

**Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2023**

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on December 15, 2023 at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond.

Members Present

1. David Ashe
2. Carl Bedell
3. Mike Cherry
4. Michael Dick
5. Robert Eisiminger
6. Mario Flores
7. Buddy Fowler
8. Joyce Henderson
9. Carlton Kent
10. John Lesinski
11. Terence McKnight
12. Bryce Reeves
13. Monti Zimmerman, representing the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
14. Mike Coleman, representing the Veterans Services Foundation
15. Daniel Gade, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
16. Kathy Owens, Chair, Virginia War Memorial Foundation

Members Attending Virtually

1. Scott Davidson
2. Matthew Miller

Members Absent

1. Victor Angry
2. Jason Ballard
3. John Bell
4. Joe Campa
5. Vincent Griffith
6. Mamie Locke
7. Kathleen Murphy
8. Melissa Watts

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

1. Jordan Stewart, Assistant Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
2. Steven Combs, Department of Veterans Services (DVS)

3. Montwrace Cunningham, DVS
4. Stefani Dawson-Flowers, DVS
5. Glendalynn Glover, DVS
6. Patrice Jones, DVS
7. Ravi Padman, DVS
8. Jayla Plymouth, DVS
9. Anthony Swann, DVS
10. James Toczko, DVS
11. Brigadier General Todd Hubbard, Virginia National Guard
12. Alexis Bowles-Fryar, Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
13. Dr. Sarah Burgos, Museum of the Virginia National Guard

Members of the Public

1. Bob Pryor, Office of Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan
2. John Cogbill, Virginia War Memorial Foundation
3. Jamie Galanti, Virginia War Memorial Foundation
4. Rick St. John, Virginia War Memorial Foundation
5. Mike Santoro, Virginia War Memorial Foundation
6. Pam Seay, Virginia War Memorial Foundation
7. Kassie Schroth, McGuireWoods Consulting

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

1. Draft Agenda
2. Draft Minutes of the September 20, 2023 meeting
3. DVS Operational Update
4. Statewide Strategic Plan 2024-2029 – Making Virginia the Best State for Veterans
5. Joint Leadership Council (JLC) Report
6. Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Report
7. Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF) Report (Fall 2023 newsletter)
8. BVS 2024 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan
9. BVS POC List – as of 11/17/2023

Item I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Michael Dick called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Chairman Dick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item II. Roll Call, Introduction of Members, and Quorum Determination

The roll call determined that there were 16 of 26 members physically present at the meeting site, and a quorum was established. There was no objection to two members participating virtually, bringing the total to 18 of 26 members.

Item III. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Dick proposed two changes to the agenda:

1. Move the VSF Report to new Item VI
2. Change the presenters for the National Guard Museum update to Dr. Sarah Burgos and Brigadier General Todd Hubbard.

Chairman Dick made a **motion, seconded** by Delegate Buddy Fowler, to approve the Agenda as amended.

The motion carried unanimously. The approved Agenda is attached to these minutes.

Item IV. Approval of the Minutes of the September 20, 2023 meeting

Chairman Dick asked if there were any changes to the minutes of the September 20, 2023 BVS meeting. Hearing none, Chairman Dick made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. John Lesinski, to approve the minutes as drafted. The motion carried unanimously.

Item V. Introduction of DVS Staff and Guests

DVS Commissioner Daniel Gade recognized DVS Staff members in attendance. Guests introduced themselves. Their names are listed above.

New BVS member Scott Davidson introduced himself and spoke briefly about his background.

Item VI. Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Report

Mr. Michael Coleman, representing the VSF, presented the VSF report, which is attached.

Item VII. DVS Operations Update

DVS Commissioner Gade provided the DVS Operations Update, which is attached.

Item VIII. Strategic Plan Update

DVS Commissioner Gade gave an overview of the *Statewide Strategic Plan 2024 – 2029 Making Virginia the Best State for Veterans*. He noted that the plan included budget and legislative recommendations in preparation for the 2024 General Assembly session. A copy of the Strategic Plan is attached.

Item IX. Joint Leadership Council (JLC) Legislative Initiatives and JLC Report

JLC Vice Chair Monti Zimmerman reviewed the four JLC Initiatives for the 2024 General Assembly session and reviewed the JLC report, which is attached.

Item X. 2024 General Assembly Session

Chairman Micheal Dick and the BVS legislative members reviewed the upcoming General Assembly Session, which begins January 10. Senator Bryce Reeves, co-chair of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus (GAMVC), noted that weekly GAMVC meetings would begin January 17, but that the location was to be determined.

Item XI. Virginia War Memorial Foundation (VWMF) Report

VWMF Chair Kathy Owens called the members attention to the VWMF Fall 2023 newsletter and

highlighted some of the recent and upcoming programming at the Virginia War Memorial. The newsletter is attached.

Item XII. New Business

a. **Museum of the Virginia National Guard**

Dr. Sarah Burgos, PhD, Curator of the Museum of the Virginia National Guard (MVANG), and Brigadier General Todd Hubbard, Director of the Virginia National Guard Joint Staff, delivered an update on the MVANG. A copy of their presentation is attached.

b. **2024 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan:**

Chairman Michael Dick reviewed the BVS 2024 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan.

Chairman Dick made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Terence McKnight, to approve the BVS 2024 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan as presented. The motion carried unanimously. The Meeting Schedule/Work Plan is attached.

c. **“Good of the Order” Reports**

Ms. Joyce Henderson asked about the status of the Women Veterans License Plate. Commissioner Gade noted that the DMV design was approved and the plates would be available soon.

d. **Other New Business**

Chairman Dick spoke about the BVS Point of Contact (POC) process and the POC Assignments as of 11/17/2023. He invited members to contact him with any questions about POC assignments. He noted that, in addition to the POC reports, the BVS will from time to time form work groups to tackle in-depth issues requiring input from multiple members. The POC Assignment listing is attached.

Item XIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item XIV. Wrap Up & Adjournment

Chairman Dick adjourned the meeting at 12:02. p.m.

Approved Agenda
BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES
December 15, 2023, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Virginia War Memorial

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:00 – 10:02)
- II. Roll Call, Introduction of Members, and Quorum Determination – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:02 – 10:05)
- III. Approval of Agenda – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:05 – 10:06)
- IV. Approval of Minutes of the September 21, 2023 meeting – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:06 – 10:07)
- V. Introduction of VDVS staff and guests – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (10:07 – 10:15)
- VI. Veterans Services Foundation Report – *Micheal Coleman, VSF* (10:15 – 10:20)
- VII. VDVS Operations Update – *Daniel Gade, VDVS Commissioner* (10:20 – 10:35)
- VIII. Strategic Plan Update – *Daniel Gade, VDVS Commissioner* (10:35 – 10:50)
- IX. 2024 Joint Leadership Council (JLC) Legislative Initiatives and JLC Report– *Kevin Hoffman, JLC Chair* (10:50 – 11:05)
- X. 2024 General Assembly session - *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman and BVS legislative members* (11:05 – 11:20)
- XI. Virginia War Memorial Foundation Report – *Kathy Owens, VWMF Chair* (11:20 – 11:25)
- XII. New Business: (11:25 – 11:45)
 - a. National Guard Museum update – *Dr. Sarah Burgos and Brigadier General Todd Hubbard*
 - b. 2024 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman*
 - c. “Good of the Order” Reports – *all members*
 - d. Other new business – *as requested by members*
- XIII. Public comment (11:45 – 11:50) – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman*
- XIV. Wrap Up & Adjourn – *Michael Dick, BVS Chairman* (11:50 - 12:00)



VIRGINIA VETERANS SERVICE FOUNDATION
Report to the Board of Veterans Services
December 15, 2023

The Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting on December 7, 2023, at the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce in Newport News, Virginia.

There have been two new appointees to the Board. The Governor appointed Marc Andersen from Northern Virginia who has dedicated his life to making investments to those who work to make a difference to serve those who fight for our country. The Speaker of the House appointed Mike Coleman to replace John Esposito.

The Foundation has hired Kayla Arestivo as its Executive Director. Kayla, a licensed professional counselor, is the CEO of Trail for Purpose, supports service members and their families in their fight to overcome the negative effects of trauma, transition, and trials that result from their service in the military. They do this by providing FREE equine-assisted therapies and mental health counseling.

The Foundation Chairman, Paul Haughton, will be stepping down effective December 15. The Vice Chairman, Brad Willaimson, will fulfill the duties of the Chairman.

Financially, the Foundation is on sound footing with a balance at the end of September 2023, of \$3.2 million. The Foundation has sent requests to every VSO in Virginia that has given to the Foundation over the past 5 years. We asked that the Foundation to be considered as your organizations consider way to help Virginia Veterans. Additionally, we sent letters to anyone who donated to the Veterans Care Centers, asking for donation to support a holiday program. The response has been favorable so far, and we will provide you with data at your next meeting on the overall giving for the entire year.

Attached is a copy of the Foundation Annual Report to the General Assembly, which provides specific information on 2023 operations.

The next VSF Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2024, at a location to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul Haughton
Chairman
Virginia Veterans Services Foundation



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services

Daniel M. Gade, PhD
Commissioner

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Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Operations Update

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On November 20 DVS presented a virtual briefing to members and members-elect of the General Assembly entitled *"An introduction to the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and how we can help you help our veterans and families."* Delegate David Reid and Senator Bryce Reeves provided an overview of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus (GAMVC) and the work of the DVS Strategic Planning Group. A copy of the briefing, along with DVS Points of Contact and the DVS One-Pager is attached.

The Suicide Prevention and Opioid Addiction Services (SOS) program, part of Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS), continues to build critical community and research capacity with DVS grants. Forty-one community grants were awarded totaling almost \$4.1 million and eight research grants awarded as of November 1, 2023, totaling almost \$1,650,000. Grantees will implement, study, and expand best practices in veteran peer support, suicide prevention training, risk screening, and clinical therapies for Service Members, Veterans, and Families across the Commonwealth.

For VVFS direct services delivery in October 2023, there was a 60% increase in clients from October 2022 (153 new clients compared to 96). Veterans and families received assistance with resource connections for housing needs (36%), behavioral health support (15%), benefits assistance (10%), homeless assistance (9%), employment (9%).

DVS Benefits continues to strive to respond to the enactment of the Federal PACT Act in FY23 which drove an increase of 12% in DVS claims production over the last year. Among many efforts to meet the growing demand, the service line is innovating and pursuing new technologies such as Appeals management software, Virtual Contact Center, online digital forms, and digital signatures. Internally we have begun to develop Objectives and Key Results down to the individual level, with the intent of achieving first-in-class claims service to Virginia's veterans. We also continue to support the DVS Transition & Education team in their effort to reach more

transitioning military members and their families through Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and other associated programs.

The Veterans Education Transition and Employment (VETE) continues to bridge employment and education gaps for our transitioning service members, veterans, and dependents through the following programs and initiatives: Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program, Military Medics and Corpsman (MMAC) Program, Virginia Women Veterans (VWVP) Program, Virginia State Approving Agency (SAA), Military Education and Workforce Initiative (MEWI), and Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP).

The V3 Program commemorated its tenth anniversary at the V3 Awards Luncheon held October 11, 2023. Governor Glenn Youngkin and General Stanley McChrystal served as keynote speakers before 362 attendees. During this luncheon, V3 recognized fifteen small, medium, large, and enterprise V3 certified organizations for their advocacy and development of veteran friendly programs. V3 has certified 3,236 organizations who have hired more than 129,000 veterans since our program's inception. V3 awarded 69, \$1,000 V3 grants during FY24 to V3 certified companies with fewer than 300 employees to support veteran employment.

Military Education and Workforce Initiative (MEWI) partnered with the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) to provide laptops to 134 VMSDEP students enrolled at colleges and universities across the Commonwealth.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) awarded DVS three grants, totaling \$10.6M, to add additional columbarium niches at the Amelia, Dublin, and Suffolk state veterans cemeteries, part of the phased expansion of the three cemeteries. Construction is nearing completion on the Amelia and Dublin projects; the Suffolk project is scheduled to start before the end of the year. The cemeteries will host wreath placement ceremonies on December 16: Suffolk at 9 a.m., Amelia at 12 p.m., and Dublin at 1 p.m. We invite you to join us.

Resident # 1 was admitted to the Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center in Virginia Beach on November 8, just ahead of the Commonwealth's Veterans Day Ceremony and JCVCC Grand Opening on November 10. Construction delays will push the opening of the Puller Veterans Care Center in Fauquier County into next year. The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center in Richmond and the Virginia Veterans Care Center in Roanoke hosted special Thanksgiving meals for residents and their families on November 23. DVS will host a special ceremony on December 12 at 11 a.m., when the Virginia Veterans Care Center will be renamed in honor of two Virginia heroes. We invite you to join us.

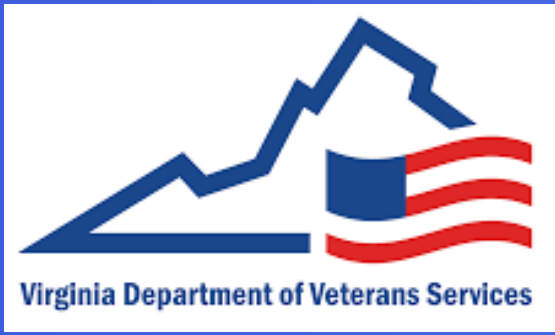
The Virginia War Memorial hosted the annual Commonwealth's Patriot Day ceremony on September 11; a special ceremony marking the 40th Anniversary of the bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon on October 23; the annual Veterans Day ceremony on November 10; the "Bringing Honor Home: A Native-American Heritage Month Event" on November 28; and the annual Commonwealth's Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony on December 7. All were well attended. In addition to these in-person ceremonies, the Memorial hosted virtual programs covering the

Battle of the Bulge, the Pathway to Pearl Harbor, and the World War I Christmas Truce. We invite you to join us for future programs – please visit <https://vawarmemorial.org/events/> to learn more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan. Gade", written in a cursive style.

Daniel Gade, PhD
Commissioner



Veterans Strategic Plan Workgroup Report

January 2024



VCU

Center for Public Policy

L. Douglas Wilder School of
Government and Public Affairs



This report is presented by:



VCU

Center for Public Policy

L. Douglas Wilder School of
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Center for Public Policy (CPP) with VCU's L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs would like to express our deep gratitude to the many voices and talents who gathered together for the strategic planning process. The workgroup members provided passionate and dedicated support for informed decision-making. DVS staff and advisors brought an incredible breadth of experience to the strategic planning process and helped to situate the workgroup's efforts within the relevant administrative context. Their contributions were invaluable to the process. The McChrystal Group collaborative consultants were dedicated to providing additional military-specific context and enhanced the group process.

Strategic Planning Workgroup Members

Commissioner Daniel Gade

Assistant Secretary Jordan Stewart

Major Andrew Czaplicki

Major Mario Flores

Major Kevin Hoffman

Senator John Bell

Delegate Mike Cherry

Senator Bryce Reeves

Delegate David Reid

Chief Warrant Officer 5 (Ret.) Phyllis Wilson

Captain (Ret.) Thurraya Kent

Senior Advisors

Steven Combs, Chief Deputy Commissioner

Kathleen Jabs, Former Deputy Secretary and Acting Secretary Veterans and Defense Affairs

Joyce Henderson, Board of Veteran Services

John Lesinski, Board of Veteran Services



Virginia Department of Veterans Services Staff Support Group

Meagan Altizar, Regional Program Manager Central / West, Virginia Values Veterans (V3)

Kim Barton, Deputy CFO

Monique Brabham, Deputy Director, Virginia Veterans Family Services

Angela Bufano, Superintendent, Albert G. Horton, Jr. Veterans' Cemetery

Tramaine Carroll-Payne, Deputy Director of Education Programs

Michele Crone, Benefits Director

Montwrace Cunningham, Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) Program Manager

James Darragh, Assistant Administrator, Virginia Care Centers

Guy Dinkins, Regional Director, Manassas Benefits Office

Kyndall Drumheller, Education Logistics Manager, Virginia War Memorial

Claudia Flores, Director of Policy and Planning

Jasmine Gore, Deputy Director for Transition and Employment, V3

Brandi Jancaitis, Director, Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program

Eric Johnson, Director of Research and Program Evaluation

Patrice Jones, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Director of Education Programs

Danielle Orbe, Human Resources Manager

Brian Wofford, Virginia Values Veterans

Collaborative Consultants – McChrystal Group

Billy Don Farris, Partner

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Olivia Monroe, Associate



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the direction of the General Assembly, the Commissioner of the Department of Veteran Services (DVS) convened a workgroup charged with developing a statewide strategic plan for veterans and their families under HB 1759. The Veteran Strategic Plan Workgroup began meeting in June of 2023 with the purpose of making Virginia the best state for veterans. The full legislative text of HB 1759 can be found in Appendix A.

The Center for Public Policy (CPP) within Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs and McChrystal Group facilitated monthly Workgroup meetings to develop a vision and goals for this purpose. The Workgroup first created a vision for their work:

Make Virginia the best state for service members, veterans, and their families to live, work, lead, and raise a family.

This vision emphasizes a key strategic choice on the part of the Workgroup to extend benefits to children and spouses of veterans and service members in order to strengthen Virginia's efforts towards becoming a more welcoming and supportive state for veterans, service members, and their families. Then, members worked together to establish six major goals in service of this vision:

1. Increase labor force participation rate for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to maximize economic outcomes
2. Make Virginia the easiest state for service members, veterans, and their families to transition, reskill, and upskill
3. Attract more transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to move to Virginia through tangible economic incentives.
4. Honor veterans' service, sacrifice, and legacy by promoting and providing high quality programs and services
5. Reduce obstacles to reliable and affordable housing options for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families
6. Reduce the rate of homelessness for veterans and their families in Virginia

For each goal, Workgroup members created specific action items and key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure that the goals are achievable and measurable. For the complete strategic plan, see Appendix B.

INTRODUCTION

The Veterans Strategic Plan Workgroup was established by the Commissioner of the Department of Veteran Services at the direction of HB 1759¹, approved by the General Assembly on March 23, 2023. The Workgroup was charged with the following responsibilities:

- Developing a statewide strategic plan that will guide legislation and budget decisions for the next five years
- Determining and identifying key performance indicators, quantifiable factors that can be compared with those of other states in determining quality of life for veterans in such states
- Assessing Virginia's current key performance indicators against those of other states
- Identifying legislative and budgetary recommendations
- Creating a scorecard of Virginia's key performance indicators to be presented to the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus at the first meeting of each regular session

The Workgroup was made up of 10 members according to the legislation, which mandated the membership to include the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs or his designee; the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services or his designee; the Adjutant General of the Virginia National Guard or his designee; one member from the Board of Veterans Services; one additional member from the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations; two current members of the General Assembly who previously served as members of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus, one to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and one to be appointed by the Chair of the Senate Committee on Rules; two members who previously served as officers of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus, one to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and one to be appointed by the Chair of the Senate Committee on Rules; and one member of a veterans organization focused on issues related to women veterans. The representative from the Board of Veterans services shifted during the course of the planning process due to leadership rotation, and the first representative remained invested in an active support role.

The group met six times from June, 2023 through November, 2023. At these meetings, Workgroup members focused on prioritizing goals for the strategic plan, crafting specific actions to reach each goal, and identifying metrics that will enable Virginia to measure progress towards each goal in comparison with other peer states.

¹ <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?231+ful+CHAP0407>



The Center for Public Policy (CPP) within Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs and McChrystal Group were hired as consultants on this project to facilitate Workgroup meetings, build consensus among Workgroup members, manage workflow and feedback between meetings, and ultimately to generate drafts of each deliverable for Workgroup review and approval.

STRATEGIC PLAN JUSTIFICATION

As the state with the third largest veteran population in the country, Virginia is currently home to over 700,000 veterans². Virginia's veterans represent 9.2% of the state's population³, come from all branches of the military, and have served in every conflict since World War II. Most importantly, they possess invaluable leadership attributes that stand to benefit the Commonwealth. Whether acquired through active or non-active duty, military experience equips individuals with a wide range of transferable skills aligned with Virginia's workforce development goals. These skills include tactical planning, crisis management, and innovative problem-solving. Veterans are also dedicated to upholding safety and compliance while maintaining adaptability in the face of adversity--necessary skill sets for leaders in any organization, business, or agency. For these reasons, providing veterans with career training and opportunities directly contributes to greater economic growth across the Commonwealth. Moreover, veterans' strong commitment to public service enriches communities and serves as a model for future generations.

While recent census data indicates that veterans are performing well in Virginia (see Scorecard section), integration back into civilian life presents challenges. Additional support is needed to ensure that every veteran has the opportunities, tools, and resources needed to reach their full potential. As veterans continue to be a tremendous asset to all communities, an investment in Virginia's military service members is an investment in the entire Commonwealth. The strategic plan outlined in this report presents both legislative and administrative goals along with targeted actions that seek to advance opportunities for veterans to live, raise a family, and thrive in Virginia.

METHODOLOGY

Over the course of six months, facilitators met with the workgroup monthly and guided them through various small and large group activities to discuss the needs of service members, veterans, and their families and generate ideas for solutions. The workgroup examined data relevant to the needs to inform this process. The facilitators revised draft documents after each

²https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/State_Summaries_Virginia.pdf

³ <https://www.axios.com/2023/11/10/map-where-veterans-live-us>



meeting to reflect on the conversation. In between sessions, workgroup members were asked to virtually provide input via QuestionPro surveys to ensure the next round of drafts were inclusive of all viewpoints.

Strategic Plan

The iterative process of idea generation and discussion, facilitator integration of ideas, and returning drafts to the Workgroup each month led to robust discussion and refinement of the strategic plan. Discussions illuminated the following as important frameworks for the strategic plan:

- A strong desire to address the needs of and provide support to service members, veterans, and their families instead of a narrow focus on veterans only. This focus was inclusive of military spouses as well as National Guard and Reserve Components.
- The strategic plan as a means to support service members, veterans, and their families to **lead** and **serve** in Virginia.
- DVS programs and services are comprehensive and delivered by dedicated professionals who are eager to reach more individuals and families.

A finalized strategic plan is available in the Deliverables section of this report. Through the iterative process, some needs and potential solutions were discussed and then ultimately not included. The items discussed were:

- grant funding to reduce the cost of child and family care;
- grant funding for recently unemployed or underemployed veterans; and
- the expansion of a universal Gold Star license plate that recognizes Gold Star Families, as defined by the more inclusive definition of "died while serving or from a service-connected injury or illness."

Selection of Comparison States

The Workgroup discussed various aspects that should be considered when selecting comparison states. It was important to the group that Virginia compare itself to other states with a similar composition of service member and veteran populations as well as industries that support military infrastructure, which provide ripe opportunities for employment after active-duty service. As a result of the conversations, Commissioner Gade requested that we work to compare Virginia to each border state as well as Texas and Florida (two other states with large veteran populations). All comparison states are listed on the scorecard available in the Deliverables section of this report.



Selection of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Workgroup engaged in robust discussions about aspirational, ideal, and realistic KPIs. A strong importance was placed on using KPIs that would measure progress toward the attainment of the six goals. Of equal importance was the availability of data for Virginia as well as the seven comparison states. KPIs selected were:

- Veterans as a percentage of adult population;
- Veteran labor force participation rate;
- Percentage of Veterans living above the poverty line;
- Number of Interstate Licensure Compacts joined;
- Veteran homeownership rates;
- Percentage of Veterans experiencing housing problems (includes problems of quality, crowding, and cost);
- Percentage of Veterans experiencing homelessness;
- Benefits Offered: Veteran dependent education benefit;
- Benefits Offered: Veteran gets “Resident” tuition rate;
- Benefits Offered: Military retirement pay exemption from state income tax;
- Benefits Offered: Veteran spouse and dependent burial at no cost, and
- National Guard & Reserve (No Active Duty) eligible for burial in State Veteran Cemeteries

Due to data constraints, many potential KPIs became aspirational and were not able to be included. There was a palpable desire to include the spouses and dependents of service members and their families in the KPIs. This was an acknowledged gap in the available data. KPIs that were discussed but not included were:

- GI Bill usage;
- Veterans Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) enrollment;
- Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) utilization;
- Property tax exemptions for disabled veterans that their surviving spouses;
- Veteran median income;
- Percentage of median household income spent on childcare;
- Veteran business ownership rate;
- Number of State Veteran Cemeteries;
- Number of Yellow Ribbon Schools; and
- Number of school districts with Purple Star designations.

Scorecard Development

Following the selection of KPIs and comparison states, data was distilled to create a scorecard to visually display how Virginia compares to the seven selected states according to each KPI. The scorecard was divided into two sections as outlined below with a description of their data



source. In general, most data was gathered from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Housing Assistance Council tabulations, and National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. The scorecard is available in the Deliverables section of this report and data sources and calculations are available in Appendix E.

DELIVERABLES

Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Vision

Make Virginia the best state for service members, veterans, and their families to live, work, lead, and raise a family.

Goals, Action Items, and KPIs

Goal 1: Increase labor force participation rate for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to maximize economic outcomes.

Action 1.1: General Assembly amends the budget appropriation for Veterans Benefit Services to expand the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) grant program eligibility to include veterans and military spouse hires in businesses and nonprofit organizations with 300 or fewer employees and local governments of any size.

Action 1.2: General Assembly increases the budget appropriation for Veterans Benefit Services to \$1,000,000 for V3 grant disbursement and increases the grant amount to \$5,000 each.

Action 1.3: DVS partners with the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement to create a pilot job matching and resource navigation program for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.

Action 1.4: General Assembly authorizes the establishment of the Military and Veterans Legislative Fellowship Program.

KPIs: Labor Force Participation Rate of Veterans; Percentage of Veterans Living Above the Poverty Line

Goal 2: Make Virginia the easiest state for service members, veterans, and their families to transition, reskill, and upskill.

Action 2.1: General Assembly authorizes a workgroup convened by the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement to determine best practices and strategies to standardize services across institutions of higher education and optimize the amount of credit received for military service and training.



Action 2.2: General Assembly amends Virginia code to ensure that dependent children and spouses of service members and veterans residing in Virginia are eligible for in-state tuition rates regardless of length of residency.

Action 2.3: General Assembly optimizes the tuition assistance program for members of the Virginia National Guard.

Action 2.4: General Assembly authorizes Virginia joining additional reciprocal credentialing compacts, specifically teacher mobility, cosmetology, physician assistant, dentist and dental hygienist, massage therapists, social work, and any other compacts as they become available.

KPIs: Number of Compacts Joined; Dependent Education Benefit; Waved Veteran Tuition Rate

Goal 3: Attract more transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to move to Virginia through tangible economic incentives.

Action 3.1: General Assembly authorizes the establishment of a Veteran Transition Tax Credit Program to incentivize transitioning service members to move to Virginia at end of their active-duty service, to include those who join the Virginia Army or Air National Guard and the Virginia-based Reserve Components.

Action 3.2: General Assembly allows Virginia procurement set asides for veteran-owned businesses operated in Virginia.

Action 3.3: General Assembly authorizes low or no-interest loans for veteran-owned small businesses operated in Virginia.

Action 3.4: General Assembly approves a Virginia constitutional amendment to standardize property tax waivers for surviving spouses of service members who died in the line of duty.

KPIs: Military Retirement Exemption from State Income Tax

Goal 4: Honor veterans' service, sacrifice, and legacy by promoting and providing high quality programs and services.

Action 4.1: DVS collaborates with DOE to provide training to support Purple Star Designation Programs in Virginia schools.

Action 4.2: General Assembly approves a budget increase for salaries for Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) to support retention of VSRs.

Action 4.3: DVS improves partnership and influence with DBHDS to increase veteran access to behavioral health services across the Commonwealth.

Action 4.4: DVS creates a healthcare resource navigation function within DVS.



Action 4.5: General Assembly directs the Office of Data Governance and Analytics to create and execute a multi-agency data sharing agreement to share veteran-specific data with DVS in order to support data-informed outreach plans for veterans.

Action 4.6: General Assembly approves a DVS budget request for marketing resources for veteran outreach.

Action 4.7: DVS develops a long-term plan with funding requests to improve infrastructure and capital assets.

KPIs: Veteran Spouse and Dependent Burial at No Cost; National Guard & Reserve (No Active Duty) Eligible for Burial

Goal 5: Reduce obstacles to reliable and affordable housing options for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.

Action 5.1: General Assembly establishes funding for veteran home improvement grants for depreciated housing in Virginia.

Action 5.2: General Assembly authorizes the establishment of a Veteran First Time Homebuyer Tax Credit Program in which a \$5,000 tax credit is available to military veterans who for the first time purchase a primary home in Virginia.

Action 5.3: DVS partners with Habitat for Humanity to expand Habitat for Heroes and Veterans Build to increase veteran homeownership in Virginia.

Action 5.4: DVS partners with DHCD to apply for grant funding to support a Virginia Veterans Rent Relief Program.

KPIs: Veteran Homeownership Rate; Percentage of Veterans Experiencing Housing Problems (quality, crowding, cost)

Goal 6: Reduce the rate of homelessness for veterans and their families in Virginia.

Action 6.1: DVS partners with Virginia Housing to apply for VA GPD Case Management grants that help veterans obtain and retain permanent housing.

Action 6.2: DVS partners with Virginia Housing to apply for grant funds to support a Virginia Veterans Mortgage Relief program that helps military families avoid foreclosure.

KPIs: Percent of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness



Action Items

Legislative and Budgetary Actions for General Assembly Consideration

Action Item	Justification
<p>Goal 1: Increase Labor Force Participation Rate for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to maximize economic outcomes</p>	
<p>1.1 Expand Virginia Values Veterans (V3) grant program eligibility to include veterans and spouses in businesses and small to mid-sized nonprofit organizations. <i>Year 1 Priority</i></p>	<p>Address military spouse underemployment and root military families in Virginia following active-duty service while alleviating worker shortage in critical sectors in the Commonwealth.</p>
<p>1.2 Increase budget appropriation for Veterans Benefits Services \$1,000,000 for V3 grant distribution and individual grant amount to \$5,000 each. <i>Year 1 Priority</i></p>	<p>Strong investment in encouraging employers to hire and successfully retain veterans and military spouses.</p>
<p>1.4 Authorize Military and Veterans Fellowship Program. <i>Year 1 Priority</i></p>	<p>Provides pathway for veterans to gain education and experience in public policy preparing them to lead in state government.</p>
<p>Goal 2: Make Virginia the easiest state for service members, veterans, and their families to transition, reskill, and upskill.</p>	
<p>2.1 Authorize workgroup to study standardize services and military and service training credit across Universities.</p>	<p>Assist veterans in navigating the best path to upskill and reskill.</p>
<p>2.2 Amend state code to ensure eligibility for in-state tuition rates for dependents and spouses of veteran residents regardless of length of residency.</p>	<p>Waiving residency requirement allows more affordable access to higher education in Virginia, likely informing decisions to move or stay at the end of their service.</p>
<p>2.3 Optimize tuition assistance program for National Guard members.</p>	<p>Supports current efforts to simplify the process for members of the Virginia National Guard to access and utilize the tuition assistance program.</p>
<p>2.4 Authorize Virginia joining additional reciprocal credentialing compacts. <i>Year 1 Priority</i></p>	<p>Enables transferability of professional credentials to more easily participate in labor force, making Virginia a leader in supporting military spouses to transition.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Attract more transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to move to Virginia through tangible economic incentives.</p>	
<p>3.1 Authorize establishment of a Veteran Transition Tax Credit Program that includes those who join the Virginia Army or Air</p>	<p>Incentivizes transitioning service members to move to Virginia at end of their active-duty service.</p>



National Guard the Virginia-based Reserve Components. <i>Year 1 Priority</i>	
3.2 Allow Virginia procurement set asides for Veteran-owned businesses operated in Virginia.	Encourage veteran business ownership and support sustainability of veteran-owned businesses.
3.4 Approve state constitutional amendment to standardize property tax waivers for surviving spouses of service members (died in active duty). <i>Year 1 Priority</i>	Workgroup supports passing this action for the second time, bringing the decision of supporting surviving spouses to voters.
Goal 4: Honor veteran’s service, sacrifice, and legacy by promoting and providing high quality programs and services.	
4.2 Approve budget increase for salaries for Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs). <i>Year 1 Priority</i>	Supports retention of VSRs—a serious concern for DVS as compensation does not match the private sector and the agency is losing well-trained individuals.
4.5. Direct the Office of Data Governance and Analytics to create and execute a multi-agency data sharing agreement to share veteran-specific data with DVS. <i>Year 1 Priority</i>	Increases data sharing among state agencies and enhances data-informed outreach plans for veterans.
4.6 Approve DVS budget request for marketing resources for veteran outreach. <i>Year 1 Priority</i>	Provides additional funding to effectively reach those currently eligible for services and transitioning out of service and considering staying in Virginia.
Goal 5: Reduce obstacles to reliable and affordable housing options for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.	
5.1 Establish funding for veteran home improvement grants for depreciated housing in Virginia.	Assist veterans who are experiencing housing problems—an area identified by
5.2 Authorize the establishment of a Veteran First Time Homebuyer Tax Credit Program with a \$5,000 tax credit. <i>Year 1 Priority</i>	Encourage veterans to move to Virginia and increase veteran homeownership rate.



Administrative Actions Implemented by DVS

Action Item	Justification
<p>Goal 1: Increase Labor Force Participation Rate for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to maximize economic outcomes</p>	
<p>1.3 Partner with the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement to create a pilot job matching and resource navigation program for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.</p>	<p>Enhance experience for job-seeking veterans and hiring employers—current processes lack the functionality to efficiently connect these two groups.</p>
<p>Goal 4: Honor veterans’ service, sacrifice, and legacy by promoting and providing high quality programs and services.</p>	
<p>4.1 Collaborate with Department of Education to provide training to support Purple Star Designation Programs in Virginia schools.</p>	<p>Provide additional support to faculty and staff providing services as well as the children and families they serve.</p>
<p>4.3 Improve partnership and influence with Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.</p>	<p>Increase veteran access to behavioral health services across the Commonwealth.</p>
<p>4.4 Create healthcare resource navigation function within the agency.</p>	<p>Allow for comprehensive assistance for veterans as they navigate complex systems to receive necessary care.</p>
<p>4.7 Develop a long-term plan and funding requests to improve agency infrastructure and capital assets throughout the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>Provide decision-makers with the information they need to evaluate DVS requests for financial support and infrastructure improvements.</p>
<p>Goal 5: Reduce obstacles to reliable and affordable housing options for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.</p>	
<p>5.3 Partner with Habitat for Humanity to expand Habitat for Heroes and Veterans Build.</p>	<p>Increase veteran homeownership in Virginia.</p>
<p>5.4 Partner with Department of Housing and Community Development to apply for grant funding to support a Virginia Veterans Rent Relief Program.</p>	<p>Improve veteran’s access to housing stability and support the viability of the rent relief program.</p>
<p>Goal 6: Reduce the rate of homelessness for veterans and their families.</p>	
<p>6.1 Partner with Virginia Housing to apply for federal Grant and Per Diem Case Management grants.</p>	<p>Help veterans obtain and retain permanent housing.</p>



6.2 Partner with Virginia Housing to apply for grant funds to support a Virginia Veterans Mortgage Relief program.

Help military families avoid home foreclosure and improve access to housing stability.

Scorecards

These two scorecards summarize all KPIs developed for this strategic plan, categorized by “Quality of Life” and “Benefits Offered”. These scorecards indicate where Virginia is outperforming peer states and where Virginia could improve outcomes. They will be presented to the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus at the first meeting of each regular session, in accordance with HB 1759. For more information on data sources, see Appendix X.

Quality of Life

Key

- ★ Outperforming All
- ▲ Improvement Needed

Virginia
Border State
Nonborder State



Key Performance Indicator*	Virginia	Kentucky	Maryland	North Carolina	Tennessee	West Virginia	Florida	Texas
Veterans as % of adult population	10.2% ★	7.2%	7.4%	8.0%	8.0%	8.3%	8.2%	6.7%
Veteran Labor Force Participation Rate	59.7% ★	46.9%	55.3%	44.1%	45.7%	46.4%	44.2%	57.0%
% of Veterans Living Above the Poverty Line	95.1% ★	91.5%	95.0%	92.8%	92.4%	91.3%	92.8%	93.4%
Number of Interstate Licensure Compacts Joined	7 ▲	9 ★	7	6	9 ★	8	4	5
Veteran Homeownership Rates	77.6% ▲	77.6%	79.0%	77.9%	80.4%	82.8% ★	80.1%	74.9%
% of Veterans Experiencing Housing Problems**	14.5% ▲	13.4%	15.1%	15.0%	13.2%	10.4% ★	16.9%	16.0%
% of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	0.06% ★	0.13%	0.09%	0.11%	0.13%	0.10%	0.16%	0.12%

*Datasonces: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, Housing Assistance Council, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs
 **Includes problems of quality, crowding, or cost



Benefits Offered

Key

✓	Yes	Virginia
✗	No	Border State
		Nonborder State



Key Performance Indicator	Virginia	Kentucky	Maryland	North Carolina	Tennessee	West Virginia	Florida	Texas
Veteran Dependent Education Benefit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Veteran gets "Resident" Tuition Rate	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Military Retirement Pay Exemption from State Income Tax	First \$40,000 covered	First \$38,775 covered	\$5K at retirement, \$15K at age 55	Total	Total	Total	No state income tax for any resident	No state income tax for any resident
Veteran Spouse and Dependent Burial at No Cost	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	No State Veteran Cemeteries	✓
National Guard & Reserve (No Active Duty) Eligible for Burial	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	No State Veteran Cemeteries	✗

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DVS ACTION

In addition to implementing the administrative components of the veteran’s strategic plan, we recommend that DVS review and update the plan annually with key partners and stakeholders. Revisiting this plan regularly will help keep the General Assembly sufficiently informed of progress. necessary. Key metrics and performance indicators will be re-evaluated in year five to track progress. Ongoing updates will be provided to the General Assembly members by the agency’s Commissioner. To support strategic plan implementation, DVS will assign the administrative actions to the appropriate staff. As DVS already offers invaluable programming to thousands of veterans and their families annually, agency efforts will focus largely on expanding and enhancing existing offerings while increasing awareness among veterans and their families around what services are available. Finally, DVS will develop a plan and funding requests for improving infrastructure and critical assets throughout the state.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Virginia is well positioned as a place for service members, veterans, and their families to grow and thrive. The Workgroup considered multiple ways to leverage resources already deployed in Virginia as well as develop key strategies to address the contemporary needs of service members, veterans, and their families. Implementing the legislative and budgetary actions in this plan will create policy measures that directly support service members, veterans and their families to establish roots in Virginia and provide leadership in



their community. Additionally, such changes will enable DVS staff to conduct outreach and provide high quality services more efficiently and effectively. The combination of legislative actions and DVS program initiatives outlined above will enhance our ability to make Virginia the best state for service members, veterans, and their families to live, work, lead, and raise a family.



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Full Legislative Text

CHAPTER 407

An Act to direct the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services to convene a work group to study and develop recommendations for implementing a statewide strategic plan to make Virginia the best state for veterans; report.

[H 1759]

Approved March 23, 2023

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *That the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services shall convene a work group to study and develop recommendations for implementing a statewide strategic plan to make Virginia the best state for veterans. The work group shall consist of 10 members to be appointed as follows: the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs or his designee; the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services or his designee; the Adjutant General of the Virginia National Guard or his designee; one member from the Board of Veterans Services; one additional member from the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations; two current members of the General Assembly who previously served as members of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus, one to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and one to be appointed by the Chair of the Senate Committee on Rules; two members who previously served as officers of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus, one to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and one to be appointed by the Chair of the Senate Committee on Rules; and one member of a veterans organization focused on issues related to women veterans.*

The responsibilities of the work group shall include (i) developing a statewide strategic plan that will guide legislation and budget decisions for the next five years; (ii) determining and identifying key performance indicators, quantifiable factors that can be compared with those of other states in determining quality of life for veterans in such states; (iii) assessing Virginia's current key performance indicators against those of other states; (iv) identifying legislative and budgetary recommendations; and (v) creating a scorecard of Virginia's key performance indicators to be presented to the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus at the first meeting of each regular session.

The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services or his designee shall, as applicable, serve as chairman of the work group. As chairman, he shall be responsible for



convening meetings, taking and publishing minutes, and reporting the findings and recommendations of the work group in a report to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Committee on General Laws and the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology. The work group shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2023 and submit such report by the first day of the 2024 regular session.



Appendix B: Statewide Strategic Plan



STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2029



Making Virginia the Best
State for Veterans





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This statewide plan was developed collaboratively by the Veterans Strategic Plan Workgroup established under House Bill 1759 introduced in the 2023 General Assembly Session. Convened by the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS), the workgroup was responsible for the study and development of recommendations for implementing a statewide strategic plan to guide legislation to make Virginia the best state for veterans.

.....

WORKGROUP MEMBERS

- Senator John Bell
- Delegate Mike Cherry
- Major Andrew Czaplicki
- Major Mario Flores
- Commissioner Daniel Gade
- Major Kevin Hoffman
- Captain (Ret.) Thurraya Kent
- Senator Bryce Reeves
- Delegate David Reid
- Assistant Secretary Jordan Stewart
- Chief Warrant Officer (CW5) (Ret.) Phyllis Wilson

DVS STAFF & ADVISORS

Support Staff

- Meagan Altizar
- Kim Barton
- Monique Brabham
- Angela Bufano
- Tramaine Carroll-Payne
- Michele Crone
- Montwrace Cunningham
- James Darragh
- Guy Dinkins

- Kyndall Drumheller
- Claudia Flores
- Jasmine Gore
- Brandi Jancaitis
- Eric Johnson
- Patrice Jones
- Danielle Orbe
- Brian Wofford

Senior Advisors

- Steven Combs
- Joyce Henderson
- Kathleen Jabs
- John Lesinski





VISION



Make Virginia the best state for service members, veterans, and their families to live, work, lead, and raise a family.

STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1

Increase labor force participation rate for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to maximize economic outcomes.



GOAL 2

Make Virginia the easiest state for service members, veterans, and their families to transition, reskill, and upskill.



GOAL 3

Attract more transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to move to Virginia through tangible economic incentives.



GOAL 4

Honor veterans' service, sacrifice, and legacy by promoting and providing high quality programs and services.



GOAL 5

Reduce obstacles to reliable and affordable housing options for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.



GOAL 6

Reduce the rate of homelessness for veterans and their families in Virginia.



1





GOAL 1



Increase labor force participation rate for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to maximize economic outcomes.

Action 1.1: General Assembly amends the budget appropriation for Veterans Benefit Services to expand the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) grant program eligibility to include veterans and military spouse hires in businesses and nonprofit organizations with 300 or fewer employees and local governments of any size.



Action 1.2: General Assembly increases the budget appropriation for Veterans Benefit Services to \$1,000,000 for V3 grant disbursement and increases the grant amount to \$5,000 each.



Action 1.3: DVS partners with the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement to create a pilot job matching and resource navigation program for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.

Action 1.4: General Assembly authorizes the establishment of the Military and Veterans Legislative Fellowship Program.



 **Year 1 Legislative and Budgetary Priority**



Key Performance Indicators

Veteran Labor Force
Participation
Rate

% of Veterans Living
Above the
Poverty Line





GOAL 2 ACTIONS




Make Virginia the easiest state for service members, veterans, and their families to transition, reskill, and upskill.

Action 2.1: General Assembly authorizes a workgroup convened by the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement to determine best practices and strategies to standardize services across institutions of higher education and optimize the amount of credit received for military service and training.

Action 2.2: General Assembly amends Virginia code to ensure that dependent children and spouses of service members and veterans residing in Virginia are eligible for in-state tuition rates regardless of length of residency.

Action 2.3: General Assembly optimizes the tuition assistance program for members of the Virginia National Guard.

Action 2.4: General Assembly authorizes Virginia joining additional reciprocal  credentialing compacts, specifically teacher mobility, cosmetology, physician assistant, dentist and dental hygienist, massage therapists, social work, and any other compacts as they become available.



Year 1 Legislative and Budgetary Priority



Key Performance Indicators

Number of
Compacts Joined

Dependent
Education Benefit

Waived Veteran
Tuition Rate





GOAL 3 ACTIONS



Attract more transitioning service members, veterans, and their families to move to Virginia through tangible economic incentives.

Action 3.1: General Assembly authorizes the establishment of a Veteran Transition Tax Credit Program to incentivize transitioning service members to move to Virginia at end of their active-duty service, to include those who join the Virginia Army or Air National Guard and the Virginia-based Reserve Components. ★

Action 3.2: General Assembly allows Virginia procurement set asides for veteran-owned businesses operated in Virginia.

Action 3.3: General Assembly authorizes low or no-interest loans for veteran-owned small businesses operated in Virginia.

Action 3.4: General Assembly approves a Virginia constitutional amendment to standardize property tax waivers for surviving spouses of service members who died in the line of duty. ★

★ **Year 1 Legislative and Budgetary Priority**



Key Performance Indicator

Military Retirement
Pay Exemption from
State Income Tax





GOAL 4 ACTIONS



Honor veterans’ service, sacrifice, and legacy by promoting and providing high quality programs and services.

Action 4.1: Department of Veterans Services collaborates with Department of Education to provide training to support Purple Star Designation Programs in Virginia schools.

Action 4.2: General Assembly approves a budget increase for salaries for Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) to support retention of VSRs.



Action 4.3: Department of Veterans Services improves partnership and influence with Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to increase veteran access to behavioral health services across the Commonwealth.

Action 4.4: Department of Veterans Services creates a healthcare resource navigation function within the agency.

Action 4.5: General Assembly directs the Office of Data Governance and Analytics to create and execute a multi-agency data sharing agreement to share veteran-specific data with the Department of Veterans Services in order to expand the data-informed outreach plans for veterans.



Action 4.6: General Assembly approves a Department of Veterans Services budget request for marketing resources for veteran outreach.



Action 4.7: Department of Veterans Services develops a long-term plan and funding requests to improve agency infrastructure and capital assets throughout the Commonwealth.

 **Year 1 Legislative and Budget Priority**



Key Performance Indicators

Veteran Spouse and Dependent Burial at No Cost

National Guard & Reserve (No Active Duty) Eligible for Burial





GOAL 5 ACTIONS



Reduce obstacles to reliable and affordable housing options for transitioning service members, veterans, and their families.

Action 5.1: General Assembly establishes funding for veteran home improvement grants for depreciated housing in Virginia.

Action 5.2: General Assembly authorizes the establishment of a Veteran First Time Homebuyer Tax Credit Program in which a \$5,000 tax credit is available to military veterans who purchase a primary home in Virginia for the first time. ★

Action 5.3: Department of Veterans Services partners with Habitat for Humanity to expand Habitat for Heroes and Veterans Build to increase veteran homeownership in Virginia.

Action 5.4: Department of Veterans Services partners with Department of Housing and Community Development to apply for grant funding to support a Virginia Veterans Rent Relief Program.

★ **Year 1 Legislative and Budgetary Priority**



Key Performance Indicators

Veteran Homeownership Rates

% of Veterans Experiencing Housing Problems*

*Includes problems of quality, crowding, or cost





GOAL 6 ACTIONS



Reduce the rate of homelessness for veterans and their families in Virginia.

Action 6.1: Department of Veterans Services partners with Virginia Housing to apply for U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs Grant and Per Diem (VA GPD) Case Management grants that help veterans obtain and retain permanent housing.

Action 6.2: Department of Veterans Services partners with Virginia Housing to apply for grant funds to support a Virginia Veterans Mortgage Relief program that helps military families avoid foreclosure.



Key Performance Indicator

% of Veterans
Experiencing
Homelessness





SCORECARDS

Quality of Life

Key

- ★ Outperforming All
- ▲ Improvement Needed

	Virginia
	Border State
	Nonborder State



Key Performance Indicator*	Virginia	Kentucky	Maryland	North Carolina	Tennessee	West Virginia	Florida	Texas
Veterans as % of adult population	10.2% ★	7.2%	7.4%	8.0%	8.0%	8.3%	8.2%	6.7%
Veteran Labor Force Participation Rate	59.7% ★	46.9%	55.3%	44.1%	45.7%	46.4%	44.2%	57.0%
% of Veterans Living Above the Poverty Line	95.1% ★	91.5%	95.0%	92.8%	92.4%	91.3%	92.8%	93.4%
Number of Interstate Licensure Compacts Joined	7 ▲	9 ★	7	6	9 ★	8	4	5
Veteran Homeownership Rates	77.6% ▲	77.6%	79.0%	77.9%	80.4%	82.8% ★	80.1%	74.9%
% of Veterans Experiencing Housing Problems**	14.5% ▲	13.4%	15.1%	15.0%	13.2%	10.4% ★	16.9%	16.0%
% of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	0.06% ★	0.13%	0.09%	0.11%	0.13%	0.10%	0.16%	0.12%

*Datasources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Housing Assistance Council, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs
 **Includes problems of quality, crowding, or cost



Benefits Offered

Key

- ✓ Yes
- ✗ No

Virginia
Border State
Nonborder State



Key Performance Indicator	Virginia	Kentucky	Maryland	North Carolina	Tennessee	West Virginia	Florida	Texas
Veteran Dependent Education Benefit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Veteran gets "Resident" Tuition Rate	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Military Retirement Pay Exemption from State Income Tax	First \$40,000 covered	First \$38,775 covered	\$5K at retirement, \$15K at age 55	Total	Total	Total	No state income tax for any resident	No state income tax for any resident
Veteran Spouse and Dependent Burial at No Cost	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	No State Veteran Cemeteries	✓
National Guard & Reserve (No Active Duty) Eligible for Burial	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	No State Veteran Cemeteries	✗



Appendix C: Full Work Group Member List

Strategic Planning Committee

Name, Title	Organization, Affiliation
Senator John Bell, Member	GAMVC, Senate Rules Committee
Delegate Mike Cherry, Member	GAMVC, Speaker of the House
Major Andrew Czaplicki, Adjutant General	Virginia National Guard
Major Mario Flores, Member	Board of Veterans Services
Daniel Gade, Commissioner	Department of Veterans Services
Major Kevin Hoffman, Member	Joint Leadership Council
Captain (Ret.) Thurraya Kent, Member	Board of Veterans Services
Senator Bryce Reeves, Previous Officer	GAMVC, Senate Rules Committee
Delegate David Reid, Previous Officer	GAMVC, Speaker of the House
Jordan Stewart, Assistant Secretary	Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Designee)
Chief Warrant Officer (CW5) (Ret.) Phyllis Wilson, Member	Women-focused Veteran Organization



Appendix D: Meeting Schedule

#	Date/ Time	Objectives and Topics	Facilitators	Location
1	June 6, 2023/ 9am-12pm	Project overview; defining and synthesizing strategic priorities and goals	CPP and MG	Virtual
2	July 12, 2023/ 9am-12pm	Goal revision and action review and revision	CPP and MG	Virginia State Capitol Richmond, VA
3	August 16, 2023/ 9am-12pm	Introduction of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), pairing actions with metrics, action prioritization	CPP and MG	Virginia War Memorial, Richmond, VA
4	September 14, 2023/ 9am-12pm	Developing KPIs for goals 1-3	CPP and MG	Virginia War Memorial, Richmond, VA
5	October 18, 2023/ 9am-12pm	Feedback and refining KPIs for goals; reflection on and refining of strategic plan goals and actions	CPP and MG	Virginia War Memorial, Richmond, VA
6	November 15, 2023/ 9am-12pm	Feedback and finalization of strategic plan and scorecard; strategic action prioritization	CPP and MG	Virginia War Memorial, Richmond, VA

Appendix E: Scorecard Resources and Calculations

Housing Assistance Council (2023) <https://veteransdata.info/about-the-data>

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) developed tabulations of the 2017-2021 American Community Survey (ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) used for certain estimates). From this, HAC created data sheets per state to reflect their tabulations. The data sheets for Virginia and the seven comparison states were used to determine:

- Veterans as percentage of adult population
- Veteran homeownership rates
- Percentage of Veterans living above the poverty line
 - calculated the inverse of the number given of Veterans living in poverty
- Percentage of Veterans experiencing housing problems
 - calculated percentage per state: (number of veterans with housing problems ÷ total veteran population) X 100
- Percentage of Veterans experiencing homelessness
 - calculated percentage per state: (number of veterans experiencing homelessness ÷ total veteran population) X 100

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023) <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/vet.pdf>

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on the status of employment of veterans in 2022. The scorecard includes the Veteran labor force participation rate as indicated in Table 6A. Employment status of veterans 18 years and over by state, 2022 annual averages.

National Center for Interstate Compacts (2023)

The National Center for Interstate Compacts is a technical assistance provider for interstate compacts and supplied state comparison information to CPP via personal correspondence.

National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) (2023)

The benefit options checklist information was primarily sourced from the National Association NASDVA 2023 State Territory Benefits information spreadsheet provided by DVS. These items are depicted by a yes/no answer or a description of the benefit by state.





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

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

*Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants
Association
American Legion
AMVETS
Association of the United
States Army
Disabled American
Veterans
Fifth Baptist Church Veterans
Ministry
Fleet Reserve Association
Legion of Valor of the
U.S., Inc.
Marine Corps League
Military Officers Association
of America
Military Order of the
Purple Heart
Military Order of the
World Wars
Navy Mutual Aid Association
Paralyzed Veterans of
America
Reserve Organization of
America
Roanoke Valley Veterans
Council
Student Veterans of America
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vietnam Veterans of America
Virginia Army/Air National
Guard Enlisted
Association
Virginia National Guard
Association
Women Marines Association
Wounded Warrior Project*

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES December 15, 2023

The Joint Leadership Council (JLC) last met on December 14, 2023 at the Virginia War Memorial. During the meeting, prioritized the JLC 2024 initiatives:

- Tax Relief Surviving Spouses (Constitutional Amendment 2nd Reference)
- Virginia National Guard Tuition Assistance Waiver
- Virginia National Guard Enhanced Emergency Response Medical Protection

Ms. Katherine Martinez of Student Veterans of America proposed the creation of a JLC Task Force to study ways to improve state education benefits for veterans. The JLC voted unanimously to form the Task Force.

The JLC appointed the following Officers for the 2023-2024 term:

- Glenn Yarborough – Legislative Officer & Chair of Objectives Committee
- Bill Aramony – Assistant Legislative Officer & Chair of Procedures Committee
- Mark Atchison – Chaplain
- Dan Karnes – Chaplain (Alternate)

Additionally, Monti Zimmerman will serve as Chair of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee, Rick Van Norton and Sha'ron Martin will serve as the Co-Chairs of the Nominating Committee, and Jay Marts will serve as legislative sponsor.

We are actively planning for the 2024 JLC Day on the Hill scheduled for January 17. Our next JLC meeting will be December 14 at the Virginia War Memorial.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Hoffman
Chairman

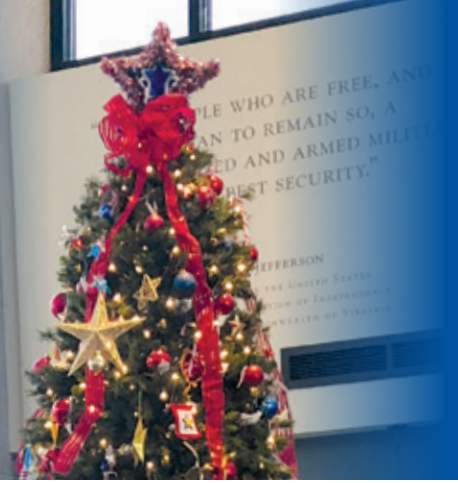


VIRGINIA
WAR MEMORIAL
FOUNDATION

Fall/Winter
2023

Blue Star Families Hero Tree

NOW ON VIEW



D+80

VIRGINIANS IN THE NORMANDY INVASION

EXHIBITION OPENS JUNE 6, 2024
TO MARK THE
80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Over 150,000 Allied troops attacked the heavily fortified beaches in Normandy, France, initiating the largest amphibious assault in human history. Code named Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy served as the turning point of World War II, began the drive to liberate Europe, and ultimately led to an Allied victory.

What General Dwight D. Eisenhower described as a “great and noble undertaking,” the D-Day invasion would forever characterize the indomitable strength and spirit of the more than 70,000 American troops who participated.

Many of them were from Virginia. This is their story.

D-DAY TRAINING: Preparing for the Normandy Invasion

Allied D-Day training and preparing was a vast endeavor, stretching from South America to southern England. Firing ranges were at a premium, so space was needed for practicing dropping weapons from gliders to aerial gunnery and anti-aircraft guns. However, the campaign was upon amphibious operations and landing, and some facilities had been in use long before June 1944.

Here is how Tom Paulk describes a typical training day in mid-April 1944, when the Light Infantry moved to a training camp about 60 miles from Southampton:

Left on the table was a platoon. We discussed our plan of where it would be, but the question was when? Sometimes the question got us on nerves. We all had our own theories as to when it would be. Around May 1944, a decision never took place. The camp was used, our training was over. The days that followed were spent in the air. Bombers were directed to the camp area, around the camp. We received our mail, but were still allowed to write home, subject to strict censorship.

The U.S. Army set up at least eight training centers prior to D-Day, most notably at Washington Beach, Texas. Because of its topographical similarity to Normandy, the Virginia Beach region of the main coast was selected for amphibious rehearsals, leading to the disaster Operation Tiger in April.



Exhibit Design: The 1717 Design Group, Inc.

The lessons of World War II — those learned from triumphs as well as losses — will be forgotten without the efforts of organizations like the Virginia War Memorial to keep the memories, the sights, and the sounds in the public consciousness.

Five Gallery Sections will cover these topics:

- Training for the Invasion
- Operation Overlord Landing
- Paratrooper and Glider Operations, and Amphibious Landings
- Hedgerow Fights
- The Battle of Saint Lô to the Normandy Breakout

Now Open in the Veterans' Art Gallery



F-4 Taxi Cat, one of Paulk's paintings featured in Dreams of Flight; Inset: Paulk aboard the USS Midway.

Dreams of Flight

Longtime Virginia resident Tom Paulk had his dreams of flight come true — he was fortunate enough to find a path that led to flying Jet Fighters for the U.S. Navy. Tom could always draw, but he was not a painter until he left the Naval Academy and realized how terrible an apartment wall can look when it is devoid of art and color. His first painting effort was an experiment, where he enlarged a gift shop postcard. The result was very encouraging, leading to a few more artistic efforts while on his first tour to Japan, as time allowed. Most, but not all, of his paintings then and since, have had a tie to aviation.

Completing his Navy career led to a business career, as well as more off-duty opportunities to create art. Tom, a resident of Chesapeake, Virginia, joined the Southside Artists Association, and the American Society of Aviation Artists (ASAA), with the goal of learning his craft and creating beautiful works that would delight collectors.

EXHIBITIONS ON VIEW:

- 50 Years Beyond:
The Vietnam Veteran Experience
CLOSES APRIL 2024
- Dreams of Flight:
The Art of Tom Paulk
- Arms for the Nation
- Virginia Medal of Honor Gallery
- Undercroft Exhibit Hall
- The Shrine of Memory

Making New Friends by Making New Partners



Thanks to new friends in Southwest Virginia, Blue Ridge PBS, and Appalachia Digital PBS, as well as to all of the Foundation's partners, our most recent documentary, *One Week in October*, aired on PBS stations across Virginia and into D.C.,

Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. If you missed it, you can also see it on our website VaWarMemorial.org.

When we approached the folks at Blue Ridge PBS about the production, they were quick to see the importance of preserving this story. They produced an unforgettable narrative, in the voices of Virginia veterans, of a momentous week in October 1983. A week still fraught with unanswered questions. A week that saw the horrific bombing of the Marine Corps Barracks in Beirut and then two days later the invasion of Grenada.

We have also formed a partnership with the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Music. As part of the *Mighty Pen Podcast*, music students will contribute original compositions to the effort.

Strengthening our partnership with our sister sites in the Virginia World War II Heritage

Alliance is a mandate in our strategic plan.

Garden Clubs across the state are partners in our Public Green Space initiative. The Garden Club of Virginia has a strong history of relief efforts during World War II. Love of Commonwealth, and of country, are evident in all that is undertaken by this historic group.

Firehouse Theatre is our production partner for the 2024 *War In Pieces*

festival of veteran-authored one-act plays.

Our participation on the Board of Veterans Services and our work with the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations ensures that our programs are closely aligned with our mission to preserve the stories of veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice, to honor all veterans and active-duty military, and to inspire love of country through education.

Teachers and education professionals across the state, our museum colleagues who belong to the Virginia Association of Museums, and decision-makers in state and local government – all of these partners work with us to consolidate resources for greater efficiency.

What would we do without our friends in the media – print, broadcast, and digital partners – who share our dedication to critical educational programming for all ages?

As important as all these collaborations are, YOU are our most important partner. Without the support of people like you, we would not be operating from the position of strength that allows us to be bold in our planning.

Thank you.

Pamela R. Seay
PRESIDENT
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



Listen to Our *Mighty Pen Podcast* – New in 2024

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Our Mighty Pen Project

Each week in 2024, stories from our longest-running creative writing program for veterans will be released, followed by conversations between Mighty Pen Project instructor David Robbins and the authors of the stories. In cases where the author is no longer with us, a close friend will remember them. The wide reach of a podcast will provide easy access to veterans who might not be aware of our free creative programs designed especially for them. And for nonveterans, the podcast will focus much needed attention on veterans as individuals, not as a monolithic demographic with a single dimension.



Alexander Sapp reads for the *Mighty Pen Podcast* in the studio at the Memorial, as Foundation employees Dan Thomas and Ennis Kristiansen listen carefully.

Work has started. The response from our network of professional actors wanting to deliver this powerful medium has been outstanding. New partnerships with the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Department of Music will provide original music, further enhancing the veteran pieces and allowing students a chance to spotlight their compositions to this new community.

The Virginia War Memorial is proud to be a member of the Virginia World War II Heritage Alliance. We invite you to visit all our partners:

The National D-Day Memorial
dday.org

MacArthur Memorial
macarthurmemoial.org

Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation
hamptonroadsnavalhistoricalfoundation.org

Virginia Holocaust Museum
vaholocaust.org

The Stonewall Brigade Museum
shenandoahatwar.org/stonewall-brigade-museum

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum
portsmouthnavalshipyardmuseum.com

Military Aviation Museum
militaryaviationmuseum.org



Dawn Goldstein, PhD, RN, PMHNP-BC, a *Mighty Pen Graduate*, U.S. Army veteran, *War In Pieces* playwright of 2024 One-Act Play.

RIGHT:
A scene from the 2023 season.

War in Pieces Continues in 2024

Once again, four one-act plays, each written by a military veteran, will be presented on stage in our VMI Alumni Hall of Honor. Firehouse Theatre will be our partner in 2024. Performances are scheduled for March 15, 16, 17 and on March 21, 22, 23, 24.

These live performances will connect you to the cast, and to the playwrights, and to others in the audience. The intimacy and the immediacy of the stage makes the experience more than entertaining. Each play offers an eye-opening snapshot of pain, humor, loss, redemption, or validation, delivered from one soul to another.



Virginia War Memorial Foundation Board of Directors 2023

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Such Wonderful Friends



In recent months, the Virginia War Memorial has made a concerted effort to connect with retirement communities in the Richmond area. The reason for this outreach is rooted simply in the catalogue of wonderful moments we have built

at the War Memorial while hosting visiting retiree groups and conducting tours for them. Hearing their amazing stories, the insightful questions, and the joy for learning from these visiting residents makes us want to do more with and for these patriotic Virginians.

It should come as no surprise that our retirement communities are rich with veterans. From World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, their generations hold a higher percentage of veterans than those now amid the workforce and those beginning their careers. As a result, I hope to find a means to tap into their wisdom and experience to help us preserve history, educate, and inspire a new generation of patriots. It would be a terrible shame to miss such an opportunity to enrich the War Memorial's programs and our visitors' experience.

Therefore, we are reaching out to our retirement communities to participate in our oral history project, capturing the stories of veterans. Our education team of Jim Triesler and Crystal Coon continue to visit several local communities for engaging historic presentations. We are also looking into the possibility of extending our creative writing Mighty Pen Project to residents as well as other creative arts programs we are developing. And of course, we are working with program directors at retirement communities to schedule more group visits here to the War Memorial, to include a special program about the World War I Christmas Truce this December 13th.

We have much to learn from our wonderful friends who are enjoying retirement. The Virginia War Memorial wants to show them all we do for veterans, their families, and for the Commonwealth. Any recommendations or information for connecting with retirement communities can be sent to Catherine Allen at Catherine.allen@dvs.virginia.gov.

Dr. Clay Mountcastle
DIRECTOR
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL



Assistant VWM Director of Education Crystal Coon presents to a group of retirees on life during the Civil War.



OUR MISSION

To preserve the stories of veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice, to honor all veterans and active-duty military, and to inspire love of country through education.

OUR VISION

A global audience will recognize the valor and sacrifice of Virginia's military veterans in the pursuit of liberty, democracy, justice, and peace for all.

NEWS NEWS NEWS

Virginia War Memorial Foundation Receives the Garden Club of Virginia Common Wealth Award

On October 18, the Virginia War Memorial Foundation was awarded the Garden Club of Virginia 2023 Common Wealth Award for our Public Green Space Project. This prestigious and historic recognition dates to the Garden Club of Virginia's annual meeting in May 1979, when the club voted to provide an annual grant to promote projects in the interest of conservation, beautification, horticulture, preservation, and education. The two-word name "Common Wealth" was chosen to describe the "wealth" that is "common" to all Virginians. The nearly 12,000 names etched on the Shrine of Memory represent sons and daughters from every city, county, and town across the Commonwealth.

Our Public Green Space Project was nominated by the four Richmond Garden Club of Virginia clubs — the Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton, the Boxwood Garden Club, the James River Garden Club, and the Three Chopt Garden Club — and voted on by each of the 48 Garden Clubs across the state.

The Award provides us with \$20,000 to kickstart our Capstone Challenge Campaign to meet our \$1 Million goal before year end.

The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton is donating an additional \$7,500 toward the Capstone Challenge for the purchase of five large White Oak trees to be planted in a space to be named the "Gold Star Oak Grove." RoseMarie Bundy, member of the Tuckahoe Garden Club and the Public Green Space Project Committee, reported the donation and said it is part of the Club's Centennial Service project: "We make this gift to honor Gold Star Families, an honor no one should bear. The White Oak is a symbol of peace and serenity and we hope the Gold Star Oak Grove at the Virginia War Memorial will provide that for all."

Garden Club of Virginia Common Wealth Award Winner

★
Help us meet the Capstone Challenge

The Award provides us with \$20,000 to kickstart our Capstone Challenge Campaign to meet our \$1 Million goal before year end.



Welcome Jamie Galanti, the Foundation's Newest Board Member

Jamie is one of the owners of Commonwealth Commercial Partners — a Virginia-based commercial real estate firm. As a Senior Vice President and Partner in the firm, Jamie is one of the top commercial agents in Richmond specializing in office and industrial properties.

Jamie's love for our veterans started at home. Both of his grandfathers were colonels in the U.S. Army and served in World War II. His father, Paul, was a naval aviator who fought in Vietnam and spent nearly seven years in a Vietnamese prison camp as a Prisoner of War in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton." Back here at home, Jamie's mother, Phyllis, was a tireless advocate for the POWs and helped to secure their release in 1973. Jamie has given back to our veterans by volunteering at the VA Medical Center here in Richmond and assisting with the Families of the Wounded Fund. He attended Hampden-Sydney College, where he was the Vice President of the Student Senate, and a standout on the lacrosse field.

Meet Dan Thomas, Engagement and Outreach Manager, Virginia War Memorial Foundation

Dan is originally from Alexandria, Virginia, but has spent much of his life in Richmond. He holds a BA in history from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Before joining the Foundation, Dan worked for VCU Libraries and held internships at the City of Westminster Archives and here at the Virginia War Memorial assisting with research for the Medal of Honor Gallery.

Dan is especially excited about the upcoming *Mighty Pen Podcast*, which he was tasked with producing on his first day on the job: "It's been a privilege to be working with the Veterans in the *Mighty Pen Project* to showcase their work and use it in making this podcast. I believe sharing stories like this, the types that aren't usually put forward in popular media, is one of the most effective ways to connect people to our shared history. Listening to the Vietnam Veterans' stories has made me think quite a bit about my grandfather, who passed long before I was born, who served in the Air Force in Vietnam. I like to think he would have appreciated the opportunity I have with the podcast as well — after he served, he hosted a late-night show on a radio station in Fredericksburg."

Suggestions and questions regarding the *Mighty Pen Podcast* can be sent to mppodcast@vawarmemorial.org.

Contact Dan at dthomas@vawarmemorial.org for help with other outreach/engagement needs, such as rentals, Walkway of Honor purchases, the Joseph A. Weinberg Memorial Store, Bus Trips, and the *Mighty Pen Project*.



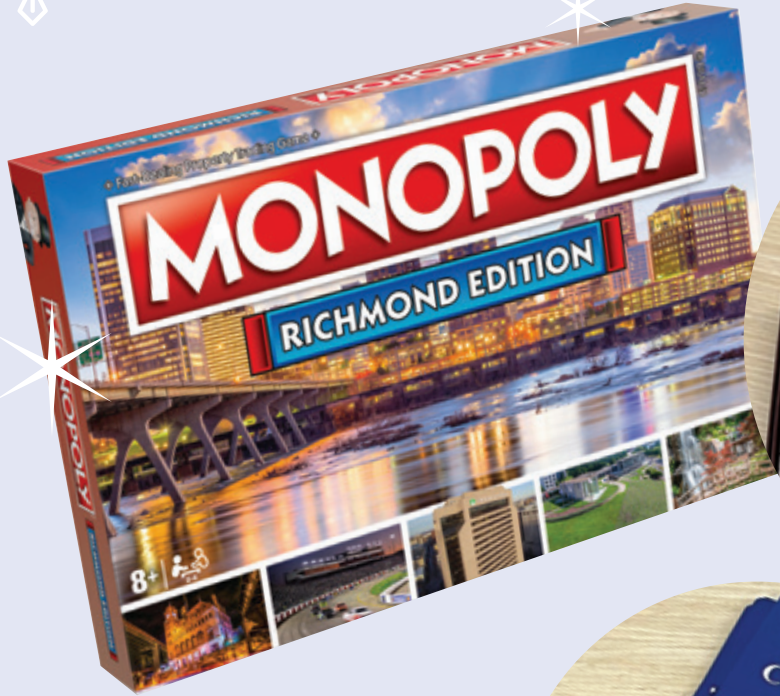
JOSEPH A. WEINBERG MEMORIAL STORE

Shop here before you PASS GO

RICHMOND MONOPOLY is here and we are on the board. Pick up your edition here at the Memorial and enjoy time with your family competing to snag your favorite local places. Also new to our lineup is a commemorative coaster honoring Phyllis Galanti, gently reminding us in her inimitable way,

“No whining!” Brush up on your civic knowledge with citizenship flash cards.

All proceeds from the Joseph A. Weinberg Memorial Store fund the continuing educational mission of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation. Shop online at VaWarMemorial.org. Shipping and local pickup options are available.



Visit the Memorial Store to find these and other great holiday gifts!



OPEN:
Monday – Saturday: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Sunday: noon – 4 p.m.
Shrine of Memory:
5 a.m. to midnight daily

CLOSED:
New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day
VaWarMemorial.org

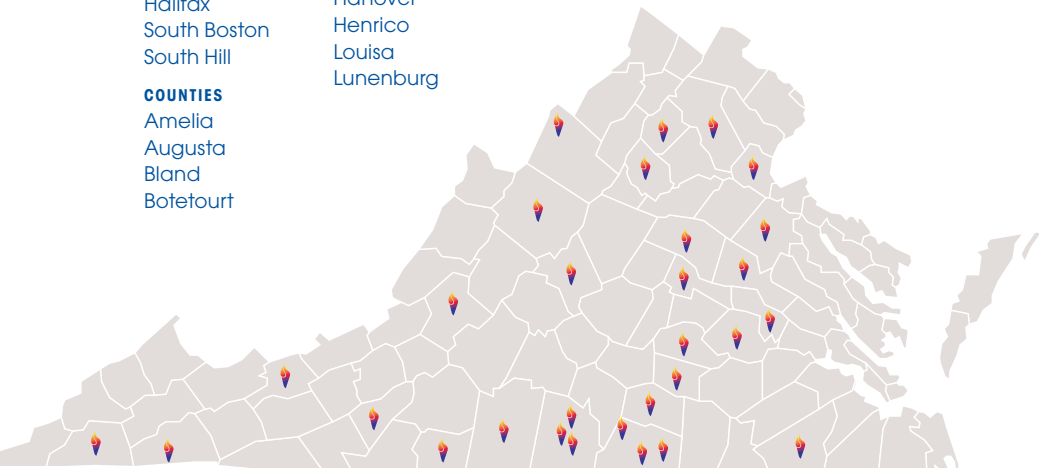
PHOTOGRAPHY:
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John Crank
Virginia War Memorial
Virginia War Memorial Foundation

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Jenny M. Abel Editorial Services
NEWSLETTER DESIGN:
Communication Design Inc.

Who They Were: Lives Worth Knowing

Nearly 12,000 names, engraved in stone and walls of glass, represent men and women from a grateful Commonwealth. The cities, towns, and counties represented here by a flame of patriotism are remembering those to whom we owe so much.

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| CITIES
Bristol
Martinsville | Caroline
Chesterfield
Fauquier
Floyd
Goochland
Halifax
Hanover
Henrico
Louisa
Lunenburg | TOWNS
Chase City
Elkton
Halifax
South Boston
South Hill | COUNTIES
Amelia
Augusta
Bland
Botetourt | Madison
Mecklenburg
Nelson
Nottoway
Pittsylvania | Rappahannock
Scott
Southampton
Stafford |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|



If your city or county would like to support our efforts, please contact us at mmwachur@vawarmemorial.org or (301) 580-1488. Or visit VaWarMemorial.org/support/whotheywere.

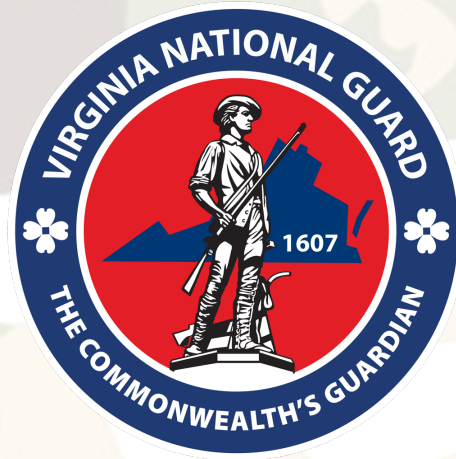
2024 Events Calendar

Visit our website and sign up for e-news alerts for details on these events and others at VaWarMemorial.org/events.

Our popular *At Ease on the Bus* insider trips return in 2024. Details and open registration to be announced by e-news.

- January 2**
Launch – *Mighty Pen Podcast*
- February 11 – 17**
National Salute to Veteran Patients
- March 15**
Opening Night Performance – *War in Pieces*
- March 16**
K-9 Veterans Day Memorial Dog Walk
- March 16 – 17**
Performance – *War in Pieces*
- March 21 – 24**
Performance – *War in Pieces*
- April 10**
Leadership in America: Adam Lee – “Security Threats: Government and the Private Sector”
- May 27**
Commonwealth of Virginia’s Memorial Day Ceremony
Annual Walkway of Honor Breakfast

- June 6**
Leadership In America: Gallery Talk and Exhibition Opening — *D+80: Virginians in the Normandy Invasion*
- June 16**
Performance – *Father’s Day Concert by the Richmond Philharmonic Orchestra*
- June 28**
Hill of Heroes Installation
Join us for the installation of 12,000 American flags on our hillside representing the names engraved on the Shrine of Memory.
- June 29**
Hill of Heroes Celebration and Flag Exchange
Free family-friendly activities
- September 11**
Commonwealth of Virginia’s 9/11 Patriot Day Ceremony
Leadership in America: Alex Kershaw – *Patton’s Prayer*
- September 13**
Sips on the Skyline
- September 20**
National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- November 11**
Commonwealth of Virginia’s Veterans Day Ceremony
- December 7**
Commonwealth of Virginia’s Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony



MUSEUM

OF THE

VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

EDUCATION, RESEARCH, & TRAINING CENTER

Richmond, Virginia
December 14, 2023





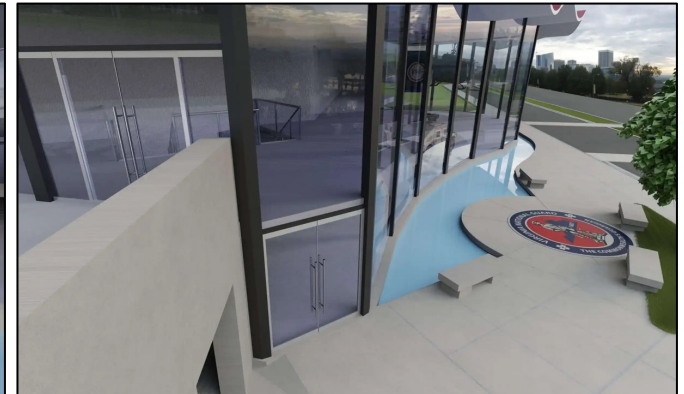
MUSEUM OF THE VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

Virginia is the only state of the original 13 colonies without an official National Guard Museum, despite having the oldest branch of the National Guard dating back to the original Jamestown settlement militia in 1607.

This proposal establishes, funds the construction, and lays the groundwork for sustaining the *Museum of the Virginia National Guard: Education, Research, and Training Center* in Richmond.

FISCAL INVESTMENT

\$5,321,000 for *Detailed Planning*
\$62,112,700 for *Construction*





MUSEUM OF THE VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

BACKGROUND:

It has been nearly 40 years since Virginia's Office of the Adjutant General signed a permanent order to establish the museum in 1986. But no administration has yet to fund its construction.

Amid the growing nationwide recruiting and retention crisis, Virginia is missing opportunities to:

- Recruit future National Guardsmen
- Better retain current Guardsmen by recognizing their service
- Keep and attract more veterans to Virginia
- Ensure accurate education about how the Virginia National Guard serves the Commonwealth and the Nation
- Tell the stories of all our Reserve Components
- Protect state-owned historical artifacts



MUSEUM OF THE VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

STATE-WIDE COALITION PARTNERS:

- National D-Day Memorial (Bedford)
- Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (Williamsburg)
- 29th Infantry Division Museum (Verona)
- Virginia War Museum (Newport News)

FUNDRAISING ENTITY:

- Virginia National Guard Historical Foundation, 501(c) 3

The Museum's Collections are currently displayed at:

- Virginia War Memorial (Richmond)
- Joint Force Headquarters (Richmond)
- Fort Barfoot (Blackstone)
- 20+ Readiness Centers across Virginia



MUSEUM OF THE VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD



Before



After

The *Museum of the Virginia National Guard* performs critical community service by displaying and preserving the artifact collection of the Virginia National Guard.

Seen here: One of only around ten remaining national flags carried during the Mexican-American War, before and after recent conservation.



MUSEUM OF THE VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD

- The Virginia National Guard averages a **26:1 federal return on state investment**
- 18,500+ Guardsmen have mobilized since September 11, 2001

New Business:

- Feasibility studies are underway for multiple sites in Richmond, some of which belong to the Virginia National Guard.
- Analyzing associated costs, community and economic impacts, and engineering studies.

BVS 2024 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan

General Assembly (begins January 10)

- Attend “JLC Day at the General Assembly” – January 17
- Attend meetings of the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus throughout session

Meeting 1 (June 20):

- POC Reports
 - Benefits Services
 - Behavioral Health, Suicide Prevention, and Rehabilitative Services
 - Transition & Employment
 - Rural Veterans
 - Veterans in the Arts
- Establish Working Groups as necessary
- Legislation/budget & General Assembly session overview

Meeting 2 (September 26):

- Review JLC 2025 Initiatives and provide feedback
- POC Reports
 - Veterans Cemeteries
 - Homelessness & Housing Services
 - Justice-Involved Veterans and Veteran Treatment Dockets
 - Education
 - Women Veterans
- Working Group reports as necessary

Meeting 3 (On or around December 13):

- POC Reports
 - Communications & Marketing, Outreach
 - Strategic Plans
 - Legislative Priorities and Budget
 - Virginia War Memorial
 - Virginia Care Centers
- Working Group Reports as necessary
- 2025 General Assembly Session preview
- Adopt 2025 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan

BVS POC LIST AS OF 11/17/2023

BVS MEMBER(S)	POC FOR	VDVS SERVICE LINE & DIRECTOR/PM	DC POC
Carl Bedell, Scott Davidson, Carlton Kent	Benefits Services	Benefits, Michele Watson Crone	Patrice Jones
David Ashe, Carlton Kent, Mike Cherry	Behavioral Health, Rehabilitative Services, AND Suicide Prevention and Opioid Addiction Services (SOS)	VVFS, Brandi Jancaitis; VVFS/SOS, Angela Porter	Patrice Jones
John Lesinski, Bob Eisiminger	Veterans Cemeteries	Cemeteries, Michael Henshaw, Scott Miller, Angela Bufano	Steven Combs
Joyce Henderson, Kathleen Murphy, Melissa Watts	Women Veterans	Women Veterans Program, Beverly VanTull	Patrice Jones
Victor Angry, Mario Flores, David Ashe, Joyce Henderson	Transition & Employment (V3, MMAC, MILSPOUSE)	Transition & Employment, Patrice Jones Kayla LaFond (MilSpouse)	Patrice Jones
Vincent Griffith, Victor Angry, John Bell	Veterans Care Centers	Robyn Jennings (SBVCC); Todd Barnes (VVCC); Patrick Shuler (JCVCC); Brock Bakos (PVCC)	Steven Combs
Bob Eisiminger, Buddy Fowler	Virginia War Memorial	VWM, Clay Mountcastle	Steven Combs
Carl Bedell, Matthew Miller	Veterans and the Arts	VVFS, Anthony Swann; VWM, Clay Mountcastle	Patrice Jones, Steven Combs
Joe Campa, Mamie Locke	Homelessness & Housing Services	VVFS, Brandi Jancaitis & Desiree Taylor	Patrice Jones
Bryce Reeves, Joe Campa, Michael Dick	Justice-Involved Veterans & Veteran Treatment Dockets	VVFS, Brandi Jancaitis; Donna Harrison, JIV Director	Patrice Jones
Terry McKnight, Mario Flores	Education (GI Bill, VMSDEP, and SkillBridge)	Education, Patrice Jones	Patrice Jones
Melissa Watts, Terry McKnight, Scott Davidson	Communications & Marketing, Outreach	Communications, Tina Parlett-Calhoun	Commissioner Gade
John Lesinski, Jason Ballard, Matthew Miller	Rural veterans (including broadband)	VVFS, Brandi Jancaitis and Leanna Craig; Benefits, Craig McCarty	Patrice Jones
Michael Dick, Vincent Griffith	Strategic Plans	Claudia Flores, DP&P; and Steven Combs, CDC	Commissioner Gade
Michael Dick, Legislators	Legislative priorities, budget amendments & draft legislation	Claudia Flores, DP&P; and Steven Combs, CDC	Commissioner Gade