

Date of Report: August 2, 2022

BVS POC(s): Kathy Owens, Buddy Fowler

Service Area/Program: Virginia War Memorial

Mission of service area/program (i.e. what does it do?):

“The Virginia War Memorial honors Virginia’s veterans, preserves their history, educates, and inspires patriotism in all “. This was our Mission Statement for years which has been recently updated through our Long Term Planning process.

Who does the service area/program serve (i.e. who are the customers)?

- All Virginians (Veterans, Active Duty Service Members, National Guard Members, family members and all Virginians)

What are the service line’s primary objectives?

- Honor Veterans
- Preserve History
- Educate
- Inspire Patriotism

What are the key results that support the objective(s)?

- Outreach to inform Virginians, veterans and families of the VWM and programs
- Recognize, thank, and honor our Vietnam Era veterans
- Maintain a robust oral history program
- Provide varied educational programs for all ages
- Connect with educators throughout the state
- Host patriotic events throughout the year

What specific objectives (end of FY2022, end of FY2025) has the service line established and what progress has the service line/program made toward achieving the objective(s).

- Increase visitation to 50,000 (FY23) and 100,000 (FY26) – Visitation has increased with the return of tour groups and some student groups. On track for 50,000+ visitors for FY23. Achieved nearly 40,000 in FY22.
- Capture 50 oral histories in FY22 and 100/yr in FY25.
- Engage with 50,000 learners per/year in education programming by FY25. Achieved 10,000 in FY22.
- Increased media presence

What are some operational highlights from the past year?

- Opened Who They Were: Lives Worth Knowing Exhibit. It has been a huge success and very well received.

- Released new welcome film highlighting the purpose and impact of the Virginia War Memorial. Will be instrumental in getting the word out to the community.
- Hosted Commonwealth's Patriot Day (9/11), Veterans Day, and Memorial Day services with a combined attendance of over 5,000.
- Showcased two exhibits of Veteran artwork in the Veterans Art Gallery: Sacred Scenes: America's Battlefields and Parks. The Photography of
- Began massive Vietnam-Era veterans outreach for 50 Years Beyond Project. Collected over 1,000 photos submitted by Virginian Vietnam Veterans

What type of outreach did the service line conduct and what are the results?

- Established new partnership program – Military Partnership Program with active duty and guard units in Virginia for assistance with VWM programming. This has greatly improved uniformed presence at our events.
- Continued outreach to Vietnam Veterans which has resulted in a tremendous digital archive of Vietnam photos for preservation
- Connected with the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) and local retirement communities for education programs, boosting attendance by 25%

What, if any, new initiatives / innovative solutions were launched during the past year?

- 50 Years Beyond Project
- Mighty Pen Project (MPP)
- 1 Act play festival with local theater
- Oral History Project /Transcription production

What are the biggest challenges facing the service area / program at present?

- Staff Transition – (Facility manager, admin assistant open)
- Lingering COVID hesitancy (tour groups)
- Limited communication resources (ability to get the word out). VWMF recently approved and formed a Marketing Committee to assist with this.

How does delivering the service/program help Virginia's veterans?

- The Virginia War Memorial builds support for veterans and the military community as a whole. Connects the general public with the military community and provides veterans with educational opportunities. Our programs and events make veterans feel valued and the Shrine of Memory provides a solemn location where friends and family can find and honor their loved ones.

By helping the veteran, how does it help the Commonwealth?

- The benefits that the venue and programming provide create a desire for Virginia veterans to stay in Virginia after they separate and also a sense of pride for all Virginians knowing that Virginia Values Veterans.

What strategic opportunities are there for the future?

- Connecting with museums at the national level (Women's Memorial, USMC, NMUSA) for enhanced education programming.
- International programs facilitated via the National Battlefields and Monuments Commission

What else do you want the Board to know about this service area?

- The Virginia War Memorial needs to be known in all regions of Virginia. Staff needs are paramount as we attempt to extend our influence and impact and yet we have fewer staff members on hand now than in previous years. DVS is working to find funds for the admin assistant position. The VWMF has provided a wealth of oversight, direction and assistance in establishing and achieving our goals.