

**Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2021**

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held electronically on Friday, April 16, 2021.

Members Present

- Victor Angry
- Carl Bedell
- Carl Bess
- Paige Cherry
- Michael Dick
- Jenny Dye
- Mario Flores
- Buddy Fowler
- Dan Helmer
- James Icenhour
- Thurraya Kent
- Lyla Kohistany
- Tammi Lambert
- John Lesinski
- Maimi Locke
- Kathy Owens
- Bryce Reeves
- Frank Reyes
- Julie Waters
- William Ashton, Chairman, Joint Leadership Council
- Jack Lanier, 2nd Vice Chair, Veterans Services Foundation
- Pam Seay, representing the Virginia War Memorial Foundation
- John Maxwell, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- John Bell
- Kathleen Murphy
- Marcus Simon

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Kathleen Jabs, Deputy Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Jon Ward, Assistant Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Tom Crabbs, Military Liaison Veterans and Defense Affairs
- Jim Flaherty, AGO
- Steven Combs, Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS)
- Claudia Flores, VDVS

- Thomas Herthel, VDVS
- Annie Walker, VDVS
- Tina Parlett-Calhoun, VDVS
- Brandi Jancaitis, VDVS
- Donna Williams, VDVS
- Beverly VanTull, VDVS
- Ravi Padma, VDVS
- Michael Henshaw, VDVS
- Nicole Anderson, VDVS
- Martina Murray, VDVS

Materials Distributed as part of the Agenda Packet (sent via e-mail and posted on BVS webpage)

- Draft Agenda
- Draft Minutes of the December 17, 2020, meeting
- VDVS Operations Update
- VDVS Compact with Virginia Veterans Strategic Priorities
- VDVS Strategic Priorities Brief
- 2021 Military Veterans Bills and Budget Matrix
- JLC Report
- Veterans Services Foundation Report
- Virginia War Memorial Report

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Michael Dick called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Chairman Dick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Dick took a moment to comment on the words of the Pledge of Allegiance and encouraged members to take pause and reflect on the meaning of the words, and the veteran community.

Chairman Dick welcomed two new members, Ms. Jenny Dye and Mr. Mario Flores. Chairman Dick asked the two members to introduce themselves. Ms. Dye noted she has a background in professional counseling and currently works at Virginia Tech. Ms. Dye's spouse is an Army veteran. Mr. Flores commented he is serving as an Army Reserve member and was selected as a Defense Fellow.

Roll Call and Quorum Determination

The roll call determined a quorum with 22 of 26 members present.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to approve the agenda by. Victor Angry made the **motion, seconded** by Senator Reeves. The motion carried by unanimous consent. (*See attachment 1*)

Approval of Minutes of the April 16, 2020, Meeting

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to waive the reading of the minutes since they minutes from the December 17, 2020 meeting were available to all members in advance. Senator Locke made the **motion, seconded** by Senator Reeves to waive the reading of the minutes. The Chairman asked for any opposition. In the absence of opposition, the Chairman ruled that the motion carried.

Introduction of VDVS staff and guests

VDVS Commissioner Maxwell introduced the VDVS team members. The names are recorded above.

Chairman Dick introduced Deputy Secretary Jabs, Assistant Secretary Ward, and Military Liaison Tom Crabbs from the Secretary's office.

Update on DVS

Chairman Dick asked VDVS Commissioner Maxwell to provide an update on the VDVS Operational Status. Commissioner Maxwell commented that in-person services are expanding with the decrease of the effects of COVID. He noted 32 of the 34 offices are opening for appointments. He commented that walk-in services are difficult at this time given the COVID environment.

Commissioner Maxwell reported there are no COVID cases at this time at the two Veterans Care Centers. Due to the census dropping and the increased costs associate with COVID, the Commissioner commented on the operational deficit and the need for supplemental funding. He noted for the VVCC, the supplemental funding needed in FY21 is \$1million from the economic contingency fund, and in FY22, the amount is \$2 - \$5 million for VVCC / \$1 - \$3 million for Sitter and Barfoot.

The Commissioner commented that the cemeteries exceeded their monthly average in February. He noted the Amelia expansion will begin shortly and there will be an increase to the spousal burial fees.

Commissioner Maxwell noted the planned Memorial Day service at the War Memorial.

With VVFS, Commissioner Maxwell commented on the supply of housing assistance for veterans but the shortage of housing availability. He made note of the VISR program and the Women Veterans program. Commissioner Maxwell noted the V3 program has nearly 1400 certified companies and the grant money for this year was used in its entirety.

Commissioner Maxwell highlighted the Diversity Equity and Inclusion effort within the Agency to enhance the working environment, moving forward with the One Virginia Plan. (*See Attachment 2*)

Commissioner Maxwell asked for questions.

Chairman Dick thanked Commissioner Maxwell asked the members to send reminders about the Memorial Day Service and the Women Veterans Summit. Chairman Dick asked the vaccination status of the VDVS staff outside of the Care Centers. Commissioner Maxwell said the vaccine is not mandated. Chairman Maxwell asked if the vaccination status drives the opening of offices. Commissioner Maxwell commented on the safety measures in place within each of the offices and protocol when there are known exposures.

Chairman Dick asked if there were any questions. None heard. The Chairman turned the floor back to the Commissioner.

VDVS Strategic Priorities *(See Attachment 3)*

Commissioner Maxwell presented the strategic priorities brief on the Compact with Virginia Veterans. He provided background information on previous VDVS leadership meetings whereby the leadership team reviewed requirements outlined in the Code of Virginia.

As background information, he noted the passion and commitment of VDVS staff members as a strength. He also noted the agency is service line centered but works hard on cross-collaboration. He commented that direct services are difficult and commented on VSRs listening daily to veteran stories of trauma. The Commissioner noted all the strengths / weaknesses were considered in building priorities. He also commented the desire to build partnerships.

Commissioner Maxwell briefed VDVS as a Port of Entry to Services. He commented on holistic needs assessments to connect veterans and their families to resources and benefits. He also noted the importance of timely assistance.

The commissioner reviewed the Code of Virginia requiring VDVS to establish and implement a compact with Virginia's veterans with the goal of making Virginia America's most veteran-friendly state.

Based on the requirement within the Code, the Commissioner presented the written Compact to unify the state's efforts in veteran services, serve as a primary port of entry, connect veterans and their families to earned benefits, optimize technology advances to enrich services and increase outreach.

The Commissioner paused for questions. Chairman Dick asked if the Commissioner took into account the previous POC reports. The Commissioner acknowledged that the POC reports are considered in the priorities and commented the Compact summary is the start and VDVS can build on it with goals and objectives.

The Commissioner presented the top three strategic priorities of the Compact, the Port of Entry, and the Investment in the VDVS Team.

The Commissioner presented the strategic priority of the Compact with Virginia's Veterans with the Goal of making Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation, and the objectives for achieving this goal. The Commissioner commented on the desire for VDVS to be the example-

setter. He noted accessibility is important. The Commissioner commented that holistic connections and need analysis is an important part of the Port of Entry piece.

Kathy Owens asked the Commissioner about the taxation of veteran retirement pay and noted that Virginia is not in the top ten of veteran friendly state but instead moved into the mid-twenties according to one source. Ms. Owens commented that the source indicated 8 of the top 10 states did not tax military retirement. Ms. Owens commented on the possibility of conducting another study to determine how important this issue is for veterans remaining in Virginia.

The Commissioner commented from a retiree perspective, WalletHub rated Virginia number one but noted this topic continues to surface as a point of concern for retirees.

Senator Reeves commented that the General Assembly studied this several times. Senator Reeves noted that through DoD, Virginia is still ranked number one or number two for being military friendly for the active component. He commented the General Assembly looked at the impact of income tax relief several times and although it should continue to be discussed, it might not be an immediate initiative.

Chairman Dick thanked Senator Reeves and asked Senator Locke for her comments. Nothing heard from Senator Locke. Ms. Thurraya Kent asked what the criteria is for determining that Virginia is the most veteran friendly state.

Commissioner Maxwell commented on WalletHub's criteria and noted the objectives within his strategic priorities contribute to the metrics for veteran friendly status. Commissioner Maxwell commented his desire for VDVS to work with the BVS and JLC on the criteria.

Senator Reeves asked to get the study of the Roosevelt Matrix Group on where Virginia stands as a whole to the Board.

Deputy Secretary Jabs commented there are two reports with specific criteria such as access to medical, access to DVS offices, and access to parks. She noted the two reports will be distributed to the Board.

Ms. Tammi Lambert commented that WalletHub criteria is very different from DoD and recommended both be sent to the members of the Board.

Ms. Kent noted the need and benefit of clarity with respect to the criteria being used to determine the veteran-friendly status.

Chairman Dick asked if the Board is asking for VDVS to quantify the criteria for veteran friendly status. Ms. Kent confirmed.

Mr. Victor Angry commented these discussions drill down into communities and this is a piece to identify.

Senator Reeves noted that DoD metrics look at more than veterans and there is an opportunity to

combine the two lists and determine what the gaps might be and provide that information to the JLC and focus for the General Assembly.

Chairman Dick thanked the members for their comments and noted the importance of strategic communication. Chairman Dick turned the floor back to the Commissioner.

Commissioner thanked the Board for their comments. He commented on the number of VDVS partners that work on behalf of veterans. He noted there are many benefits for veterans across the Commonwealth and it is important to tell that story.

Commissioner Maxwell discussed the Point of Entry strategic priority and noted partnerships and access to services. He commented on the caregiver support program as an objective toward achieving the port of entry goal. He also noted technology as an objective.

Commissioner Maxwell discussed the Strategic Priority of Investment in the VDVS Team. He commented on career development to help those who want to grow as leaders. He discussed salaries as average with the state occupational codes but there is a need to make sure they are coded properly. Commissioner Maxwell commented on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and support functions as objectives.

The Chairman thanked the Commissioner and asked for questions. Mr. Carl Bess asked if the Virginia Dept. of labor and Industries is still involved with the apprenticeship program. Commissioner Maxwell commented that DOL is involved with VEC and asked DC Walker if she had any more information. Martina Murray commented on the relationship with DOL.

Ms. Tammi Lambert asked if VDVS has communication initiatives. Commissioner Maxwell confirmed that VDVS has a targeted communication plan.

Post Session Report

Chairman Dick turned the floor over to Delegate Fowler. Delegate Fowler noted he had the opportunity to go to the War Memorial and commented on the addition to the Shrine and highlighted the General Assembly Resolution honoring Russell Scott.

Chairman Dick turned the floor over to Delegate Helmer. Delegate Helmer commented on the connection as a state to the origins of military service. Delegate Helmer thanked the Chairman and the Board on his legislation signed by the Governor.

Chairman Dick turned the floor over to Senator Locke. The Senator noted budget items supportive of veterans.

Chairman Dick turned the floor over to Senator Reeves. The Senator thanked Delegate Helmer for getting his bill passed and noted the legislation brought forward by the JLC. Senator Reeves thanks the National Guard.

Chairman Dick turned the floor over to Claudia Flores for an update on the Bill Matrix. She summarized the legislation passed and approved by the Governor related to military and veteran

bills.

AS Ward highlighted Delegate Tran's and Senator Bell's bill on anti-discrimination. AS Ward commented on the initiative and tied it to Virginia's commitment to the military and veterans.

Commissioner Maxwell thanked the Board for all the support and advocacy and commented it will directly improve services for military members, veterans and their families.

Chairman Dick asked for further comments or questions. None heard. Chairman Dick moved on to the next agenda item.

JLC Report *(See Attachment 4)*

Chairman Ashton commented on the virtual environment of this year's General Assembly session and noted the opportunity to speak to members virtually that was not available previously. He noted 2 of the 8 JLC initiatives were approved by the Governor. Chairman Dick noted his term on the JLC ends 30 June 2021. Chairman Ashton commented on subject areas of interest for 2022 initiatives to include veteran suicide.

VSF Report *(See Attachment 5)*

Mr. Lanier commented on the VSF meeting held virtually in March. He noted a partnership with Sentara and the financial donation from Sentara to the VSF. He noted overall, donations are down but there are plans to increase the fundraising effort.

Virginia War Memorial Foundation *(See Attachment 6)*

Ms. Seay commented on the exhibition to open on Veterans Day, presenting 30 profiles of names on the Shrine in order to focus attention on all of Virginia's veterans. She commented on the Mighty Pen Project, highlighting this program the virtual environment allows more participation. She highlighted the speaker series as well.

Good of the Order Report

Mr. Lesinski reported the VSF is working with DVS and the Virginia Community College System through the Altria Grant to present laptops to veterans and their spouses in the Community College System. He highlighted two presentations.

Chairman Dick commended the book *Robert E. Lee and Me, a Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause* by Ty Seidule.

Chairman Dick asked for any New Business

Chairman Dick noted information submitted by Beverly VanTull on the Women Veterans Summit. Ms. VanTull thanked the Board for their work and thanked Delegate Murphy and Senator Kiggans for their work on a Resolution honoring Ms. Maybell Campbell.

Public Comment

No comment heard.

Wrap Up & Adjournment

Chairman Dick asked for a motion to adjourn. Kathy Owens made the **motion, seconded** by Mr. Angry. In the absence of any objections, the motion carried.

ATTACHMENT 1
BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

AGENDA
ELECTRONIC MEETING

April 16, 2021
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:02)
- II. Roll Call and Quorum Determination – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:02 – 10:10)
- III. Approval of Agenda – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)
- IV. Approval of Minutes of the December 17, 2020 meeting – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:15 – 10:20)
- V. Introduction of VDVS staff and guests – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:20 – 10:30)
- VI. Update on current VDVS operational status – *John Maxwell, VDVS Commissioner* (10:30 – 10:35)
- VII. Compact with Virginia Veterans Strategic Priorities – *John Maxwell, VDVS Commissioner* (10:35 – 11:15)
- VIII. Post Session Report (Budget and Legislation – 2021 General Assembly – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman and BVS legislative members* (11:15 – 11:30)
- IX. Reports (11:30 – 11:45)
 - a. Joint Leadership Council – *William Ashton, JLC Chairman*
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Jack Lanier, VSF 2nd Vice Chairman*
 - c. Virginia War Memorial Foundation – *Linda Schreiner, VWMF Chairman*
- X. New Business: (11:45 – 11:50)
 - a. “Good of the Order” Reports – *all members*
 - b. Other new business – *as requested by members*
- XI. Public comment (11:50 – 11:55) – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman*
- XII. Wrap Up & Adjourn – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (11:55 – 12:00)
* Next Meeting 23 June

ATTACHMENT 2

VDVS Operational Update



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

John Maxwell
Commissioner

Telephone: (804) 786-0220
Fax: (804) 786-0302

Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) Update for the Board of Veterans Services April 16, 2021

As we start the fourth quarter of Commonwealth Fiscal Year (CFY) and the impact of the COVID pandemic starts to decrease, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) is excited about the prospect of serving more veterans and their families.

With declining positivity rates and more Virginians being vaccinated, VDVS is expanding its in-person services. Currently, 32 of 34 VDVS offices are scheduling regular (in-person) office appointments for veterans seeking face-to-face services, instead of essential-only assistance. While Benefits claims are down by 35% over last year, we are seeing an increase in in-person assistance and claims submittals to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

As of April 14, 2021, neither Veterans Care Center has active COVID cases. This is a tremendous accomplishment following outbreaks at both care centers in October and another at Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in late December. We are actively seeking new admissions at both care centers and we have restarted limited family visitations. Unfortunately, the large increase in costs and the significant reductions in census at both care centers due to COVID greatly impacted revenues from operations, to the point that both care centers forecasted operational deficits, even with CARES Act supplements. Therefore, VDVS requested supplemental funding to cover those deficits, which we expect to persist through CFY 2022. VVCC has seen its census begin to increase and we are hopeful this trend continues, as it will reduce the amount of supplemental funds needed. SBVCC has yet to see a notable improvement in its census despite the efforts of the marketing team. Finally, we anticipate receiving additional funding through the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act and America Rescue Plan.

Cemeteries had a record month in February as both Horton (Suffolk) and Amelia conducted record numbers of interments, and Dublin exceeded their monthly average. Construction will start on the \$5.2M expansion project in April at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery at Amelia, and will be completed in early calendar year 2022. We have also submitted a grant request to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for columbaria expansion at Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin. To help cover increased operations and personnel costs, we are increasing spousal burial fees from \$300 to \$400 on July 1, 2021.

The Virginia War Memorial (VWM) is open to visitors and the team continues to offer a wide array of educational opportunities in person and virtually. These offerings included special programming

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during Black History and Women History months, and the recent celebration of K-9 Veterans Day. Additionally, the Virginia War Memorial recently added two names to the Shrine of Memory - one who was killed in 1951 in Korea and one who was killed in the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut in 1983. Since Memorial Day last year, we added four names to the Shrine of Memory. Finally, we will hold a televised Memorial Day service at VWM.

Virginia Veterans and Family Support (VVFS) is seeing numbers trend upward and 31% of their clients require housing assistance. They are also seeking ways to build capacity and improve resource connections for veterans and families, to include peer support and prevention of suicide among service members, veterans, and families (SMVF). This includes the expansion of Virginia's Identify SMVF, Screen for Suicide Risk, and Refer for Services (VISR) pilot, Crisis Intercept Mapping in conjunction with the VA and DBHDS, and Crisis Intervention Training. Of note, Blacksburg Veteran Peer Specialist and Resource Specialist held a peer support group meeting in person for the first time since the COVID pandemic.

VDVS' Women Veterans Program had a successful Women Veterans Week in March. The week included programming at the Virginia War Memorial and recorded remarks by the Governor, Secretary Hopkins, Deputy Secretary Jabs, Delegate Murphy, and Senator Kiggans. As our Women Veterans Program Manager prepares for the Women Veterans Summit, which will be held virtually again this year in June, she continues to build partnerships with the VA and others who are focused on improving outcomes for women veterans. The agency will build on efforts to make strategic connections that improve advocacy for services unique to Virginia's women veterans.

The Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program now has 1388 certified companies and our V3 Regional Coordinators are constantly building on their networks to generate interest in the program. V3 has distributed all of the \$100,000 allocated for veteran hiring grants in CFY 2021 and will delay awarding future grants until CFY 2022. We added voluntary veteran mental health awareness training for interested V3 companies.

The State Approving Agency (SAA) is one of six states to be part of a pilot for risk-based surveys of GI Bill approved schools. Risk-based surveys focus on veteran outcome and return on investment versus compliance-based surveys which ensure that all GI Bill funds were disbursed to students.

Our Veteran Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) program has seen steady numbers of TSMs looking for assistance. We have recently made great strides in the Tidewater area with briefings to high-level senior enlisted leaders at major Navy commands. Finally, VTAP has an average salary of \$95,000 for its clients (n=21).

Through our Military Education and Workforce Initiative (MEWI), VDVS will distribute 225 laptops to veteran students and military spouses at two central Virginia community colleges. This program was made possible by a partnership with the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF), Altria, Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and a local non-profit.. MEWI is also exploring a similar program in the Tidewater area.

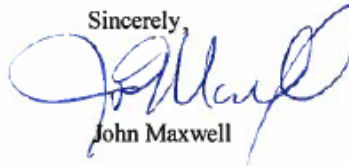
During the 2021 General Assembly Session, reductions from the 2020 General Assembly Special Session regarding Veteran Peer Specialists, Resource Specialists, Veterans Services Administrators, and an Assistant Women Veterans Program Manager were restored. In addition, a Military Spouse Liaison position was added and funded. We also had legislative actions passed that expanded the partner health care systems eligible for inclusion in our Military Medic and Corpsman (MMAC) program; and our comprehensive transition program will now be codified effective 1 July, helping to better define roles

and improve collaboration with the Virginia Employment Commission in hiring transitioning service members and veterans. We are very grateful for the tremendous support and advocacy for the agency.

Finally, we have reviewed the One Virginia plan recently promulgated by Governor Northam. Because of the work we started last year, we are well-positioned to integrate One Virginia into our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity efforts. We have been working closely with a representative from DHRM and our leadership will be part of a pilot of their first training on cultural competence.

Despite the challenges of COVID, we have been able to make headway. We look forward to working with the Board of Veterans Services to refine and achieve our strategic priorities and the Compact with Virginia's veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Maxwell", is written over the word "John Maxwell".

John Maxwell

ATTACHMENT 3

VDVS Strategic Priorities



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

John Maxwell
Commissioner

Telephone: (804) 786-0220
Fax: (804) 786-0302

Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS) Strategic Priorities

Board of Veterans Services

April 16, 2021

The Code of Virginia directs the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services to establish and implement a Compact with Virginia's veterans with the goal of making Virginia America's most veteran-friendly state. The Code outlines specific statutory requirements to be included in the Compact:

- Specific provisions for:
 - Technology advances,
 - Workforce development
 - Outreach,
 - Quality of life enhancements,
 - Other services for veterans.

To fulfill the mandated requirements, and achieve the goal of making Virginia the most veteran-friendly state, VDVS established strategic priorities to support the following Compact :

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services will unify the state's efforts in veterans services. With a highly trained and professional workforce, we will serve as a primary port of entry to federal, state and community resources, connecting veterans and their families to earned benefits. We will optimize technology advances to enrich services and increase outreach. We will advocate for veteran quality of life enhancements and prioritize accessibility of services for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families throughout the Commonwealth.

- **Compact with Virginia's Veterans**

GOAL: Make Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation

- **Objectives:**

- Unify the Commonwealth's efforts in Veterans Services among state agencies / stakeholders / community partners
- Prioritize accessibility of services throughout the Commonwealth
- Honor Veterans, Preserve History, Educate Youth
- Improve outcomes for veterans and their families in the areas of behavior health, rehabilitative services, supportive services, financial stability

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- Holistically connect veterans and their families to earned benefits, resources, and opportunities
- Provide the residents of Virginia's veterans care centers with exceptional person-centered care in an enriching environment that enhances their sense of physical, emotional, and social well-being.
- Advocate for quality of life enhancements for transitioning service member, veterans, and their families
- Improve the agency's effectiveness at reaching and serving Virginia's veterans and families through the implementation of technology

- Port of Entry

GOAL: Serve as a Primary Port of Entry to federal, state and community resources

- **Objectives:**

- Improve veterans' and their families' access to services through any entry point into VDVS
- Strengthen local / state / federal partnerships and advocate for federal and state resources to improve services
- Serve as a port of re-entry for justice involved veterans
- Increase outreach and community awareness; anticipate and address requirements / shortfalls created by increased demands for VDVS services
- Align VDVS support and partner resources to achieve equity in access
- Offer in-person / virtual services that facilitate service shortly after engagement
- Enhance access to education and employment opportunities for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families
- Enhance the security of VDVS applications while integrating ease-of-use features that promote awareness and resource connections for veterans and families

- Invest in the VDVS Team

GOAL: Enhance the strength of Team VDVS through employee development, support, and collaboration

- **Objectives:**

- Foster a supportive, collaborative, equitable and inclusive culture
- Identify and address shortfalls in agency infrastructure
- Recruit a diverse workforce; create an environment and opportunities that encourage retaining talented, skilled, and experienced teammates
- Institutionalize a Professional Development Program that fosters technical, leadership, individual and team growth
- Institute a compensation plan based on skillsets, experience, and level of responsibility

Sincerely,



John Maxwell

ATTACHMENT 4

JLC Report to BVS



101 N. 14TH ST., 17TH FLOOR
RICHMOND VA 23219

*Air Force Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fleet Reserve Association
Fifth Baptist Veterans
Ministry
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans
of America
Korean War Veterans
Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Officers Association
of America
Military Order of the
World Wars
Navy Mutual Aid Association
Navy Seabee Veterans of
America
Non-Commissioned
Officers Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Officers Association
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines Association*

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF VETERAN SERVICES April 16, 2021

The Joint Leadership Council met virtually December 16, 2020 and discussed advocacy of the eight JLC adopted initiatives for the 2021 General Assembly Session.

During the month of December, JLC members contacted their local Delegates and Senators to ask for support of the 2021 Initiatives. Additionally, six of the initiatives received Patron support as introduced bills, with two also have member support with corresponding budget amendment requests. A seventh initiative was supported through the budget bill introduced by Governor Ralph Northam and approved by the General Assembly. One recommendation was not picked up by a General Assembly member. In addition Senator Reeves introduced a bill in response to a JLC letter advocating for exemption of VSO Honor Guards from paramilitary activities. JLC members attended subcommittee/committee meetings to speak in support of proposed legislation.

Of the nine initiatives (including Senator Reeves' bill) only two can be deemed to be a success. A status summary of the JLC 2021 initiatives is attached and posted on the JLC webpage at: <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2>

The JLC adopted its 2021 Work Plan at the December meeting, with the first 2021 meeting scheduled for May 14. During that meeting, we will request candidates for Chair & Vice Chair nominations and we will hold orientation for all new members. We do not know yet if the meeting will be held in-person or virtually.

The JLC looks forward to working closely with the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in support of the Compact with Virginia Veterans and his strategic priorities to be a port of entry for Veterans services and for continued investment into the VDVS team. We look forward to our continued and vital partnership with the Board of Veterans Services in 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

William B. Ashton
William B. Ashton
Chairman

THE 25 ORGANIZATIONS OF THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL HAVE MORE THAN 250,000 MEMBERS

ATTACHMENT 5

VSF Report to BVS



VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION

Report to the Board of Veterans Services

April 16, 2021

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees held a virtual meeting on March 28, 2021.

The VSF Chairman, John Lesinski welcomed Anna Healey James, Senior Vice President of Public Policy & Government Relations of Sentara Health. Sentara is one of the largest not-for-profit health systems in Virginia. Sentara wanted to continue their strong support with the veteran population, so Ms. James reached out to Secretary Hopkins and VSF Executive Director, Karla Boughney to launch a partnership to help serve the needs of Virginia veterans and their families. Ms. James announced that Sentara would be making a \$150,000 donation to VSF to collaborate and focus on veteran homelessness and behavioral health services. This generous gift from Sentara will make a huge difference in the lives of many Virginia veterans and their family members.

Commissioner Maxwell provided a detailed report on behalf of VDVS. The agency continues to focus on their role as a port of entry for services needed by veterans. The Commissioner reminded everyone that he has served in this position for little over a year and has only operated during COVID-19. He continues to focus on teleworking and providing in person mission essential services. Commissioner Maxwell plans to begin a more robust admission program at the two care centers along with allowing residents to visit with their families. He added that the \$5.2M expansion project at the Amelia Cemetery will begin soon and is expected to be completed in early 2022. The Virginia War Memorial is open to visitors and has expanded their educational programs virtually to include Black History Month and Women's History Month.

Virginia Veteran and Family Support continues to seek ways to improve its resource connections for veterans and families, to include peer support and prevention of suicide among service members, veterans, and families (SMVF). This includes the expansion of Virginia's Identify SMVF, Screen for Suicide Risk, and Refer for Services (VISR) pilot and Crisis Intercept Mapping in conjunction with the VA and DBHDS. VVFS will not expend the entire Homeless Fund (\$210K) this year, mostly due to the eviction moratorium and the substantial amount of public funding for housing. Also, VVFS will not expend all funds designated for direct services (\$240K annually) and expects to spend \$140K-\$170K this CFY. This is due the reduced number of veterans and families requiring services during COVID.

Commissioner Maxwell noted the education portion of DVS is an approval agency for those wanting to use the GI Bill. They work with transitioning services and military spouses to find employment. The Altria Grant funding is utilized through a job training program. Originally Altria funding was expended for advanced manufacturing courses, but IT has now been added to the list of courses. DVS worked with VSF and the VCCS to develop a program to provide veterans and spouses with computers also using the Altria grant funding. Students request laptops by submitting an online application to VDVS at the Veteran Education Resource Initiative for Transition, Advising and Success (VERITAS) office at their campus. VDVS will review the application for eligibility and notify VERITAS of approval status. VERITAS will then provide the student a Virginia Department of Veteran Services Veteran Resource Guide to the student, issue the device to the student, and have the student sign a hand receipt.

Overall donations are down for the Foundation in FY21. However, plans were discussed aimed at new fundraising initiatives to take place before the close of the fiscal year on June 30th. Fundraising for many organizations are down as a result of COVID 19.

The Foundation welcomed four new trustees to the board. Lettie Bien, Paula Buckley, Philip Jones, and Laura Schmiegel were sworn in virtually by Secretary Hopkins.

The next Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2021. The meeting is currently planned to take place virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Lesinski, Chairman
Veterans Services Foundation

ATTACHMENT 6

VWM Report to BVS



45 May 2021

Virginia's Annual Memorial Day Ceremony

★

Monday, May 31, 11 am - noon
Huffman Amphitheater

Join us in person or online.
Please visit VWMfoundation.org for details and a poster related to weather and COVID restrictions.



Coming to the Virginia War Memorial

Who They Were: Lives Worth Knowing

Exhibition Opening Veterans Day 2021

The Memorial's walls are engraved with the names of nearly 13,000 military veterans from Virginia who perished in combat during World War II, the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf, and, more recently, those who have lost their lives in the Global War on Terrorism.

A new exhibition opening here this year will shed light on who these veterans were and what they were doing before military service interrupted and cut short their lives. Our overarching mission is to honor veterans. We do that most effectively through the preservation of their stories (in writing of which we believe). Our vision is that a global audience will recognize the valor and sacrifice of Virginian military veterans in the pursuit of liberty, democracy, justice, and peace for all.

If you have decision items that help tell the story of any name engraved on our walls, please contact Jesse Smith, Virginia War Memorial Curator, at jesssmith@vwm.org.

★ ALFRED GREGORY
★ LESLIE GREGORY
★ HERBERT MOORE LOGAN

On June 22, 1915, four cousins—Alfred Gregory and Leslie Gregory, and their best friend Herbert Moore Logan, nicknamed for the U.S. Army. The three grew up together in Buckingham County, attended school together and were members of the same church. They attended basic training together, and were assigned to the, still mostly segregated, African American 14th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division in Korea. On April 12, 1951, Logan was killed in action. On May 23, 1951, both Alfred and Leslie Gregory were also killed. Still together, Herbert, Alfred, and Leslie are buried in the Baptist Union Baptist Church cemetery in Buckingham.

★ GORDON PRESTON YOUNG

Gordon Preston Young was born in Albemarle County on March 15, 1944, and grew up in Oakton Beach (Charlottesville County). A Boy Scout, paperboy, and baseball enthusiast, Gordon enjoyed spending time outdoors. He attended Randolph-Macon High School, and while he didn't like academics, he loved playing the drums in the school band and being a member of the junior varsity football team. Gordon dropped out of high school and enlisted in the Army on January 25, 1963. He planned to make a career in the Army. In August 1964, he was assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). As part of the 1st Cavalry Division, Gordon was among the first full Army division deployed to Vietnam. Stationed in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, the 1st Cavalry Division was surrounded by challenging landscape and very few roads. Helicopters were the fastest and safest way to move soldiers. On November 17, 1965, during the Battle of Ia Drang Valley, Gordon was killed during a mortar attack. His family learned of his death when a radio operator brought a telegram to their door.

★ LESLIE DENISE JACKSON

Leslie Denise Jackson was born on October 28, 1925, in Richmond. Leslie graduated from George Wythe High School, where she was the first of her class at Farmington Community School. After graduation, she then joined the U.S. Army on March 28, 1954. Leslie deployed first to Korea and then to Iraq. She was one of the first women to serve in the U.S. Army. She died later that day. At the age of 28, the female young woman was one of the youngest casualties of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



★ PAUL FISKLA, JR.

Paul Fiskla, Jr., was born on July 26, 1927, to unemployed parents: Paul Fiskla, Sr., from Maughey and Charlotte Fiskla from Arizona. After graduating from high school in Hagerman, Paul Jr. was assigned at the Naval Air Station in Norfolk, before joining the Army on November 5, 1945. After basic training he was assigned to the 2nd Armored Infantry Battalion of the 7th Armored Division. In August 1944, he served on 20-man and fought across France. On September 11, 1944, near Donost, France, Fiskla Paul Fiskla, Jr., was killed in action. He was initially buried in Maughey in Arizona. It took more than a year for his remains to be recovered and identified. They are still stored at the Louisiana Military Cemetery at St. Armand, France.



