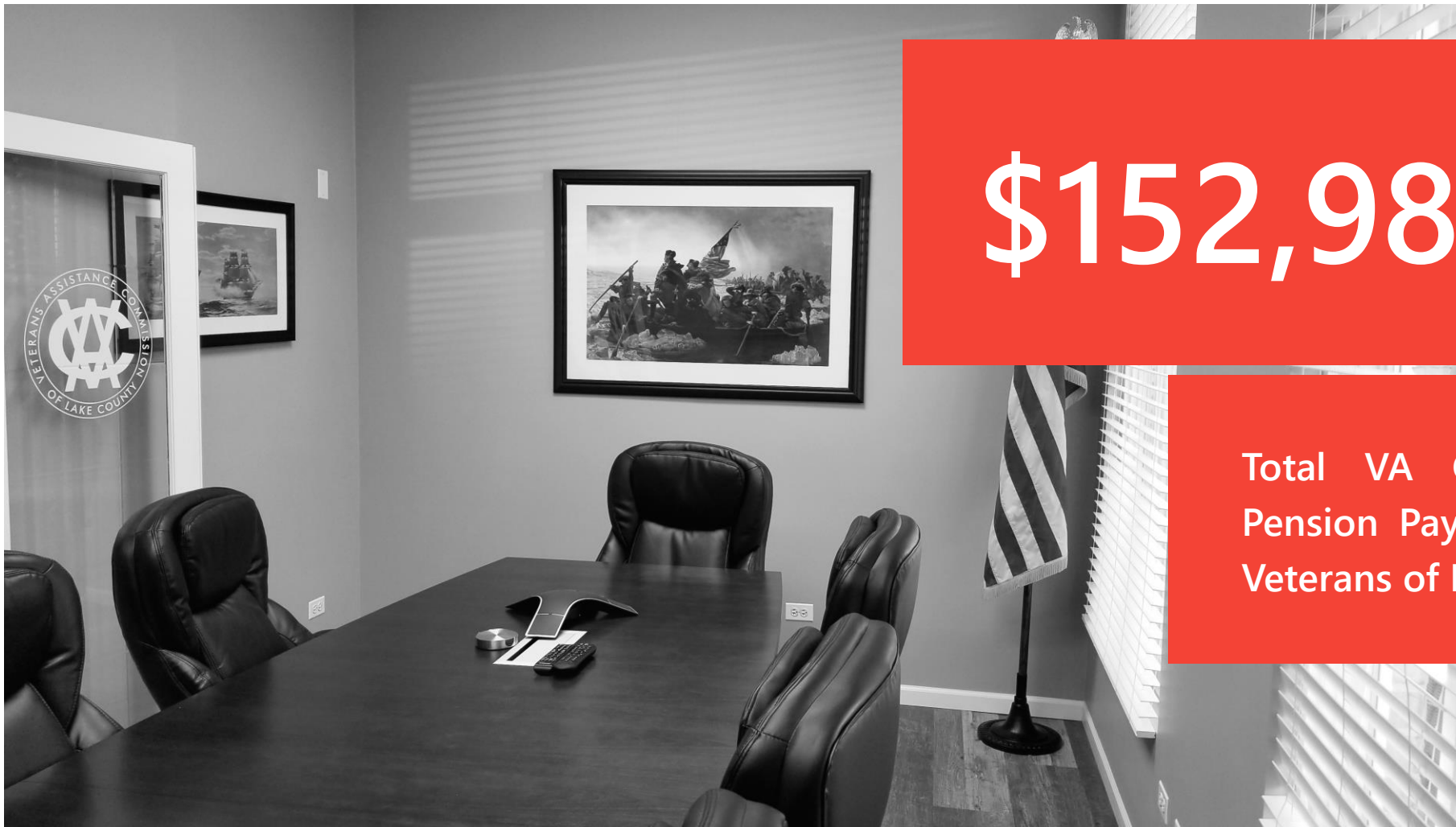
VAC by the Numbers

2021



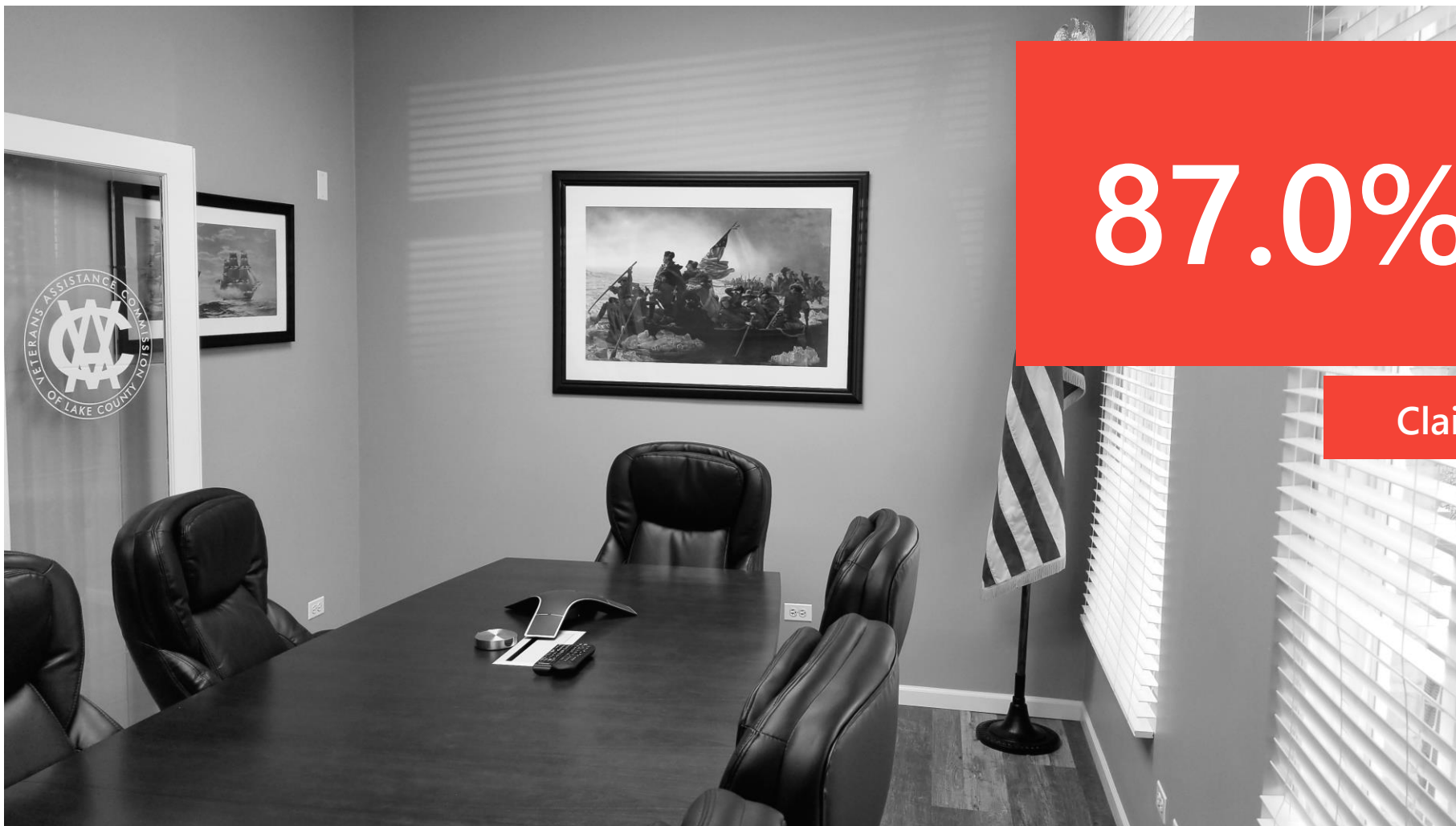
Fact:

There are more than
30,000 Veterans
in Lake County.



\$152,985,597

Total VA Compensation and Pension Payments won for the Veterans of Lake County.



87.0%

Claim Approval Rate.



\$8,916,551

**In new VA Benefits for
Lake County Veterans.**



\$69,847

**Total Financial
Assistance
provided to
needy Veterans
of Lake County.**



7

Indigent
Veterans
provided
with Burial
Assistance.



698

Nights of
emergency
housing
provided.

Local community.

Local government.

Local Veterans.

Working **together** to serve
those who served us.



Contact **us.**

ADDRESS

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CONTACT

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QUESTIONS?