

subsequent Presidents. A PMC is mailed to deceased veterans relatives and friends honoring their military service to our Nation. In most cases involving recent deaths, the local VA regional office originates the process without a request from the next-of-kin. With the automation of the program, the insert will accompany the issuance of the original certificate. The insert provides a convenient method for the recipients of the original PMC to request additional certificates and/or replacement or corrected certificates. The information will be used by the NCS to promptly reissue or provide additional certificates.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on this collection of information was published on May 27, 1997 at pages 28756-28757.

**Affected Public:** Individuals or households.

**Estimated Annual Burden:** 925 hours.

**Estimated Average Burden Per**

**Respondent:** 2 minutes.

**Frequency of Response:** On occasion.

**Estimated Number of Respondents:** 27,740.

Send comments and recommendations concerning any aspect of the information collection to VA's OMB Desk Officer, Allison Eydt, OMB Human Resources and Housing Branch, New Executive Office Building, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503 (202) 395-4650. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0567" in any correspondence.

Dated: August 20, 1997.

By direction of the Secretary.

**Donald L. Neilson,**

*Director, Information Management Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-24060 Filed 9-10-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0569]

### Agency Information Collection Activities Under OMB Review

**AGENCY:** Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), this notice announces that the Veterans Benefits

Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs, has submitted the collection of information abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The PRA submission describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden; it includes the actual data collection instrument. In addition, OMB is being requested to:

a. Grant the VBA a 3-year generic clearance approval authority.

b. Allow the VBA to establish a maximum number of annual burden hours against which burden will be charged for each survey actually used.

c. Allow for the submission of a summary of objectives, specific burden estimates, and all final or near final survey instruments covered by the generic clearance for inclusion in the OMB public docket prior to their use.

**DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before October 14, 1997.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR A COPY OF THE SUBMISSION CONTACT:** Ron Taylor, Information Management Service (045A4), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-8015 or FAX (202) 273-5981. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0569."

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Title:** Generic Clearance for the Veterans Benefits Administration Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

**OMB Control Number:** 2900-0569.

**Type of Review:** Extension of a currently approved collection.

**Abstract:** The VBA administers integrated programs of benefits and services, established by law for veterans and their survivors, and service personnel. Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards, requires Federal agencies and departments to identify and survey its customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing service. The VBA uses customer satisfaction surveys to gauge customer perceptions of VA services as well as customer expectations and desires. The results of these information collections lead to improvements in the quality of VBA service delivery by helping to shape the direction and focus of specific programs and services.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on this collection of information was published on June 5, 1997 at pages 30930-30932.

**Affected Public:** Individuals or households, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, veterans' service organizations, and businesses or other for-profits.

**Listing of Survey Activities:** The following list of activities is a compendium of VBA's customer satisfaction survey plan. The actual conduct of any particular activity listed could be affected by circumstances. A change in, or refinement of, our focus in a specific area, as well as resource constraints could require deletion or substitution of any listed item. If VBA substitutes or proposes to add a new activity that falls under the umbrella of this generic approval, including those activities that are currently in a planning stage, OMB will be notified and will be furnished a copy of pertinent materials, a description of the activity and number of burden hours involved. VBA will conduct periodic reviews of ongoing survey activities to ensure that they comply with the PRA.

**Survey of Veterans' Satisfaction with the VA Compensation & Pension (C&P) Claims Process:** VBA will continue to gauge customer satisfaction levels of those who experience the C&P claims adjudication process.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 5,700 hours.            |
| 1998 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 5,700 hours.            |
| 1999 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 5,700 hours.            |

**VA Compensation & Pension Claims Process Customer Satisfaction Focus Groups:** VBA will conduct 10 focus groups to solicit customer opinion of the C&P claims process. Each of the 10 groups will consist of 20 participants.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 400 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 400 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 400 hours.              |

**Survey of Veterans' Satisfaction with the VA Education Claims Process:** VBA will conduct surveys to determine the customer satisfaction levels of veterans and their dependents or survivors who are receiving education benefits from VA.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 1,000 hours.            |
| 1998 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 800 hours.              |

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1999 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 800 hours.              |

**VA Education Claims Process Focus Groups** (Certifying Officials, Service Organization representatives, and Montgomery GI Bill participants): VBA will conduct 1 focus group each year which will be comprised of 10 participants who certify to VA that veterans are progressing in their chosen education program, veterans service organization representatives who assist veterans in their education claims, and veterans who are receiving education benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 220 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 220 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 220 hours.              |

**VA Loan Customer Service Survey:** VBA will conduct customer satisfaction surveys of those who have had their home loan guaranteed by VA.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 575 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 575 hours.              |

**VA Loan Guaranty Lender Survey:** VBA will conduct customer satisfaction surveys of home loan mortgage lenders that participate in the VA home loan guaranty program.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 20 minutes .....                        | 303 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 20 minutes .....                        | 303 hours.              |

**VA Regional Office-Based Loan Guaranty Surveys:** VA regional offices will conduct customer satisfaction surveys of veterans as well as home mortgage lenders and home builders in their particular areas of jurisdiction.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 10 minutes to 1 hour .....              | 257 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 10 minutes to 1 hour .....              | 262 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 10 minutes to 1 hour .....              | 262 hours.              |

**VA Regional Office-Based Loan Guaranty Focus Groups:** VA regional offices will conduct focus groups consisting of participating loan servicers and property managers. There will be 2

groups of 75 participants for up to 4 hours and 12 groups of 10 participants for up to 3 hours respectively.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 3 to 4 hours .....                      | 960 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 3 to 4 hours .....                      | 960 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 3 to 4 hours .....                      | 960 hours.              |

**VA Regional Office-Based Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling Surveys:** VA regional offices will conduct customer satisfaction surveys of veterans who have entered a program of vocational rehabilitation with VA.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 5 to 15 minutes .....                   | 384 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 5 to 15 minutes .....                   | 506 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 5 to 15 minutes .....                   | 506 hours.              |

**Insurance Customer Surveys:** VBA will continue to conduct customer satisfaction surveys of veterans who have life insurance policies administered by VA.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 6 minutes .....                         | 216 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 6 minutes .....                         | 280 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 6 minutes .....                         | 280 hours.              |

**Survey of Insurance Interactive Voice Response Users:** VBA will continue to conduct customer satisfaction surveys of veterans who have life insurance policies administered by VA and use the Interactive Voice Response System employed at the VA Regional Office & Insurance Center, Philadelphia, PA.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 12 minutes .....                        | 41 hours.               |

**VA Regional Office-Based Customer Satisfaction Surveys:** Many VA regional offices will conduct customer satisfaction surveys of veterans who inquire about and/or apply for different VA benefits.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 3 to 15 minutes .....                   | 432 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 3 to 15 minutes .....                   | 468 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 3 to 15 minutes .....                   | 468 hours.              |

**VA Regional Office-Based Customer Satisfaction Focus Groups:** Many VA

regional offices will conduct focus groups comprising veterans who inquire about and/or apply for different VA benefits. The groups will commonly consist of groups of 10 to 12 participants meeting for 2 to 3 hours at a time.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 2 to 3 hours .....                      | 767 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 2 to 3 hours .....                      | 767 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 2 to 3 hours .....                      | 767 hours.              |

**VA Regional Office-Based Surveys of Specialized Population Groups:** VA regional offices will conduct customer satisfaction surveys of such specialized population groups as county veterans officers and Persian Gulf War veterans)

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 10 minutes to 1 hour .....              | 125 hours.              |
| 1998 .. | 10 minutes to 1 hour .....              | 115 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 10 minutes to 1 hour .....              | 115 hours.              |

**VA Regional Office-Based Focus Groups of Specialized Population Groups:** VA regional offices will conduct focus groups consisting of such specialized population groups as minority veterans, women veterans, and active duty military personnel.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 120 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 120 hours.              |

**Conceptual Survey Activities:** The VBA is planning or considering survey activities in the following areas:

**Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling Service Survey (National):** VBA plans to conduct a national survey encompassing veterans who are in a VA Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling program.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1999 .. | 30 minutes .....                        | 5,600 hours.            |

**Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling Focus Groups (National):** VBA plans to conduct focus groups that consist of veterans who are in a VA Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling program. These will include 30 groups of 10 participants.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1998 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 600 hours.              |
| 1999 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 600 hours.              |

**VA Loan Customer Service Survey:** VBA plans to develop a new national survey of veterans who apply for VA home loan guaranty benefits.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1999 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 4,600 hours.            |

**VA Regional Office Specific Service Improvement Initiatives (Comment Card):** VBA plans to develop a comment card which would be given to customers to determine what effect service improvement initiatives are having on customer satisfaction.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1997 .. | 5 minutes .....                         | 4,275 hours.            |
| 1998 .. | 5 minutes .....                         | 8,550 hours.            |
| 1999 .. | 5 minutes .....                         | 8,550 hours.            |

**Survey of Educational Institutions:** VBA plans to develop new survey of educational institutions where veterans attend. This survey would gauge the institution's level of satisfaction with their dealings with VA offices.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1999 .. | 15 minutes .....                        | 250 hours.              |

**Survey of Veterans Who Filed for an Increase in their Service-Connected Disability Compensation:** VBA plans to develop a new survey to determine customer satisfaction levels of those who have applied for an increase in their service-connected disability compensation.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1999 .. | 20 minutes .....                        | 167 hours.              |

**Survey of Veterans and their Survivors Who Have Been Denied Claims for Service-Connected Disability Compensation or Related Benefits:** VBA plans to develop a new survey of veterans and survivors to determine customer satisfaction levels of those who have been denied benefits.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1999 .. | 20 minutes .....                        | 167 hours.              |

**Survey of Military Personnel Who are Separating from Active Duty:** VBA plans to develop a new survey intended to gauge customer satisfaction expectations of military personnel as they leave active service.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1999 .. | 20 minutes .....                        | 167 hours.              |

**Survey of Veterans Service Officers:** VBA plans to develop a new survey intended to gauge customer satisfaction levels of Veterans Service Officer that work in partnership with VA in service to veterans.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1998 .. | 20 minutes .....                        | 50 hours.               |

**Undetermined Focus Groups:** VBA plans to conduct focus groups consisting of specific population groups that have yet to be determined. There will be approximately 200 focus groups of 10 participants.

| Year    | Estimated average burden per respondent | Estimated annual burden |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| 1998 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 4,000 hours.            |
| 1999 .. | 2 hours .....                           | 4,000 hours.            |

Most customer satisfaction surveys will be recurring so that the VBA can create ongoing measures of performance and to determine how well the agency meets customer service standards. Each collection of information will consist of the minimum amount of information necessary to determine customer needs and to evaluate the VBA's performance. The VBA expects to conduct focus groups involving an estimated burden of 2,467 hours during the remainder of 1997, 6,947 hours in 1998, and 7,067 hours in 1999. In addition, the VBA expects to distribute written surveys with a total annual burden of approximately 13,308 hours in 1997, 17,559 hours in 1998, and 27,683 hours in 1999. The grand totals for both focus groups and written surveys are—15,775 hours in 1997, 24,506 hours in 1998, and 34,750 hours in 1999.

The areas of concern to the VBA and its customers may change over time, and it is important to have the ability to evaluate customer concerns quickly.

Participation in the surveys and focus groups will be voluntary and the generic clearance will not be used to collect information required to obtain or maintain eligibility for a VA program or benefit. In order to maximize the voluntary response rates, the information collection will be designed to make participation convenient, simple, and free of unnecessary barriers. Baseline data obtained through these information collections will be used to improve customer service standards. The VBA will consult with OMB regarding each specific information collection during this approval period.

Send comments and recommendations concerning any aspect of the information collection to VA's OMB Desk Officer, Allison Eydt, OMB Human Resources and Housing Branch, New Executive Office Building, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503 (202) 395-4650. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0570" in any correspondence.

Dated: August 14, 1997.

By direction of the Secretary.

**Donald L. Neilson,**

*Director, Information Management Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-24061 Filed 9-10-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0570]

### Agency Information Collection Activities Under OMB Review

**AGENCY:** Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Department of Veterans Affairs, has submitted the collection of information abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The PRA submission describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden; it includes the actual data collection instrument. In addition, OMB is being requested to:

- Grant the VHA a 3-year generic clearance approval authority.
- Allow the VHA to establish a maximum number of annual burden hours against which burden will be charged for each survey actually used.
- Allow for the submission of a summary of objectives, specific burden