



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

John Maxwell
Commissioner

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Memorandum for: The Honorable Ralph S. Northam (through Chief of Staff Clark Mercer)
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Carlos Hopkins
Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs

From: John Maxwell, Commissioner
Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Subject: Virginia Department of Veterans Services FY2020 Annual Report

Date: December 1, 2020

Via Electronic Mail

It is my distinct pleasure to provide my first annual report as Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS). I am incredibly proud of the department's accomplishments during Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 and the report shows our steadfast commitment to serving Virginia's veterans and their families.

We learned much about ourselves this year. As we started the fiscal year, we were hopeful for some modest growth in our existing model; as we ended the year, we were in the midst of our transition to an environment in which we could safely deliver services both in-person and virtually. While COVID-19 hindered our services, VDVS remained dedicated to finding ways to keep its promises to Virginia's veterans and their families.

Every member of the VDVS team considers it an honor to serve Virginia's veterans and we are excited to improve upon what we have done. We are determined that Virginia's veterans and their families receive the benefits they have earned and the resources they need so that Virginia is the most veteran-friendly state in the Nation.

Sincerely,


John Maxwell

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

COMMISSIONER'S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

TO

GOVERNOR RALPH S. NORTHAM,

SECRETARY CARLOS HOPKINS,

AND

THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

December 1, 2020

Serving those who served

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The Virginia Department of Veterans Services
COMMISSIONER'S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

To serve Virginia's veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard, Virginia residents in the Armed Forces Reserves, and their family members by ensuring they receive timely transition, employment and education assistance; benefits; behavioral health care; long-term care; and the recognition they have earned through service to our country and Commonwealth.

VISION

To be the most veteran friendly state in the nation by setting the national benchmark for the delivery of results-oriented and cost-effective veterans services.

VALUES

EXCELLENCE: Provide exemplary service to Virginia's veterans and their families.

COMMITMENT: An enduring commitment to helping Virginia's veterans and their families receive all earned federal and state benefits and creating an economic environment that promotes veteran-owned businesses and Virginia companies hiring veterans.

INNOVATION: Continually find new methods to reach and serve Virginia's veterans and their families.



Governor Ralph Northam and Secretary Carlos Hopkins recognize Carahsoft for becoming the 1,000th Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Certified Employer

Commissioner's Message

It is my distinct pleasure to provide my first annual report as Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS). Fiscal Year 2020 has been nothing short of extraordinary for the agency. I am incredibly proud of the department's accomplishments, and I have been overwhelmed by the commitment that the VDVS team displayed in its service to Virginia's veterans and their families, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During 2020, VDVS experienced substantial transition in leadership, with the departure of one Commissioner, several months of having an Acting Commissioner, and finally with my arrival in February. Yet, the employees of VDVS maintained their steadfast and unwavering dedication to veterans. I want to thank former Commissioner John Newby for laying the foundation and Chief Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs for leading the agency as Acting Commissioner from August 2019 to February 2020.

As you review this report, you'll notice that we were gaining momentum when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. We created synergies by consolidating some Benefits and VVFS offices, while opening new ones; we made great gains in veteran employment initiatives; we prepared for construction on two new veterans care centers; we expanded a cemetery; and we led initiatives to prevent suicide among veterans. The last FY 20 event fully open to the public marked the expansion of the Virginia War Memorial. When COVID-19 struck, we had to restrict how we delivered our services and reached out to the public. In some cases, that meant virtual-only interactions; in other cases we strictly limited activities and visits. As FY 20 closed out, we began the slow process of combining remote and in-person services.

We learned much about ourselves this year. As the fiscal year started, serving veterans and their families strictly through phone calls, emails, video conferences, and regular mail seemed far-fetched. Yet, we did just that. We provided advice and counsel electronically, held hiring conferences and the Women Veterans Summit virtually, and we delivered a Memorial Day ceremony from the Virginia War Memorial to 38,000 viewers through livestreaming. We adjusted to PPE usage, hiring freezes and the unallotment of fiscal resources, and still continued to give our best to Virginia's veterans and their families.

While the pandemic reduced the number of veterans the agency was able to serve this past year, VDVS kept the promises it made in the Compact with Virginia's Veterans. However, we have no intent of resting on our laurels; in FY 2021 we will find ways to get better. We will continue to deliver services both in-person and through remote means, and we remain committed to ensuring veterans and their families receive what they have earned and the resources they need.

As a veteran, I consider it a great honor to serve Virginia's veterans. I can also report that every member of the VDVS team feels the same.

Service through teamwork.

John Maxwell
Commissioner

Compact with Virginia's Veterans

The Code of Virginia, §2.2-2004(17) requires the Commissioner of Veterans Services to:

Establish and implement a compact with Virginia's veterans, which shall have a goal of making Virginia America's most veteran-friendly state. The compact shall be established in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services and supported by the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations and shall (i) include specific provisions for technology advances, workforce development, outreach, quality of life enhancement, and other services for veterans and (ii) provide service standards and goals to be attained for each specific provision in clause (i). The provisions of the compact shall be reviewed and updated annually. The Commissioner shall include in the annual report required by this section the progress of veterans services established in the compact.

The Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) and the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC), has established overarching goals in support of the Compact.

VDVS, BVS, and JLC adopted goals, priorities, and recommendations for the 2018-2020 biennium (fiscal years 2019 and 2020) in support of the Compact with Virginia's Veterans. Each goal, priority, or recommendation is classified according to the following provisions required by the Compact:

- *Technology advances*
- *Workforce development*
- *Outreach*
- *Quality of life enhancement*
- *Other services for veterans*

The VDVS Strategic Plan, part of the state Performance Budgeting (PB) System, details the Department's goals, objectives, targets, and measures. The VDVS strategic plan for the 2018-2020 biennium is posted on the Virginia Department of Planning & Budget (DPB) website at <https://dpb.virginia.gov/sp/sp.cfm>. The agency thanks the Board of Veterans Services for their assistance by providing oversight and input to our strategic plan process.



OVERARCHING GOALS IN SUPPORT OF THE COMPACT

The Department of Veterans Services' overarching goal is to make Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the Nation.

In support of the Compact, the Department of Veterans Services (VDVS), in conjunction with the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) and the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) established the following overarching goals:

1. Ensure Virginia veterans and eligible family members receive timely assistance in filing for federal and state disability benefits.
2. Deliver long-term skilled nursing care, assisted-living (domiciliary) care, Alzheimer's/ memory care, and short-term rehabilitation services to Virginia veterans at Virginia's Veterans Care Centers.
3. Connect veterans, Guardsmen and Reservists not in Federal service, and their family members, to a network of services designed to help them overcome the challenges of stress-related and traumatic brain injuries and rehabilitative needs that result from military service.
4. Provide Virginia's veterans, their spouses, and other eligible family members an honored final resting place at state veterans cemeteries that meet national shrine standards.
5. Ensure veterans and their dependents have approved educational programs through which they may receive their educational benefits.
6. Ensure that veteran homelessness is a rare, brief, and nonrecurring experience.
7. In conjunction with other state agencies, create employment opportunities for Virginia veterans in state government and the private sector.
8. Honor Virginians who served and sacrificed in the cause of freedom and liberty for the Commonwealth and the nation in time of war, and honor all of Virginia's veterans by preserving their history, educating our youth, and inspiring patriotism in all Virginians.
9. Coordinate with other state agencies to afford Virginia's veterans business, employment, transportation, and other appropriate opportunities through technology advances, workforce development, outreach, quality of life enhancement, and other services for veterans and their families.



The following goals, priorities, and recommendations were established for FY20 by VDVS, the JLC, and BVS:

VDVS FY20 GOALS IN SUPPORT OF THE COMPACT:

VDVS Goal #1: Augment the new Virginia economy with mission-ready, relevantly skilled veterans by creating seamless transitions for veterans with high quality education and workforce services that accelerate career opportunities. (WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES, and OUTREACH)

VDVS Objectives in support of Goal #1:

1. Create employment opportunities for veterans.
 - a. Continue to work toward Governor Ralph Northam's goal of 65,000 total V3 (Virginia Values Veterans Program) hires by the end of his administration;
 - b. Continue to expand veterans transition and employment programs statewide, with emphasis on Central and Southwestern Virginia;
 - c. Continue to create pathways to career success for transitioning medics and corpsmen;
 - d. Virginia Women Veterans Program Manager to build strategic focus on women veterans, and a continued focus on the annual Virginia Women Veterans Summit; and
2. Provide widest access to G.I. Bill-approved education and training opportunities for Virginia veterans and their dependents through the approval and ongoing supervision of post-secondary education and training programs; and
3. Ensure access to Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) benefits for qualified applicants. Deploy new systems for assisting potential VMSDEP beneficiaries in submitting and tracking applications for determination of eligibility.

VDVS Goal #2: Improve outcomes for veterans and their families in the areas of behavioral health, rehabilitative services, supportive services, health, and financial stability. (QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT and OUTREACH)

VDVS Objectives in support of Goal #2:

1. Provide readily accessible, expert assistance to Virginia's veterans and family members in the development and submission of service-connected disability and pension claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and in accessing other federal, state, and local veterans programs and services;
2. Assess Virginia veterans, members of the Virginia Guard and Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service, and family members of those veterans and service members served by the Virginia Veteran and Family Supportive (VVFS) program for behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services;
 - a. Work with veterans to develop a coordinated resources plan that identifies appropriate service providers to meet the veteran's service needs;

- b. Continue to build programs and interagency support for justice-involved veterans, including veteran treatment dockets and post-incarceration support networks;
 - c. Strengthen local communities and local/state/federal partnerships to create safe, permanent supportive housing for veterans and their families; and
 - d. Strengthen local communities and local/state/federal partnerships to address veteran suicide mitigation and prevention in Virginia.
3. Serve the greatest possible number of veterans by maintaining the highest practical facility census at state veterans care centers. Commence construction of the Puller Veterans Care Center (Vint Hill, Fauquier County) and the Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center (Virginia Beach) in FY20 and open in FY22.

VDVS Goal #3: Honor our veterans and military, and their families, for their service and sacrifice (OTHER SERVICES FOR VETERANS, TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES, and OUTREACH)

VDVS Objectives in support of Goal #3:

1. Honor our Veterans, Preserve our History, Educate our Youth, and Inspire Patriotism in All.
 - a. Develop new programs and initiatives designed to attract more visitors to the Memorial and to reach more middle and high school students and teachers; and
 - b. Complete construction of the Virginia War Memorial expansion project in FY20.
2. Serve the burial, memorial, and perpetual care needs of Virginia's veterans and eligible dependents by meeting or exceeding service standards set by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
 - a. Complete construction of the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery (Suffolk) expansion project in FY20 in order to provide additional in-ground burial spaces; and
 - b. Conduct outreach and manage the resulting increased burials and expanded grounds maintenance requirements for perpetual care at the state veterans cemeteries.

VDVS Goal #4: Manage public resources efficiently and effectively. (OUTREACH and OTHER SERVICES FOR VETERANS)

VDVS Objectives in support of Goal #4:

1. Ensure that resources are used efficiently and programs are managed effectively, and in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal requirements.
2. Work with Executive and Legislative branches to address service requirements/shortfalls created by increased demands for VDVS services;
3. Find solutions to address employee recruitment and retention issues, especially in Northern Virginia;

-
4. Address shortfalls in agency infrastructure, management, and employee training and professional development;
 5. Continue strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the JLC, and the BVS to effectively advocate for Virginia's veterans, National Guard and Reserves and their families; and
 6. Inform veterans of the services provided by VDVS through targeted media campaigns and engagement with media resources around Virginia. Continue statewide outreach, presentations and attendance at events around Virginia by VDVS team members to share resources and information about all the services and programs available to veterans and family members.

JLC FY20 PRIORITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE COMPACT

The JLC submitted six recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly for consideration during the 2020 Session. Three of six were adopted: Priorities 1, 2, and 4.

To read the JLC's annual report, or view the 2021 priorities, please visit:

<https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2>

JLC Priority #1: That the Governor and General Assembly approve legislation, and send to the voters via ballot initiative, creating a standardized, statewide personal property tax exemption for one vehicle for 100% service-connected, total and permanent disabled veterans. (QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT). *Status: Governor and General Assembly approved legislation to put the issue on the ballot for the November 3, 2020 General Election. The amendment to Virginia's Constitution was approved by 86% of Virginia's voters.*

JLC Priority #2: That the General Assembly enact and the Governor sign legislation that directs Virginia registrars receive and count military overseas absentee ballots postmarked on or before election day and which arrive by 5:00 p.m. on the second business day before the State Board of Elections meets to certify the results of the election. (QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT) *Status: Legislation passed by the 2020 General Assembly will count absentee ballots, including those submitted by overseas military voters, if they are postmarked on or before election day and received by noon on the third day after the election.*

JLC Priority #3: That the Governor and General Assembly approve an individual income tax subtraction for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federally adjusted gross income, not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household, who have not already claimed another exemption. (QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT) *Status: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance.*

JLC Priority #4: That the Governor and General Assembly ensure Virginia's continued commitment to the men and women of the Virginia National Guard, through raising the minimum National Guard Emergency Response Pay (ERP) to equal the currently used DOD pay table plus a 2-10% increased adjustment, depending on rank. (QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT). *Status: Legislation approved by the Governor and General Assembly "Provides that whenever called to state active duty in response to certain emergencies, members of the National Guard and the Virginia Defense Force receive pay and allowance equal to their rank and years of service, as determined by the Department of Military Affairs."*

JLC Priority #5: That the Governor and General Assembly approve Tax credits for employers of National Guard members and self-employed National Guard members. (QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT) *Status: Continued to 2021 in Senate Finance.*

JLC Priority #6: That the Governor and General Assembly provide an appropriation in the amount of \$1,000,000 in FY20 and \$1,000,000 in FY21 for the Microloan for Veterans Program fund. (WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT) *Status: Legislation introduced, but left in House Appropriations.*

BVS FY20 PRIORITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE COMPACT

The Board of Veterans Services formed three workgroups in FY19 to study policy issues related to Benefit Services, Education, and Veterans and the Arts.

The Benefit Services Workgroup:

Course of Work: This Working Group studied the strategy for continued growth and the obstacles that may hinder that growth, and the current economic impact of received benefits by Virginia veterans. Areas of focus included employee retention and workload. The work group analyzed budget/funding issues and shortfalls and developed justifications for budget/funding increases.

Current Status: The Working Group studied employee recruitment and retention, with the issue of VDVS Benefits staff salaries rising as a top-level risk to the continued success of VDVS Benefits service offerings. VDVS leadership provided salary data that indicated VDVS Benefits staff are significantly underpaid relative to their peers working for the Commonwealth and for veterans service organizations, non-profit organizations, and veteran law firms. This disparity appears to be especially true for attorneys and staff located in Northern Virginia.

The workgroup had planned to present to the full Board in spring 2020, but reporting was delayed until fall 2020 due to COVID-related delays. The Board's Point of Contact (POC) for Benefit Services, Mr. Carl Bedell, continues to work with VDVS to address issues identified by the workgroup.

The Education Workgroup:

Course of Work: This Working Group worked to: assess how education programs at Virginia's institutions of higher education are addressing the needs of student veterans, gather information today about the needs of student veterans attending Virginia's higher education institutions, review published research discussing the challenges facing student veterans, and examine the structural, procedural, and administrative mechanisms that may hinder the efforts of student veterans to achieve their education goals.

Current Status: Additional work planned for FY20 was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board's POCs for veterans employment – Chairman Michael Dick and Delegate Marcus Simon – will report to the Board at the spring 2021 meeting on any recommendations.

The Veterans and the Arts Workgroup:

Course of Work: This Working Group is focused on research and attention on arts as an economic and small business endeavor in Virginia and how policy recommendations can support and strengthen current or potential efforts. Efforts were slowed in FY20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the BVS POC for Veterans and the Arts – Ms. Julie Waters – remains focused on this topic and will report out to the Board at the spring 2021 meeting.

Current Status: As a result of the group's work, VDVS began work with the Department of General Services (DGS) to find ways to promote artists who are veterans throughout Virginia within and around state government buildings. As with other projects, this has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift of many state workers to tele-work status.

VDVS Locations – FY20

Underlined offices are combined offices with Benefits & VVFS.
Full contact information for each office is listed on our website: www.dvs.virginia.gov

Benefits Services Offices

- 1 Abingdon
- 2 Accomac
- 3 Big Stone Gap
- 4 Charlottesville
- 5 Chesapeake
- 6 Danville
- 7 Emporia
- 8 Fairfax
- 9 Fort Belvoir
- 10 Fort Lee
- 11 Fredericksburg
- 12 Hampton
- 13 Hampton VA Medical Center
- 14 Henrico
- 15 Loudoun
- 16 Lynchburg
- 17 Manassas
- 18 McGuire VA Medical Center (Richmond)
- 19 Norfolk
- 20 Ocean/Virginia Beach
- 21 Pentagon
- 22 Petersburg

- 23 Portsmouth
- 24 Quantico
- 25 Roanoke
- 26 Salem VA Medical Center
- 27 South Hill
- 28 Springfield
- 29 Staunton
- 30 Strasburg
- 31 Tazewell
- 32 Virginia Beach
- 33 Williamsburg
- 34 Wytheville

* **VVFS:** Underlined offices indicate co-location of VVFS and Benefits Services offices.

Care Centers

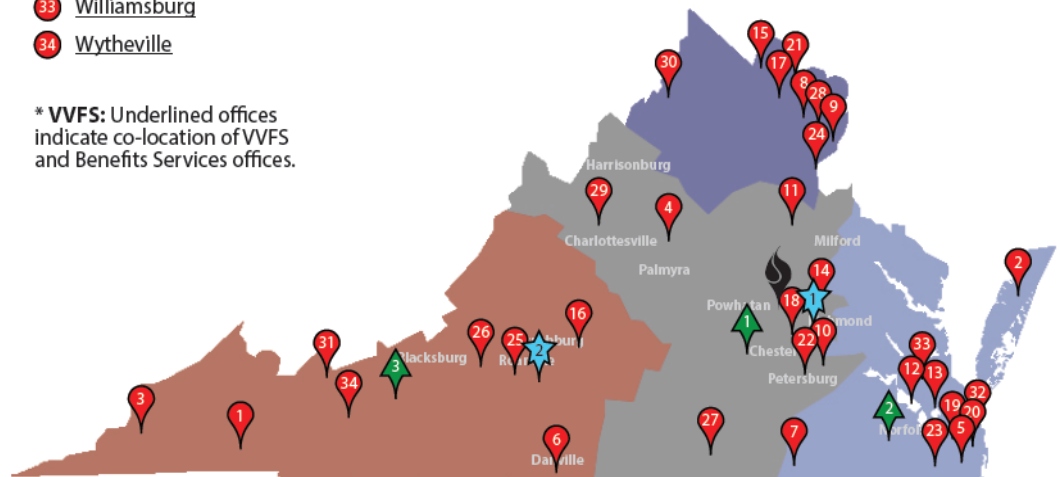
- ★ Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, Richmond
- ★ Virginia Veterans Care Center, Roanoke

Virginia Veteran and Family Support Regions

- North
- East
- Central
- West

Cemeteries

- 1 Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia
- 2 Albert G. Horton, Jr., Memorial Veterans Cemetery, Suffolk
- 3 Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin
- Virginia War Memorial Richmond



VDVS FY20 Results – Summary

BENEFIT SERVICES

Benefit Services provides Virginia's veterans and their family members with accurate, timely and ethical education and assistance in obtaining the federal and state benefits they have earned through service and sacrifice to our Commonwealth and Nation.

- 77,738*** Claims submitted to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in FY20 (-2.6% from FY19) **Includes all claims submitted to the USDVA in FY20.*
- 16,873** Compensation and Pension claims submitted to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in FY20 (-8.4% from FY19)
- 193,730** Client contacts in FY20 (-13.5% from FY19)
- \$3.57B** Disability compensation and pension payments to Virginia veterans and dependents in FFY19 (+11.9% from FFY18)

VIRGINIA VETERAN and FAMILY SUPPORT

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Program provides comprehensive coordination of and referrals to behavioral and rehabilitative health care and supportive services to Virginia's veterans, National Guard, armed forces Reserves, caregivers and family members.

- 1,770** Veterans and family members served in FY20 (-7% from FY19)
- 2,852** Total individual services provided in FY20 (-10.8% from FY19)
- 381** Total behavioral health services provided in FY20 (-33.4% from FY19)
- 40** Total rehabilitative/medical services provided in FY20 (-46% from FY19)
- 2,431** Total supportive services provided in FY20 (-4.6% from FY19)
- 423** Total group services provided in FY20 (+20.5% from FY19)
- 114** Veterans and family members served by Mission: Healthy Relationships and Mission: Healthy Families in FY20 (-40% from FY19)
- 1,159** Individuals trained in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) by VVFS (-35.6% from FY19)
- 2,337** Individuals trained in Military Cultural Competency Training by VVFS (+300% from FY19)
- 156** Veterans who received Behavioral Health Assistance through funding allocated by the Veterans Services Foundation (same as FY19)



STATE APPROVING AGENCY FOR VETERANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Virginia State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education and Training approves educational courses and programs of instruction provided by Virginia institutions to enable eligible veterans and their dependents to enroll and receive financial assistance (GI Bill benefits) from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

- 4th** Commonwealth's ranking among the states in terms of Veterans using their GI Bill benefits in FFY19 (up from 5th in FFY18)
- \$857M** Amount of GI Bill benefits paid to Virginia recipients in FFY19 (+6.3% from FFY18)
- 960** Instructional institutions in Virginia approved to provide training to Veterans and dependents in FFY19 (-0.9% from FFY18)

VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) provides education benefits to spouses and children of military service members killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or who became at least 90 percent disabled as a result of military service. Many VMSDEP beneficiaries also qualify for a stipend of up to \$1,900 per year to partially offset the cost of room, board, books, and supplies.

- 2,432** Applied for VMSDEP benefits in FY20 (+101% from FY19)
- 1,438** Applications approved for VMSDEP benefits in FY20 (+125% from FY19)
- 1,299** Unique students received stipend award for FY20 (+2% from FY19)
- \$1,961,421** In stipends were awarded in FY20, through May 8, 2020. Stipends were awarded for 2019-2020 academic year (+2.7% from FY19)
- 38** Virginia public colleges and universities that applied VMSDEP benefits to students' accounts in FY20. Students used VMSDEP benefits at 38 of 40 public institutions (no change from FY19)

VIRGINIA TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VTAP)

The Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) assesses, coordinates, and disseminates opportunities for members of the armed forces and their spouses transitioning from military to civilian life by providing a pathway to employment, education, and entrepreneurship.

- 109,055** Veterans, transitioning service members (TSMs), and spouses reached through VTAP outreach efforts in FY20 (+37.8% from FY19)
- 1,285** Referrals of Veteran/transitioning service member/spouses to partner organizations for direct services outside of employment, education and entrepreneurship (-17.3% from FY19)
- 149** Visits to Virginia military installations to conduct outreach and work with TSMs and their spouses in FY20 (-34.4% from FY19)
- 42** VTAP-sponsored transition events held in partnership with community-based support and transition organizations in FY20, each serving between 60 and 130 transitioning Veterans (no change from FY19)

VIRGINIA VALUES VETERANS (V3) PROGRAM

The Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program increases employment opportunities and promotes economic development, by training and certifying organizations in veteran's workforce best practices while creating connectivity opportunity and activities.

- 429** Certified companies joined V3 in FY20 (-0.7% from FY19)
- 14,773** Virginia veterans hired by V3 companies in FY20 (+12.6 % from FY19)
- 15*** Training events in FY20 (+7.1% from FY19)

**Note: Training Events have been streamlined – V3 is executing fewer events than in FY18 but maximizing the results for each event with greater participation of engaged employers at each.*

MILITARY MEDICS AND CORPSMEN (MMAC) PROGRAM

The Military Medics and Corpsmen Program (MMAC) provides pathways to careers and credentialing in civilian healthcare for former service members with healthcare-related training and experience.

- 223** Applicants for MMAC FY20 (+10.4% from FY19)
- 27** MMAC Hires reported in FY20 (-10.0% from FY19)
- 46** No Medics and Corpsmen Left Behind Hires FY20 (+39.4 from FY19)
- 28** Leadership Hires FY20 (new statistic for FY20)

VIRGINIA VETERANS CEMETERIES

Virginia's three state veterans cemeteries serve the memorial and perpetual care needs of veterans and eligible dependents. Virginia's state veterans cemeteries commemorate the personal sacrifice of those who served and those who stand ready to defend our freedom.

- 1,852** Interments conducted at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery (Suffolk), the Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Amelia), and the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin) in FY20 (-3.3% from FY19)

VETERANS CARE CENTERS

Virginia's Veterans Care Centers provide long-term care, Alzheimer's/dementia care, and short-term rehabilitative care to Virginia's veterans. Domiciliary (assisted living) care is provided in Roanoke.

Sitter & Barfoot Veteran Care Center — Richmond (*adjacent to the McGuire VA Medical Center*)

- 160** Beds in private rooms providing skilled nursing or post-acute skilled rehabilitative care for veterans transitioning back into the community
- 40** Bed in private rooms in a secure Alzheimer's/dementia unit
- 67,953** Patient days of nursing and Alzheimer's/dementia care provided in FY20 (93% capacity) (-3.2% from FY19)

Virginia Veterans Care Center — Roanoke (*adjacent to the Salem VA Medical Center*)

- 120** Beds in semi-private rooms providing skilled nursing care
- 60** Beds in semi-private rooms in a secure Alzheimer's/dementia unit
- 16** Beds in private rooms dedicated to providing post-acute skilled rehabilitative care for veterans transitioning back into the community
- 28** Beds in semi-private rooms providing assisted living/domiciliary care
- 62,815** Patient days of nursing and Alzheimer's/dementia care provided in FY20 (88% capacity) (+1.2% from FY19)
- 9,411** Patient days of assisted living care provided in FY20 (92% capacity) (-24.7% from FY19)

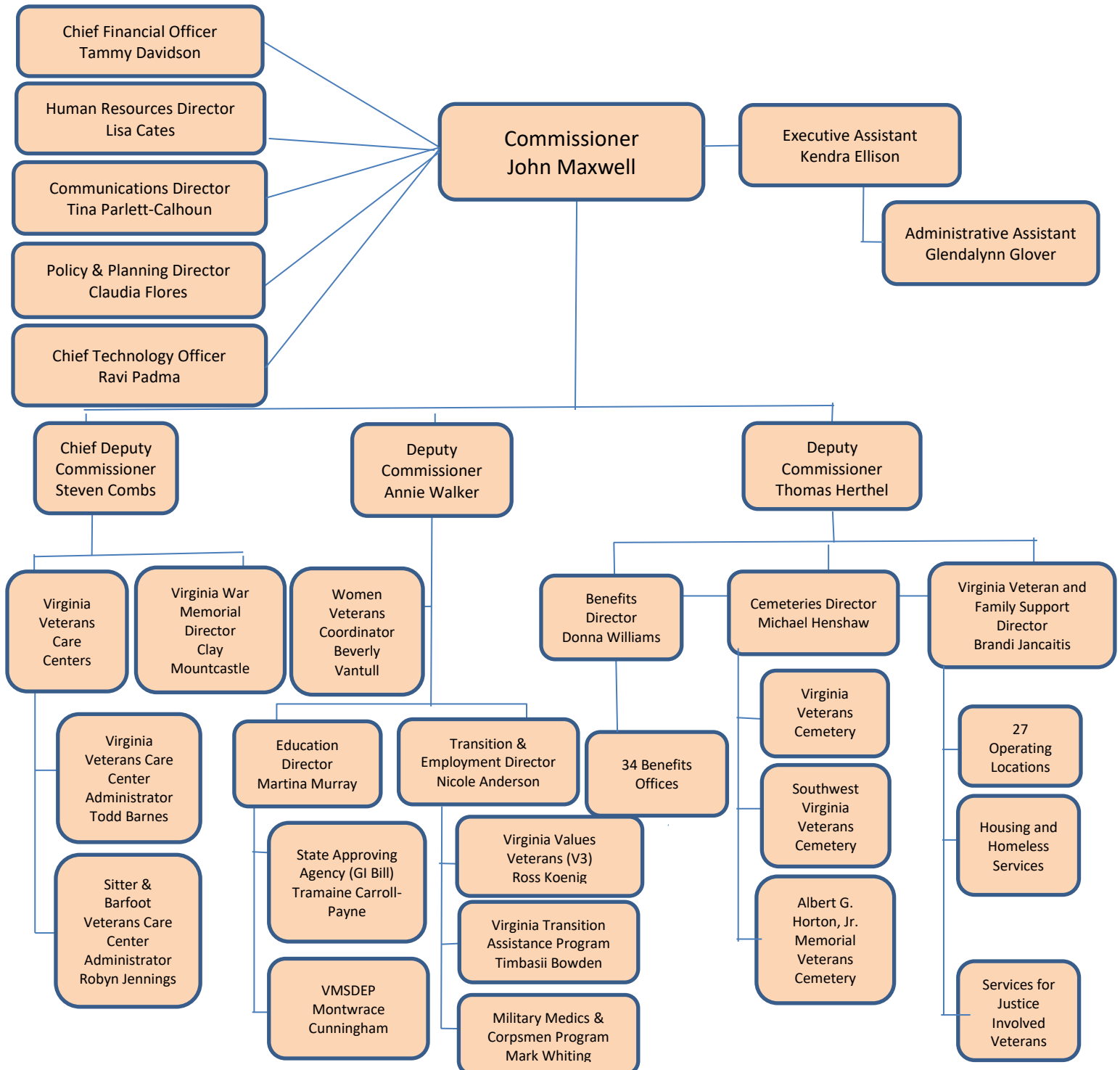
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL

Honoring our Veterans, Preserving our History, Educating our Youth, and Inspiring Patriotism in All

- 4,691** Educational Outreach Virtual Visitors in FY20 (new statistic for FY20)
- 26,916** Visitors to the Virginia War Memorial in FY20 (-34.6% from FY19)
- 88** Educational Outreach, Professional Development, Family Education, and Patriotic Programs conducted in FY20 (-12.9% from FY19)
- 54** Group tours provided in FY20 (-41.9% from FY19)
- 2,385** Hours of service provided by Virginia War Memorial volunteers in FY20 (-36.2% from FY19)

VDVS Organizational Chart

Reflects personnel as of December 1, 2020



Who are Virginia's Veterans?

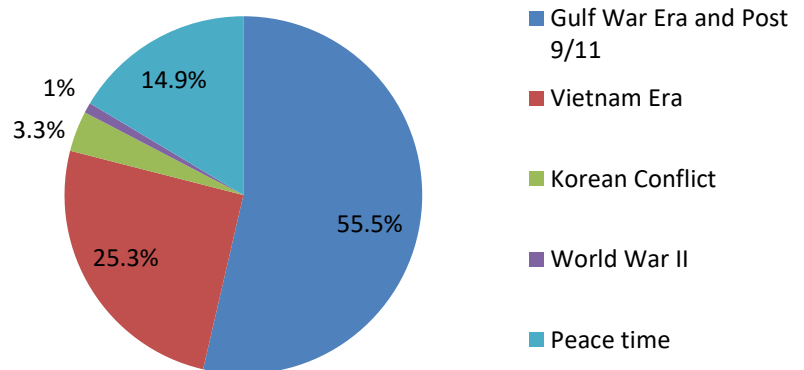
POPULATION

- 721,894** Estimated number of **Virginia Veterans** as of September 30, 2020 (*Source: USDVA, VetPop 2018, Table 6L*)
- 108,000** Estimated number of **Women Veterans** – **15 % of our veteran population**. Virginia leads the nation with the highest percentage of women veterans.
- 133,640** **Number of Virginia veterans under 40.**
- 7th** **Virginia's ranking in total veteran population.**
- 2nd** **Percentage of Veterans to total state population.** In terms of raw numbers, Virginia is 7^h in overall largest veterans population – but when factored in as a percentage of total population, we are second in the nation (behind Alaska).

ERA OF SERVICE (AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2020)

- 598,337** Total war time
- 123,557** Total peace time
- 403,448** Gulf War Era and Post 9/11
- 190,945** Vietnam Era
- 27,554** Korean Conflict
- 6,992** World War II

By Period of Service



(USDVA, VetPop2018, Table 7L.)

EDUCATION & TRANSITION

- 51,489** Number of Veterans receiving G.I. Bill benefits in Virginia in FFY19. Virginia ranks 4th in the nation in number of Veterans receiving G.I. Bill benefits.
- \$857M** Total G.I. Bill benefits paid to Veterans in Virginia in FFY19.
- 1,438** Applications approved for VMSDEP benefits in FY20.
- 109,055** Veterans, transitioning service members (TSMs), and spouses reached through VTAP outreach efforts in FY20.
- 1,285** Referrals of veterans, transitioning service members (TSMs), and spouses to partner organizations for direct services outside of employment, education and entrepreneurship in FY20.

DISABLED VETERANS

- 207,091** Veterans receiving USDVA compensation or pension benefits as of September 30, 2019.
- \$3.85B** Compensation and pension payments to Virginia veterans in FFY19.

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

- 395** Estimated number of homeless veterans in Virginia on a single night in January 2020.
- 72** Estimated number of unsheltered veterans in Virginia on a single night in January 2020.
- 947** Number of homeless veterans housed statewide in FY20.
- 194** Veterans experiencing homelessness who received financial assistance through VVFS in FY20.



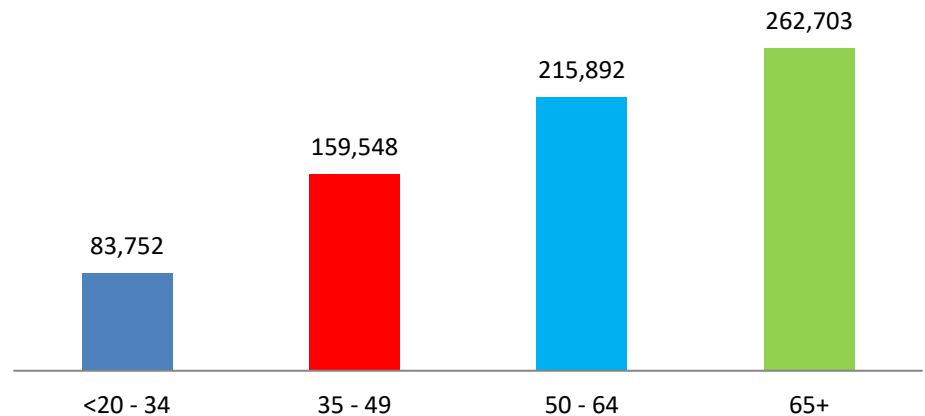
"Brave Women Warriors" panel, March 2020

OLDER VETERANS = 36% OF VIRGINIA'S VETERANS

262,703 Estimated number of veterans age 65+ living in Virginia as of September 30, 2020

The number of Va. veterans age 65 and older is projected to remain steady over the next decade, being at **257,719** in 2030 (*USDVA, Table 6L*)

Number of Virginia Veterans by Age



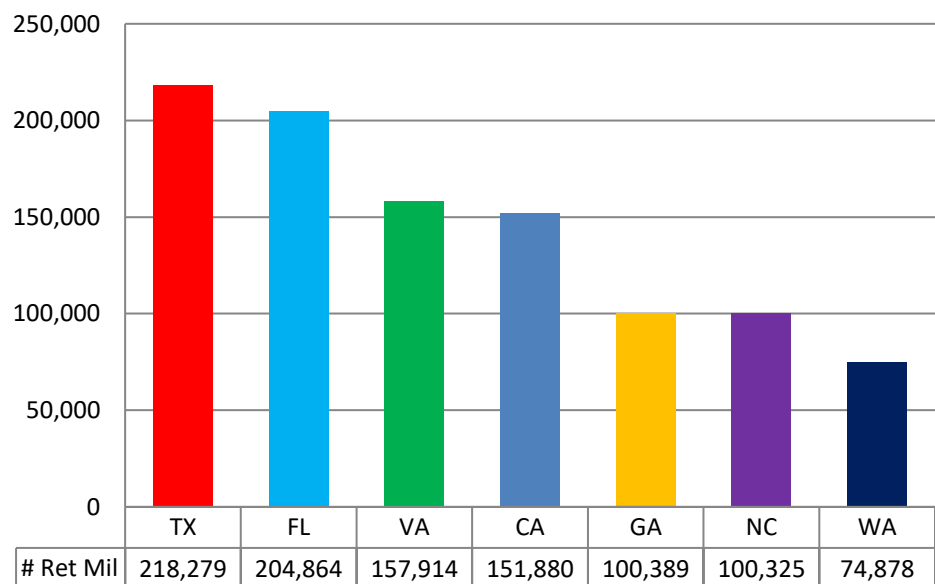
MILITARY RETIREES

157,914 Number of military retirees in Virginia as of September 30, 2019.

3rd Virginia ranks **3rd** in the nation in number of military retirees.

(DoD, Office of the Actuary, Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System FFY19)

Number of Military Retirees, FFY19



Veterans' Economic Impact on Virginia

Virginia's veterans have a significant positive economic impact on the Commonwealth, bringing **\$12.41B** in federal funding through compensation and pension payments, construction expenditures, educational and vocational rehabilitation employment expenditures, medical expenditures, and military retiree pay.

USDVA EXPENDITURES IN VIRGINIA DURING FFY19

\$6.83B Total USDVA expenditures in Virginia

\$3.85B Compensation and pension

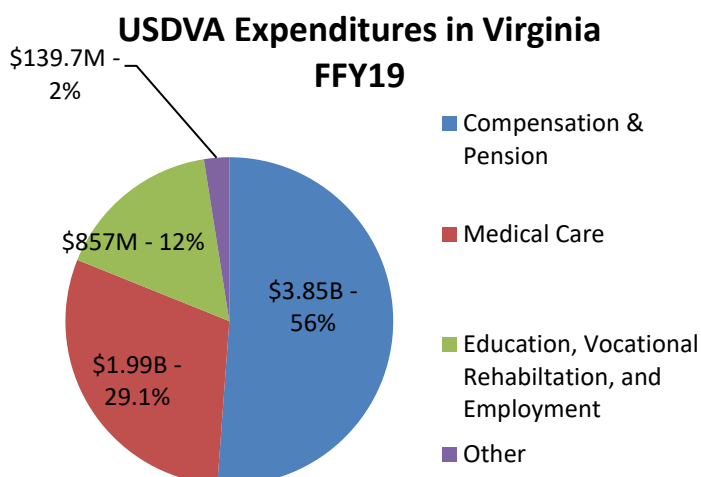
\$1.99B Medical Care

\$857M Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and employment

\$139.7M Other (General Operating, Insurance & Indemnities, Construction)

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, FFY19 Summary of Expenditures by State.

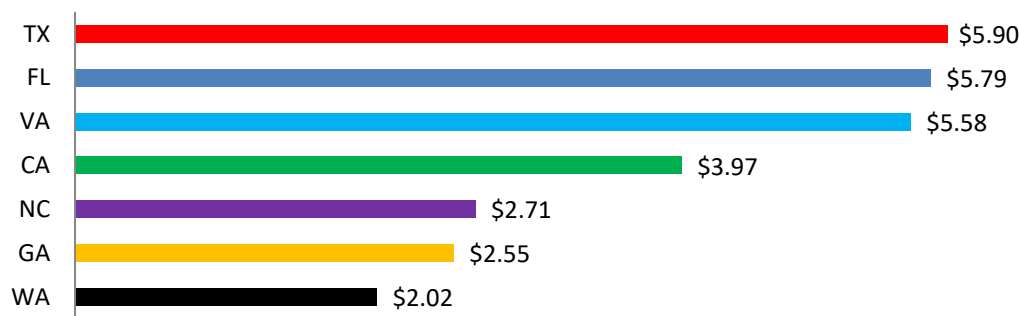
<http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Expenditures.asp>



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MILITARY RETIREE PAY IN VIRGINIA IN FFY19

\$5.58B Retirement pay to military retirees in Virginia. Virginia ranks third in the nation for the amount of military retirement pay received. (*Department of Defense, Office of the Actuary, Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System, FFY19*).

DoD Retired Military Pay - FFY19 (in billions)



Benefits Services

MISSION

To provide Virginia's veterans and their family members with accurate, timely and ethical education and assistance in obtaining the federal and state benefits they have earned through service and sacrifice to our Commonwealth and Nation.

ACTIVITIES

The Benefits Services section assists Virginia's veterans in gaining access to the federal and state benefits they are entitled to as a result of their service and sacrifice in the military. These benefits and services are:

- Compensation for service-connected disabilities or death;
- Income-based pensions;
- Medical care;
- Home purchase assistance;
- Education; and
- Burial benefits.

Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) and Veterans Service Administrators (VSAs) are the heart of Benefits Services. 70 VSRs and 14 VSAs are located in our 34 VDVS offices across the Commonwealth. VSRs are actively engaged in the daily practice of veteran's law, under the authority provided in 38 USC 5902, as they assist veterans and their family members in filing disability claims before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

FY20 brought many events and solidified new and existing partnerships within Benefits Services. FY20 began with the celebration of two grand opening ceremonies hosted in August 2019: Virginia Beach-Oceana Benefits Office and the Ft. Belvoir Benefits Office. Our Virginia Beach - Oceana office opened for services in April 2019, with the Grand Opening ceremony held in August. Our new office on Fort Belvoir also had a ribbon cutting ceremony in August. Staff began making appointments and assisting veterans on October 1, 2019. VDVS is proud to work closely with military installations across Virginia to provide convenient access in a familiar setting to our veterans.

We continued to work closely with other states and their state veterans agencies. We formed a new relationship with the New York Department of Veterans Affairs. Benefits personnel traveled to Albany, New York in December 2019 for a two-day collaborative meeting with our partners in New York. The Tennessee Department of Veteran Services referred the South Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to discuss our current methods in training, accreditation, and appeals.

The Benefits Service line also continued to work closely with the VA throughout FY20. First, the Benefits Appeals Team served as a pilot state for the VA Board of Veterans Appeals' Telehearings Program. This program began in July 2019 and was instrumental to the transition to virtual services after the stay-at-home order in March 2020 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Benefits Services also worked closely with the VA's Office of the Under Secretary of Veterans Benefits (Veterans Benefits Administration – or

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VBA) to host a Tele-Town Hall in May 2020. In coordination with the VA, Benefits Service Representatives assisted over 190,000 veterans and claimants with their benefits questions and concerns.

In addition to working with our Federal partners, Benefits Services worked with our state partners and actively participated with our fellow service lines. Benefits Service Offices began working together with Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) as part of the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF). Benefits Services was part of the VISR Pilot Program (Virginia's Identify SMVF, Screen for Suicide Risk, and Refer for Services). This particular endeavor involved not only close collaboration between these partners, but also substantial training on the part of Benefits Veterans Service Representatives on proper suicide screening techniques.

In further support of the VISR initiative with VVFS, all Benefits employees completed "S.A.V.E." training, a suicide prevention training developed between PsychArmor Institute and the VA. Benefits staff completed "S.A.V.E." training by May 2020, in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month.

Benefits Services personnel actively supported and participated in the annual Women Veterans Summit. Although the Summit became a virtual event due to the COVID environment, Benefits Services personnel hosted a one-hour, live, informational session on Veterans Benefits. VSRs also monitored and responded to questions asked via the chat box during the virtual briefing.

Benefit services participated in a collaborative session with the Virginia Bar Associations' Veterans Initiative Task Force to discuss ways to better meet the legal needs of Virginia's Veterans. Participants in this session included the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University, the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, Altria, and the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation.

In recognition of Virginia Public Service Week, Benefits Services participated in CommonHealth's adoption of the National Employee Health and Fitness Month. In May, 69 Benefit Services personnel joined virtually for an afternoon physical fitness activity! Many participants walked, others ran, biked, and a few completed yoga workouts.

The Benefits service line responded quickly to the COVID 19 pandemic. We closed offices in March 2020 for in-person services to reduce spread of the virus, but remained open for virtual services. The swift transition included moving laptops, printers, monitors, and mobile internet hot spots to home offices for establishment of the telework posture. In late June, Benefits began a phased approach to re-opening offices for in-person appointments, while continuing to conduct virtual services. This transition to the hybrid model included purchasing PPE for all personnel and Veteran clients. It also included comprehensive safety training to ensure the personnel were protected while meeting with veterans. The hybrid model of virtual and face-to-face services had its challenges, yet Benefits staff had more than 190,000 client contacts and filed 77,738 actions for VA consideration, of which, 16,873 became disability compensation or pension claims for Virginia's veterans. Virginia veterans received \$3.57B in VA disability compensation and pension benefits during FFY19. The investment in VDVS continues to pay dividends for our veterans and for Virginia's economy, with a 75% claims approval rating.

The *Center of Excellence (COE)*, collocated with the VA Regional Office in Roanoke, provides oversight of Benefits-wide policies and procedures related to claims processing and claims submission to the VA. The COE manages a robust Quality Assurance program, ensuring claims submitted to VA are prepared in accordance with existing Federal statute and regulation thereby maximizing the granting of benefits by VA. The COE works closely with the Training Team and Benefits' Leadership team to ensure training efforts are relevant, timely, and focused on identified errors. In close coordination with Benefits leadership, the COE develops and implements improved policies, processes, and procedures, to ensure timely and efficient claims processing. Working closely with VA's Roanoke Regional Office, the COE ensures consistency and compliance with VA requirements and they remedy submitted claims that are experiencing delays or other processing problems within VA.

The *Appeals Team* is comprised of Appeals Specialists and Attorneys who apply their knowledge of Veterans' Law to provide effective, no-cost representation to claimants challenging adverse VA decisions during the Veterans Affairs (VA) Appellate Process. Through collective subject matter expertise, and by leveraging diverse relationships with outside organizations, the Appeals Team is a potent force multiplier helping veterans secure approximately \$4.5 million in retroactive awards during FY20 alone. These awards convey other material benefits to veterans as well, including educational assistance and access to healthcare. During a national pandemic, the Appeals Team offered a vital lifeline to veterans and survivors.

The Appeals Team assists veterans before an appeal is filed. As subject-matter experts, the Appeals Team provides real time advice and counsel to the VSRs that staff each of the 34 offices across the Commonwealth. Thus, when a veteran visits any VDVS location for assistance, they can trust that they will receive accurate individualized legal advice on the appeal process.

After an appeal is filed, the Appeals Team provides direct legal services to each appellant under the agency's representation. This is true even if the veteran chose to file their appeal before consulting VDVS. Most commonly, the Appeals Team advocates for veterans during scheduled hearings at the Board of Veterans Appeals or drafts written legal briefs on their behalf. This ensures that each individual is afforded due process under the law and has an opportunity to present a meaningful argument in support of their appeal.

In FY20, the Appeals Team represented clients at 231 hearings before the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, D.C., and in 99 videoconference hearings at the VA Regional Office in Roanoke. During FY20, the Appeals Team assisted 322 clients at the Board level. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 35% of FY20 clients received assistance remotely through legal briefs or Virtual Telehearings. Virginia was one of five states that helped pilot the Telehearing program with the Board of Veterans Appeals in FY20. Veterans Law Judges conducted hearings remotely using cameras and internet connections, often from the privacy of their home. In FY20, the Appeals Team obtained favorable outcomes in 75% of the cases they argued before the Board.

The Appeals Team's success with the Virtual Telehearing Program is significant because it overcomes longstanding challenges, such as distance and transportation, that Virginia veterans encountered when

testifying at the Board of Veterans Appeals. Previously, a veteran's only options were travel to Washington, D.C. to be seen at the Board's Central Office, or travel to a VA Regional Office. The only VA Regional Office in Virginia is in Roanoke. The long distances often discourage many veterans, especially those who are disabled, from exercising their rights to a hearing.

In addition to serving veterans directly during the VA Appellate Process, the VDVS Legal Liaison who is an attorney, also forms and maintains relationships with outside organizations that offer free or discounted legal services to veterans. When a veteran contacts the agency seeking legal assistance with an issue outside the scope of its services, the Legal Liaison then acts as a point of contact for veteran referrals to and from those outside groups. Especially in cases where the veteran may have a time-sensitive legal need due to disability or illness, the Legal Liaison diversifies the agency's ability to connect veterans with critical support.

The *Training Team* works to ensure that all personnel have a complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities to continue providing excellent service to our veterans. This is accomplished through quarterly and annual training with all levels of the Benefits Services staff. All Benefits personnel maintain standards of Accreditation by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, according to 38 USC 5902. While FY20 began as any normal year in developing and hosting in-person training, such as basic training, quarterly training, and in-person assessments, the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be a challenge in delivering and meeting the training needs of our personnel. Ever resourceful, the training team adapted to this situation with innovation, perseverance, and unwavering dedication to the mission.

Following the March stay-at-home order, the VDVS Benefits Training Team adapted its entire program to virtual modalities, thereby ensuring successful continuity of operations while maintaining outstanding quality in its training and services. Through early and rapid adoption of virtual techniques, the Training Team was able to begin online trainings seven business days after the March stay-at-home order. The Training Team continued to deliver exceptional services and support that kept new and established personnel engaged and compliant with all training requirements for VDVS and VA purposes. At the end of FY20, the Training Team had conducted:

- 5 Basic Training Courses (25% increase from FY19),
- Completed 40 personnel assessments (30% increase from FY19),
- Conducted 8 Proficiency Test sessions with 17 graduates, (33% increase from FY19).
- Delivered 35 training hours (14% increase from FY19)

In FY20, Benefits Services continued to receive high marks from veterans regarding delivery of high-quality service. This data is collected through Feedback Forms submitted via mail or e-mail, and through real-time feedback in six offices by using Survey Monkey (since May 2019, over 900 responses have been captured through Survey Monkey). Benefits can state with a high degree of accuracy, based on the data that over 86% of our clients would recommend VDVS services to a friend and 90% of our clients are *very satisfied* with the services provided. Each of these criteria reflect a 2% increase since FY19. Additionally, to the questions: “*how well did our services meet your needs*,” “*how satisfied were you with VDVS*,” and “*how would you rate the quality of our service*” over 95% of respondents gave favorable marks.

Outreach and Partnerships

Generally, nearly 40% of survey respondents stated they were visiting a VDVS office for the first time, and 25% of respondents have been clients for less than 1 year, which attests to the great strides that our offices continued to make in outreach efforts to the public.

The VDVS Appeals Team continues to cultivate valuable partnerships to help Benefits deliver top quality services to Virginia veterans. The National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) partners with the Appeals Team and Center of Excellence, reviewing all decisions from the Board of Veterans Appeals for appealable errors. If errors are present, NVLSP will offer to represent VDVS veterans before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims at no cost to them. If additional case development is required, NVLSP and the Appeals Team work together to ensure that appropriate actions are taken on each appeal.

George Mason University's (GMU's) Psychological Services Program is instrumental in creating psychological profiles of disabled veterans that may be used to support disability claims and appeals to the VA. The Appeals Team helps oversee this program by providing case-specific records and other information to GMU's Center for Psychological Services, allowing them to create a psychological profile tailored to the matters at-issue in a veteran's appeal. In FY19, the team completed 12 assessments in support of pending VA Appeals. In FY20, the team completed two assessments prior the closing of campus services due to COVID. A virtual option is now available for the assessments going forward, so it is expected that the number of GMU Assessments will rise in FY21.

Benefits also partners with the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) to better facilitate and coordinate compensation and pension exams to veterans who are currently incarcerated and need to apply for VA benefits. These exams are administered at the correctional facilities throughout the commonwealth by contracted medical professionals. *(Please see the JIS report for more details.)*

In FY19, Benefits Services, along with VVFS, assisted Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, Carlos Hopkins, with the creation of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Coalition. The Coalition brings together key collaborators to identify and address the needs of veterans in the cities and counties of Southwest Virginia. The Coalition meeting in August 2019 brought together the Secretariat, Benefits, VVFS, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, representatives from Veteran Service Organizations, and representatives from Southwest Virginia businesses and organizations.

Benefits continues to value our close proximity to VA headquarters in downtown Washington, D.C. and maintains close relationships with the VA staff. In FY19, large-scale administrative changes within the VA resulted from legislation that drastically changed the way that veterans access and apply for benefits. First, the Appeals Modernization and Improvement Act, passed by Congress in August 2017 and implemented by VA in February 2019, provided an entirely new claims and appeals structure. The second influential change is the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019, which coupled with the recent U.S. Federal Circuit Court decision in *Procopio v. Wilkie*, will allow Vietnam veterans who served in the territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam to access benefits related to exposure to the herbicide, Agent Orange, that they were once denied.

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Even on Federal issues, Virginia veterans rely on VDVS staff to know the answers to their questions, or quickly connect them to federal partners who are able to assist them. The COE, Appeals Team, and Training Team works closely with the VA, and trains the VSRs to ensure that our veterans are provided with the most accurate, up-to-date information on their benefits. COE also works closely with the VA's regional and national leadership to obtain the latest updates on implementation, and works to resolve problems that arose after implementation. These efforts keeps staff abreast of changes, and active in the advocate community to share resources and knowledge.

Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20
Compensation Claims submitted to USDVA	18,949	18,419	16,873
All Claims submitted to USDVA	71,311	79,792	77,738
Client contacts	222,359	223,965	193,730
Number of offices	31	33	34
Itinerant points	41	42	42
Budget	\$7,609,744	\$7,996,947	\$8,814,957
Authorized Positions	94	100	100
Filled Positions – as of June 30	89	97	99

For more detailed information, please refer to Appendix A

Veterans Education, Transition, & Employment

Veterans Education, Transition, and Employment (VETE) programs align under Deputy Commissioner Annie Walker.

VIRGINIA WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

MISSION

The Virginia Women Veteran Program (VWVP) provides access to community resources to educate, unify, and empower Virginia's women veterans who have served in the military in all eras by ensuring they receive timely yet appropriate transition and benefits support,; employment and education outreach, and health and community advocacy.

ACTIVITIES

This year women veterans were identified as the nation's fastest-growing veteran population. In FY20, the VWVP continued to strengthen the outreach and development of a collaborative program providing access to community resources to educate, unify, and empower Virginia's women veterans. Virginia's key objective of this program is to help women veterans find their "pathways to success" as they build their lives in the civilian community after years of military service.

The program's main goals are to ensure women veterans receive timely and appropriate transition and benefits referral support, employment and education outreach, health and community advocacy, and to identify additional needs. Through the VWVP, the agency coordinates/monitors access to a wide array of local, state, and federal veteran benefits tailored to meet women's needs and maintain a continued focus through the annual Virginia Women Veterans Summit. We expand awareness and advocacy on behalf of Virginia's women veterans to enhance their lives while increasing community visibility and partnership opportunities. The Program Manager is the resource connector, ensuring women veterans receive the warm handoff to the seven VDVS service lines and other community partners and service providers, as needed.

In February, the VWVP presented our "newest program" lessons learned at the annual National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) Mid-Winter Conference held in Alexandria. We provided input on best practices developed, discovered, and incorporated while building a new program focused on women veterans.

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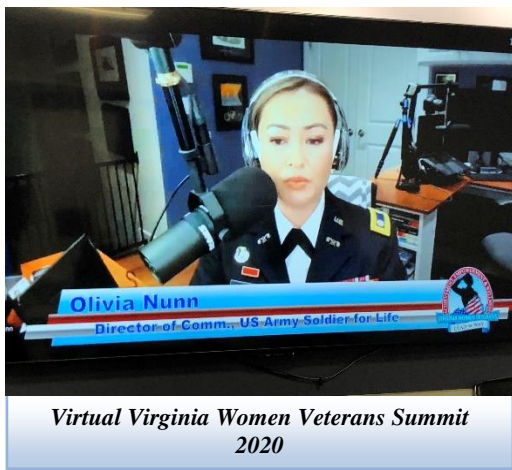
Soon after, VWVP invited women veterans and the community to celebrate the service of women in the military with our first free movie screening at the newly expanded Virginia War Memorial. The movie, *Megan Leavey* (2017, PG-13), focused on the story of a female Marine Corporal and her military dog as they detected explosives in Iraq. The movie was followed by an engaging panel discussion with women veterans of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) era. This event provided a fun and unique opportunity to bring together women veterans, family members, and the community to share experiences. By mid-March, due to the unforeseen public health concerns involved in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, we postponed the remaining live outreach events planned for the 2020 annual Women Veterans Week recognition.



Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Kathleen Jabs at the Virginia War Memorial

In April, VWVP shifted all operations, utilizing various digital and virtual systems, to continue women veteran support, daily activities, and maintain contact with viable community partners. This time was dedicated to researching and connecting with technology to continue meeting the needs of our women veterans.

In June, VDVS presented the annual Virginia Women Veterans Summit in a virtual format. This summit raises awareness about the services and benefits offered to women veterans in Virginia. This year's goal was to keep Virginia's women veterans connected to each other, and to pivotal resources, during one of the most turbulent times in our Commonwealth's history.



Virtual Virginia Women Veterans Summit 2020

We transitioned, a 500-800 attendee (in-person event), to a fully virtual experience within 60 days. The theme of the virtual summit was *Empowered: Collaborating and Creating Champions of Change*.

This VWVP event included 20 hours of extraordinary live and pre-recorded content with 91 experts broadcasting to nearly 1,400 registrants and over 1,900 viewers over the 3-day timeframe. We had viewers not only within Virginia and 30 other US states, but also from international locations such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and Japan.

The virtual program included sessions on a wide variety of topics including what Virginia offers to women veterans, career strategies, entrepreneurship, financial stewardship, suicide awareness, mentorship, personal health, and wellness, and more. We showcased another empowering pitch competition co-hosted by a new national partner, StreetShares Foundation. The *"Female Founders Veteran Small Business Award"* event provided three outstanding women veteran entrepreneurs grants totaling \$25,000. This pitch

contest provides a much-needed financial boost to help women veteran small business owners succeed and serve the positive growth of the military entrepreneurial community.

The summit was also a great opportunity to share some good news stories and recognize women veterans in the community that are making a positive impact on society. This year's *Trailblazer of the Year* recipient was U.S. Marine Corps Veteran and JT Inspire LLC Founder/ Motivational Speaker, Taniki Richard. U.S. Navy Veteran Renee Foster, Program Manager of Women Veteran Leadership programs under The Mission Continues (non-profit organization), won the *Change Maker of the Year* award.

We honored over 30 Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Companies for their commitment to hiring women veterans. The top V3 employers who received special awards included Sentra Health as our Enterprise Company; Department of Military Affairs as our Large Company; FITT Scientific LLC as our Medium Company and IntellecTechs as our Small V3 Company.

VWVP reached over 1,600 women veterans within a virtual environment, contributing to more than 3,300 women veterans contacted in the Commonwealth since the program began. The VWVP program continued to identify (and vet) unique opportunities to form partnerships with a diverse array of Virginia based resources/ partners who offer services designed specifically for women's and veteran's needs. Many pivotal partners embraced the opportunity to collaborate on our first virtual summit such as COMCAST, Dominion Energy Street Shares, and PENFED foundation. We also had a host of our Virginia Values Veterans (V3) companies share employment opportunities and available resources. We developed stronger bonds with state agencies like the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) and Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) and Federal partners like the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Center for Women Veterans.

Due to this year's major operational shift, VWVP sought opportunities to connect with national associations who could expand support services within or into Virginia. Some of these groups include the Military Women's Coalition, Military Talent Partners (MTP), National Veteran-Owned Business Association (NaVOBA), National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA). VWVP was able to sustain and grow our relationships with many partners such as Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Center on Transition Innovations (CTI), George Mason University Veterans and the Arts Initiative, Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (SBSD), Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Service (DBHDS) and others. VWVP is ready and able to take the next steps forward to assist Virginia women veterans determine their path to success within the Commonwealth.

Veterans Education Programs

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services includes three education programs: the State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education & Training, the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP), and the Training Education Alliance (TEA).

STATE APPROVING AGENCY FOR VETERANS EDUCATION & TRAINING

MISSION

Enable access to post-secondary education opportunities for veterans and eligible family members.

ACTIVITIES

The State Approving Agency (SAA) for Veterans Education and Training, operating under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), reviews, evaluates, and approves post-secondary education and training programs offered by educational institutions, businesses, and industries in Virginia, helping veterans and eligible family members to use their GI Bill® benefits to attain their educational goals.

SAA provides support and supervision for 960 education and training institutions. While some offer only one program, many offer multiple programs, with each program requiring separate approval. Programs must be approved before veterans and eligible family members may enroll and receive financial assistance from the VA through the GI Bill®. SAA ensures compliance with federal and state education regulations through on-site visits to active institutions.

To verify enrollment data, SAA conducts compliance surveys, awards actions for accuracy, and ensures payments made to eligible veterans are within VA regulations. The VA/Virginia SAA FFY20 cooperative agreement requires 90% of assigned surveys be conducted by August 15, 2020. This year, SAA was only able to complete 61% of the assigned surveys due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eleven compliance surveys were completed before the onset of the pandemic, and all pending assigned compliance surveys were scheduled and on track to be accomplished by the August 15 deadline. However, the SAA began telecommuting in mid-March; this major shift in service delivery, combined with travel restrictions due to the pandemic and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs guidance, limited the number of surveys that Virginia's SAA could complete by the August 15 deadline.

The SAA met all other metrics outlined in the cooperative agreement. COVID-19 had minimal impact on the approval process and the SAA had no delays with program approvals. School officials continued to submit approval packets via email, and approval letters were sent to schools via email and then uploaded into eForce. Overall, most School Certifying Officials (SCO) could access approval documentation and the staff incorporated virtual platforms like ZOOM and Google Meets to conduct technical assistance to schools.

SAA's secondary mission is outreach to veterans and family members, making them aware of all the various education and training programs and eligibility criteria. Outreach is conducted through job fairs,

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on military bases, and at veteran's events hosted by VDVS around the Commonwealth. Staff conduct one-on-one discussions on military bases with veterans, service members scheduled to retire or be discharged from the military, and family members. The conversations cover topics including: VA educational benefits, approved facilities, how to apply, plus On-The-Job (OJT) and apprenticeship opportunities, instructions to start Post-9/11 GI Bill® and Transfer of Entitlement benefits for an eligible dependent. The staff continued virtual outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SAA team is heavily involved with the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA). In August 2020, Annie Walker, VDVS Deputy Commissioner, was re-elected President of NASAA. This is a key and strategic post for Virginia and VDVS is proud of the work Deputy Commissioner Walker has done and continues to do for Virginia on the national level. Additionally, Director Murray stepped down as chair of the NASAA IHL/NCD Committee and was replaced by Christopher Link, SAA Manager. Tramaine Carroll-Payne, Deputy Director, continues to chair the Audit Committee and Bobbie Blakely, SAA Manager, is Vice Chair of the Honors and Awards, Membership and Alumni Committee. New SAA team members attended the National Training Institute in October 2019 where DC Walker served as a faculty member.



DC Annie Walker, SAA Managers Chris Link and Sharo Browne, and Education Support Specialist Michael Mullins at the NASAA's National Training Institute, Oct. 2019

Annual Services Provided	FFY18	FFY19	FFY20
Education and training institutions supported	1,164	969	960
Educational program approval actions	4,680	5,688	8,222
Number approved/% approved	3,644/78%	4,798/84%	7179/87%
Other approval actions	751	888	1,728
Number approved/% approved	600/ 80%	562/63%	1459/84%
Educational institution supervisory visits	64**	61**	36
% of required supervisory visits completed	94%**	100%**	61%**
Veteran student population	32,287***	32,694***	33,612***

For more detailed information, please refer to Appendix B

Note: Data is reported by federal fiscal year (FFY) since SAA activity is tracked on that basis.

* The increase in approval actions is due to the return of approval authority of public and not-for-profit institutions. Previously these institutions were not fully reviewed because their degree programs were "deemed approved." The FFY17 contract required the review of all programs at each institution with "deemed approved" programs.

** The VA contract requires the SAA to complete 90% of the 61 assigned compliance visits.

*** Number of Veterans receiving G.I. Bill benefits in Virginia as of April 2020. This does not include Veterans who attended school but who have not received payment of GI Bill Benefits. The final count for FFY20 should be available in March 2021

** The VA contract requires the SAA to complete 90% of the 68 assigned compliance visits.

*** Number of Veterans receiving G.I. Bill benefits in Virginia as of April 2018. This does not include Veterans who attended school but who have not received payment of GI Bill Benefits. The final count for FFY18 should be available in March 2019

VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM (VMSDEP)

MISSION

Provides education benefits to spouses and children of qualified military service members killed, missing in action, taken prisoner, or who became totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent permanently disabled as a result of military service. Military service includes service in the United States Armed Forces, United States Armed Forces Reserves, or the Virginia National Guard.

ACTIVITIES

The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) waives tuition and required fees at Virginia public colleges and universities for qualified survivors and dependents. Some VMSDEP beneficiaries also receive a stipend to partially offset the cost of room, board, books, and supplies. The dependents must be a spouse, or child between the ages of 16 and 29, of a military service member who, while serving as an active duty member in the U. S. Armed Forces, Reserves, the Virginia National Guard, or Virginia National Guard Reserve, during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict, was killed or is missing in action or is a prisoner of war, or of a veteran who has been rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as totally and permanently disabled or at least 90 percent permanently disabled, and has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. Domiciliary or physical presence requirements also apply and are detailed in the Code of Virginia.

Effective July 1, 2019, eligibility for VMSDEP benefits expanded to include dependents of veterans with non-combat service-connected disabilities. Two tiers of benefits now exist. Tier 1 waives tuition and mandatory fees for the dependents of veterans who are rated at least 90% with permanent disabilities, but the beneficiaries do not receive a stipend. Tier 2 beneficiaries are the dependents of the veterans or service members who meet all the previous criteria, but that also are related to combat-related disabilities. Tier 2 beneficiaries receive the stipend as well as the waiver.

The Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund (the Fund) provides funding for the Tier 2 stipend. The stipend can offset the costs of room, board, books, and supplies. The stipend amount may vary based on determinations by the Virginia General Assembly, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and the amount appropriated to the Fund.

In FY20, VMSDEP launched an improved application portal and the full rollout of the portal occurred at the beginning of FY21. The portal provides functionality for VDVS staff, SCHEV, applicants, and schools. The portal eliminates most of the manual processing of applications allowing the staff to keep up with the steady increase of VMSDEP applicants. The portal will also allow schools and students the ability to see benefits usage in real-time.

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In FY20, VMSDEP staff conducted outreach to veterans and transitioning service members at Ft. Lee, presented training of changes to the program to VDVS benefits staff, and presented at Regional School Certifying Official (SCO) training.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the SAA staff conducted VMSDEP outreach virtually for both Ft. Lee and Joint Base Langley-Eustis. Staff also disseminated information about the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program through multiple communications channels, including:

- VDVS website;
- SCHEV website;
- State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training listserv;
- Virginia public college and university websites and catalogues;
- “*Opportunities: Preparing for college guide and workbook*” created by SCHEV and the Educational Credit Management Corporation annually. Printed copies are distributed to students and guidance counselors free of charge, and an electronic version is on the SCHEV website;
- VDVS-developed VMSDEP informational brochure; and
- Direct outreach to veterans whose disability rating and period of service would potentially make their dependents eligible for VMSDEP benefits.

Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20
Applications Submitted	1,473	1,207	2,432
Applications Approved	638	640	1,438
Unique students receiving stipend award	1,122	1,274	1,299
Total stipend dollars awarded	\$1,599,525	\$1,909,235	\$1,961,421
Outreach Activities	6	6	6

VIRGINIA TRAINING & EDUCATION ALLIANCE (TEA)

MISSION

To assist institutions by providing training on veteran cultural competency and best practices in military and veteran student recruitment, matriculation, retention, and graduation, and employment in the civilian sector.

ACTIVITIES

The Virginia Training & Education Alliance (TEA) began as a pilot program in January 2017, through a grant from Altria, with the goal of training educators on Military Culture Competency. In 2018, the focus of the program expanded to facilitating relationships between educators and employers, including *Bridging the Gap* meetings. Bridging the Gap events bring together V3 employers and TEA schools with the intention of sharing information about employment and educational needs that would ultimately result in strengthening the school to work pipeline. TEA also provides students with connectivity to employment pipelines, Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) staff, and/or Virginia Values Veterans (V3) hiring events. TEA currently includes 24 certified institutions and 111 certified ambassadors.

TEA partnered with the Virginia chapter of The American Institute of Architects (AIA) to create a summer architecture internship for Virginia Veterans. Through partnerships with member firms, AIA Virginia developed paid summer internship opportunities throughout the Commonwealth that allow Architecture students to gain Architectural Experience Program (AXP) hours toward licensure. TEA served as the liaison for architecture faculty and AIA employers. Due to COVID-19, all confirmed internships were placed on hold until the next academic year.

TEA continued its partnership with The Mission Continues, a veterans organization. The partnership highlights community service opportunities for student veterans, and connects The Mission Continues members with schools. Many of these community service opportunities organized through The Mission Continues are attended by employers, providing student veterans unique networking opportunities.



Patrice Jones (2nd from left) stands with students at John Tyler Community College's Workforce Center opening

The signature Bridging the Gap events were not held this year due to COVID-19. VDVS continues the TEA's mission and services through the Education Programs budget, viewing it as valuable to the Commonwealth. TEA continues to build its network of institutions and ambassadors, as well as collaboration with V3 employers and the VTAP staff.

TEA Certification shows the school has dedicated resources to ensure a military-friendly campus environment through the implementation of best practices in Military and Veteran student recruitment, matriculation, retention, and graduation.

Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20
Schools Certified	12	10	2
Ambassador's Certified	31	75	5
Training Events Conducted	10	16	16

Veterans Transition & Employment Programs

Transition & Employment programs include the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program, the Virginia Transition Assistance Program (VTAP), and the Military Medics and Corpsmen (MMAC) Program.

VIRGINIA VALUES VETERANS (V3) PROGRAM

MISSION

The V3 program increases employment opportunities and promotes economic development by training and certifying organizations in veterans workforce best practices while creating connectivity opportunity and activities.

ACTIVITIES

V3 is a national leader in training employers to recruit, hire, and retain veterans. Since starting out as a pilot program, the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program has educated thousands of individuals with hundreds of companies on why hiring veterans is the best business decision they can make.

In FY20, V3 continued to surpass all goals and expectations, and as of June 30, 2020: 1,131 companies are certified, 153 state agencies are certified and 790 businesses, state agencies and localities are enrolled and working toward certification, for a total of 2,074 member companies/agencies. The new goal of 35,000 veteran hires reported in Governor Northam's term was announced in January 2018, and as of June 30, 2020, there were 33,298 hires in the Northam Administration, meaning that V3 is 95% of the way toward achieving the goal of 35,000 veterans hired (January 2018 – January 2022).

As a national leader in training employers to recruit, hire, and retain veterans, V3 remains a preferred provider with both the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Human Resources Certification Institute (HRCI). V3 conducted 15 training events in FY20, and continued the partnership with PsychArmor to provide top-level training options for our employers to learn more about the veteran community as a whole.

Additionally, the V3 employment grant provides employers with 300 and fewer employees \$1,000 for every veteran hired (on or after July 1, 2014) and retained for one year full time, within five years of separation of active duty. Employers can receive a total of \$10,000 annually. For FY 20, \$85,000 in grant monies were distributed.

Annual Services Provided	FY17	FY18	FY20
Companies enrolled	301	432	429
Veterans Hired by Certified Companies	9,703	13,121	14,773
Training Events Conducted	58	14*	14*

**Note: Training Events have been streamlined – V3 is conducting fewer events but maximizing the results for each event with greater participation of engaged employers at each event.*

VIRGINIA TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VTAP)

MISSION

VTAP assesses, coordinates and disseminates opportunities for members of the armed forces and their spouses transitioning from military to civilian life by providing a pathway to employment, education and entrepreneurship.

ACTIVITIES

Transition from military service is not complete on the date of a service member's discharge and may take years beyond that actual transition date. As such, VTAP is designed to provide transition resources and assistance to all Virginia veterans and their spouses; the program offers a suite of services applicable to each veteran's and transitioning service member's (TSM) unique journey.

The return on the Commonwealth's investment and growth of the New Virginia Economy is exponentially strong, and transitioning service members (TSMs) are an important component to transitioning into high demand industries in the Commonwealth. Veterans receive the tools and support they need to build productive lives in Virginia, contributing to our economy and adding to our unmatched pool of talent.

In FY20, VTAP connected with 109,055 veterans, transitioning military, and spouses through a variety of outreach methods, including through its close partnership with V3. VTAP is a "go to" organization for partner organizations to participate and present on employment, education, and entrepreneurship in the Commonwealth. Additionally, the V3-VTAP partnership provides coordination between transitioning veterans and employment services, connects veterans directly with employers who have pledged to hire veterans, and educates veterans on educational and entrepreneurial opportunities here in Virginia.

In FY20, VTAP successfully continued the program that began in FY18 – outreach to all transitioning military who list Virginia as their home of record on their DD214 and who allow the Virginia Department of Veterans Services to receive a copy of it. VTAP sent a Welcome Letter and information about our ***Virginia Veterans Resource Guide*** to 6,054 transitioning service members with information about VTAP, V3, and the overall services and support offered through VDVS.

VTAP staff has built relationships with our military installations, making 149 visits to Virginia military installations in FY20 before the COVID-19 Pandemic moved meetings virtual. VTAP transition coordinators have a presence on:

- Naval Station Norfolk
- JEB Little Creek – Fort Story
- Joint Base Langley-Eustis
- Fort Lee
- Marine Corps Base Quantico
- Fort Belvoir
- Joint Base Myer Henderson Hall; and
- The Pentagon

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These partnerships are either through the USO Pathfinder Program or directly with installation transition offices (TAP). These visits have resulted in reaching TSMs prior to separation, providing a warm hand-off to the local community resource providers best equipped to provide direct services needed, and creating opportunities for our staff to teach transition and professional development workshops on base. VTAP either hosted or was a collaborative partner in hosting 221 events in FY20, and made 1,003 referrals to local resources.

VTAP continued to partner with the Virginia Chamber Foundation to host eight Hire Vets Now Networking and Hiring Events on six different military installations between the fall of 2019 and the late spring of 2020. In total, 1,102 service members and 170 V3 employers participated.

VTAP also hosts employment workshops and recruiting events throughout Virginia and continues to be innovative in seeking out ways to connect transitioning military to jobs in the Commonwealth. In FY20, VTAP hosted two virtual Hire Vets Now Networking events in collaboration with the Virginia Chamber Foundation and the Veteran Services Foundation. These events allowed 80 employers to connect with over 400 transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses.

VTAP continued to host a DoD approved Skill Bridge program with the Navy on Naval Station Norfolk, which came about through a FY18 Memorandum of Understanding between VDVS and Navy Region Mid-Atlantic. Skill Bridge allows transitioning service members within 180 days of separation to intern for 6-12 weeks at with employers while still on active duty. Under this agreement, these employers must be V3 Certified and develop a training program for interns, and cannot receive compensation from the employers during the program. This now includes the Hire Vets Now Fellowship Program, launched in September 2019. Forty service members who completed the program in FY20 received an employment offer in his/her desired career field. As of the creation of this report, there are 28 V3-Certified employers participating with 50 TSMs enrolled, 42 completed internships, and four waiting to begin an internship in the program.

VTAP, in collaboration with the Virginia Chamber Foundation, hosted two virtual events for more than 30 senior transitioning service members from Fort Lee. The events provided insight from a panel of industry leaders who themselves were senior leaders in the military. Post event experience includes mentorship matching provided by the V3 team.

Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20
TSM, Veteran, Spouse Outreach	56,973	79,133	109,055
VTAP Events held	36	42	221
Transition Service Partnerships	198	200	199
Military Installation Visits	167	227	149
VTAP Inquiries/Client Services	--	2,565	2,433*

MILITARY MEDICS AND CORPSMEN (MMAC) PROGRAM

MISSION

The Military Medics and Corpsmen Program (MMAC) provides pathways to careers and credentialing in civilian healthcare for former service members with healthcare-related training and experience.

ACTIVITIES

As an innovative program within VDVS, MMAC continues changing the way healthcare systems hire veterans in Virginia. When medics and corpsmen transition to the civilian workforce, many lack healthcare-specific civilian certifications and licensure needed and face unnecessary challenges of their military healthcare experience and education not translating into civilian credentials.

In FY 20 MMAC addressed veteran's career and credentialing challenges daily by recruiting, reviewing, and referring candidates to healthcare employers statewide. One MMAC applicant in FY 20 put it this way: *"This program is so dedicated to Veterans that it is unbelievable. Without my job I have now, I would have never known about the hospital's nursing program I will be attending. Also, I would not have the extra income needed to support myself nor my family. MMAC was an opening of one door that led me to a hallway of hundreds of other doors."*

The MMAC staff recruits potential candidates worldwide, reviews the applicants, and then discusses with them their military background, career, and educational goals. Following this assessment, MMAC staff curates open positions and refers them to our MMAC partner healthcare systems and/or Virginia Values Veterans Program (V3) healthcare employers statewide. The employers determine the hiring decisions, the scope of practice, and potential educational opportunities. MMAC does not grant licensure and certification or financial assistance.

Now in its fifth year, MMAC continues to grow the number of its Partner Healthcare Systems (PHS). Memos of Agreement (MOA) are currently in place with 14 major healthcare systems and state agency facilities. The MOA allows MMAC-Qualified employees to apply their extensive clinical skills and experience under supervision while they obtain required civilian clinical care credentials. Almost anywhere in the Commonwealth an MMAC Applicant would like to live or work, there is likely an employment opportunity waiting for them.

In FY 20, VDVS signed MMAC Memos of Agreement with the Partner Healthcare Systems below:

- Capital Area Pediatrics
- Mary Washington Healthcare
- Central Health

MMAC is well-regarded among PHS; below are two typical comments about the program:

"The MMAC program has flourished at Bon Secours. Being the Clinical Director of the MMAC program since our first hire is an honor. The program brings pride to the veterans

performing and partnering with civilian health care teams, it enhances our staffing capabilities and brings clinical experts into the ministry.”

-Julie Selvey, Director of Nursing and Education, Bon Secours/Mercy Health

“Our MMAC personnel have proven to be a pivotal asset to the Clinical Administrator team and Carilion as a whole. The military ideals of fidelity, integrity, and altruism instilled in them coincide with our Carilion values and is shown daily through the care they provide to those we serve.”

-Adam Church, Clinical Administrator, Carilion Clinics

To increase the number of veterans in MMAC, VDVS and program managers initiated a number of outreach activities:

- MMAC staff launched a weekly MMAC Partner Healthcare System (PHS) Message and MMAC Applicant Message in the Constant Contact Format. The PHS message provides a listing of all current MMAC Applicants at each PHS and V3 Employer, it also features the MMAC "Free Agent" list of MMAC Applicants screened and ready to hire, but have not yet applied to a PHS or V3 Employer. The MMAC Applicant message contains job listings for PHS/V3 employers, special hiring alerts, and other employment resources and materials.
- MMAC Program Manager Mark Whiting participated in a radio/podcast interview on the veteran-focused show, "Coming Home Well." The interview featured a discussion of the MMAC Program, and how medically trained veterans make ideal responders for the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- A banner ad was featured on the Stars and Stripes website, www.strips.com. The campaign received 12,500 impressions per month for a total of 50,000 impressions. In conjunction with the banner ad, a similar ad ran in the *Stars and Stripes Transition Guide* with a worldwide circulation of 350,000. See screenshot and ad below:



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- MMAC Program Coordinator and former Army Combat Medic, Phil Trezza joined Army Soldier for Life (SFL) LTC, Olivia Nunn to record an SFL Podcast with a "Medic-to-Medic" theme. The program focused on the features and benefits of the MMAC Program for transitioning service members.
- MMAC Program Manager participated in The American Legion National Credentialing Summit held during the American Legion National Convention in Indianapolis. The American Legion National Credentialing Summit convened senior leaders, policymakers, VSOs, and experts from credentialing fields to address the employment challenges currently facing America's service members and veterans.
- MMAC was highlighted on the Lifetime Channel program, *Military Makeover: Operation Career* hosted by Montel Williams. The program featured a profile on Tanisha Tucker, a former Combat Medic, MMAC Applicant and current Bon Secours Health employee.
- MMAC launched a series of information sessions targeting bases in Virginia and North Carolina with significant healthcare facilities and/or concentrations of Medics and Corpsmen. Two sessions were held at the TAP/Fleet and Family Services Center (FFSC) at Portsmouth Naval Station and one at the Fort Belvoir USO Warrior and Family Center. Further briefings including one at Fort Bragg were postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- As part of an ongoing effort to boost collaboration with the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association (VHHA), MMAC delivered a presentation to the VHHA Board of Directors. The board is composed of 27 CEO, Chief Medical Officers, and executive-level leaders of healthcare systems statewide. VHHA leadership and staff along with eight of the 11 MMAC Partner Healthcare Systems (PHS) attended the meeting.
- The Virginia Healthcare Workforce Advisory Council and the council's COVID-19 Workgroup selected MMAC Program Manager, Mark Whiting to serve with them. Every quarter, the council brings together CEOs, HR Directors, and senior leadership from the public and private healthcare and education stakeholders. The focus of the council is on developing and prioritizing policy recommendations to meet current and future healthcare workforce needs in the Commonwealth.



Recording of Medic-to-Medic

Numbers and stats help tell the MMAC story. However, this MMAC Applicant tells it best: *"I was at a dead end looking for work. I was actively trying to find work and was having a hard time overall. The MMAC Program gave me confidence in myself and actually pushed me to think outside the box on what jobs I should try for or even consider. I absolutely love this program!"*

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Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20
Program Applicants	186	202	223
Total Hires	52	67	101
MMAC Qualified Hires	31	30	27
No Veteran Left Behind Hires	21	37	46

**BUDGET AND PERSONNEL:
 VETERANS EDUCATION, TRANSITION, AND EMPLOYEMENT PROGRAMS**

	FY18	FY19	FY20
Budget	\$2,744,000	\$3,071,227	\$3,183,921
Authorized Positions	29	31	35
Filled Positions – as of June 30	24	30	29

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) Program

MISSION

To monitor and provide resource connections and care coordination for behavioral health, rehabilitative, and other related supportive services to Virginia veterans, National Guard, Armed Forces Reserves, caregivers and families.

ACTIVITIES

The Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program is a focused response to the growing need to improve and expand services to our Nation's veterans and their family members coping with the impact of deployment, military service, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and operational stress and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI). It is operated by the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). VVFS serves veterans of all eras who are Virginia residents, members of the Virginia National Guard or Armed Forces Reserves (not in active federal service), and their family members.

The purpose and priorities of the VVFS program are:

- Work with veterans to develop a coordinated resources plan that identifies appropriate service providers to meet the veteran's service needs;
- Refer veterans to appropriate and available providers on the basis of needs identified in the coordinated resources plan;
- Monitor progress toward individually identified goals in accordance with the coordinated resource plan;
- Collaborate with relevant agencies of the Commonwealth, localities, and service providers;
- Build awareness of veterans service needs and the availability of the program through marketing, outreach, and training for first responders, service providers and others;
- Develop and implement a consistent method of determining how many veterans in the Commonwealth are currently in need of mental health, physical rehabilitation or other services, or may be in need of such services in the future.

In 2020, VVFS continued to expand and sustain partnerships with Federal, state, and community partners in connecting service members, veterans and their families (SMVF) to resources and services. After COVID-19, VVFS shifted services to provide increased virtual care coordination to SMVF in need of resources. Through the Governor's Challenge and the Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families in Virginia, VVFS expanded virtual trainings, such as

Military Culture Competency (MCC) and Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), to state agencies and community partners to enhance knowledge and resource connections.

Creating a continuum of care for SMVF for behavioral health, rehabilitative, and supportive services is a continual priority to ensure there is no wrong door and SMVF can quickly access services when needed. VVFS is continuing its partnership with Headstrong in Northern Virginia for mental health clinicians and an innovative art therapy program with Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS). The public-private partnership between VVFS and the VDVS Benefits Services (Benefits) division, George Mason University's Center for Psychological Services, and Dominion Energy is also continuing to provide behavioral health assessments at no cost to veterans.

VVFS continues its partnership with the Department of Social Services and Virginia 2-1-1 to enhance the statewide 2-1-1 system. With additional call specialists, increased training on military and veteran competency, and increased collection of data, the 2-1-1 system is better able to connect veterans 24/7 to community, state, and federal resources. The system connected 5,361 veterans, active duty military, and their family members to services in FY20. The majority of referral needs were for utility and housing assistance, social services, and job-related services.

Governor's Challenge and Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

VVFS continued its efforts as part of the [Governor's Challenge and the Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families](#). The City of Richmond was one of the first eight cities in the Nation to join the Mayor's Challenge, and Virginia is one of now eight states to participate in the Governor's Challenge. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) sponsor both of these initiatives.

The Virginia team is implementing the VA's [National Strategy for the Prevention of Veteran Suicide](#), which provides a framework for using a comprehensive public health approach to address the growing public health challenge among the veteran population. Secretary Daniel Carey, Health and Human Resources, and Secretary Carlos Hopkins, Veterans and Defense Affairs, co-lead the Governor's Challenge team in Virginia. The theme of the Virginia's Governor's Challenge is the "3C's – *Care, Connect, and Communicate*":

- **Care**: The provision of accessible and culturally competent behavioral health services.
 - **Strategy**: Identify and support SMVF at risk of suicide through "Asking the Question – Have you or a family member served in the military?" and suicide risk screening in community services.
- **Connect**: Bringing military/veteran specific and community services together; forming systemic partnerships.
 - **Strategy**: Increase engagement between Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS), and partner organizations for SMVF referrals.

- Communicate: Educating the SMVF population on resources and behavioral health providers on military culture and suicide prevention best practices
 - Strategy: Expand lethal means safety (particularly firearm safety) training to community stakeholders

As part of the Governor's Challenge, VVFS and Benefits joined the *Virginia's Identify SMVF, Screen for Suicide Risk, and Refer for Services* (VISR) Pilot. The goal of the VISR pilot is to develop military culture, suicide prevention, and safety planning infrastructure in community agencies including hospitals, local departments of social services, CSBs, and the Up Center Cohen Veterans Network Clinic. Starting in July 2019, VVFS has been screening all veterans and family members accessing services for suicide risk, developing safety plans, and providing resource referrals when appropriate.

As part of the VISR initiative, VVFS continues to lead the effort to train state and community agencies in Military Cultural Competency and Transition Awareness Training. After holding in-person summits in the summer of 2019 that trained 525 service providers, VVFS shifted to virtual trainings in response to COVID-19 and trained over 1,450 from March – September 2020. VVFS has also continued to distribute VDVFS/VA resource business cards that list the VA Suicide Crisis Hotline on one side and VVFS contact information for non-crisis services on the other. VVFS, DBHDS, and the VA disseminated the cards to State Police, local police departments, first responders, and other service providers across the Commonwealth.

In March 2020, VVFS joined the Virginia Law Enforcement Assistance Program to co-host Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) training to VVFS staff, emergency responders, and the Virginia Army National Guard. The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) CISM training included two courses focused on peer training – *Basic Group Crisis Intervention* and *Assisting Individuals in Crisis*. Designed to present a comprehensive and systematic crisis intervention curriculum, it prepared staff to utilize a wide range of crisis intervention services and tools to provide group crisis interventions. In addition, it trained staff in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD).

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

VVFS provides hands-on assistance navigating behavioral health, rehabilitative, and other supportive services, including peer and family support services to the most vulnerable veterans. This includes justice-involved veterans and those at risk for, or experiencing homelessness.

VVFS focuses supportive services in five areas:

1. Case coordination and management;
2. Housing and Homeless Services;
3. Justice Involved Services program (JIS);
4. Mission: Healthy Relationships and Mission: Healthy Families (MHR, MHF);
5. Veteran Peer Support (VPS) Services

CASE COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT

VVFS consists of four regions, which provide the core services of resource connections, care coordination, peer and group support to veterans and their family members.

Capacity Building Initiatives

- **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training:** VVFS staff provide SMVF crisis intervention training to partner agencies, law enforcement, and first responders. This training builds capacity in communities and solidifies partnerships throughout the regions for referral resources and care coordination. CIT training provides the program with referrals at vital intercept points to connect veterans experiencing crises to care treatment and other related supportive services.
- **Virginia National Guard:** VVFS staff continue to support ongoing planning and training with the Virginia National Guard. Through the Commander's Ready and Resilient Council (CR2C) and with the Risk Reduction, Readiness and Suicide Prevention (R3SP) office, VVFS has developed and delivered training that increases the capacity of the National Guard to provide peer support. Peer support is an evidence-based practice that increases engagement to treatment and other supportive services. VVFS staff have further proposed geographically placed collaborative groups that address individual referrals on a case-by-case basis, sharing resources and information to maximize unified support for that SMVF's specific needs.
- **International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF):** In early March 2020, staff attended (ICISF) peer facilitation training in Charlottesville. The three-day training concentrates on techniques for peer engagement and support in a professional environment that may itself be the source of immense stress or trauma exposure (or causes the professional to revisit past experiences). In addition to increasing VVFS peer support capacity, the training equips VVFS staff to support National Guard units or other groups/individuals who have experienced suicides or related traumas in the workplace. Further, the training provides a unique networking opportunity between VVFS, Virginia National Guard R3SP support staff, and local law enforcement.
- **Military Cultural Competency (MCC) Training:** VVFS staff continue to provide MCC training to community agencies, state agencies, and other providers serving veterans. In FY20, VVFS was the lead MCC trainer for the VISR pilot through the Governor's Challenge for Suicide Prevention. This training builds provider knowledge in serving SMVF and provides information on key resource connections including outreaching VVFS services.

COVID-19

At the onset of COVID-19, VVFS adjusted its in-person services to virtual services, eventually developing a hybrid posture to coordinate with community partners and meet different needs while prioritizing safety. In addition to ongoing care coordination, staff invested significant effort in maintaining real-time awareness on service partner and resource operational posture, adjusting referrals

and client advocacy. Staff observed a decrease in new clients, but an increase in returning clients and the length of time working with these clients. Despite an initial decrease in services provided, by June client referrals had increased noticeably, though lengths of interaction remain longer than pre-COVID. VVFS staff identified a small number of key barriers (relating largely to paper documents and internet access), but most have been resolved. While operations have continued, provision of services that require face-to-face interactions still present challenges in this environment.

Regional highlights

VVFS North Region serves approximately 218,200 veterans and their families in 14 counties and six independent cities in Northern Virginia.

The North Region team is comprised of 10 members: a Regional Director, Senior Resource Specialist, Veteran Justice Specialist, Veteran Peer Specialist, five full time Resource Specialists, and one part time resource specialist, strategically located across the Metropolitan area in six VDVS offices: Springfield, Fairfax City, Manassas, Ashburn, Fredericksburg, and Strasburg.

Due to the close proximity to 21 active duty military bases, the Pentagon, and Washington D.C, there is a high demand for assistance for veterans and family members particularly with mental health needs and related supportive services. In response, the region provides a high level of peer support, including groups, and care coordination for mental health. VVFS connects veterans and family members to licensed mental health clinicians who have experience working with veterans with PTSD and TBI. When veterans have barriers to accessing mental health treatment at the VA, staff are able to coordinate referrals to clinicians typically within a week. The region leverages the Veteran Services Foundation to coordinate assessments and treatment for veterans who cannot access the VA and have financial barriers.

In the past year, two staff transitioned from a contracted location in Oakton into VDVS offices. All North Region staff are now co-located with VDVS Benefits employees. Co-locating with Benefits staff has benefited both service lines. In FY20, the region received 40% of their referrals from Benefits personnel. VVFS is also able to coordinate appointments with Benefits staff and able to support Benefit clients with additional supportive serves as needed.

Regional staff continue to coordinate with six local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Washington, D.C. and Martinsburg VA Medical Center (VAMC) homeless services teams to connect veterans experiencing homelessness to permanent housing. Staff are active in meetings of Unite-Us Serving Together Collaborative and Homeless Veterans By-Name Housing to assist in care coordination with Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and other CoC partners.

Staff are part of the treatment teams for both the Fairfax County Veteran's Docket and Prince William County's Veteran Docket, working directly with judges, attorneys, probation/parole personnel, and a VA Justice Coordinator. VVFS, in collaboration with Veteran Mentors, assist justice involved veterans in accessing mental health and/or substance abuse treatment, as well as employment/vocational and education services to comply with the docket and successfully graduate from the program.

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VVFS West Region serves approximately 99,500 veterans and their families in Southwest Virginia, which includes 32 counties and 13 independent cities.

The West Region team is comprised of 11 members including: a Regional Director, Senior Resource Specialist, Veteran Justice Specialist, Veteran Peer Specialist, and seven Resource Specialists, strategically located across the 32 counties in five VDVS offices: Big Stone Gap, Abingdon, Wytheville, Danville and Lynchburg, and three CSB offices: New River Valley, Piedmont, and Alleghany Highlands. The region also provides services at satellite offices across the region and monthly itinerates in the community.

The West Region collaborates with DBHDS, VAMCs, CSBs and other key stakeholders. In FY20, the region co-hosted a two-day Southwest Virginia Crisis Intercept Mapping (CIM) for Suicide Prevention among SMVF in November 2019 with DBHDS. The SWVA CIM collaborative partnerships include VAMC's, state hospitals, CSB's, local universities and the Virginia Army National Guard who worked to solidify consistent and systematic screening of the SMVF population, safety planning for SMVF identified customers, lethal means safety planning, and bridge gaps for resource and referral contacts throughout the region.

In addition, staff provide training in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), Trauma Informed Care/Adverse Childhood Experiences (TIC/ACEs), Talk Saves Lives and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

The region is involved in Secretary Hopkins' Southwest Virginia Coalition meetings and continues to participate in strong collaborations with key stakeholders. This includes several suicide prevention committees and coalitions that address barriers to services specific to SWVA. This has also bolstered partnerships with the three VAMCs that serve veterans living in western and southwestern Virginia, including Beckley, West Virginia; Mountain Home, Tennessee, and Salem, VA. Within these partnerships, VVFS West Region has worked closely with Salem VAMC and New River Valley Community Services to bridge partnerships in implementing the Salem VAMC telehealth program.

The Salem VAMC has established a mobile telehealth program and currently has an active relationship with the New River Valley Community Services Board. They provide the service the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month and currently offer Primary Care Services with the goal to expand to mental health services. Veterans can report to a designated site, where they meet with a registered nurse who assists with connecting them to a primary care provider at the Salem VA using peripheral devices (BP cuff, thermometer, pulse ox, stethoscope, and scales) and an iPad. This process allows for decreased travel time on the part of the Veteran for simple follow-up exams for veterans with no access to broadband. VVFS is in the process of arranging similar services with the Galax Virginia Employment Commission.

Together With Veterans (TWV) is an exciting opportunity for Southwest Virginia (SWVA) proposed through the Governor's Challenge. TWV is a national best practice from the VA's Veterans Health Administration designed to bolster grass roots, veteran-led, suicide prevention in rural communities. TWV is a community-engaged process for identifying, selecting, and implementing a variety of evidence-based,

promising practices for the reduction of suicide and promotion of wellness among veterans living in rural communities.

In October 2019, SWVA TWV members attended the TWV Implementation Academy in Colorado. The SWVA TWV team returned and completed an in-depth Community Assessment and Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis that complements the SWVA CIM sessions. The SWVA TWV program is currently in Phase 3 and Phase 4 of the five phases of the community development process. SWVA TWV and the Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) completed the PARTNER Tool Survey. This process surveys key stakeholders from across SWVA to measure collaboration among people and organizations in our communities.

VVFS Central Region serves approximately 158,500 veterans and their family members in Central Virginia, encompassing 29 counties and nine independent cities.

The Central Region team is composed of 12 members: a Regional Director, a Senior Resource Specialist, the VVFS Senior Veteran Specialist, five Resource Specialists, one Justice Resource Specialist, and three Veteran Peer Specialists, strategically located in six VDVS offices: Petersburg, Chesterfield, Henrico, Charlottesville, Staunton and Fredericksburg, and two CSB offices: Richmond and Fluvanna. Three of these positions are new as of FY19, reflecting the region's increase in client numbers, case complexity and added outreach, training, and capacity building opportunities.

As part of the Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Veteran Suicide, regional staff are participating in ongoing outreach and messaging opportunities. This includes public service announcements on available resources for veterans who are struggling (or in immediate crisis) as well as short video vignettes of front-line staff describing their work and their personal connection to the veterans they are serving/supporting. The primary aim of these short videos is to humanize the programs and staff a veteran may contact, and share greater detail on the resources and support available.

VVFS East Region: The East Region serves approximately 248,800 veterans and their families in the Greater Hampton Roads area, which includes 21 counties and 11 independent cities. The East Region is comprised of eight members: Regional Director, Senior Resource Specialist-Operations, Veteran Justice Specialist, Veteran Peer Specialist, and four Resource Specialists. Three East Region staff are strategically located in three VDVS offices: Norfolk, Chesapeake, and Virginia Beach. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff no longer work from offices at the CSBs: Colonial Behavioral Health and Western Tidewater.

The East Region has also developed a new partnership with the Steven A. Cohen Clinic as they provide confidential, client-centered therapy to post-9/11 veterans and their families, regardless of discharge status or combat experience. These services are free and offer transportation or telehealth options. East Region has successfully connected veterans to the Steven A. Cohen Clinic along with receiving referrals from the clinic.

In FY20, East Region provided support and outreach at important events including the Second Annual Re-Entry Summit of the Northern Neck Re-entry and Collaborative Council, 2019 Navy Region Mid-

Atlantic Annual Retiree Summit and Career Fair, 2019 Hampton VAMC Stand Down, Haynesville Correctional Center Resource Fair, Customs and Border Protection Resource Event, Eastern Shore Resource Fair & Homeless Count, and the Alliance for Veterans Health Fair. Some of these virtual outreach/presentations include participating in Nexus meetings, the Virtual Hampton VA Medical Center Suicide Prevention Resource Fair, the Annual Caregiver Summit, and the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans Conference.

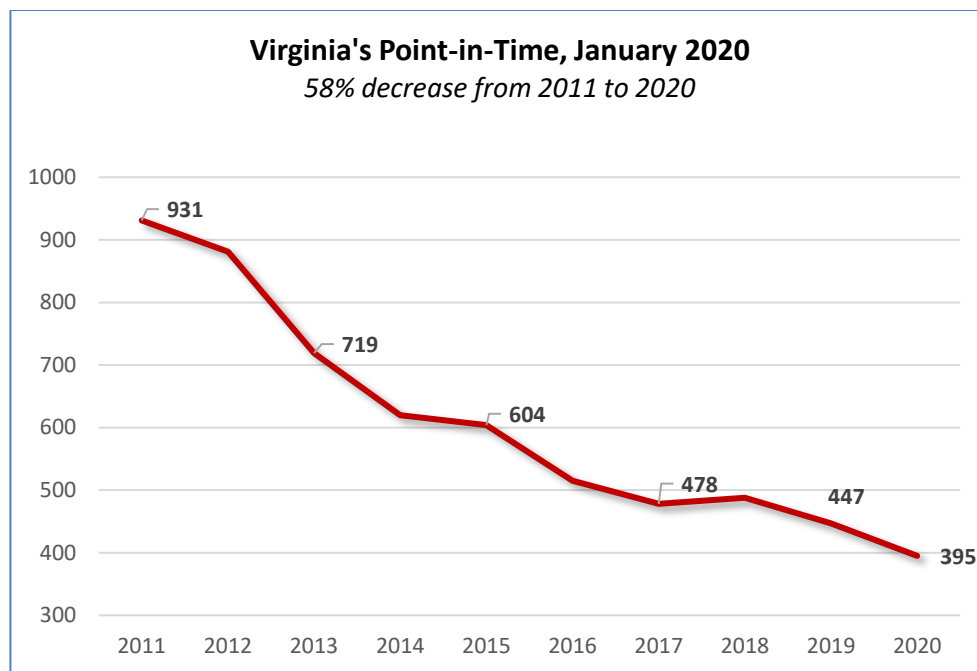
East Region also collaborates with the Hampton VA Medical Center's Homeless Services team and Suicide Prevention team to assist homeless and at-risk veterans and their families. Lastly, the East Region collaborates with the Hampton VAMC Clay Hunt Act Community Outreach Team (COT), which is part of five VAMC networks across the U.S. aiding transitioning service members seeking access to veteran health services at VA healthcare facilities and/or community healthcare services.

HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES

VVFS continues to be a leader in supporting the Commonwealth in sustaining efforts to ensure that veteran homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. The VVFS Deputy Director, who also serves as the VVFS Housing Director, continues to provide statewide coordination and leadership with federal, state, and community organizations and serves on the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans' Executive Board.

The Governor's Coordinating Council on Homelessness (GCCH), chaired by the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, continues to maintain the goal of the reduction and elimination of veteran homelessness as a key priority. As chair of the GCCH Veterans Committee, the VVFS Housing Director collaborates with three federal agencies, seven state agencies, and local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) partners to recommend strategies to the GCCH. In addition, the committee aligns priorities and works together to fill gaps and remove barriers in housing homeless veterans. In coordination with partners statewide, 947 previously homeless veterans entered permanent housing in FY20.

CoC held the annual Point in Time (PIT) Count the last week of January 2020. This year's count showed a continued decrease in veterans experiencing homelessness: 395 veterans – 325 sheltered; 72 unsheltered. This was a 12% decrease from the 2019 count of 447, and overall reduction of 58% since 2011. Women veterans experiencing homelessness had a 32% decrease from 2019, dropping from 57 to 39. VVFS continues to work with communities in sustaining efforts of reducing veteran homelessness through coordinated entry and targeting of resources.



The VDVS Homeless Fund continues leveraging Veterans Service Foundation (VSF) funds, coordinating with SSVF partners across the state to fill gaps in housing veterans experiencing homelessness and to provide prevention funds for previously chronically homeless veterans. Allowable expenses include rental deposits/arrears, utility assistance, beds, and other one-time expenses that may prevent a veteran from being housed. In FY20, VVFS used \$160,423 in VSF funds to assist 194 veterans with moves into permanent housing or homeless prevention.

The Dominion *Veteran EnergyShare* program, in conjunction with the VDVS Homeless Fund, and administered by VVFS and Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) providers across the state, continued in FY20 to provide utility assistance to homeless veterans who move into permanent housing. As in 2019, the *Veteran EnergyShare* program had \$800,000 set aside for calendar year 2020. This partnership has received national recognition as a best practice and has been vital in sustaining efforts in Virginia. In calendar year 2019, VVFS and SSVF providers utilized 1,552 *Veteran EnergyShare* vouchers for veterans experiencing homelessness or were at-risk.

In response to COVID-19, there has been an increase in homeless funding through SSVF for veterans through the CARES Act. This funding has prioritized higher risk veterans and using motel/hotel as emergency shelter while quickly moving veterans into permanent housing when possible. VVFS is also coordinating with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP) to prevent evictions and foreclosures for veterans financially affected due to COVID.

Other housing priorities that VVFS is coordinating with through the GCCH is expanding permanent supportive housing and supports through the Permanent Supportive Housing Steering Committee. These

efforts include participating in Advancing Housing-Related Supports for Individuals with Substance Use Disorders State Medicaid Learning Collaborative" with the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS). This will provide technical assistance and support to states regarding the development and expansion of innovative state strategies to provide housing-related activities and supports and care coordination under Medicaid to individuals with substance use disorders. These efforts will enhance the ability to serve veterans in need of housing and supports that may be ineligible for VA homeless resources.

VVFS JUSTICE INVOLVED SERVICES PROGRAM (JIS)

In FY20, the VVFS Justice Involved Services program (JIS) continued to offer resource connections, care coordination, and support to Virginia's veterans and service members across the criminal justice spectrum, including diversion, incarceration and in-community supervision. JIS offers direct assistance to veterans and service members of any era, regardless of discharge status. The program provides services to veterans in treatment dockets, in local jails and state prisons, and on probation and/or parole supervision. JIS includes a formalized referral process, an electronic mailbox for justice-involved referrals (VVFS Justice Mailbox - justice.vvfs@dvs.virginia.gov), and VVFS Veteran Justice Specialists (VJS) in each region to work with justice-involved veterans pre- and post-release.

JIS's comprehensive needs assessment (pre-release) identifies areas of need the veteran may experience related to behavioral healthcare, rehabilitative support, employment, education, benefits, peer support, or housing. The assigned VJS provides direct support and assistance to the veteran/service member with linkage to resources designed to address those needs in the community. The VJS now provide intakes for incarcerated veterans and other justice-involved veterans virtually via phone due to the pandemic in addition to in-person service by appointment only. The JIS Criminal Justice Director (CJD) monitors the early release process in VADOC and the local jails, and receives updates on veteran releases and early releases from VADOC. The CJD conducts statewide conference calls with the VVFS VJS quarterly to discuss cases, provide updates, and deliver technical assistance and training.

In FY20, VDVS through its JIS program continued to promote the creation of Veteran Treatment Dockets in Virginia in collaboration with the Supreme Court of Virginia, and provided technical assistance to various jurisdictions. There are seven Veteran Treatment Dockets in Virginia: Fairfax County General District Court, Fairfax County Circuit Court, Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Hampton Circuit Court, Norfolk Circuit Court, Prince William General District Court, and Rappahannock (Spotsylvania) Circuit Court. VVFS Veteran Justice Specialist (VJS) regional staff are active members of the veteran docket team and connect veterans to resources in the community. The VJS staff continued to work with veteran dockets during the pandemic via virtual meetings and videoconferencing.

Virginia is one of five states to receive the Veterans Treatment Court Statewide Strategic Planning Technical Assistance award from the Center for Court Innovation (CCI). The CJD serves on the Veterans Docket Statewide Strategic Planning team. The goal of the team is to assist in the creation of veteran dockets in Virginia. As part of the team, CJD will assist with statewide efforts to increase veteran identification in the criminal justice system at multiple intercept points, to include identifying veterans in Virginia local and regional jails. VDVS also provided a letter of support to the Virginia Supreme Court, Office of the Executive Secretary's application for the Bureau of Justice Assistance grant for veteran treatment docket statewide funding.

In addition, JIS collaborated with the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) and the VA for the Compensation and Pension (C&P) examination process for incarcerated veterans. The CJD is the statewide contact for the VA and VA-contracted vendors to request C&P exams for incarcerated veterans. The CJD coordinates C&P exams for incarcerated veterans with the VADOC statewide representative. Due to the pandemic, in-person C&P exams for incarcerated veterans are suspended; however, the CJD and VADOC collaborated with one of the VA-contracted vendors to conduct C&P behavioral health exams via telehealth. The CJD monitors and tracks pending exams and will assist in processing those exams once in-person visits resume at VADOC correctional facilities.

JIS collaborates with other key partners that include the Virginia Regional Jail Association, the Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA), the Attorney General's office, and other community partners. VDV provided a collaborative partner letter to VADOC to support their Bureau of Justice Assistance application for the *Collaborative Mental Health and Anti-Recidivism Initiative* project grant. The goal of this project is to establish a comprehensive service delivery plan to justice-involved individuals with mental health needs from intake through post-release supervision. If VADOC receives the grant, the CJD will serve on the advisory committee for the project.

JIS teammates collaborate with the VA's Veteran Justice Outreach Specialists (VJOs) and VA Prison Re-entry Coordinator to promote the usage of the VA's *Veterans Re-entry Search Service (VRSS)* in order to improve identification of incarcerated veterans in jails and prisons. VADOC has signed on to VRSS and is using this system to assist in identifying veterans in the VADOC correctional facilities across Virginia. There are also seven local jails using VRSS. As part of the Virginia Treatment Court Statewide Collaborative team and in partnership with the VA Justice Outreach staff, the CJD is developing a statewide VRSS training team and training curriculum to assist in providing training to local jails on using VRSS. This team will also market VRSS to local and regional jails across the State. The goal of accurate veteran identification in local and regional jails is to potentially increase veteran dockets in Virginia and connect justice-involved veterans to treatment and support.

MISSION: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS & MISSION: HEALTHY FAMILIES

Mission: Healthy Relationships (MHR) and *Mission: Healthy Families* (MHF) are retreats held at various locations in Virginia to focus on effective communication skills through the provision of individualized and group support in a workshop format.

Mission: Healthy Relationships is designed to foster relationship enhancement and effective communication skills for couples. It is directed at committed couples who have experienced deployment, transition or other military stressors and are coping with the effects of operational combat stress, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI). The goal of the workshop is to improve overall health and well-being, and relationship satisfaction. MHR was adapted from "8 Hours to a Lifetime of Relationship Satisfaction," a workshop designed by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Couples who participate in the weekend-long workshop are taught using a skills-based approach to relationship strengthening, enhancing relationship communication and resiliency skills, and are provided connections to behavioral health, rehabilitative and supportive services. In FY20, VVFS held workshops in Richmond and Williamsburg, with 38 couples attending. VVFS postponed the workshop planned for April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mission: Healthy Families (MHF) retreats enhance family well-being for veteran families by allowing them to step away from daily stressors and support one another as a unit. The retreats allow adults and children to engage in activities that help strengthen skill building, resiliency and communication skills within the family unit. The weekend provides time for families to engage in directed and non-directed activities that focus on strengthening relationships and the health and welfare of each other.

In FY20, VVFS hosted one workshop at Smith Mountain Lake, with veterans and family members from 17 families in attendance, with 78 total participants. MHF provides indoor and outdoor family-bonding time. VVFS postponed the planned June 2020 MHF event due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

VETERAN PEER SUPPORT (VPS)

The Veteran Peer Support (VPS) program leverages professional peer training and personal experiences to develop peer-to-peer relationships with veterans to support increasing self-reliance, health, wellness, and quality of life. Specifically focusing on veterans struggling with behavioral and rehabilitative needs affected by military service but presently disinterested in clinical treatment, VVFS Peer Specialists link with veterans who share similar military and post-military experiences.

The VPS program facilitates veteran support groups, providing structure to promote personal growth, self-awareness, coping strategies, and the opportunity to interact with other veterans. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VVFS has adapted these groups to a virtual setting to facilitate connection and mutual support. The growth of these virtual meetings helps to meet the need of veterans to avoid isolation within their communities.

VVFS has provided support to the Virginia National Guard (VANG) as they work towards implementing its first wave of peer support training to select soldiers and family members. The training, intended to better familiarize soldiers and their families with the benefits and availability of peer support, will provide in-depth instruction on how to initiate and maintain a peer-level conversation with a person seeking help, how to engage with similar lived experience (where appropriate), and how to best connect that person to VVFS or other Veteran Peer Supports. This training along with the creation of future regional groups will assist in identifying National Guard personnel who may be experiencing behavioral health barriers. Additionally, VVFS has provided assistance to the VANG Suicide Prevention Coordinator.

SNAPSHOT OF VVFS SERVICES

VVFS provides resource referrals, comprehensive behavioral and rehabilitative health care coordination, and supportive services to Virginia's Veterans, National Guard, Armed Forces Reserves, caregivers and family members.

- 1,770** Veterans and family members served in FY20
- 2,852** Total individual services provided in FY20
- 381** Total behavioral health services provided in FY20
- 40** Total rehabilitative/medical services provided in FY20
- 2,431** Total supportive services provided in FY20
- 423** Total group services provided in FY20
- 114** Veterans and family members served by *Mission: Healthy Relationships* and *Mission: Healthy Families* in FY20
- 1,159** Individuals trained in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) by VVFS
- 2,337** Individuals trained in Military Cultural Competency Training by VVFS
- 156** Veterans who received Behavioral Health Assistance through funding allocated by the Veterans Services Foundation

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

- 395** Estimated number of homeless veterans in Virginia on a single night in January 2020
- 72** Estimated number of unsheltered veterans in Virginia on a single night in January 2020
- 947** Number of homeless veterans housed statewide in FY20
- 194** Veterans experiencing homelessness who received financial assistance through VVFS in FY20

Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20
Individual Services Delivered	5,714*	3,196*	2,852**
Outreach and Training Events	NA*	729	507**

*VVFS shifted to a new data system in the middle of FY18 and changed how service data is collected. Previously, individual service contacts were counted separately, but starting in March 2018, all service contacts are collected under one individual service type within the Individualized Service Plan.

**Services and events decreased due to COVID-19

Veterans Care Centers

MISSION

Provide veteran residents with exceptional care in a home-like environment that enhances their sense of well-being. To achieve this, VDVS veterans care centers:

- 1. Take a “whole person” approach that focuses not just on providing physical health care to residents, but also providing recreational, therapeutic, and social opportunities that contribute to overall physical and mental health;*
- 2. Operate the care centers as symbols of the Commonwealth’s commitment to her veterans; and*
- 3. Serve the greatest possible number of veterans by maintaining the highest practical facility census at state veterans care centers.*

OVERVIEW

Virginia’s veterans care centers provide residential (in-patient) care services to Virginia veterans, including skilled nursing care, Alzheimer’s/memory care, and short-term rehabilitative care. Domiciliary (assisted living) care is also provided at the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VCC) in Roanoke. All 424 beds (224 in Roanoke, 200 in Richmond) are certified for both Medicare and Medicaid. Revenue sources include: Medicaid, Medicare, per diem payments from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and private funding sources. Honorably discharged veterans who reside in or entered active duty from Virginia with a need for skilled nursing care are eligible to reside at one of Virginia’s veterans care centers. It is an honor to care for all our Virginia veterans, whether short or long term.

COVID-19 had a substantial effect on the care centers’ operations. Census levels dropped during the last four months of FY20, and both care centers suspended new admissions while implementing highly restrictive infection control protocols (reducing/suspending in-facility activities, social distancing, and increased personal protective equipment (PPE) usage). At the same time, expenses increased due to testing requirements, PPE purchases, and extra staffing costs. Census levels will continue to be down, while expenses will be above average, until a COVID-19 vaccine is deployed and both care centers can resume substantial numbers of new admissions. The care centers are very grateful for the support they received from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC) located adjacent to each care center.

New Construction: Jones & Cabacoy VCC and Puller VCC

The two new Veterans Care Centers will be 128-bed facilities with private rooms that provide residential (in-patient) care services (skilled nursing care, Alzheimer’s/memory care, and long/short-term rehabilitative care). Construction of both new care centers commenced in March 2020 and their target opening is in the first half of 2022.

The Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center (VCC) is named for Medal of Honor recipient Col. William A. Jones, III and SSgt. Christopher Cabacoy, a Virginia Beach native who was killed by insurgents in Afghanistan.

The Puller VCC is named for U.S. Marine Corps Lt. General Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller, his son, Marine Corps Lt. Lewis B. Puller, Jr. and Lewis Jr.’s wife, former state Senator Toddy Puller, who, along with Senators Bryce Reeves and Louise Lucas, and Delegates Kirk Cox, Rich Anderson, and Chris Stolle, among many others, was instrumental in securing funding for the new care centers.

Administrators for the two facilities will be hired eight months prior to first residents entering the facilities. Key staff, including the Directors of Nursing, HR, IT, Marketing/ Admissions, and Maintenance, followed by direct care, pharmacy, dietary, housekeeping, and building/grounds crews, will then be brought aboard. VDVS anticipates approximately 60 team members on board before the first resident is admitted. Staffing will increase ahead of increased admissions; each care center expects to be a full occupancy 17 months after opening.

Virginia Veterans Care Center

The Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Roanoke, adjacent to the Salem VA Medical Center (VAMC), is a 224-bed facility (196 skilled, 28 assisted living) providing high-quality, short-term rehabilitative and long-term health care. 60 of the 196 beds are dedicated solely to the care of veterans who require a secure environment related to the effects of dementia. A 28-bed unit serves the needs of veterans who require assisted-living/domiciliary care. In FY20, VVCC provided 62,815 patient days of skilled nursing or Alzheimer’s/memory care, which is 88% occupancy of 196 beds and 9,411 patient days in assisted living, which is 92% capacity.

ACTIVITIES

VVCC provides high-quality, on-site physical, occupational and speech therapy, as well as many other ancillary health care services. VVCC offers amenities such as Wi-Fi, a library with computer access, a chapel, solariums on each hallway, a wheelchair accessible nature trail and deck, and a no charge on-site barber shop.



WWII Livestream Ceremony

Staff work throughout the year in coordination with 30 veterans service organizations (VSOs) and over 120 individual volunteers, on an array of activities that historically includes trips to the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Salem Red Sox baseball games, and the Fishing Rodeo. On-site activities are planned as well, including equine activities, an annual apple festival and two carnivals. VVCC staff also help facilitate resident participation with Honor Flight.

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VVCC recognizes special occasions, including Valentine's Day and Women Veterans Week in March, with individualized recognition. VVCC raised approximately \$3,000 in September for Alzheimer's Awareness month, and approximately \$12,150 for Operation Holiday Spirit (OHS), to purchase holiday gifts for all care center residents. OHS donations also provide funding and equipment for resident activities and special needs.

Despite COVID-19 visitation restrictions, VVCC staff helped residents and families stay connected virtually, through drive-by visits and the construction of an outdoor visitation station. During these unprecedented times, VVCC has received enormous community support and has increased use of technology in effort to stay connected.



*Keeping VVCC residents and families connected!
Socially distanced "family parade"*

Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center

The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC), located on the campus of the McGuire VAMC in Richmond, has 200 skilled nursing care beds in private rooms, of which 40 beds are dedicated to the care of Alzheimer's/memory care. In 2020, SBVCC provided 67,953 patient days, which is 93% occupancy, or an average of 186 beds filled. Along with long-term residents, SBVCC has some veterans on a short-term basis for rehabilitation, as they transition from hospital care back to their homes and families.

ACTIVITIES

SBVCC provides high-quality on-site physical, occupational, and speech therapy, therapeutic recreation, along with social and spiritual activities. Other amenities include on-site pharmacy, fully equipped barber and beauty shop, activity and game rooms, library, resident lounges in each nursing neighborhood, courtyards, and an outdoor walking trail.

Prior to COVID, SBVCC hosted held a variety of events for the residents, including horseback riding at the Lonesome Dove Equestrian Center, Richmond flying Squirrels baseball games, and a trip to the Washington Football Team training camp. Volunteers form a core that helps to keep residents happy and healthy. SBVCC was able to complete renovations to its community room and craft room. Donated funds purchased a large TV sound system for veterans to enjoy.

Unfortunately, many activities drastically changed with COVID-19. For several weeks, activities were held with individuals in their rooms and staff became creative in doing activities such as hallway bingo, hallway trivia, and hallway scattagories. Staff worked diligently to help veterans keep in touch with their loved ones through social media and FaceTime. As health experts learned more about COVID-19, SBVCC was able to hold small gatherings outside (e.g. trivia,

music, ice cream social), while maintaining social distancing. SBVCC also set up a no-contact visitation station for our veterans and families to use outside.



*Fort Lee soldiers visit
with SBVCC Residents*



*SBVCC caring for the health and
safety of residents!*

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services
COMMISSIONER'S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20*
<i>Virginia Veterans Care Center</i>			
Patient Days—Nursing / % of beds occupied	61,505 / 94%	62,080 / 94%	62,815/88%
Patient Days—Assisted Living / % of beds occupied	12,543 / 57%	12,498 / 57%	9,411/92%
<i>Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center</i>			
Patient Days—Nursing / % of beds occupied	70,275 / 96%	70,211 / 96%	67,953 93%
Resources **			
<i>Virginia Veterans Care Center</i>			
Appropriation	\$27,819,459	\$27,455,001	\$24,977,075
Authorized f/t Positions	262	288	262
Filled f/t Positions – June 30	225	239	249
<i>Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center</i>			
Appropriation	\$29,367,470	\$32,672,319	\$39,865,486
Authorized f/t Positions	313	313	313
Filled f/t Positions – June 30	294	290	287

* In FY20, 32 assisted living beds (in 16 rooms) were converted to 16 skilled-nursing beds (in 16 rooms) to allow VVCC to provide post-acute short-term recovery care for veterans. This conversion took place in January 2020. This conversion accounts for the drop in the skilled-nursing occupancy rate, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the occupancy rate in the assisted living (domiciliary) unit improved markedly (because of fewer beds), but this rate too has been affected by COVID-19.

** Appropriation levels for the veterans care centers reflect the maximum amount that each has the authority to spend. Actual spending levels were lower. Because the care centers rely on facility-generated revenue (Medicaid, Medicare, VA per diem, etc.) they can only spend what they earn, which is usually much less than authorization.

Additional details on Care Center services provided found in Appendix D

Veterans Cemeteries

MISSION

Provide dignified final resting places in places of honor in perpetuity for Virginia's veterans and their eligible dependents.

ACTIVITIES

The Cemetery Services section operates and lovingly maintains Virginia's three state veterans cemeteries: the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk; the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia; and the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin. All three provide final resting places for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen in places of honor, dignity, respect, and remembrance. All cemeteries accommodate in-ground burial of casketed remains, in-ground inurnment of cremated remains, and aboveground inurnment of cremated remains in a columbarium. Southwest Virginia State Veterans Cemetery also offers a green burial option for cremated remains in its scatter garden.

In FY20, Virginia's three state veterans cemeteries conducted 1,852 committal services, each of which were solemn, dignified events honoring those who took up arms to defend our nation. We are honored that Virginia's veterans and their families chose our cemeteries for their loved-one's final resting place. In FY20, several severe weather events and the COVID-19 pandemic did not stop the cemeteries' staff from performing scheduled burials and providing the highest level of customer service to the families. In FY20, cemetery staff conducted tours for the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the new VDVS Commissioner, the Virginia Board of Veterans Services, and welcomed state and federal elected and appointed officials.

The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk completed a \$10.2M Federal grant construction project, which added an additional 7,000 pre-installed concrete crypts in a new section, complete with an in-ground irrigation system, renovation of the administration building, and a decorative fence and entryway along the cemetery's front entrance.

Virginia's veterans cemeteries submitted a VA grant application to the National Cemetery Administration for an estimated \$5.2M crypt and infrastructure project at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia. This project will improve the existing infrastructure and add over 3,600 pre-placed crypts, ensuring the cemetery can accommodate casketed burials for next thirty-plus years.

In FY20, the VA conducted their required annual VA grant compliance inspections at both the Amelia and Dublin cemeteries. Dublin scored 97% and Amelia scored 90%, which certified that



Boy Scouts assist in the annual Wreaths Across America program in Amelia

both cemeteries were fully compliant with VA's grant requirements. Suffolk's inspection, which was scheduled for March, was rescheduled for September 2020 due to COVID-19.

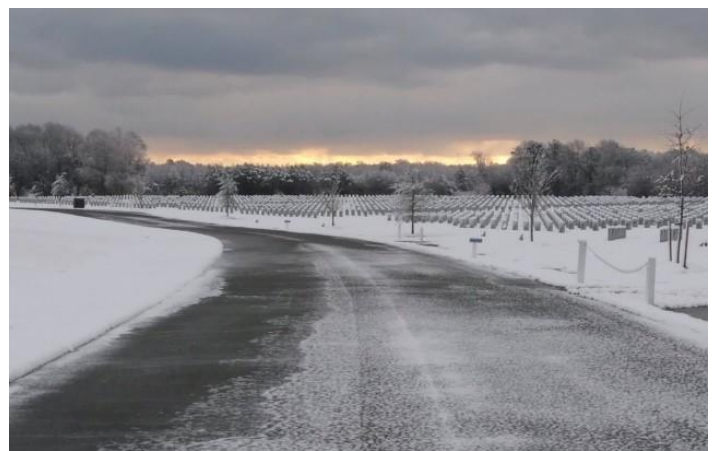
Virginia's state veterans cemeteries follow burial eligibility requirements set by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces who dies on active duty, retires or is discharged from military service under conditions other than dishonorable is eligible for interment in a state veterans cemetery. Also eligible for burial, if they meet certain requirements, are members of the Reserves and National Guard, Commissioned Officers with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Merchant Marines. Veteran's spouses, including widows/widowers are eligible for internment in the same gravesite as the veteran. Additionally, certain dependents, including unmarried sons/daughters under age 21, and when applicable, an unmarried adult son/daughter, who before the age of 21 became permanently incapable of self-support due to physical or mental disability, are also eligible for burial at state veterans cemeteries.

VDVS encourages veterans and family members to complete a "pre-application" so that required documentation (discharge documents, marriage certificates, etc.) are on file to expedite scheduling at their time of need. Filing a pre-application is an indication of intent to be buried in a state veterans cemetery, in advance of the veteran's or spouse's death, and helps the families and the cemeteries successfully prepare for internment. Pre-application forms are available for download on the VDVS website.

In FY20, VDVS once again saw a rise in pre-application filings at each cemetery; The Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Amelia) saw an 8% increase; Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery (Suffolk) saw a 10% increase; and, Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin) saw a 7% increase. Cemetery staff conduct dozens of outreach events in communities around Virginia each year to explain what the state has to offer and get information and pre-applications into the hands of veterans. The local VSOs are often significant partners in these outreach events.

VDVS receives a plot allowance from the VA for each veteran buried in a Virginia state veterans cemetery. The 2020 reimbursement per veteran was \$796, up from \$780 in FY19. Eligible spouses and dependents are charged a nominal fee of \$300 to offset the cost of operations. The remaining Cemetery Services' budget comes from the General Fund, and is used for personnel, burial operations, grounds maintenance, operating equipment replacement and maintenance, and upkeep of cemetery buildings.

All three cemeteries are open to the public for visitation Monday through Friday during daylight hours. Cemetery administrative offices are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and there is a special phone number for funeral directors to call and reach staff for scheduling internment ceremonies. The staff understands the importance for families to visit on weekends and holidays. Each cemetery is staffed with one employee



Winter weather at Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk

on Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Independence Day, and on all Saturdays. These personnel are able to assist families with locating and accessing a loved-one's gravesite, as well as ensuring the public restrooms are clean and accessible. Each cemetery hosts various special events and services throughout the year, such as wreath-laying ceremonies, bench and monument dedications, and flag placements each Veterans Day and Memorial Day.



Wreaths adorn the in-ground cremation section at Southwest Virginia State Veterans Cemetery in Dublin

Memorial Day services are sponsored by local veterans groups, and Veterans Day open house events, while not formal services, educate veterans and family members about burial benefits available to veterans and eligible family members at each of our three cemeteries.

All three cemeteries hold holiday wreath-laying events in December. Live wreaths with red bows are placed on each gravesite, as is done at all VA national cemeteries. Local non-profit organizations purchase the wreaths for these special events. In FY20, The Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin) received donated

funds of approximately \$12,000, while Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery (Suffolk) received donated funds totaling over \$100,000. The Virginia State Veterans Cemetery (Amelia) is organizing a new wreaths committee. Donations at this time are going to Wreaths Across America, who in turn deliver about 1,000 wreaths per year to the cemetery.

For those veterans who pass away without family, VDVS cemetery staff work with local organizations and civic groups, law enforcement, public health officials, funeral directors, the Virginia Army National Guard Funeral Honors Program and individual citizens to identify the unclaimed remains of veterans who deserve a dignified final resting place. This year several unaccompanied veterans were respectfully laid to rest.

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services
COMMISSIONER'S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20
<i>Virginia Veterans Cemetery</i>			
Interments	426	484	488
Pre-applications on file*	3,120	3,219	3,474
<i>Horton Veterans Cemetery</i>			
Interments	1,211	1,220	1,179
Pre-applications on file*	6,610	6,876	7,408
<i>Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery</i>			
Interments	228	211	185
Pre-applications on file*	2,799	2,984	1,790
Resources			
Budget	\$1,888,307	\$3,076,394	\$3,559,629
General Fund	\$1,088,538	\$1,129,809	\$1,548,044
Non-General Fund	\$799,769	\$1,946,585	\$2,011,585
Authorized positions	28	28	32
Filled positions as of June 30	28	28	29

* Filing a pre-application is an indication of intent to be buried in a state veterans cemetery, and is a way to submit, in advance of the veterans death, all necessary documentation to verify eligibility for burial in a state veterans cemetery. For further information, please refer to Appendix E

Virginia War Memorial

MISSION

Honor our Veterans, Preserve our History, Educate our Youth, and Inspire Patriotism in All

ACTIVITIES

The Virginia War Memorial is the Commonwealth of Virginia's premier memorial and educational center honoring the memory of all Virginians who demonstrated a willingness to serve and fight in defense of the United States from World War II through today. Through educational outreach, exhibits, documentary films, and patriotic programming, staff and volunteers strive to educate Virginians of all ages and backgrounds.

The *Shrine of Memory - 20th Century* (World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and Gulf War) was at capacity, and so the *Shrine of Memory - Global War on Terrorism* expansion was necessary to recognize and honor all of the Virginians who have made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in the Global War on Terrorism.

On February 29, 2020, sixty-four years to the day from the Grand Opening of the Virginia War Memorial (February, 29 1956) the Virginia War Memorial opened its expansion. This expansion includes the *C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion*, named after WWII veteran and Richmond businessman Ken Wright, who passed away in the fall of 2019. The pavilion includes a new Exhibit Hall, Virginia Medal of Honor Gallery, a Veterans' Art Gallery, a 350-seat presentation hall, and state-of-the-art Distance Learning Center. It also added a new underground parking deck with over 170 parking spaces to accommodate the expected increase in visitors.



Cutting the ribbon on the 28,000 square foot expansion: February 29, 2020

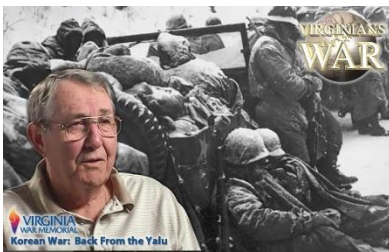


12,000 American Flags on the Virginia War Memorial's "Hill of Heroes"

Since the opening of the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center in September of 2010, the Virginia War Memorial has seen visitation grow from 20,000 visitors a year to over 72,000 per year (before construction of the expansion project began). With the completion of the expanded facility and new parking capabilities, VDVVS anticipates these numbers to continue to grow once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

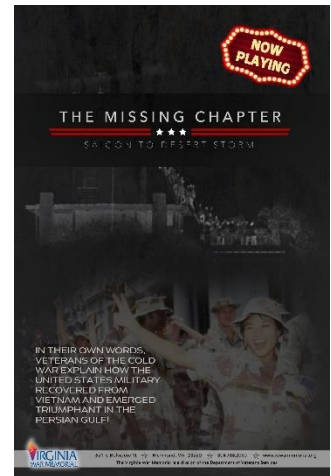
VIRGINIANS AT WAR FILM SERIES

In FY20, the Virginia War Memorial, along with the Virginia War Memorial Foundation, worked on the next installments of the popular and award winning *Virginians At War* documentary series with the completion of *The Missing Chapter: Saigon to the Gulf War* and *The Korean War - Back From the Yalu*. *The Missing Chapter* examines the military's rebuilding from Vietnam to a position of dominance in the Persian Gulf. It includes 14 interviews with Virginians during this timeframe, including CSM Jeff Mellinger (Ret.), the last active Vietnam draftee, and Retired Generals Tilelli, Zinni, and Flowers. The film premiered at Virginia War Memorial on November 8, 2019. *The Korean War* features interviews with 17 Virginia service members who witnessed first-hand the Korean War in heavy fighting in some of the harshest weather conditions imaginable between 1950-1953.



The Virginia War Memorial's **Summer Teacher Institutes** are successful partnerships with Virginia educators to assist in professional development, resulting in recertification points for teachers. In the summer of 2019, 86 teachers attended one of three Institutes around Virginia. The daylong programs target English and Social Studies

teachers, but are open to all Virginia teachers, teaching all grades, and focus on the impact of war on technology, economics, culture, minorities (including women) and more. The 2019 Teacher Institutes were held in Norfolk, Fairfax County (Fort Belvoir), and Roanoke. The Education staff also participated in the Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission's Teacher Symposia, in Staunton and Richmond, meeting 33 additional teachers and partnering with a number of other institutions throughout Virginia.



EVENTS

As with every year, FY20 was full of patriotic events and solemn ceremonies, as well as innovative partnerships to bring unique experiences for learning about Virginia's and our nation's history. Some highlights included:

- Commonwealth Patriot Day with over 250 visitors;
- Teacher Focus Groups in October and November;
- JROTC Recognition Days in November;
- Native American Heritage Month: *Divergent Paths*, featuring Powhatan Red Cloud-Owen of the Chickahominy and Chief Ken Adams of the Upper Mattaponi;
- Veterans Day celebrating the 101st Anniversary to the end of the *War to End All Wars*;
- Participated in the Richmond Christmas parade with veterans and the 1942 Packard and 1943 Jeep;

- Grand Opening of the Veterans' Art Gallery, a one-of-a-kind gallery, featuring veteran artists; Mike Fay (Featured Artist), Diana de Avila, Pamela Corwin, Bernie Donato, Dennis Hicks, and Saxon Martinez;
- *Tales of the Tuskegee Airmen* which included a dinner with Richmond City Public Schools students prior to the evening public program for Black History Month;
- Grand Opening, celebrating the 64th Anniversary of the War Memorial with over 1,100 participants;
- Women's History Month: Screening of *Megan Leavey* followed by panel discussion with Virginian women veterans;
- Commonwealth's Virtual Memorial Day Art Contest;
- Commonwealth's Memorial Day ceremony and partnered with a local TV station reaching over 38,000 viewers;
- Hosted the 2nd Annual, *Hill of Heroes*, honoring the nearly 12,000 Virginians inscribe in the Shrine;
- Began streaming nationwide student programming through Streamable Learning and public Livestreams through Zoom, with 33 programs and over 1,500 virtual attendees;
- Developed partnership with RUI (Retirement Unlimited, Inc.) - monthly programs for retirement communities throughout the state;
- Continued partnership with the Lifelong Learning Institute, highlight was a seven hour program on WWII with two live interviews of WWII veterans; and
- Continued the Mighty Pen Project (MPP) with three sessions and over 35 participating veterans.

Annual ceremonies continued to bring Virginians together to remember and create shared experiences. On November 11, 2019, approximately 1,100 attendees gathered at the Bruce E. Heilman Amphitheater for the annual ***Commonwealth's Veterans Day Ceremony*** to honor all Americans who have served, or are currently serving. The ceremony commemorated the 101th anniversary of the Armistice that ended WWI. Governor Ralph Northam and Secretary Carlos Hopkins made remarks while the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) Band and the St. Andrews Legion Pipes and Drums provided ceremonial and historic music. The winners of the Virginia War Memorial Veterans Day Essay Contest, Caroline Vernon from Patrick County HS and Brooke Eubanks of Chickahominy MS, read their winning entries.

For **Memorial Day Weekend**, the ***Commonwealth's Memorial Day Ceremony***, supported by CBS-6 broadcasting and live-streaming across the Commonwealth due to COVID guidance, was held in the *Shrine of Memory-20th Century*, with approximately 40 people in attendance and over 38,000 viewers. Governor Ralph Northam provided a prerecorded message; Secretary Carlos Hopkins and Dr. Clay



*Dr. Clay Mountcastle during the
Commonwealth's Memorial Day
Observance*

Mountcastle gave remarks. Ava Mister and Derek Sprincis were recognized as the winners of the Virginia War Memorial's 2020 *Marocchi Memorial Scholarship*. The four winners of the Memorial Day Art Contest were also recognized: Roland Thompson, Catherine Firda, Siera Bullington, and Jasmine Stolz. Wreaths were laid at the base of Memory in the Virginia War Memorial's Shrine. At the conclusion of the ceremony, VDVS presented a prerecorded piece featuring the three state veterans cemeteries.

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services
COMMISSIONER'S 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Annual Services Provided	FY18	FY19	FY20
Visitors	51,479	51,479	26,916
Resources			
Budget	\$1,308,558	\$1,471,355	\$1,808,577*
Authorized Positions	8	9	11
Filled Positions – June 30 (9 f/t, 2 p/t)	8	9	11

* Increased budget reflects additional operations and facility maintenance costs associated with new Wright Pavilion.

VDVS FY20 Budget and Staffing

VDVS POSITION LEVELS – AUTHORIZED VS. FILLED AS OF JUNE 30, 2020

Staffing by Service Area	Authorized	Filled
Benefits	104	95
Education	9	9
Transition & Employment	24	20
Virginia Veteran and Family Support	47	43
Veterans Care Centers	602	516
Veterans Cemeteries	32	28
Virginia War Memorial	9	9
Administration	19	13
Totals	836	733





VDVS FY20 BUDGET (APPROPRIATION)
AS APPROVED BY THE 2020 GENERAL ASSEMBLY (CHAPTER 1289)
 (NOTE: DOES NOT INCLUDE CENTRAL ACCOUNT DISTRIBUTIONS)

Program	Fund Source				Program Total
	General Fund	Special (fee for service)	Dedicated Special (Donations)	Federal Trust (federal contract)	
Benefit Services	\$8,418,957	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,418,957
Virginia Veteran and Family Support	\$4,584,824	\$0	\$0	\$282,054	\$4,866,878
Education, Transition, and Employment	\$3,183,921	\$0	\$0	\$904,188	\$4,088,115
Care Centers	\$50,000	\$45,544,638	\$0	\$27,264,789	\$76,859,427
Cemeteries	\$1,429,864	\$348,466		\$1,663,119	\$3,441,449
Virginia War Memorial	\$1,471,355	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,471,355
Administration	\$2,357,466	\$416,298	\$0	\$0	\$2,773,744
Non-VDVS programs:					
Granting Freedom	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000
Veterans Services Foundation	\$0	\$0	\$796,500	\$0	\$796,500
VDVS Total:	\$21,696,393	\$46,309,402	\$796,500	\$30,114,150	\$102,916,425

Boards

The Department of Veterans Services' work is guided and supported by two (formerly three) boards, comprised of legislators and citizen appointees:

1. Board of Veterans Services
2. Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
3. Virginia War Memorial Board (sunsetting December 31, 2019)

Listed below is a short report for each board, which includes:

- Mission statement of the board;
- The board's powers and duties (from the Code of Virginia);
- A message from the board's chairman;
- A list of board members.



*BVS Chairman Michael Dick (r) at Virginia War Memorial
Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony 2019. Next to
Chairman Dick is Pearl Harbor survivor Mr. Len Gardner*



BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

MISSION

The Board of Veterans Services supports the Department of Veterans Services by providing expertise and insight into best practices in benefits claims services, medical and health care management, and cemetery operations; performance measurements and general management principles; and nonprofit volunteer operations and management. The Board develops reasonable and effective policy recommendations related to the services provided to veterans of the armed forces of the United States and their eligible spouses, orphans, and dependents by the Department of Veterans Services.

§ 2.2-2454. Powers and Duties of the Board

1. Advise and make recommendations to the Commissioner of Veterans Services upon such matters as may arise in the performance of his duties;
2. Investigate issues related to the provision of care and services to veterans, upon request of the Commissioner of Veterans Services or the Governor;
3. Study all matters affecting the welfare of Virginia citizens who are veterans or dependents or survivors of such veterans, and make recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services;
4. Develop recommendations for policies and procedures related to the efficient and effective delivery of the services provided by the Department of Veterans Services;
5. Establish policies related to the coordinated delivery of veterans services, in consultation with those agencies, entities, and organizations, including counties, cities, towns or other political subdivisions of the Commonwealth capable of providing such services;
6. Monitor the administration of all laws concerning veterans and their dependents;
7. Review and advise the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services on the Department's strategic plan;
8. Based on rigorous cost-benefit-value analysis, provide recommendations to the Department of Veterans Services regarding future projects and the acquisition of facilities that may benefit the State's veterans, including but not limited to veterans cemeteries and veterans care centers; and
9. Provide recommendations to the Department of Veterans Services and the Veterans Services Foundation created in § [2.2-2715](#) regarding gifts, grants, and other resources from public and private entities and organizations to support veterans services.

(2003, cc. [657](#), [670](#); 2004, c. [697](#); 2005, c. [758](#); 2008, cc. [467](#), [768](#); 2010, c. [64](#); 2012, cc. [33](#), [162](#); 2015, c. [319](#); 2017, cc. [89](#), [501](#); 2019, cc. [40](#), [204](#).)



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) works with the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) to ensure the welfare of Virginia's veterans and advises the VDVS in developing policies that enhance the support of veterans throughout the Commonwealth. I am proud to report that the BVS fulfilled its mission under the exceptionally challenging circumstances experienced in Fiscal Year 2020.

With the “sunsetting” of the Virginia War Memorial Board (VWMB) on January 1, 2020, policy oversight of the Virginia War Memorial is now the responsibility of the BVS. We are pleased to welcome four former VWMB members to the BVS to carry on the legacy of service – Ms. Kathleen Owens, Delegate Buddy Fowler, Senator (former Delegate) John Bell, and Ms. Linda Schreiner. With hundreds of our fellow Virginians, we were proud to see the dedication of the Virginia War Memorial expansion on February 29, 2020.

As part of efforts to accomplish its mission, BVS members are assigned to be a “point of contact” (POC) for a VDVS program or service area. Through regular contact with VDVS, BVS POCs serve as a valuable sounding board for policy development, day-to-day operations, identifying areas of concern and/or future opportunities, and are a vital link for keeping the BVS up to date on VDVS operations and requirements. In addition, BVS members supported the 2020 Virginia Women Veterans Virtual Summit, with over 800 participants from across the Commonwealth as well as some from outside Virginia. The Board is also closely monitoring the construction of the new veterans care centers in Virginia Beach and Fauquier County and BVS members were a part of the veterans care center workgroup led by Secretaries Carlos Hopkins and Aubrey Layne.

In FY21, the BVS will work with VDVS on the critical task of updating the agency strategic plan, serving as a sounding board for the service line directors through POC liaison. We also look forward to working with VDVS to update the Compact with Virginia's Veterans.

The members of the Board also continued to support the work of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, the Veterans Services Foundation, and the Virginia War Memorial Foundation. Particularly in this time of constrained resources, the BVS considers it essential to continue to communicate with the General Assembly on the needs of veterans and the importance of adequately resourcing the VDVS. The return on investment to the Commonwealth, and especially our veterans, is always significant!

The BVS has built and sustained outstanding partnerships with the Governor and the Virginia General Assembly. We look forward to working with our partners to ensure Virginia continues to be the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

Respectfully,
Michael Dick
Colonel, USMC (Ret.)
Chairman



Board of Veterans Services members – as of December 1, 2020

Member	Position
Michael Dick	Chairman, Retired Colonel, Marine Corps College of William & Mary
Tammi Lambert	Vice Chair, Army veteran U.S. Department of the Interior
Victor Angry	Founder, A is for Angry, LLC Retired Command Sergeant Major, ARNG
Carl Bedell	Attorney Army veteran
Senator John Bell	General Assembly of Virginia Air Force veteran
Carl Bess	Retired Colonel, Virginia Air National Guard
Paige Cherry	Treasurer, City of Portsmouth Army veteran
Delegate Hyland (Buddy) Fowler	General Assembly of Virginia,
Delegate Dan Helmer	General Assembly of Virginia Army veteran
James Icenhour, Jr.	Chairman, Board of Supervisors, James City County Retired Major, U.S. Air Force
Thurraja S. Kent	Retired Captain, U.S. Navy
M. Lyla Kohistany	Founder, PROMOTE Navy veteran
John Lesinski	Colliers International Retired Colonel, Marine Corps
Senator Mamie Locke	General Assembly of Virginia
Delegate Kathleen Murphy	General Assembly of Virginia
Kathleen Owens	President, Beach Group Realty, Retired Commander U.S. Navy
Senator Bryce Reeves	General Assembly of Virginia Army veteran
Efrain “Frank” Reyes	Navy veteran
Delegate Marcus Simon	General Assembly of Virginia Army veteran
Julie Waters	Attorney Army veteran; U.S. Army Reserve
John Maxwell	Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services
William Ashton	Chairman, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Jack Lanier	2 nd Vice Chair, Veterans Services Foundation
Linda Schreiner	Chair, Virginia War Memorial Foundation Board

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS (THE JLC)

MISSION

The Council provides advice and assistance to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Department of Veterans Services on matters of concern to the veterans community and provides a conduit of information to and from the veterans service organizations on policy and legislation, pending and enacted, as well as information on existing services.

§ 2.2-2682. Powers and Duties of the Council

A. The Council shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Advise the Department of Veterans Services and the General Assembly regarding (i) methods of providing support for ongoing veterans services and programs, and (ii) addressing veterans issues on an ongoing basis;
2. Recommend issues that may potentially impact veterans of the armed forces of the United States and their eligible spouses, orphans, and dependents;
3. Advise the Department of Veterans Services and the Board of Veterans Services on matters of concern to Virginia-domiciled veterans and their eligible spouses, orphans, and dependents;
4. Promote and support existing veterans services and programs;
5. Recommend and promote implementation of new efficient and effective administrative initiatives that enhance existing veterans services and programs or provide for necessary veterans services and programs not currently provided; and
6. Maintain a nonpartisan approach to maintaining and improving veterans services and programs in the Commonwealth.

B. The chairman shall report to the Commissioner and the Board of Veterans Services the results of its meetings and submit an annual report on or before November 30 of each year.

C. The Council may apply for funds from the Veterans Services Foundation to enable it to better carry out its objectives. The Council shall not impose unreasonable burdens or costs in connection with requests of agencies.

(2003, cc. [657](#), [670](#); 2008, cc. [467](#), [768](#); 2014, c. [809](#).)



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) is comprised of 25 Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) representing over 250,000 members. JLC members are committed to serving Virginia's over 720,000 Veterans of which 157,914 are retired and call Virginia their home. We serve these Veterans in numerous ways and also advocate for the entire military community, including the National Guard and the Armed Forces Reserves and their families. Veterans comprise almost 10% of the Commonwealth's population, giving Virginia one of the highest per capita populations of Veterans, and Veterans still in the workforce and in the country.

Our commitment to the Commonwealth of Virginia and supporting Veterans and their families could not be stronger. JLC members are working on multiple initiatives for consideration during the 2021 General Assembly session. All are published on our website and have been distributed to legislators for consideration as possible legislation or budget items.

This year has been a difficult one with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many of our VSOs were not able to have their monthly meetings which delayed submission of their initiatives. As for the JLC we were unable to hold our April 2020 meeting. We extended our deadline for submissions to our October 2020 meeting. We were able to meet in person for our July meeting with all CDC precautions in place and with the dedicated help of the Department of Veterans Services and the Virginia War Memorial staff.

During our July 2020 meeting, I was honored to be elected as Chairman of the JLC and Denise Williams, representing the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), was elected Vice Chair. Lauren Augustine, representing the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is our appointed Legislative Chair.

We deeply value our partnership with the Department of Veterans Services, Board of Veterans Services, Veterans Services Foundation, Virginia War Memorial Foundation, the Governor, and the General Assembly, as we work together to serve Virginia's Veterans and their families. The Governor and the General Assembly have significantly supported the legislative initiatives proposed by the JLC over the years. Normally every January, our members visit the General Assembly at the start of the session and enjoy speaking with State Senators and Delegates about the merits of JLC-sponsored bills. This year might be different because of COVID-19, but we will do everything possible to communicate with our elected officials. It is important work that ensures all Virginia Veterans have the ability to speak with a coordinated voice to our Legislators.

The JLC is proud to serve as a voice for all of Virginia's Veterans. The JLC looks forward to our continued involvement in the legislative process and promoting Virginia as the most Veteran-friendly state in the Nation.

With deep respect and admiration,

William B. Ashton
Chairman

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) Representative to the Joint Leadership Council

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Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations members – as of December 1, 2020

Veterans Service Organization	JLC Member	Alternate
Air Force Association	Thomas Wozniak	
American Legion	Richard Oertel	Dale Chapman
AMVETS	John Cooper	Richard Mansfield
Association of the U.S. Army	Michael Flanagan	Robert Sempek
Disabled American Veterans	Denice Williams	Thomas Wendel
Fifth Baptist Veterans Ministry	John Manning	Thad Jones
Fleet Reserve Association	William Ashton	Jeffrey Gilmartin
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America	Lauren Augustine	
Korean War Veterans Association	Tim Whitmore	
Legion of Valor of the U.S., Inc.	Robert S. “Steve” Herbert	Richard Rinaldo
Marine Corps League	Jim Barrett	Bruce Steeley
Military Order of the Purple Heart	James Cuthbertson	Mark Atchison
Military Order of the World Wars	Vernon Peters	Alvin Chandler
Military Officers Association of America	Monti Zimmerman	John Down
Navy Mutual Aid Association	TBD	
Navy Seabee Veterans of America	Mike Boyle	
Non-Commissioned Officers Association	Jon Ostrowski	Tyrone Anderson
Paralyzed Veterans of America	Preston Curry	Raymond Kenney
Reserve Officers Association	David Sitler	Terrence Moore
Roanoke Valley Veterans Council	Perry Taylor	Daniel Karnes
Veterans of Foreign Wars	Daniel Boyer	Rick Raskin
Vietnam Veterans of America	Charles Montgomery	George Corbett
Va. Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Assn	Robert Barnette	Carl Holcomb
Virginia National Guard Association	Kevin Hoffman	Fallon Martin
Women Marines Association	Judy Reid	Marie Juliano
Chairman, Board of Veterans Services	Michael Dick	
Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation	John Lesinski	
Commissioner of Veterans Services	John Maxwell	



VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL BOARD

(sunsetted December 31, 2019)

MISSION

The Virginia War Memorial is the Commonwealth of Virginia's monument to honor the memory of Virginia's men and women who demonstrated a willingness to serve and fight to defend our way of life from World War II to the present. Through its Galanti Education Center, the Virginia War Memorial serves as the Center of Excellence for the Commonwealth in education of Virginian's experience of war from the birth of our nation to the present. The Virginia War Memorial Board supports the Memorial and its mission.

§ 2.2-2466. Authority of Board

The Board shall have the power and duty to advise and make recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services concerning:

1. The management, control, maintenance, and operation of the Virginia War Memorial, including the contents, furnishings, grounds, funds, property, and endowments thereof;
2. Fees for the use of the Memorial;
3. Programs and activities that may and should be carried out at the Memorial; and
4. Regulations for the use of and visitation to the Memorial.

(2012, cc. [803](#), [835](#); 2013, c. [234](#).)



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Virginia War Memorial Board (VWMB) was created to support the Virginia War Memorial and its' staff and volunteers, when the Memorial was a stand-alone state entity. The Memorial is a living entity that perpetually renews and refreshes its message and meaning for visitors of all ages, and the mission of the Virginia War Memorial Board has always been a single-minded commitment to supporting the Memorial's mission of honoring the Virginia heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in uniform. At the dedication of the Virginia War Memorial in 1956, former Senator John J. Wicker, Jr., Chairman of the War Memorial Commission said, "When everyone living today has passed away, this memorial will remain for the dedication and inspiration of generations unborn, and as tangible evidence that patriotic service of Virginians will never be forgotten."

Since the entry of the United States into World War II in 1941, close to 12,000 Virginians have laid their lives on the altar of American freedom. The greatest tribute we can pay is to honor their memory, share the stories of sacrifice, and conduct educational programs for all Virginians and all Americans to understand that freedom isn't free. The Paul and Phyllis Galanti expansion in 2010 and the C. Kenneth Wright Pavilion educational expansion in 2020 have added significantly to the Virginia War Memorial's outreach to many more visitors, and the Virginia War Memorial has become the premier state war memorial in the country.

With the completion of the Virginia War Memorial expansion project, the Board has effectively completed the mission for which it was created. At our September 2018 meeting, the members of the Virginia War Memorial Board voted unanimously to sunset the Board and transfer all responsibilities to the Board of Veterans Services, which is the policy board of the Department of Veterans Services. With the sunsetting of the VWMB on December 31, 2019, the transfer was effective January 1, 2020.

It was my honor and privilege to serve as Chairman of the Virginia War Memorial Board, as well as a long-time board member. We are proud of the front-and-center role played by the Memorial in making Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation. It is bittersweet to be the final Chairman, but I congratulate the men and women of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and the Virginia War Memorial in achieving a standard of excellence in programming that is unmatched by anyone anywhere, and the Virginia War Memorial will continue its mission to honor Virginia war heroes and educate the public about those Virginians who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in uniform.

Sincerely,
Hon. John S. Edwards, USMC veteran
Chairman
Member, Senate of Virginia

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Virginia War Memorial Board members – as of December 31, 2019

Member	Position
Delegate John Bell	General Assembly of Virginia Major, Air Force (Ret.)
Delegate David Bulova	General Assembly of Virginia
Delegate Buddy Fowler, Jr.	General Assembly of Virginia
Delegate Riley Ingram	General Assembly of Virginia Army Veteran, USAR, Virginia National Guard
Delegate John McGuire	General Assembly of Virginia Navy Veteran
Delegate Bob Thomas	General Assembly of Virginia Marine Corps Veteran
Senator Richard H. Black	General Assembly of Virginia Colonel, Marine Corps (Ret.)
Senator Bill DeSteph	General Assembly of Virginia Navy Veteran
Senator John Edwards, Chairman	General Assembly of Virginia Marine Corps Veteran
Senator Jeremy McPike	General Assembly of Virginia
April Cheek-Messier	President, The National D-Day Memorial Foundation
Karen M. Halverson	Foundation Ambassador for Virginia, Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial Foundation
Robert Hannon	American Legion, Department of Virginia
Bernie Henderson	President, Woody Funeral Home and Cremation Services
Joshua King	Deputy Sheriff, Fairfax County Army Veteran
F. Caroline Lane	LCDR, Navy (Ret)
Keith McIntosh	Vice President for Information Services & Chief Information Officer, University of Richmond
Kathleen Owens	President, Beach Development Group CDR, Navy Reserves (Ret)
Naveed Shah	Leadership Fellow, Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America Army Veteran
James Zollar	Assistant Chief of Staff Training, Virginia Army National Guard; Colonel, Army National Guard
Frank Rennie	<i>Ex officio</i> Chairman, Virginia War Memorial Foundation RADM, Navy (Ret.)
Michael Dick	<i>Ex officio</i> Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
Frank Wickersham, III	<i>Ex officio</i> Chair, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Steven Combs	<i>Ex officio</i> Acting Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services

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APPENDIX A: BENEFIT SERVICES
Claims, Evidence and Appeals Submitted to USDVA
Table 1: Sorted by Office

Office	Total Claims			
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Abingdon	1,556	1,336	1,450	1,176
Accomac	810	1,140	1,571	1,136
Big Stone Gap	1,439	1,565	1,466	1,521
Charlottesville	1,580	2,662	3,510	3,088
Chesapeake	1,933	2,787	1,840	2,131
Danville	1,270	1,829	1,659	1,498
Emporia	N/A	259	618	680
Fairfax	2,786	2,780	2,167	2,406
Fort Lee (new)	--	--	297	1,722
Fredericksburg	1,842	3,594	6,932	4,411
Hampton VAMC	2,285	3,458	2,926	2,614
Hampton	3,341	5,612	6,077	4,811
Henrico	1,715	1,742	1,778	1,337
Loudoun	40	1,549	780	1,045
Lynchburg	1,048	2,051	1,634	1,629
Manassas	160	1,862	2,376	3,956
McGuire VAMC	7,044	6,124	5,735	4,655
Norfolk	5,693	7,970	7,587	6,287
Oceana	--	--	415	2,159
Pentagon	--	--	3,016	4,384
Petersburg	1,304	1,748	1,575	1,214
Portsmouth	2,031	1,879	1,255	1,033
Quantico	1,272	3,666	4,840	4,897
Roanoke	656	515	739	620
Salem VAMC	1,190	2,076	1,633	2,501
South Hill	1,024	1,367	878	809
Springfield	1,544	4,108	4,762	4,531
Staunton	1,358	1,474	1,641	1,157
Strasburg	693	645	750	963
Tazewell	1,255	1,319	1,486	2,525
Virginia Beach	2,229	2,639	2,965	2,377

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Williamsburg	N/A	982	2,885	3,354
Wytheville	1,131	1,173	549	N/A
Totals	50,229	71,311	79,792	79,367

Table 2: Sorted by Month

Month	Total Claims			
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
July	3,884	3,788	6,999	7,933
August	4,857	5,675	6,869	7,990
September	3,572	4,642	5,708	7,437
October	4,022	5,783	6,680	8,705
November	3,836	5,234	5,850	7,152
December	3,716	3,719	4,796	6,730
January	4,118	4,118	6,892	8,012
February	4,266	4,156	6,387	7,037
March	4,862	4,750	7,109	5,620
April	4,201	6,722	7,096	3,578
May	4,143	7,539	6,996	3,945
June	4,752	7,617	8,053	3,599
Totals	50,229	71,311	79,792	77,738

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Table 3: Client Contacts – Sorted by Office

	Walk-Ins				Phone/Email				Total Contacts			
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Abingdon	1,833	1,286	1,287	912	1,698	1,421	1,536	1,523	3,531	2,707	2,823	2,435
Accomac	1,536	1,503	1,285	859	3,143	3,387	3,044	3,529	4,679	4,890	4,329	4,388
Big Stone Gap	1,482	1,375	1,354	998	2,162	1,815	1,955	3,014	3,644	3,190	3,309	4,012
Charlottesville	1,775	1,463	1,792	1,525	6,262	3,778	3,693	5,117	8,037	5,240	5,485	6,642
Chesapeake	4,412	5,829	4,028	2,733	5,195	6,171	3,852	4,906	9,607	12,000	7,880	7,639
Danville	3,054	2,953	2,782	1,608	2,737	2,253	2,996	2,906	5,791	5,206	5,688	4,604
Emporia	1,808	162	775	787	0	274	915	1,615	0	436	1,690	2,402
Fairfax	1,808	1,526	1,912	1703	4,895	5,848	5,663	6,361	6,703	7,374	7,575	8,064
Fort Belvoir	--	--	--	500	--	--	--	1,408	--	--	--	1,908
Fort Lee (new)	--	--	575	871	--	--	715	3,200	--	--	1,290	4,071
Fredericksburg	3,836	6,464	6,155	4,129	4,273	7,465	9,492	5,991	8,109	13,929	15,647	10,120
Hampton VAMC	3,178	3,487	4,743	3,076	1,771	1,479	2,370	3,928	4,949	4,966	7,113	7,004
Hampton	4,690	4,089	3,945	2,623	3,825	3,856	3,401	6,089	8,515	7,945	7,346	8,712
Henrico	1,631	1,729	1,831	1,369	3,889	4,038	3,812	4,206	5,520	5,767	5,643	5575
Loudoun	21	930	954	600	120	2,567	3,483	3,769	141	3,497	4,437	4,369
Lynchburg	1,693	2,058	1,716	1,342	2249	4,532	4,502	3,270	3,942	6,590	6,218	4,612
Manassas	170	1,199	1,842	2,439	738	3,488	3,825	6,981	908	4,687	5,667	9,420
McGuire VAMC	24,207	20,839	10,929	7,690	23,847	19,996	12,093	10,583	48,054	40,835	23,022	18,273
Norfolk	10,257	13,182	17,435	10,572	13,369	17,774	24410	17,973	23,626	30,956	41,845	28,545
Oceana (new)	--	--	508	1,157	--	--	148	1,839	--	--	656	2,996
Pentagon	--	--	3,905	3,531	--	--	4088	5,826	--	--	7,993	9,357
Petersburg	2,684	2,787	1,044	853	6,090	3,535	1264	2,782	8,774	6,322	2,308	3,635
Portsmouth	1,157	1,144	690	711	7,396	7,067	4,679	2,905	8,553	8,211	5,369	3,316
Quantico	2,176	2,207	2,755	2,278	4,150	4,992	5,179	5,838	6,326	7,199	7,934	8,116
Roanoke	593	576	681	370	1,115	534	1,108	1,014	1,708	1,110	2,622	2,622
Salem VAMC	1,654	1,833	1,514	2,349	1,673	1,768	1,108	3,302	3,422	3,807	2,622	5,651
South Hill	1,180	1,070	735	492	1,958	1,849	520	831	3,029	2,429	1,255	338
Springfield	1,971	1,990	3,015	2,248	3,184	4,399	9,606	9,325	6,370	8,210	12,621	11,573
Staunton	2,063	1,424	1,232	968	2,472	2,849	1,931	2,742	4,912	3,726	3,163	3,710
Strasburg	811	882	751	363	2,235	2,250	1,095	1,918	3,061	2,085	1,846	2,281
Tazewell	2,026	1,434	1,514	1,363	1,725	2,160	1,423	2,001	4,186	3,070	2,937	3,364
Virginia Beach	5,623	4,549	5,721	2,804	6,638	8,643	6,365	7,132	14,266	11,971	12,086	9,936
Williamsburg	0	855	1,504	1,297	0	0	1,487	2,905	0	1,357	2,991	4,202
Wytheville	1,313	915	325	--	2,104	2,424	632	--	3,737	3,132	957	--
Totals	88,834	91,740	91,234	67,120	99,416	125,26	132,731	146,729	211,039	222,844	224,367	213,892



APPENDIX B: STATE APPROVING AGENCY (SAA) FOR VETERANS EDUCATION & TRAINING

Table1: SAA Program Approval Actions

	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	FFY 18	FFY 18	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20
Totals for Federal Fiscal Year	3,042	3,843	6,051	1,438	1,795	2,171	32	28	28	12	18	15	156	4	80
Number of Applications Received															
Number Approved	2,488	3,281	5,543	961	1,479	1626	29	28	28	10	6	9	156	4	64
Number Disapproved	554	562	508	477	316	580	3	0	0	2	12	6	0	0	16
Percentage of Applications Approved	82	85	92	67	82	75	91	100	100	83	50	60	100	100	80

Table 2: SAA Other Approval Actions

	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20
Totals for Federal Fiscal Year	373	476	1017	213	198	711	75	34	64	72	17	18	18	0	14
Number of Applications Received															
Number Approved	289	380	894	154	139	565	72	34	56	69	9	11	16	0	8
Number Disapproved	84	96	123	59	59	146	3	0	8	3	8	7	2	0	6
Percentage of Applications Approved	77	80	88	72	70	79	96	100	88	96	53	61	89	0	57

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Table 3: SAA Compliance Visits

	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20	FFY 18	FFY 19	FFY 20
Totals for Federal Fiscal Year															
Number of Visits	37	40	23	22	16	9	5	0	2	1	4	2	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 4: SAA Other Activities in Support of Veterans Education

Activity	FFY18	FFY19	FFY20
Email inquiries	500	870	870
Requests for application for a new facility	120	90	82
Active schools (facilities in which a veteran actively attends)	454	455 ¹	455 ¹
Number of students enrolled	47,906	32,694 ²	33,612 ²

¹ The active schools list for FFY 2019 is a snapshot of every facility that enrolled or training a VA education beneficiary in a Virginia SAA approved facility (including on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and flights) from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.

²Number of veterans receiving G.I. Bill benefits in Virginia as of April 2019. This does not include veterans who attended school but who have not received payment of GI Bill Benefits. The final count for FFY18 should be available in March 2020.

APPENDIX C: VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM (VMSDEP)

Table 1: 2017-2020 Number of Recipients and Amount Awarded

	2017-18 Total		2018-19		2019-20	
	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars	Unique #	Dollars
Four-Year Publics						
Christopher Newport University	23	37,800	18	30,236	16	27,410
College of William and Mary	11	19,575	19	34,240	23	36,850
George Mason University	81	126,900	101	163,560	114	171,730
James Madison University	37	58,360	58	101,174	68	117,580
Longwood University	16	26,100	27	45,140	25	42,530
Norfolk State University	34	49,275	36	57,490	38	63,920
Old Dominion University	172	268,875	209	331,710	220	343,660
Radford University	50	77,400	55	87,420	45	76,970
University of Mary Washington	28	43,200	29	47,550	40	60,360
University of Virginia	26	43,650	34	59,150	33	57,500
University of Virginia's College at Wise	11	17,775	7	11,410	5	9,270
Virginia Commonwealth University	120	183,825	187	296,800	180	301,038
Virginia Military Institute	5	9,000	12	22,800	11	20,900
Virginia State University	38	60,525	46	71,750	44	68,900
Virginia Tech	53	79,536	52	88,150	74	125,783
Four-Year Public total	703	1,101,796	890	1,448,580	936	1,524,401
Two-Year Publics						
Richard Bland College	7	12,375	12	19,970	16	22,350
Two-Year Public total	7	12,375	12	19,970	16	22,350
Community Colleges						
Blue Ridge Community College	7	9,000	6	3,590	5	4,540
Central Virginia Community College	2	3,600	5	2,880	4	3,3350
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	0	0	0	0	1	950

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Danville Community College	1	900	1	950	1	240
Eastern Shore Community College	0	0	0	0	0	0
Germanna Community College	31	35,325	29	37,400	35	43,140
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	19	24,300	12	12,640	21	23,550
John Tyler Community College	35	42,750	44	46,285	43	49,100
Lord Fairfax Community College	5	6,075	5	4,310	5	7,390
Mountain Empire Community College	10	14,850	7	10,220	5	8,080
New River Community College	5	5,175	6	8,800	3	3,330
Northern Virginia Community College	71	71,550	68	79,940	67	79,790
Patrick Henry Community College	8	12,600	3	4,520	3	3,570
Paul D. Camp Community College	1	900	1	1,430	4	3,590
Piedmont Virginia Community College	5	6,525	5	5,950	5	6,420
Rappahannock Community College	5	5,400	3	2,380	2	1,900
Southside Virginia Community College	4	5,400	5	6,900	2	2,850
Southwest Virginia Community College	12	15,075	7	8,810	0	0
Thomas Nelson Community College	31	34,875	51	65,510	33	40,970
Tidewater Community College	102	112,725	99	118,660	91	108,150
Virginia Highlands Community College	5	5,175	1	1,900	2	2,850
Virginia Western Community College	13	18,225	8	8,570	5	7,130
Wytheville Community College	4	5,850	5	7,140	6	8,080
Community College total	355	396,900	371	438,785	343	408,970

Other Publics						
Eastern Virginia Medical School	1	1,800.00	1	1,900	4	5,700
Other Public total	1	1,800.00	1	1,900	4	5,700

Grand Total	1,122	1,599,525	1,274	1,909,235	1,299	1,961,421
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Source: SCHEV May 2018, 2019, and 2020 Reports to the General Assembly

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Community Colleges						
Blue Ridge Community College	7	9,000	6	3,590	5	4,540
Central Virginia Community College	2	3,600	5	2,880	4	3,3350
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	0	0	0	0	1	950
Danville Community College	1	900	1	950	1	240
Eastern Shore Community College	0	0	0	0	0	0
Germanna Community College	31	35,325	29	37,400	35	43,140
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	19	24,300	12	12,640	21	23,550
John Tyler Community College	35	42,750	44	46,285	43	49,100
Lord Fairfax Community College	5	6,075	5	4,310	5	7,390
Mountain Empire Community College	10	14,850	7	10,220	5	8,080
New River Community College	5	5,175	6	8,800	3	3,330
Northern Virginia Community College	71	71,550	68	79,940	67	79,790
Patrick Henry Community College	8	12,600	3	4,520	3	3,570
Paul D. Camp Community College	1	900	1	1,430	4	3,590
Piedmont Virginia Community College	5	6,525	5	5,950	5	6,420
Rappahannock Community College	5	5,400	3	2,380	2	1,900
Southside Virginia Community College	4	5,400	5	6,900	2	2,850
Southwest Virginia Community College	12	15,075	7	8,810	0	0
Thomas Nelson Community College	31	34,875	51	65,510	33	40,970
Tidewater Community College	102	112,725	99	118,660	91	108,150
Virginia Highlands Community College	5	5,175	1	1,900	2	2,850
Virginia Western Community College	13	18,225	8	8,570	5	7,130
Wytheville Community College	4	5,850	5	7,140	6	8,080
Community College total	355	396,900	371	438,785	343	408,970

Other Publics						
Eastern Virginia Medical School	1	1,800.00	1	1,900	4	5,700
Other Public total	1	1,800.00	1	1,900	4	5,700

Grand Total	1,122	1,599,525	1,274	1,909,235	1,299	1,961,421
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Source: SCHEV May 2018, 2019, and 2020 Reports to the General Assembly



APPENDIX D: VETERANS CARE CENTERS

Table 1: Virginia Veterans Care Center, Roanoke

Month	Patient Days: Nursing			Average # of Nursing Beds Occupied			Occupancy Level: Nursing			Patient Days: Assisted Living			Average # of Assisted Living Beds Occupied			Occupancy Level: Assisted Living		
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY18	FY19	FY20
July	5,419	5,339	5,321	175	172	172	97%	96%	88%	975	1,056	972	31	34	31	52%	57%	112%
August	5,301	5,440	5,361	171	175	173	95%	97%	88%	994	1,067	906	32	34	29	53%	57%	104%
September	4,996	5,209	5,302	167	174	177	93%	96%	90%	977	1,042	828	33	35	28	54%	58%	99%
October	5,175	5,412	5,413	167	175	175	93%	97%	89%	1,018	1,116	810	33	36	26	55%	60%	93%
November	5,025	5,177	5,183	168	173	173	93%	96%	88%	993	1,088	760	33	36	25	55%	60%	90%
December	4,995	5,097	5,354	161	164	173	90%	91%	88%	1,042	1,119	741	34	36	24	56%	60%	85%
January	5,055	4,977	5,408	163	161	174	91%	89%	89%	1,019	1,081	744	33	35	24	55%	58%	86%
February	4,675	4,619	5,174	167	165	178	93%	92%	91%	1,034	951	684	37	34	24	62%	57%	84%
March	5,178	5,322	5,467	167	172	176	93%	95%	90%	1,200	1,043	762	39	34	25	65%	56%	88%
April	5,105	5,124	5,038	170	171	168	95%	95%	86%	1,089	1,040	750	36	35	25	61%	58%	89%
May	5,391	5,218	4,935	174	168	159	97%	94%	81%	1,166	975	750	38	31	24	63%	52%	86%
June	5,190	5,146	4,859	173	172	162	96%	95%	83%	1,036	920	704	35	31	23	58%	51%	84%
Annual Max Capacity	65,700	65,700	71,736	180	180	196	100%	100%	100%	21,900	21,900	10,248	60	60	28	100%	100%	100%
Total Patient Days	61,505	62,080	62,815	169	169	172	94%	94%	88%	12,543	12,498	9,411	35	35	26	57%	57%	92%



Table 2: Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, Richmond

Month	Patient Days Nursing			Average # of Nursing Beds Occupied			Occupancy Level: Nursing		
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY18	FY19	FY20
July	6,057	5,983	5,731	195	193	185	98%	97%	92%
August	5,919	6,016	5,706	191	194	184	95%	97%	92%
September	5,745	5,743	5,621	192	191	187	96%	96%	94%
October	5,926	5,978	5,751	191	193	186	96%	96%	93%
November	5,776	5,859	5,616	193	195	187	96%	98%	94%
December	6,027	5,877	5,799	194	190	187	97%	95%	94%
January	6,026	5,952	5,894	194	192	190	97%	96%	95%
February	5,465	5,420	5,660	195	194	195	98%	97%	98%
March	5,886	5,978	6,005	190	193	194	95%	96%	97%
April	5,752	5,776	5,472	192	193	182	96%	96%	91%
May	5,959	5,949	5,491	192	192	177	96%	96%	89%
June	5,737	5,680	5,207	191	189	174	96%	95%	87%
Annual Max Capacity	73,000	73,000	73,000	200	200	200	100%	100%	100%
Total Patient Days	70,275	70,211	67,953	194	193	186	97%	96%	93%
Monthly Average	5,856	5,851	5,663	194	193	186	97%	96%	93%



APPENDIX E: VETERANS CEMETERIES

Table 1: Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Amelia)

	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
July	26	17	26	23	25	19	26	24	25	37	27	31	40	66
August	17	13	23	12	17	21	22	28	38	39	31	23	50	48
September	17	15	19	17	28	34	27	22	27	29	43	38	29	36
October	22	25	21	17	23	18	19	23	38	33	27	36	32	39
November	22	13	9	25	25	24	29	23	24	33	22	34	42	37
December	18	22	20	29	22	17	26	24	24	43	26	25	29	48
January	20	15	18	17	25	23	24	28	36	28	38	48	42	37
February	18	16	13	21	30	31	21	23	27	26	38	35	28	40
March	19	19	19	32	29	25	24	28	36	38	34	37	43	47
April	18	19	29	23	28	23	35	32	30	37	35	44	45	28
May	13	18	28	16	28	17	30	28	37	31	42	39	53	27
June	18	21	23	31	22	27	28	24	38	42	50	36	51	35
Total	228	213	248	263	302	279	311	307	380	416	413	426	484	488



Table 2: Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery (Suffolk)

	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
July	54	36	55	51	58	61	62	82	96	101	96	105	100
August	31	51	58	47	65	86	78	78	100	98	112	114	106
September	35	48	52	46	62	58	72	82	101	77	82	73	95
October	49	49	59	70	57	68	102	84	119	82	105	110	106
November	40	36	61	75	51	66	71	76	65	82	99	105	97
December	52	65	77	63	74	61	78	91	90	84	81	82	116
January	60	59	60	82	79	89	95	104	84	88	112	126	120
February	56	54	55	66	56	61	95	88	89	95	97	94	85
March	51	62	69	75	63	75	90	89	116	106	92	102	96
April	55	59	76	59	88	89	96	101	92	91	119	113	88
May	44	53	65	68	79	76	109	89	101	106	92	107	88
June	64	66	65	64	68	69	70	90	108	124	124	88	82
Total	591	638	752	766	800	859	1,017	1,054	1,161	1,134	1,211	1,220	1,179



Table 3: Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery (Dublin)

	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
July	N/A	28	17	9	7	23	19	21	21	15
August	N/A	13	15	20	16	22	23	14	24	29
September	N/A	10	14	10	144	12	15	23	19	11
October	N/A	11	12	13	12	20	25	18	21	13
November	N/A	8	19	14	17	13	13	21	16	19
December	N/A	11	7	7	12	20	17	18	9	13
January	N/A	10	13	13	20	11	17	25	23	11
February	N/A	10	9	8	5	12	14	19	8	17
March	N/A	11	17	9	10	22	16	26	24	15
April	N/A	10	21	18	19	12	17	19	10	13
May	N/A	6	15	11	13	21	16	9	22	18
June	23	15	16	8	12	13	11	15	14	11
Total	23	143	175	140	157	201	203	228	211	185



VDVS Commissioner John Maxwell and Mr. Willie Ransom, Gold Star Family Member, place the wreath at the grand reopening of the Virginia War Memorial, February 29, 2020



Mr. Glenn Canaday and Mr. Powhatan Red Cloud Owen after they performed the Chickahominy Nation blessing of the Shrine of Memory – Global War On Terrorism & Beyond, part of the grand reopening ceremony held at the Virginia War Memorial, February 29, 2020

