



Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs



Annual Report
December 2006

See inside back cover for Maryland
Veterans Commission correction.



Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Secretary

ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR.
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL S. STEELE
LT. GOVERNOR

GEORGE W. OWINGS III
SECRETARY

December 2006

Dear Governor Ehrlich:

Serving Maryland's veteran community through services and programs to assist veterans, their dependents and survivors in successfully obtaining the benefits earned in recognition of their service to state and country is the unqualified mission of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA). I am pleased to submit our Fiscal Year 2006 Annual Report for the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, pursuant to HB 3, passed and signed into law during the 2006 session of the General Assembly.

Since this is our first Annual Report, based upon the 2006 legislation, the information herein is reliant, in part, upon the United States Department of Veterans Affairs demographics and statistics.

Through the ever-expanding communication to the citizens of Maryland, engaging individuals and organizations in partnership with the MDVA staff and commissions, we continue to promote, develop and support the interests of veterans. We look forward to continuing this work and building on the accomplishments to serve and recognize Maryland's veterans.

Sincerely,

George W. Owings III
Secretary



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INTRODUCTION

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs was established in 1999 by combining the purposes and authority of the Maryland Veterans Commission, including the Washington Cemetery Board of Trustees, the Maryland Veterans Home Commission and the State's obligation and authority to the War Memorial Commission.

The Maryland Veterans Commission and the Maryland Veterans Home Commission became advisory commissions pursuant to SB 157, passed during the 2006 legislative session and signed into law by the Governor. The origin of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs follows the history of the Maryland Veterans Commission back to 1924, when the Soldiers' Relief Fund Commission was formed to administer a state relief fund for disabled veterans of World War I.

The mission of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs is to promote the interests of Maryland's veterans, to provide technical and legal assistance in obtaining earned benefits, and generally to provide the best service possible to the veterans and their families.

The Department continues to evolve as we expand and develop programs to benefit Maryland veterans and their families.

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Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs 2006 Annual Report

*“To care for him who shall have borne
the battle and for his widow, and his
orphan...”*

- Abraham Lincoln

By statute, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs advises the Governor, General Assembly and any unit of state government on the needs and requirements of Maryland veterans.

Mission

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs delivers services and programs to assist veterans, their dependents and survivors in obtaining federal, state and local benefits provided by law in recognition of their service to state and country.

The mission of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs is to promote the interests of Maryland’s veterans, to provide technical and legal assistance in obtaining earned benefits, and generally to provide the best service possible to the veterans and their families.

Message from the Secretary

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is an Executive Department in Maryland State Government with a service mission to:

- Communicate to and inform the veteran community, as well as the public at large, of the benefits and services available through the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
- Provide representation to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of the approximately 463,000 Maryland veterans through a network of five full-time offices and 22 itinerant offices
- Provide referrals to other federal, Maryland State and local government agencies for benefits which may be available to eligible individuals
- Manage Charlotte Hall Veterans Home
- Manage and operate five State Veterans Cemeteries and a Civil War Cemetery
- Maintain and care for the Maryland Vietnam, Korean and World War II Veterans Memorials
- Maintain and care for the War Memorial Building, jointly with the City of Baltimore
- Provide staff support and assistance to various State Veterans Commissions
- Introduce, monitor and advise the Governor on veteran-related legislation.

George W. Owings III
Secretary

Key Assumptions

- The Maryland veteran population is expected to decrease from 520,803 in 2000 to 426,228 in 2011.
- The Vietnam veteran population is the now the largest segment of Maryland veterans.
- Veterans from the Southwest Asia/Gulf War operations will bring unique and challenging issues, requiring MDVA to be more proactive in reaching the veterans and their families.
- There is a definite potential through Outreach & Advocacy to inform the veteran. If Maryland's percentage of veterans receiving compensation was at the national average, an additional 13,000 veterans would add approximately \$100 million in federal dollars to the State's economy.
- The average age of a Maryland veteran is 55 (ranked third youngest) which relates to a very desirable, educated and stable workforce for Maryland today and in the future.
- No legislation adverse to the program will pass, and resources will not be diverted for uses outside the program.



Key Goals

Goal 1: Promote awareness of services and benefits available to veterans, their dependents and survivors.

Goal 2: Provide effective benefits counseling and claim development services to veterans and their dependents.

Goal 3: Promote the functional independence, or positive end of life experience, for each resident at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home.

Goal 4: Ensure the maintenance of burial areas and headstones, surrounding lawn areas, buildings and roads to fulfill the expectations of family members of the deceased, members of the veteran community and the National Cemetery Administration.

Goal 5: Ensure the maintenance of the various memorials, the Civil War Cemetery and the War Memorial Building.

The Department has only partial influence over the accomplishment of its goals and performance measures. The external influences that can and do affect our success include State and national economic conditions, the State's unemployment rate, interest rates and the federal USVA Cemetery Allowances, Veterans Home per diem payments and cemetery capital construction funds.

In our favor are the statutes and factors that are inherent to maintaining State funding of operations and personnel. Directly, the Department can control work priorities, employee training, workload and budgetary cost containment.

Casualties of the Global War on Terror

On April 26, 2005, Delegate Joseph J. Minnick's House Bill 1226 - *Public Safety - Deceased Military Member - State Flag Presented to Family* became Chapter 264, codifying an existing practice of the Secretary to visit the family of the deceased, presenting the State Flag, flown in memory of the deceased, condolences from the Governor and Lieutenant Governor - both written and verbal, and a copy of the order from the Secretary of State to have the Maryland State Flag lowered to half-staff, in memory of the deceased, on the date of interment.

The process begins by staff monitoring Department of Defense Casualty releases on a daily basis. When a member of the Armed Forces from Maryland has been killed, the Department of Defense is contacted for next of kin information and funeral arrangements. Frequently the family does not sign a release until a day or two before the funeral, creating enormous interagency and logistical pressure to secure the flags, certificates showing the flag was flown over the State House in memory of the deceased, the letter from the Governor and the notice from the Secretary of State to have flags flown at half-staff on the date of interment. Many times, the Secretary, or his designee, will spend time with the family, getting to know them and conveying messages back to the Governor.

Although difficult, it has proven to be invaluable as the families know they can call upon the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs with any questions they may have. It also makes it easier for the family to see a familiar face when they are invited to the Governor's Fallen Hero ceremony. This is a private ceremony (no press), generally held twice a year, honoring not only military killed in action, but also public safety officials who have died in the line of duty. The families

gather in the Governor's Reception Room and are presented with personalized medallions commemorating their family members' ultimate sacrifice. The Secretary, along with the Heads of the State Police and State Military Departments, decide who will be included in the ceremony. There have been seventy Maryland casualties to date and thirty-five during 2006.

Outreach and Advocacy

In June 2006, the Outreach & Advocacy Program was codified by the General Assembly in HB 3. The program ensures that veterans know what services, benefits and assistance the federal and state government, as well as nonprofit organizations, provide for them.

Outreach & Advocacy is the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs' newest program. The mission of Outreach and Advocacy is to find innovative ways to seek out and inform Maryland's veterans about benefits and services that are available from federal, state and local organizations, as well as solicit feedback from veterans regarding their requests for additional services. Outreach & Advocacy also works closely with multiple state and federal agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations, to coordinate efforts to expand services that are available to veterans. Furthermore, the program ensures that legislation impacting veterans, passed by the Maryland General Assembly and signed by the Governor, is properly funded and enacted.

Outreach & Advocacy is the focal point in the State for veteran service organizations, along with local, state and federal agencies to inform and increase the veterans' awareness of the services and benefits to which they are entitled. This proactive approach gives valuable insight into the needs of the veteran community.

Public appearances by and speaking engagements at hundreds of events in the past year, such as VSO conventions, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day and civic organizations. An estimated 50,000 to 60,000 citizens have been addressed on behalf of the Governor and the Department, by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Directors, Commissioners and staff. These encounters have greatly expanded the number of veterans and dependents contacted by and informed of services and benefits provided.

A major function of Outreach & Advocacy has been the development of an eight page newsletter which has grown from a distribution of 5,000 to 20,000, to include community centers, veteran service organizations, Chambers of Commerce, senior centers, public libraries, and military bases in Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Northern Virginia over the past two years.

The program has also significantly increased the information available on MDVA's website, to include all services available to Maryland's veterans via collaborative efforts with multiple state agencies. Benefits brochures and other documents have also been developed as a part of Outreach. The program further keeps the Governor and General Assembly informed on issues of significance to veterans which may require gubernatorial or legislative action.

There is also a significant opportunity to get a message out to the veteran community, as well as the public at large, about the benefits, services and mission on behalf of veterans, as accomplished by the Outreach & Advocacy Program.

A recent USVA survey highlighted a disturbing analysis. Veterans with a self-reported disabling condition, who did not

apply for disability benefits, most frequently gave one of the following reasons:

- Did not think was entitled or eligible
- Did not need the assistance
- Unaware of VA service disconnected disability program.

The overall welfare of the informed veteran and their family members is increased with their access to benefits and services and enrolling them into the VA Healthcare coverage-system at no cost to Maryland.

Women Veterans Initiative

One specialized Outreach & Advocacy initiative has been developed and expanded to reach as many of Maryland's women veterans as possible. Of the 463,000 veterans living in Maryland, approximately 43,000 are women.

There have been 16 seminars specifically directed to women and numerous speaking engagements to professional organizations and associations to apprise the public of the benefits available to veterans, as well as to recognize their contributions to the community.

Plans have been initiated to facilitate a statewide "*Women Veterans Reunion*" with multiple State agencies and non-profit groups during 2007.

Veteran Recognition

We have maintained prominent year-round recognition of all veterans, and particularly World War II era veterans with the 60th anniversary of D-Day in June 2004. Production and introduction of a film entitled "*In Their Own Words*", featuring Maryland D-Day veterans, for Maryland public high schools occurred through a collaborative effort between the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs and the Maryland State Department of Education.

We continue to use the film frequently as a tool when any of the staff speaks to community organizations about the Department.

Interdepartmental Efforts

- Although not directly involved with negotiations, MDVA is monitoring Department of Health & Mental Hygiene's efforts with the USVA to facilitate a Memorandum of Understanding for ten veteran beds and outpatient services at Deer's Head Hospital Center in Salisbury, a state-run facility.
- We are also monitoring the Maryland Department of Transportation's new Veterans Workforce Training Program.
- Expanded interdepartmental efforts with distribution of information for veteran related scholarship assistance, job fairs and other related areas of interest.

Memberships

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs holds membership in the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs. The State of Maryland will be hosting the Annual Meeting of State Directors in Annapolis during September 2007.

Membership is also held in the National Association of State Veterans Homes.

Partnerships

A variety of partnerships have been expanded and/or developed by the Department. The Secretary and staff have visited with wounded service men and women at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center. We have developed relationships with Disabled Sports USA, The

Wounded Warrior Project, Operation Second Chance, Yellow Ribbon Fund, Way Station, MCVET and Baltimore Station, among others.

Expanded relationships continue with Veterans Service Organizations, Auxiliaries and Sons of the American Legion.

Outreach and Advocacy FY 2006 Highlights

- A 300 percent increase in *The Maryland Veteran* newsletter circulation from 5,000 to 20,000 per issue, plus electronic distribution.
- Initiated 16 statewide women veterans benefits seminars
- Significantly improved and expanded the MDVA website, which includes extensive information regarding benefits and services offered to veterans by other state agencies
- Initiated collaborative projects with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Maryland Department of Disabilities (DOD) to ensure veterans with physical and mental disabilities receive the care and services they need
- Increased collaboration and communication with the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) to promote the use of Veterans Employment Representatives at the One Stop Career Centers and the use of the Maryland Workforce Exchange system
- Construction of an information and data base concerning military service records of Maryland veterans.



Legislative Update

While the Department had only one piece of legislation during the 2006 General Assembly, we assisted in the drafting of several pieces, to include oral testimony on some of those proposals. In addition, we worked closely with the Veterans Caucus of the General Assembly and monitored 78 pieces of legislation which would impact veterans.

SB 157 -- Reflects the current functional structure of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs. Significant changes include:

- Organizes the three commissions as advisory boards to the Secretary
- Conforms the terms of all three commissions to five year periods of service
- When an organization is no longer a part of the Veterans Commission, their appointment shall terminate at the end of the current member's term
- A new organization may not be eligible for representation on the commission, unless it is congressionally chartered.
- Reduction of the residency requirement for burial in a State veterans cemetery from twenty to two years
- Establishes in law that spouses of eligible veterans may reside at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home

HB 3 -- While this legislation was not generated by MDVA, it codifies Outreach & Advocacy as a program within the Department and expands scholarship assistance to veterans. It also established a Task Force to Study State Benefits available to Maryland veterans. Other less substantive changes were included as well.

Service Program

The impact of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs is often seen through the successful attainment of benefits and services for veterans, their dependents and survivors. The unseen benefit is the improved quality of life for the veterans and their dependents, as well as the influx of federal compensation and pension payments to the Maryland economy.

The program has established statewide veteran service offices to support discharged veterans and their family members. The Veterans Service Offices, through claims initiation, development and representation, provide assistance to veterans and their dependents in preparing and submitting claims and in representing claimants before the federal, state and local agencies providing veterans benefits. The Service Officers provide counseling and referral services for both federal and state veterans benefits.

Our Service Officers provide invaluable counseling and referral services for both federal and state veteran benefits. Their efforts, in tandem with Outreach and Advocacy, are focused on ensuring that all Maryland veterans receive every benefit to which they are entitled. Further, by increasing the federal payments to Maryland veterans and their survivors resulting in the unseen effect of benefiting State of Maryland economy.

The Service Program assists veterans in obtaining their benefits via a contingency of eight U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USVA) certified service officers and a certified program director. In addition to being accredited as State of Maryland employees, five of the eight service officers, and the program director also hold multiple

accreditations, as certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. These employees hold accreditations with the following organizations and can represent any veteran who has one of these organizations as their power-of-attorney:

- American Red Cross
- American Veterans (AMVETS)
- Fleet Reserve Association
- Jewish War Veterans
- Marine Corps League
- Military Order of the Purple Heart

Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs Service Officers provide information, counseling and referrals for VA home loans, education loans, insurance and compensation for service-connected disabilities, health care and burial benefits for surviving family members.

Through the program, the MDVA Service Officers advise and represent Maryland veterans, their dependents and survivors who are seeking federal, state and local veteran benefits. Service Officers assist veterans with the preparation of claims submitted for benefits enumerated by federal, state and local law. To achieve these purposes, MDVA operates five full-time veteran service offices in:

- Baltimore
- Hurlock
- Frederick
- Cumberland
- Landover

MDVA Service Officers staff 22 itinerant locations, by appointment or on a regular schedule, in the following locations:

- Bel Air
- Cambridge
- Charlotte Hall
- Chestertown

- Easton
- Denton
- Frostburg
- Elkton
- Greenbelt
- Grasonville
- Hagerstown
- Havre de Grace
- Lonaconing
- Leonardtown
- Rockville
- Oakland
- Snow Hill
- Salisbury
- Westminster
- Westernport
- Westover
- Wheaton

Trained in the laws and regulations affecting veterans, service officers present claims before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. They represent claimants by power-of-attorney through the adjudication and appellate processes.

VA Disability Compensation and Pension Programs

In general, eligible veterans may receive two types of monetary benefits for disability that include service-connected disability compensation and pension funds. Disability compensation is a monetary benefit paid to veterans with service-connected disabilities. VA pension programs provide income support to veterans and survivors (with wartime service) for a non-service-connected disability or death. Disability programs serve veterans and survivors who are experiencing financial hardship.

Service Program 2006 Highlights

- Established a full time service office in Prince Georges County, the largest veteran populated county in Maryland.
- Expanded Frederick service office hours to four days a week
- Relocated the Cumberland service office to an area open to public transportation.
- Two service officers received accreditation by the USVA, raising the total accredited veteran service officer staff to eight (8).
- Re-established the second Service Officer for the Eastern Shore and initiated toll free telephone service to that office.
- Reestablished itinerant services to four locations on the Eastern Shore.



Cemetery & Memorial Program

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Cemetery Program maintains five veterans cemeteries, providing a final resting place for those eligible veterans and their eligible family members who desire this benefit provided by the State of Maryland.

Since the program's inception in the mid-1970s, more than 64,208 individuals have been interred at our five veteran's cemeteries. This requires the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs not only to conduct burial services, but also provide perpetual care on the ever-increasing expansion of graves sites within the system. Of Maryland's five State veteran cemeteries, three are among the top ten of the nation's busiest state cemeteries. The facilities provide interment services during the normal business week (Monday through Friday) and are open to the public 365 days of the year.

The Cemetery Program maintains and operates the cemeteries, sets the eligibility requirements for burial and manages the day-to-day operations and records. There were an

2006 Service Program Statistics

Requests for assistance	13,115
Claims filed	2,115
Number of contacts	11,000
Number of dependents	11,803
Average processing time	12 days
100% of benefit requests are processed within 30 days of receipt.	



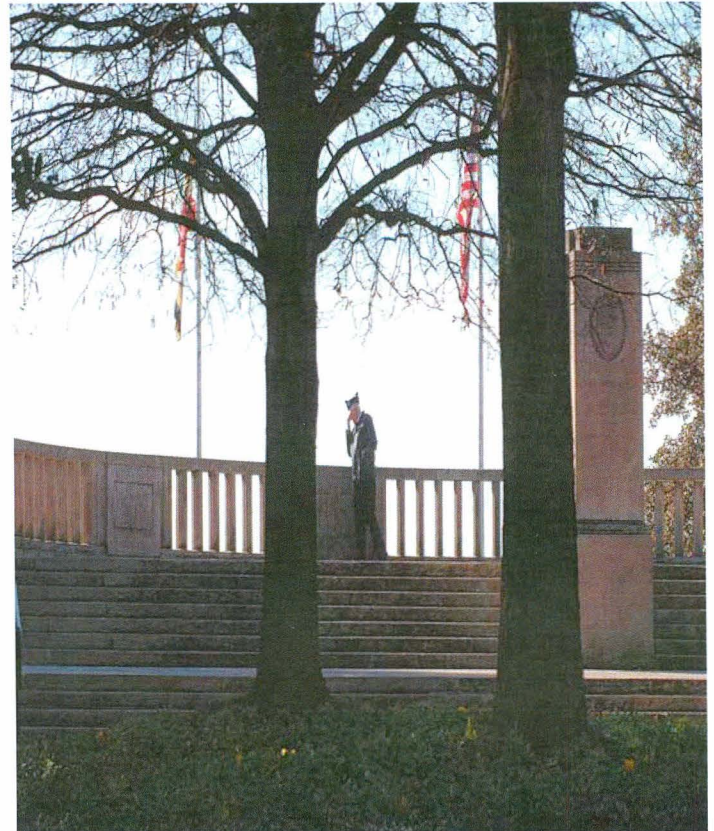
average of 3,195 interments annually over the past three years. The annual interment rate represents 21% of Maryland's veteran deaths.

Interment is the most important function carried out in the cemetery. The operations and maintenance ensure that our State Cemeteries are maintained as national shrines, dedicated to preserving our nation's history, nurturing patriotism and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans and their families have made. The five cemeteries include:

- Cheltenham – Prince George's County
- Crownsville – Anne Arundel County
- Eastern Shore – Dorchester County
- Garrison Forest – Baltimore County
- Rocky Gap – Allegany County

Cemetery Program FY 2006 Highlights

- Developed a Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Cemetery Program Quick Series pamphlet
- Incorporated a new headstone grave marker grid system with high expectations for reduction of complaints and projected long term cost savings for grave marker realignments.
- Increased the dependent opening/closing costs for the first time since 1976, from \$150 to \$400, to help defer the cost of business operations
- Increased cemetery capital construction burial expansion projects through \$19,000,000 of USVA grants requests for various improvements, including grave sites, columbaria, irrigation, roadway and building construction and renovation.
- Coordinating with State Clearinghouse for recommended transfer of ten acres to Veterans Affairs as additional land for Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery. This acreage is currently part of the Maryland Department of Agriculture's State Warehouse.



Memorials

Currently, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Cemetery and Memorial Program has responsibility for the following memorials:

- World War II Memorial in Annapolis
- Korean War Memorial in Baltimore
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Baltimore
- Civil War Cemetery at Rose Hill Cemetery in Hagerstown

These facilities are open 365 days a year in recognition of those who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice to secure our democracy.

- Joint responsibility with the City of Baltimore for the War Memorial Building.

Memorials FY 2006 Highlights

- Established an informal partnership with the Baltimore City Superintendent of Recreation and Parks for the Korean and Vietnam War Memorials.
- Fourteen (14) patriotic events were held at the memorials through the year, including Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Pearl Harbor Remembrance and other special commemorations.
- The 1866 Speakers Stand at the Civil War Cemetery was rebuilt and restored, at a cost of \$116,000
- A variety of other improvements, at a cost of \$522,000, have been made to the World War II, Korean War, Vietnam Veterans Memorials and the War Memorial Building.



Charlotte Hall Veterans Home

The Charlotte Hall Veterans Home is a 504 bed, 329,000 square foot complex on a 126 acre campus, providing assisted living, skilled nursing and specialized Alzheimer's care for the Maryland veterans who are unable to take care of themselves due to advancing age or disability, or those who have requirements for

skilled nursing care in a comprehensive setting. The Home provides support and services required for shelter, sustenance, social support and medical care with the full intent to improve the quality of life and to return the veteran to independence and when practical, to the community. The current residency has risen steadily and is at a near record high of 356 residents.

Charlotte Hall Veterans Home furthers the Department's mission of serving Maryland veterans by providing the all important health care and comfort to veterans in a clean and safe environment, thus reducing the State's provision of social and medical services.

Charlotte Hall FY2006 Highlights

- Census increased from 316 to 356 (12.7%)
- Construction of a medivac helipad for CHVH and public use
- Conducted a pilot to test the value of utilizing commercial ambulance service eight hours per day to reduce use of local Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Planning phase to the VA Clinical Patients Records System to permit the Home and the VA to view and coordinate resident's treatment records – CHVH will be the first state veterans home, nationwide, to have this level of coordination
- Expansion of the security camera system and conversion to digital recording, and installation of gates to control access on facility roadways, to increase security in the facility
- Expanded the Alzheimer's courtyard (doubled in size)
- Began project to renovate the CHVH Guest House and construct a restroom facility for the historic 1883 Chapel.

- Began a project to expand the CHVH emergency generators and improve utilization of power
- Selected by the VA to be a pilot program of an electronic record storage system for the Clinical Patients' Records System (CPRS)
- Passage of legislation codifying the admission of non-veteran spouses.
- Recent addition of a World War II 75 mm cannon, donated to the Home.

Commissions

There are three commissions to advise the Secretary in various areas:

- Maryland Veterans Commission
- Charlotte Hall Veterans Home Commission
- War Memorial Commission

Maryland Veterans Commission

The Maryland Veterans Commission advises the Secretary on all issues relating to veterans, including legislation. Individuals may be called upon to represent the Department at speaking engagements for commemorative events, present Governor's Proclamations on Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies, and provide recommendations when changes may be requested for the Cemetery & Memorial Program. The members also review proposed veteran-related legislation and advise the Secretary accordingly.

Twenty-seven Maryland veterans groups comprise the Commission, representing veteran groups and various geographical areas. The Commissioners are appointed to five-year terms by the Governor, who also names the Chair. The Director of the Veterans Service Program also serves as the director of the Commission, and acts as a liaison between the Commission and the Secretary. The Maryland Veterans

Commissioners represent the following organizations or categories:

- American Legion
- American Ex POW's
- American Veterans AMVETS
- Battle of the Bulge
- Black Veterans of All Wars
- Catholic War Veterans
- Disabled American Veterans
- Fleet Reserve Association
- Jewish War Veterans
- Korean War Veterans
- Marine Corps League
- Military Officers Association of America
- Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Pearl Harbor Survivors
- Polish War Veterans
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Women Veterans
- World War II

In addition to the Commissioners representing the above named organizations, there is a Commissioner designated to represent each of the eight congressional districts, as a geographic entity.

Maryland Veterans Home Commission

The Maryland Veterans Home Commission advises the Department on issues relating to State veteran homes and interacts with veterans and other organizations to disseminate information concerning Charlotte all Veterans Home, in St. Mary's County, the only State veteran facility in Maryland.

The Commission has fourteen members. Eleven are named to five-year terms by the Governor with Senate advice and consent. Three serve ex-officio, representing the Governor, Speaker of the House and President of the Senate.

War Memorial Commission

The Commission has custody and supervision of the War Memorial Building and the War Memorial Plaza. Both were erected in 1927 in Baltimore to honor those Marylanders who died in World War I. The War Memorial Building lies directly across from City Hall, and with the Plaza, was designed by Baltimore architect, Lawrence Hall Fowler.

The Building is open and available for meetings of veterans groups, patriotic societies and for civic gatherings. Use by these groups is permitted provided that no collection or donation is taken nor any admission charged. Maintenance costs are shared equally by the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore. The Commission's ten members serve five-year terms. Five are appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with the Governor's approval, and five by the Mayor of Baltimore.

Washington Cemetery Board of Trustees

The Cemetery's Board of Trustees was chartered in 1870. Originally, it was to have had five members: three from Maryland and one each from Virginia and West Virginia. Virginia and West Virginia contributed to the cost for funding and maintaining the Cemetery initially and so were given a place on the Board. In over one hundred and thirty years, however, neither Virginia nor West Virginia has appointed a representative. Of recent significance, was the rebuilding and restoration of the original 1866 Speakers Stand at the Rose Hill Cemetery.



Arlington National Cemetery

General Assessment of the Status of Maryland Veterans

Demographics

See the attached Maryland map showing veteran population by county, as provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in 2005, the most current information available.

Maryland Veterans Population*	463,228
Maryland Veterans Age 65 and Older	163,398
Maryland Women Veterans	41,564
County with Most Veterans	Prince George's... 67,577
County with Fewest Veterans	Kent.....2,027

Key Performance Measures for Veterans Represented By the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2006

Inputs

Potential number of veterans to be served	463,228
Number of veterans contacts	54,560

Outputs

Claims filed and developed on behalf of service-connected disabled veterans	2,100
Active cases for veterans represented by the MDVA	9,700
Appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of veterans	234

Outcomes

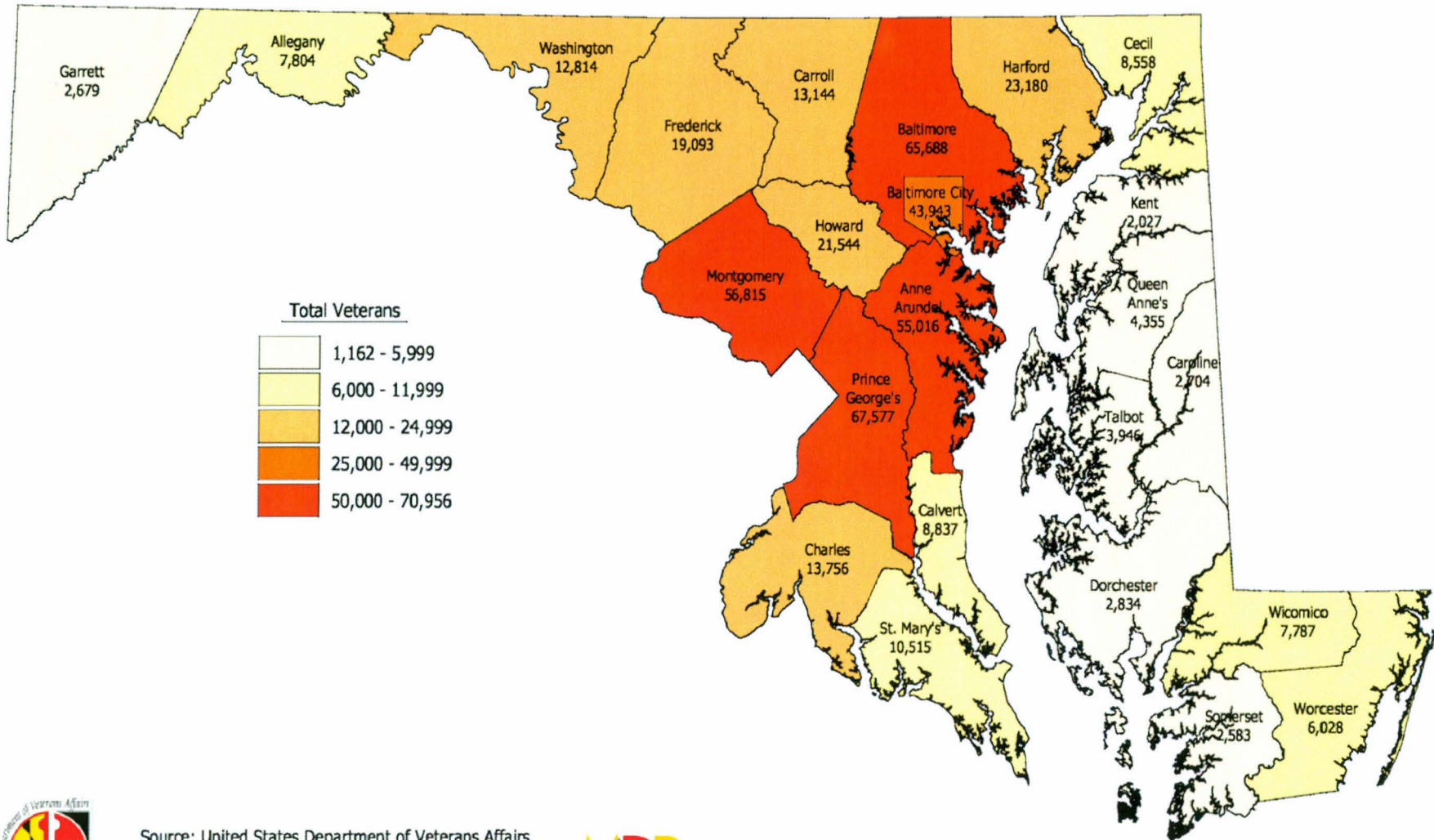
VA awards for Service-connected claims	6,951,601
VA awards for totally disabled non-service connected claims	623,862
VA awards for widows and orphans of veterans	<u>1,336,847</u>
 Total of awards to veterans and survivors represented by MDVA	 \$8,912,310

VA Expenditures for FY 2005

Total Expenditures	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocation	Insurance & Indemnities	Construction	Medical & GOE
\$1,006,511	\$503,180	\$60,010	\$38,276	\$3,143	\$401,902

Projected Number of Veterans in Maryland - 2005

Projected Veterans in Maryland: 463,228



Source: United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
Map Prepared for the Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs
by the Maryland Department of Planning, Planning Data Services. **MDP**

Veterans Receiving Disability Compensation Payments for FY 2005

50-State Totals	2,641,496
Maryland Veterans Total	463,228
Maryland Veterans	48,789
Percentage of Maryland Veterans	10.53%
Average Annual Payment	\$8,378
Maryland	\$7,944
Rank	36 th
Highest – New Mexico	\$12,004
Lowest – Illinois	\$6,961

Federal Spending in Maryland by Category FY 2004 (\$475,565,955)

Retirement and Disability Direct Payments for Individuals	Spending	National Ranking
Compensation for service-connected deaths for Veterans Dependents	11,569	23
Pension for non-service-connected disability for veterans	28,929,929	15
Pension for veterans surviving spouses and children	7,860,852	16
Veterans compensation for service-connected disability	368,396,882	7
Veteran dependency & indemnity compensation for service-connected death	70,366,723	11
Totals	\$475,565,955	

FY 2004 Federal Spending in Maryland by Category \$ 40,108,410

Department of Veterans Affairs	Spending	National Ranking
Automobiles and Adaptive Equipment for Certain Disabled Veterans	455,456	16
Burial Expenses Allowances for Veterans	125,332	20
Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans	5,005,875	11
Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance	4,288,878	12
Post-Vietnam Era Veteran Educational Assistance	37,233	21
All Volunteer Force Educational Assistance	30,195,636	7

Estimated Impact Current Military Operations are Likely to have on the Needs of Veterans in the Future

The estimated impact current military operations will likely have on the needs of the veterans in the future can be seen in the need for increased request for claims counseling and assistance. Since the onset of hostilities in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003, 2,747 Maryland National Guard have been sent to Southwest Asia for a tour of duty. Our National Guard members who are called up, as well as the Maryland regular service veterans, who are activated, as well as Maryland veterans who served on active duty in the military, are eligible for state and federal veteran benefits. Recent studies have suggested that returning veterans from the Southwest Asia Theater have a higher demand for counseling and assistance. There are outstanding issues regarding Gulf War illnesses and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As of August 2006, the VA Capital Healthcare system (of which Maryland is a part) has treated 4,975 veterans who have served in OIF/OEF. The number of requests for additional assistance and counseling is unknown at this time. Additional veteran service officers staffing may be required to meet this demand for services, as well as additional service offices – a general fund issue.

There is a separate, yet important issue, and that is the women veterans. We, like the USVA, are beginning to learn about the unique requirements that female veterans have when compared to their male counterparts. There is an ongoing department effort to reach out to this group of veterans. The intended and unintended consequences are yet to be determined. One thing is certain, the returning veterans with medical or psychological issues has a support system already in place. Whether they choose to use

it or not is their choice, but it is our responsibility to inform them of the services and benefits available. The federal dollar allocation of compensation and pension not only supports the veteran and dependents quality of life, but relieves the State of additional costs for medical and social services.

Another issue is the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's (BRAC) decision to consolidate various military and federal offices to Fort George G. Meade, Aberdeen Army Proving Grounds and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. Both Fort Meade and Aberdeen have been identified as major growth areas for consolidation of services. The unseen effect will be the emergence of high tech companies and the increase in defense contractors. Due to their desirable military background, security clearances, work habits and education, defense contractors will be seeking veterans to hire to fill the new openings created by BRAC. It is expected that there will be an insurgence of young veterans to our communities. Currently Maryland's veterans' population is the third youngest across the country at 55 years old. The challenge is how to inform the veterans and their families of services and benefits they are entitled to and to ensure that the State can provide for the resulting requirements for infrastructure in an expanding community.



Projected Conditions Affecting Future Services at MDVA

- Aging and declining veteran population base - WW II and Korean War veterans and their dependents.
- Southwest Asia ongoing combatant operations – returning veterans and their dependents.
- The lack of awareness among veterans and their dependents of the services and benefits available to them.
- Difficulty in attracting and retaining veterans services officers due to low pay.
- Service Program has aging veteran service officers and staff – 8 of 12 are eligible to retire within the next 5 years.
- Cemetery Program has an aging workforce. Based upon current service and age, 50% of the workforce will be eligible for retirement within five years.
- All paper office environment necessitates the acquisition of an electronic document management storage system
- MDVA does not have an identified Information Technology point of contact on staff, to coordinate web site construction and maintenance, e-mail, Internet and networking support.
 - The lack of electronic database coordination and support for client specific information among the databases reduces the efficiency and function of many aspects of MDVA operations.



The Maryland Veteran 2006

THE MARYLAND VETERAN

Spring 2006

Secretary's Corner

We are looking forward to a exciting spring following the 2006 session of the Maryland General Assembly. Governor Ehrlich, I think, has introduced an ambitious legislative package to assist and empower Maryland veterans. To assist you in understanding the significance of the legislative process, we have included some general information about how it works on the next page.

The following link www.mdva.state.md.us/html/summary_06.html will take you to the MDVA website where you can get updates on the status of specific legislation being introduced by the Department. MDVA also posted in our Task Force from the 2006 legislative session. The Disabled Veterans Small Business Task Force and the Women Veterans Memorial Task Force Reports may be used in their entirety at www.mdva.state.md.us/html/taskforce.html. Based upon the recommendations of each of these groups, legislation has been introduced.

Our Women Veterans column highlights upcoming benefit seminars for Maryland's women veterans. Seminars will be held around the state throughout the year. The seminar schedule can be viewed on our website.

The Governor has submitted legislation to the General Assembly to exempt military retirement pay from state income tax, as well as exempting veteran service organizations from the State sales and use tax. Our Maryland Veterans call more than 100 Maryland veterans turned out in a show of force for Governor Ehrlich's continued efforts on their behalf, specifically to show support for the Governor's military retirement income tax bill. Joined by Honorable Governor Steube, the Governor renewed his commitment to all Maryland Veterans and their families. Legislative leaders and more legislators were also in attendance, all pledging support.

There is an interesting note about a recent contribution to the Maryland State Archives on Longing Johnson's epitaph for those who might be interested. Go here on with veterans across the state, he has a great collection of photos and their memory.

Please take note of Disabled Sports USA, head printed in the article, and their report with the Maryland Paralympic Project. Learn more about what is being done to support our training athletes and athletes who have been severely wounded.

Encourage you to contact us with input or suggestions for future editions of The Maryland Veteran.

If you would like to receive this e-newsletter, please email us at info@mdva.state.md.us

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EDWARD EHRICH, JR.
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL S. OWINGS
SECRETARY



Secretary
George W. Owings III



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- Benefits Seminars
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The MARYLAND VETERAN



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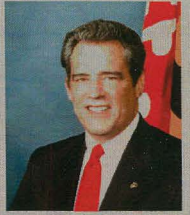
Secretary's Corner

Summer 2006

This has been a very busy and exciting year for veterans across the State of Maryland and the Department, as Governor Ehrlich continues to focus on veteran priorities. Of the 78 veteran-related bills in the 2006 Legislative Session, 26 were signed into law. This level of success is in no small measure a direct result of the energy and advocacy of so many Maryland veterans who made it a point to keep their legislators informed about why their should support veterans. In addition to the legislation that is highlighted in our Legislative Update article, I also wanted to point out that the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration is currently drafting regulations to allow surviving spouses of deceased, deceased veterans who had special license plates, to keep the four plate that was on the veteran's vehicle. This is especially meaningful to families of Purple Heart recipients.

We have also attended Veterans Service Organization meetings, conventions, parades and a myriad of other events to talk to veterans and their families. Governor Ehrlich has taken a leading role in going to the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDD) to work closely with us on an initiative to ensure that Maryland's disabled veterans receive ample information about services provided to disabled individuals living in Maryland. In connection with the initiative, the MDD will be assuming to work updating our website to make it accessible to individuals who are visually impaired. We are also working with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on a "Special Announcement" event. You will learn more about it later this year.

Memorial Day is always an exciting time for the Department, and this year was no exception. We had numerous functions to attend throughout the state, and the Maryland Veterans Commission attended events as well, to present Governor Ehrlich's Memorial Day Proclamation. Look inside the newsletter and you will find photos from Memorial Day and other events. Recent exhibit meetings have been held in Harford and Frederick Counties. You will read about the Harford County Community College Professor and students who were recognized for participating in a Service Learning Veterans History Project with local Korean War Veterans in June. As this newsletter goes to print, we will be visiting the War Station in Frederick to recognize their efforts in serving the training, employment, housing and re-integration needs of Maryland veterans with Secretary Cox of the Maryland Department of Disabilities and Secretary Fielding of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.



Secretary
George W. Owings III

What's Inside

- Veterans History Project
- Spotlight on a Veterans Service Organization
- The Well Organized Estate
- In Service to Veterans
- Out & About With Veterans
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MDVA Summer 2006 Newsletter

The MARYLAND VETERAN



EDWARD EHRICH, JR.
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL S. OWINGS
SECRETARY

Fall 2006

Veterans Day in Maryland Saturday, November 11

Veterans Day is set aside to recognize the brave men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States. Service performed in defense of our Nation is the highest form of citizenship. The Congress of the United States has designated the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of each year as Veterans Day. As such it has become a significant part of our American heritage, as we recognize the millions of citizens whose military service has protected the American values of freedom and justice for all.

It is fitting and appropriate that we promote the vital role which Marylanders and Americans have historically played in times of war, conflict and peace to faithfully and honorably support freedom and democracy for others. Governor Ehrlich and Maryland's citizens honor its distinguished veterans in paying homage to the memory of those who fought to preserve our cherished American way of life.

A listing of our Veterans Day Programs is shown to the right. We hope you can join us.

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- Secretary's Corner
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Out & About with Maryland Veterans
- Maryland Marines
- Korean War Veterans
- MDVA Working for You
- Assistance with Energy Bills

Veterans Day Events

Secretary Owings will join Lt. Governor Michael S. Steele when he honors the World War II Memorial Commemoration in Annapolis at 10:30 AM.

- 10:30 AM**
- Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, St. Mary's County
 - World War II Memorial, Annapolis

- 11:00 AM**
- Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery, Prince George's County
 - Crownsville Veterans Cemetery, Anne Arundel County
 - Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery, Baltimore County
 - Korean War Memorial, Canton Water Park, Baltimore
 - Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Middle Branch Park, Baltimore

- 1:30 PM**
- Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery, Dorchester County

- 2:00 PM**
- Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery, Allegany County

- 7:30 PM**
- War Memorial Building, Baltimore



MDVA Fall 2006 Newsletter

Regrettably, the Veterans of Foreign Wars was inadvertently omitted from the list of organizations represented on the Maryland Veterans Commission.



Maryland Department of
Veterans Affairs
2006