

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. That is correct.

Mr. KASS. And the contact man is responsible for that individual until the problem or complaint has exhausted all possibilities within the VA?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. KASS. How long has this system been in existence?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. It has been in existence at least as far back as 1924. It is embodied in the World War Veterans Act of 1924.

Mr. KASS. And this is a formal office rather than just a loose, ad hoc kind of approach?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. That is correct.

Mr. KASS. Embodied in your regulations?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. Right.

Mr. KASS. To your knowledge, have any other agencies of the Federal Government established a form of contact system?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. Not to my knowledge—that is, not with the same kind of responsibility for protecting the interests of the claimant as well as being a representative of the agency itself.

Mr. KASS. Now, when a claimant or a veteran or anybody walks into the VA local office and has a problem or a complaint, does the contact man have access to the entire file?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. KASS. If the veteran is represented by a service organization—VFW, DAV or something like that—would they have access to the same file?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. Yes, sir; complete access.

Mr. KASS. So there is complete access to the file of the individual claimant or veteran?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. KASS. In your formal statement which you submitted for the record, you make reference to the FX exchange telephone system?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. KASS. What exactly is that?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. It is a system whereby a veteran in, let's say, a small city in Missouri, might dial a local number on his own telephone without any charge and be connected with a contact representative of the Veterans' Administration in St. Louis, who would have access to his records and could immediately answer questions.

Mr. KASS. There is no long distance charge to him?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. That is correct.

Mr. KASS. Do you publicize this type of service?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. Yes, sir.

Mr. KASS. Now, do any of the other Federal agencies utilize this type of service so that if I, as a citizen having a complaint against the Social Security Administration, the Internal Revenue Service, or any of the other agencies, have a complaint and am located some distance from the regional office, could I use your phone or any other phone system to call in without charge?

Mr. GUY WILLIAMS. I understand that the Social Security Administration has done some experimentation in setting up an FX or foreign exchange system for themselves. Just how far they have gone, I am not sure.