



Executive Brief Annual Report

Key Accomplishments and successes from 2025:

- New Director has been appointed, he started on May 3rd, 2025.
- All office staff have been certified as Veteran Service Officers (VSO) via NYS Department of Veterans, and National Association of County Veterans' Service Officers (NACVSO)
- Outreach to the Veteran Community was a success. i.e. Ruck for Them, Field of the Fallen, Team Timmy Ride, Army/Navy Game.
- Continued working with local Veteran Fraternal Organizations; Developed new relationship with the Marine Corps League. (Toys for Tots Campaign)
- TCVSA was recognized by NYS Office of Mental Health for our efforts in bringing attention to Veteran and Active-Duty Suicide.
- Every High School Senior who entered the Armed Forces was recognized with a gift from TCVSA. Therefore, establishing a database of our newest members of the Armed Forces from Tioga County.

Major Challenges and Constraints experienced in 2025:

- New Director's learning curve was significant, and certifications took longer than expected.
- Utilizing the ARPA funds in seven months versus an entire year required diligent focus on fiscal stewardship and procurement.
- Developing an outreach plan for homeless Veterans. Six homeless vets have been placed in adequate housing since May 2025. Homeless Veterans do not come to the office seeking assistance.
- US Government shutdown significantly slowed VA processing of Veterans' claims.

Ongoing Priorities and goals for 2026:

- To develop a deeper working relationship with local Veterans' charities and fraternal organizations. To broaden our outreach to Tioga County Veterans who are in need of services.
- To develop a multifaceted program to more readily identify our homeless veterans to get them housing and medically and emotionally stabilized.
- To advocate for our local Veterans and assist them in obtaining the compensation, medical, housing, and educational benefits that they deserve.



Part Two-Narrative Departmental Report:

2025 was a transitional year for the Tioga County Veterans' Service Agency (TCVSA). In early 2025 the former Director, Michael Middaugh, notified the Legislature that he was resigning as the Director to accept a position with the NYS Department of Veterans Services. The search for a new Director commenced in earnest with the new Director, Dennis Mullen, being hired and starting on May 3rd, 2025. The TCVSA continued to attend outreach events throughout the remainder of the year. The Department's focus was to bring awareness of the services that TCVSA brings to our veterans and their families. The issue of Active Duty and Veteran suicide continued to be a major focus of the department's public awareness campaign. The TCVSA attended the Team Timmy Ride that is held in honor Army Captain Timothy Neild who lost his battle PTSD. The Team Timmy Ride was held in Candor, NY and was attended by over 150 Motorcycle riders. September is Veteran Suicide Awareness month; The TCVSA once again displayed 660 small American flags in the side yard of the County Office Building located at 56 Main St. Owego, NY. These flags represent the 660 Active Duty/Veteran Suicides that occur monthly. The annual dedication was held on Tuesday, September 2nd, 2025. The ceremony was well attended and covered by several local news outlets. The Annual 5K Ruck for Them was held at the Waverly Glen Park on Saturday, September 27, 2025. This event was a big success in bringing awareness to Veteran/Active-Duty Suicide with over 130 people attending the Ruck and the follow-on Picnic. The TCVSA took the opportunity at the Ruck to honor the outgoing Chairwoman of the Tioga County Legislature, Martha Sauerbrey, for her twenty years staunch support for the veterans and their families who call Tioga County home. The TCVSA was recognized by the NYS Office of Mental Health for its efforts in bringing awareness to and prevention of Veteran/Active-Duty Suicide at their annual Cares Up Conference held in October 2025. There were over 600 state, county and local agencies invited to the conference, only four departments/agencies were recognized by the Office of Mental Health for their efforts in suicide prevention and awareness. The TCVSA was the only county veterans' service agency so recognized. For the first time, this past Holiday Season the TCVSA with support of the Tioga County Legislature assisted the United States Marine Corps Reserve/The Marine Corps League in their annual Toys for Tots Campaign. The toy collection bins were placed at all county office buildings. A total of eight full bins of toys were collected with an estimated value of \$4,800. All the toys were given to children who live in Tioga County; children who may not have had any gifts for Christmas.

Veterans' Service Agency

Ronald E. Dougherty County Office Building 56 Main Street Owego, NY 13827

Dennis Mullen Director ☎ 607 687 8228 📠 607 687 8226 🌐 www.TiogaCountyNY.gov



The TCVSA also visited the veteran retirement home in Orangeville, Pennsylvania for Christmas. This retirement home is approved by the Veterans Administration to care and provide for our poor and homeless veterans. This past October the TCVSA placed a former Marine at the Orangeville Manor who had become homeless after his residence was condemned due to severe storm damage. The professional development of the TCVSA has been ongoing through mandatory training provided by the NYS Department of Veteran Services. The TCVSA staff are certified as Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) through both the NYS Department of Veteran Services and the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO). Even with the extensive outreach schedule the TCVSA assisted over 1,700 veterans with various issues from applying for benefits from the VA, assisting them in obtaining lost service records, burial benefits, NYS benefits, emergency help through the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group, educational benefits, assistance with benefits through Tioga County Social Services, to obtaining their Veterans' property tax exemptions/reductions, assisting them in obtaining adequate housing, providing emergency food for the veteran and their family, providing tickets for the Tioga County Fair and the Fresh Connect Farmers Market Coupons, assisting them in joining a local military fraternal organization, helping with transportation to medical appointments, attending medical appointments with veterans who need assistance in communicating with their care providers. The work that TCVSA does on behalf of our Veterans is complex, multifaceted, and continuous. The TCVSA's focus will be to continue to bring a highly skilled and compassionate level of service to the veterans of Tioga County, NY.