

**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs  
2011 Annual Report**



**31 December 2011**

**Reference MSAR #s: 5564 and 5667**

## Executive Summary

In accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is submitting its annual report. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) veteran population data projections estimate that there are approximately 465,000 veterans in Maryland, as of 30 September 2011.

The main services MDVA offers to all Maryland veterans are: the availability of claims assistance through the service program; admission to our veterans' home when necessary; burial in one of our five veteran's cemeteries; and a place to remember their service at one of our three memorials.

The challenges facing Maryland Veterans as they return home from their service to our nation remain unchanged from the previous few years. Severely wounded personnel, including those suffering Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), will be a stress on the US Department of Veterans Affairs health and benefits systems for decades to come. This is of even greater concern here in Maryland as we see high numbers of National Guard and other reserve component personnel participating in multiple deployments to overseas combat zones. At a time when the US Department of Defense and the US Department of Veterans Affairs continue to have difficulty providing timely services to many veterans in need, MDVA will continue to provide safety nets, wherever possible, here in Maryland to augment and enhance needed support.

MDVA continues to collaborate with individuals, organizations, commissions and other state agencies to develop, promote and support the interests of Maryland's veterans. Case in point: MDVA works in partnership with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to support and participate in Maryland's Commitment to Veterans, the behavioral health initiative begun in October, 2008, to provide for the current needs of Maryland's veterans. MDVA works in partnership with DBED to administer the Military Personnel and Service Disabled Veteran No-Interest Loan Program for certain small business owners.

There are more than 400 monuments and memorials to veterans in Maryland yet none is solely dedicated to Maryland women who have served or are serving in the armed forces of the United States of America, although women veterans make up approximately 10.5% of Maryland's veteran population. The Commission for the Establishment of a Maryland Women in Military Service Monument has been reestablished to continue the work of the previous commission. MDVA continues to participate in and staff this new term of the Commission.

In 2011 MDVA coordinated with the ARINC to host a Cyber Conference for Veteran Business Owners. This conference was attended by 35 veteran business owners. Veterans learned about the cyber industry in general, and business opportunities that may be available for them to pursue in the federal government and the private sector.

In accordance with Maryland's College Collaboration for Student Veterans, MDVA coordinated with the higher education community to host the Student Veteran Resource Provider Conference at Towson University on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011. Representatives from 39 of the state's 50 higher education

institutions attended this event. The morning portion consisted of presentations on veterans benefits. The afternoon portion consisted of an open discussion and exchange of best practices on how to help student veterans succeed and feel welcome at their college/university.

## **Outreach & Advocacy Program**

Outreach & Advocacy's (O&A) mission is to develop innovative ways to seek out and inform Maryland's veterans about benefits, services, and incentives that are available from federal, state and local agencies and solicit feedback from veterans regarding their needs for additional services.

O&A Program staffing is currently at one full time employee, half its authorized level of two. The Deputy Director of the program resigned in November, 2011. A hiring freeze exemption will be requested to fill the vacant Deputy Director position.

In May 2011 we replaced the Veterans Musters with Veterans and Families Information Days. These events build on existing expos, fairs, and venues where Maryland veterans and their families may speak with an MDVA staff member to learn about the benefits and services offered by federal, state, local and non-profit agencies. MDVA provides answers to veterans' questions as well as referral to other state agencies. An MDVA Service Officer is available to directly assist veterans with filing claims for disability and compensation.

To date, we have attended forty eight (48) events and have reached approximately 25,424 veterans and their family members through this initiative. There was no cost to MDVA for participating in these events, and no cost to the veterans and family members. O&A plans to continue to pursue outreach opportunities under this initiative.

Outreach is also conducted through briefings and staffing of resource tables at the Maryland National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve Yellow Ribbon Reintegration events. These events are attended by service members returning from deployments that include Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn and their family members. The Yellow Ribbon Program's objectives are to educate every service member regarding the challenges of transitioning from deployment to community and family, how to address these challenges and where to connect to the service providers and resources available from various federal, state, and local agencies and non-profit organizations. The briefings place an emphasis on behavioral and physical health, employment, education, and economic issues.

In May, MDVA began a faith-based initiative. The initiative seeks to use faith-based congregations and places of worship to increase public contacts to veterans and their families. There are over 2,291,896 congregational adherents in Maryland. These congregants are from more than 3,855 Maryland congregations and represent 43.3% of the state's population. An interfaith committee consisting of representatives from major religions met in May to formally launch the initiative. As a result of this initiative, to date eight faith-based events were attended by O&A staff.

O&A interns completed the data entry of more than 15,000 veteran data cards. These interns were unpaid and worked in three-hour blocks. The mailing list was obtained from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and included names of veterans released from active duty since January, 2004 through July, 2010 and veterans receiving U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs compensation, pension and education benefits. Email addresses from the data cards will be added to our existing email

database. In early 2012, MDVA will begin using Constant Contact to increase the effectiveness of outbound emails and to manage our email list.

O&A is responsible for the publication of an eight page bi-annual newsletter, *The Maryland Veteran*. The distribution of the department newsletter is approximately 45,000. The newsletter is distributed through various means: direct mail to individuals and organizations via regular mail; email subscription list; Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn followers; distributed at events attended by MDVA staff; and is available for download from our website. It is also made available at local community centers, veteran service organizations, chambers of commerce, senior centers, public libraries, and military bases in Maryland and Washington, D.C. The current print media count is 35,000 MDVA is hoping to decrease the number of print copies while increasing the electronic distribution. Approximately 2,000 electronic copies are currently distributed. The newsletter will continue to be distributed in print to accommodate our senior veterans and those with disabilities. In addition to the newsletter, the comprehensive State Benefits & Information Guide is being updated with a new printing planned for January 2012.

O&A maintains and manages the content on the MDVA website. MDVA's website has had over 2.5 million requests during calendar year 2011 with the State Benefits and Information Guide being the most requested page. The website is changed weekly to reflect current issues of interest to Maryland veterans. Our site includes information regarding services available to Maryland's veterans with links to other state agencies, the VA Maryland Health Care System, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Federal and state benefits guides, our newsletters and other documents of interest are posted to the website in an effort to remotely inform as many of Maryland's veterans and their families as possible.

O&A has increased its use of social media. A Facebook Fan Page was launched in June. The Facebook page is updated with relevant postings approximately five times each week. Because of Facebook's sharing and posting design features, each posting has the potential to reach 242,139 Facebook subscribers. The MDVA Twitter account configuration has also been updated. It is now set to automatically "Tweet" an edited copy of each Facebook posting. MDVA follows the Twitter accounts of other relevant federal agencies and Maryland state agencies. This allows MDVA to provide our veteran population with important information from these agencies

Personnel from each MDVA department have supported Outreach & Advocacy's mission by attending speaking engagements and making public appearances at multiple events in the past year. These include; Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day events; VSO conventions; Veterans and Families Information Days; and civic and community events.

## **Outreach & Advocacy Program 2011 Highlights**

- Print distribution of *The Maryland Veteran*, the Department's bi-annual newsletter, is approximately 35,000. There are approximately 10,000 electronic copies distributed.
- Each MDVA Facebook posting reaches approximately 242,139 Facebook subscribers.
- MDVA faith-based initiative established in May with eight events held this year.

- MDVA interns completed data entry of 15,684 Maryland veteran responses, which were received from the USDVA Release of Names and Addresses (RONA) Program mailing.
- O&A staff had 25,424 face-to-face contacts at forty-eight events during the year.

## **Service Program**

The purpose of the Veterans Service Program is to assist veterans, their dependents, and survivors in the preparation, development, and resolution of claims for service-connected disability compensation, pension, death benefits, educational assistance, home loans, medical care, and other benefits available from federal, state and local organizations.

This year our service program obtained 1,115 new Powers of Attorney (POA) during the year. We hold the POA for approximately 10,815 Maryland veterans and survivors.

During FY 2011, the service program responded to 91,402 requests for information from Marylanders and was responsible for filing 3,900 claims on behalf of veterans, dependents and survivors. These numbers are all-time highs for the program. The service program does not track claims filed by category. All claims filed with the service program are processed within the month they are received

The service program was responsible for the receipt of \$30,186,688 in new compensation and pension benefits awarded to veterans represented by the department. This dollar amount was an all-time high for the program. It should be noted there is no direct correlation between claims filed and benefits received in a particular year. Many of the claims filed this year will not be decided until 2012, and a majority of the \$30.1 million in receipts was based on claims received in the prior year.

The national average USDVA disability payment is \$8,890 per veteran yearly (this is based on data tabulated for FY 2005, the latest available data from USDVA). The average disability payment to Maryland veterans is \$7,654, the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest in the nation; this is down from \$7,944 in 2005 when Maryland ranked 36<sup>th</sup> in benefit payments. The State of Maryland has the lowest percentage of veterans who seek assistance through a Power of Attorney (POA's) in filing claims for benefits. Having a POA is one of the factors that affects rate of disability payment in a positive manner. Veterans with POA's receive greater disability payments than those who do not.

The service program is the repository for all DD-214s for Maryland veterans who were discharged since October 15, 1979. The service program received 2,299 DD-214s from July 2010 through June 2011. In an effort to reach recently discharged veterans, the program in October 2007, established a database to track all DD-214s received. Both the Governor and Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs are using addresses in this data base to send welcome home letters to all honorably discharged veterans. Through this effort we anticipate more veterans will seek assistance through the Department when seeking USDVA benefits. The data base will also be used by the service program's Women Veterans Coordinator to identify recently discharged women veterans and send them a letter regarding available services.

The Service Program staffing is currently at 14 full time employees, 2 short of its authorized level of 16. Vacancies currently exists at our Bel Air and Frederick service offices. Exceptions to the hiring freeze were requested for both locations, and both have been approved by Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

## **Service Program 2011 Highlights**

- Obtained 1,115 new Powers of Attorney.
- Received 2,299 DD-214s, discharge documents from veterans recently separated from the military, from July 2010 through June 2011.
- Responded to 91,402 requests (all-time high) for information from Marylanders.
- Filed 3,900 claims (all-time high) on behalf of veterans, dependents and survivors.
- Service program claims processed resulted in \$30.1 million in new benefits (all-time high) paid to Maryland veterans.



## **Charlotte Hall Veterans Home**

Located in St. Mary's County, Charlotte Hall Veterans Home (CHVH) is a 462 bed facility which provides assisted-living and skilled nursing care for Maryland Veterans and eligible spouses who are unable to take care of themselves due to age or disability.

### **Census**

The census as of January 2011 was 411 residents with 153 assisted living and 258 skilled nursing. This census population included a total of twenty-nine females of which twelve were non-veteran spouses. Subsequently, the January 2010 census was a total of 405 residents of which 151 were assisted living and 254 skilled nursing. Since January, the overall census increased by ten and rose to an all-time high of 421 residents on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. The daily census is constantly changing. Since January, there have been six new all-time high census achievements, as identified below:

January 5,	416
February 15,	417
February 17,	418
February 21,	419
February 22,	420
November 23,	421

The first three quarters of percent capacity filled is reported below with the most recent available census information included:

March	Total Census – 411 - 89% capacity
May	Total Census – 407 - 88% capacity
September	Total Census – 412 - 89% capacity
Current	Total Census – 419 – 91% capacity

The current census of 419 includes 260 Skilled Nursing and 159 Assisted Living residents. Of this total number, 27 are female with 13 of those female residents being non-veterans spouses.

### **Adjusted Capacity**

The current bed capacity has been adjusted for the following reasons:

- To create a Skilled Nursing Women's Wing on the south corridor of 3A
- To create dining space on the resident floors of 1B, 2B and 3B

The new total capacity is 456, of which 288 are Skilled Nursing and 168 are Assisted Living.

## **USDVA Reimbursement for Services**

During FY 2011 (July 1, 2009 thru June 30, 2010) CHVH received \$2,126,027 in Domiciliary Per Diem Reimbursement and \$8,588,604 in Comprehensive Care Reimbursement for a total of \$10,714,631 through the USDVA State Home Program Reimbursement. This represents an increase over the preceding year of \$1,917,137.

## **Survey Results**

- Received the 2010 Maryland Health Care Commission Nursing Home Family Satisfaction Survey results. CHVH received an excellent rating. 96% of responding families would recommend CHVH for the care of a family member.
- CMS Nursing Home Compare for 2010 Overall Rating was 5 out of 5 Stars. The overall rating is a combination of health inspections, the staffing rating and the quality measures rating. Analysis is conducted on these three data sources and each of these ratings are combined into one overall rating.
- The following surveys were conducted at CHVH:
  - August – Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Health Care Quality
  - September – USDVA Recognition Survey/Annual Survey

## **CHVH Program 2011 Highlights**

### **New Maryland Veterans Home Commissioners**

- Mr. Jason E. Franklin, served with the U.S. Marine Corps
- Mr. Terry T. Shima , Executive Director of the Japanese Veterans Association and is a Gold Medal recipient from WWII.

### **Governor O'Malley's Veterans Forum at CHVH**

CHVH hosted and Governor O'Malley chaired the Veteran's Forum held on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The Forum included breakout groups on behavioral health, benefits, mental health, and transportation. There were about 180 participants.

### **NASVH Conferences**

- Feb. 28 to Mar. 3, Director Mattia attended the Winter Conference in Alexandria, VA.
- July 11 – 15, Director Mattia attended the Summer Conference in Burlington, VT.
- Nov. 3, Regional Conference, Rocky Hill, CT. was cancelled due to a winter storm. Topic discussions were followed-up via conference call.

### **Computerized Patients Record System (CPRS)**

- CPRS was implemented in Assisted Living on December 6, 2010.

- In July, at the National Association of State Veterans Home (NASVH) conference, CHVH Medical Director Dr. Kaufman and the IT contractor presented CPRS project status to the NASVH. The other 144 Veteran Homes are now aware of what is at CHVH and hopefully be interested in working with the VA to install the system in their homes.

### **CPRS Trainer Position**

In order to advance the implementation and use of the CPRS system, CHVH has contracted Ms. Melissa Henderson to fulfill the duties of CPRS trainer. Ms. Henderson is scheduled to begin in January, 20112.

### **Extreme Weather Events**

CHVH had some very interesting weather events with hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and an earthquake. CHVH came through these events very well. The hurricane left the Home without power for about 20 hours. Many trees came down but there was no building damage or building flooding.

### **Tri-County Veterans Advisory Committee**

Director Mattia continues to attend meetings every other month. The Committee is very interested in the CBOC and veterans issues and services in the Southern Maryland area.

At one of the past meetings there were discussions concerning pro bono work being done in Los Angeles, San Diego and Minnesota by several members of the American Bar Association. One of the speakers, a young attorney from Minnesota, spoke about a program in which she takes a van throughout the state to meet with veterans to assist them in clearing outstanding tickets, charges, etc.

### **Annual Volunteer Appreciation**

The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet was held on April 13<sup>th</sup>. About 120 people attended. This annual program is very important as we receive thousands of dollars donated and volunteers give thousands of hours of their time and service to Charlotte Hall. Those individuals and groups are recognized during this program.

### **Culture Change**

Cultural Change is a long term care initiative that will deinstitutionalize long term care. The effort is to enhance facility conditions and projects so that residents feel more at home. The changes at this time include:

- Stone fireplace in the Core Dining area
- Reconditioning and painting cinder block walls in Core dining and Main Multi-Purpose rooms
- Window treatments in various areas
- Art work, wall decorations and antique furniture
- 3A Women's unit to include updating floors, light fixtures and furniture

### **Relay for Life**

CHVH was able to donate over \$4,500 through fundraising and pledges. Staff not only supports veterans but other initiatives in the community. The staff also participates in the Alzheimer's Walk in the fall.

### **Assisted Living Manager Training**

Director Mattia successfully completed training required for Assisted Living Manager. Training classes were conducted two to three days per week in Columbia, MD., Sept. 30 through Nov. 2.

### **CHVH Annual Open House**

Open House was held on Nov. 5. This year's attendance exceeded 150, the most ever for the annual event.

### **CHVH Veterans Day Celebrations**

This was the second year that CHVH residents participated in the Veterans Day Parade in Leonardtown, MD. In addition, special remembrances and a celebration were conducted at the facility. The Knights of Columbus also visited and made a wonderful contribution of twenty-one wheelchairs.

### **VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) Trailer**

In April, the VA positioned a double-wide trailer adjacent to the current CBOC. The added space has allowed for additional services to include a social worker, exercise physiologist and case manager.

### **New Charlotte Hall CBOC**

The VA has made no formal announcement of whether a replacement CBOC will be constructed. It is included in the President's budget and would take about 18 months to construct. The new CBOC would be located at the corner of Rt. 5 and Charlotte Hall School Road and would be modeled like the one being built at Fort Meade with 10,000 to 12,000 sq. ft.

### **VA Mobile Vet Center**

- The VA Mobile Vet Center continues to be at the St. Mary's Visitors Center the last Thursday and Friday of each month. The first Thursday and Friday was in January and had over 40 veterans visit the Center. Veterans are responding to outreach efforts, radio announcements, and newspapers articles.
- CHVH also provides office space for the Prince George's County Vet Center staff to schedule appointments each Thursday and Friday for veterans in the Tri-County area that do not want to travel to Camp Springs.

## **CHVH Facilities 2011 Highlights**

### **Projects Completed in 2011**

- Replaced ceramic tile floor in four (4) restrooms in 'D' wing
- Replaced the carpet and installed floor tile in the A.L. dining room

- Renovated the waiting room space adjacent to the Nursing Stations on 1A, 3A, 1B, 2B and 3B. Residents now have an area out of the hallway to wait for doctor's appointments or medicine distribution.
- Renovated the dry foods storage space in the Core kitchen. Repainted walls, installed new tile floor and installed new tracks for a rolling-shelving food storage system.
- Repaired décor panels and replaced floor coverings within each of the building elevators (seven elevators)
- Ambulance entrance – installed glass side panels to existing overhead canopy
- Installed a stone fireplace in the main dining room
- Conditioned the walls and painted the main dining and main multi-purpose rooms
- Repaired and reconfigured patio concrete at main entrance
- HVAC duct cleaning completed throughout the building
- 3A, south wing, renovations for use as Women's wing (16 bed capacity)
- Installed sunscreen awning over atrium windows in physical rehab area
- Replaced one, 100lb capacity washing machine
- Replaced Security stations at the 'C' and 'D' wing entrances
- Repairs were completed to two emergency generator underground fuel storage tanks for compliance to MDE regulations
- Removed three underground fuel storage tanks (two were no longer needed and replaced one with an above ground tank)
- Began using a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) for work order and preventive maintenance scheduling
- Replaced the carpet with ceramic tile in the Core Dining Room
- Weather events, Earthquake and Hurricane Irene

### **Projects in Progress or Development**

- Emergency Generators – DGS has selected a contractor via the competitive bidding process. Contract is ready to award. Still waiting to hear from the Federal VA State Home Construction Grant Program in response to the grant request.
- Assisted Living Dining Room – Making plans to increase the size of the dining space by enclosing the existing porch to create an atrium-style dining space. Project is in the final design phase.
- Grease Trap, Core Kitchen – Design scope has been finalized and pre-bid meeting conducted. Awaiting installation bids from contractors.
- Disaster Preparedness Planning – Continuing to meet and review, update and edit the current plan. Additionally:
  - CHVH hosted two meetings in the area of emergency preparedness working with the St. Mary's Office of Public Safety and Maryland Emergency Management Agency:
    - Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, Tri-County Homeland Security

- Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, Tri County Jurisdictional Planning Group
      - Conducted two table-top exercises
      - Provided MEMA meeting and training spaces for quarterly sessions
- Facility Master Plan – The draft Facility Master Plan has been presented by the contractor. The draft has been reviewed and areas of concern have been discussed with the provider. The final version of the Master Plan should be presented within the month. In addition to equipment replacement schedules, the suggestions include:
  - ‘A and ‘B’ wings, three story additions for day rooms/dining spaces
  - Separate building for laundry services
  - Two story addition for rehab
  - Two story addition for Administrative space
  - Enlargement of Core kitchen
  - Enlargement of Receiving area/Unloading Dock
  - Increased seating area in ‘D’ wing dining room
  - Increased parking
- Underground Storage Tanks – Working with Maryland Department of Environment, three of the five underground oil storage tanks were removed. Two tanks removed were no longer supporting operations and the third tank was replaced with an aboveground unit. Two underground tanks remain on property, serving separate emergency generators with fuel for operations. These two tanks are identified for removal with the implementation of the Emergency Generator Replacement Project.
- Roadway & Parking Lot Lighting Upgrade – Contract has been awarded and work is in progress.
- Replace Forty-One (41) Water Source Heat Pumps (WSHP’s) – Contract has been awarded. Awaiting DGS to schedule pre-construction meeting

## **Cemetery & Memorial Programs**

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Cemetery Program maintains five (5) State veterans' cemeteries, providing a final resting place for those eligible Maryland veterans and their eligible dependents who desire this benefit provided by the State of Maryland. The five State Veterans Cemeteries include Crownsville in Anne Arundel County, Cheltenham in Prince George's County, Eastern Shore in Dorchester County, Garrison Forest in Baltimore County and Rocky Gap in Allegany County. The Cemetery Program also oversees a Civil War Cemetery at Rose Hill Cemetery in Hagerstown.

Since the program's inception in the mid-1970s, more than 81,000 of Maryland's veterans and their dependents have been interred at our five veterans' 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 grave sites in accordance with National Cemetery Standards (NCA) within the system. Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs is a leader among the nation in State veteran's cemeteries with three out of the five cemeteries among the top ten busiest cemeteries in FY-2011 and where the State conducts the highest number of interments throughout the nation.

The facilities provide interment services during the normal business week (Monday through Friday) and are open to the public 365 days a 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 was an average of 3,219 interments annually over the past three years. The annual interment rate represents 28% of Maryland veteran's deaths.

Interment is the most important function carried out in the cemetery where we ensure the honor and dignity of our veterans and their families is performed for every interment. The operations and maintenance (perpetual care) ensure that our State Veterans Cemeteries are maintained as national shrines, dedicated to preserving our nation's and State's history, nurturing patriotism and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans and their families have made.

### **Cemetery Program 2011 Highlights**

- The capital construction grant for Garrison Forest State Veterans Cemetery Administration & Maintenance Complex was approved by the State Cemetery Grants Program for \$ 4,610,970.00 and construction started.
- For FY 2013 Two Pre-Applications were submitted and accepted by the State Cemetery Grants Program for Crownsville Veterans Cemetery Phase III at \$7,508,300.00 and Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery new Administration/in-ground expansion for \$ 3,773,450.00.

- A Operations & Maintenance Grant at Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery was approved by the State Cemetery Grants Program for \$ 1,712,444.00 beginning December 2011.
- Four other pre-application for Crownsville, Eastern Shore, Garrison Forest, and Rocky Gap Cemeteries Operation & Maintenance Grants were submitted to State Cemetery Grants Program totaling over \$ 6.5 million.
- Conducted Memorial Day and Veterans Day events at all five Maryland State Veterans Cemeteries honoring the service and sacrifices of our State's veterans.
- Conducted Wreaths Across America events at all five Maryland State Veterans Cemeteries honoring the service and sacrifices of our State's veterans.

#### Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery

- DGS approved design for new heating oil tank replacement project at administration building.

#### Crownsville Veterans Cemetery

- DGS began the out fall replacement project which was an emergency item.

#### Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery

- Gazebo purchased & placed in the Memorial section by the Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery Committee

#### Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery

- Began entering all records in to National Cemetery Administrations Burial Operation Support System before new Administration Building is completed.

#### Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery

- Replaced rotting Entrance Sign with a newly routed sign.
- Laid sod for over 200 graves in the cemetery

### **Memorials and Monuments**

Currently, 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
- War Memorial Building in Baltimore - Joint responsibility with the City of Baltimore

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

### **Memorials 2011 Highlights**

- Fourteen (14) patriotic events were held at the memorials throughout the year, including Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Pearl Harbor Remembrance and other special commemorations.
- DGS hired Architectural and Engineering firm to design iron fencing project at War Memorial Building.
- DGS hired Architectural and Engineering firm to design drainage project for slab movement at Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- Upgraded all lighting receptacles at World War II Memorial.
- Upgrade of flagpole lighting to light-emitting diode to improved efficiency, reduce carbon footprint, and costs.
- Pruned hedges at World War II Memorial with volunteer assistance.
- Resealed the asphalt driveway at Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

## **Commissions and Boards**

There are five commissions/boards to advise the Secretary in various areas:

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

### **Maryland Veterans Commission**

The Maryland Veterans Commission advises the Secretary on all issues relating to veterans, including legislation. Commission meetings are held quarterly. 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 Programs. The members also review proposed veteran-related legislation and advise the Secretary accordingly.

The Twenty-eight Commissioners represent veteran groups and various geographical areas. The Commissioners are appointed to five-year terms by the Governor, who also names the Chair. The Maryland Veterans Commissioners represent the following organizations or categories:

- American Legion
- American Ex POW's
- American Veterans AMVETS
- 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
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Pearl Harbor Survivors
- Polish War Veterans
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Women Veterans

- At Large Member

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 Hall Veterans Home, in St. Mary's County, the only State veteran home facility in Maryland. The Commission has fourteen members and meets four times per year. Eleven members are named to five-year terms by the Governor with Senate advice and consent. Three members serve ex-officio, representing the Governor, Speaker of the House and President of the Senate.

### **Maryland Military Monuments Commission**

The Governor established the Governor's Commission on Maryland Military Monuments in January, 1989 and it was transferred to the MDVA in October, 2008. The Commission inventories Maryland military monuments. Each monument is identified by name, date of construction, location, and original sponsorship. Current ownership of both the monument and its site is noted with a complete description of the monument, including its construction materials; condition; theme; inscriptions, if any; and who is responsible for maintenance. To restore damaged monuments, the Commission determines the cost and secures funds. The Commission also assigns responsibility for maintenance of each monument and prepares educational and tourism materials for public distribution. Since 1989, the Commission has arranged for the cleaning and restoration of ninety-seven Maryland military memorials. Appointed by the Governor, the Commission consists of up to twenty-one members. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs serves as chair. Meetings of the Commission are held quarterly.

### **War Memorial Commission**

The Commission, which meets four times per year, 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.

## Maryland Veterans Demographics According to VA Census Data

Maryland Veterans Population.....	465,727
Maryland Veterans Age 65 and Older.....	173,447
Maryland Women Veterans.....	49,562
County with Most Veterans: Prince George's.....	66,844
County with Fewest Veterans: Kent.....	2,125
County with Highest % Veterans: Worcester.....	12.0%
County with Lowest % Veterans: Montgomery.....	5.1%

## Key Performance Measures for Veterans Represented By the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2011

### Inputs

Potential number of veterans to be served.....	465,000 (Approx.)
Number of veteran contacts.....	91,402

### Outputs

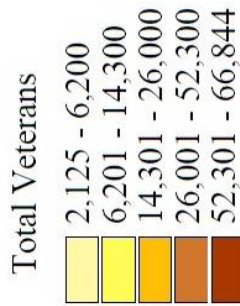
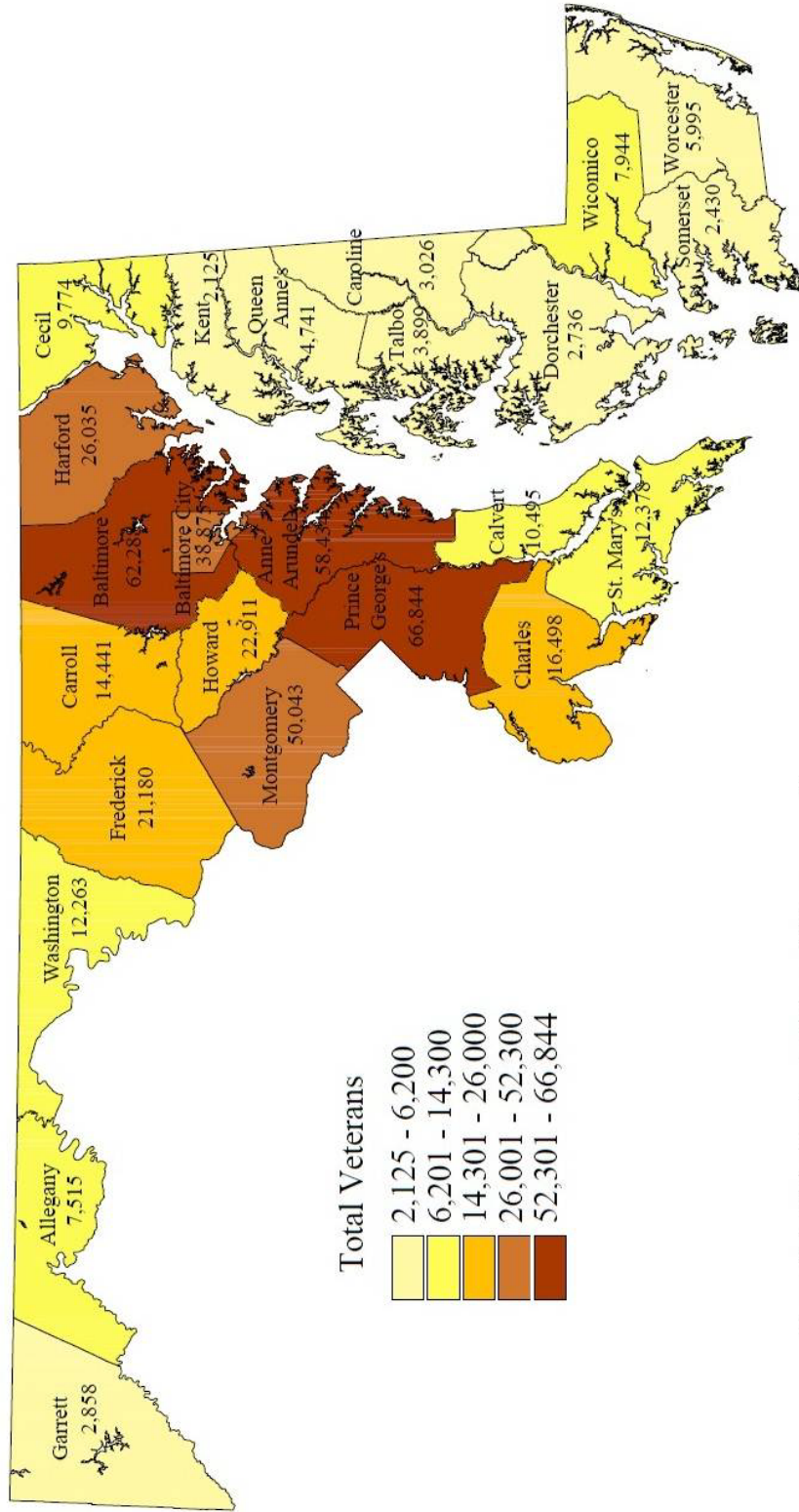
Claims filed and developed on behalf of service-connected disabled veteran.....	3,900
Active cases for veterans represented by the MDVA.....	9,600
Appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of veterans.....	289

### Outcomes

VA awards for Service-connected claims.....	\$21,142,752
VA awards for totally disabled non-service connected claims.....	\$ 1,109,474
VA awards for widows and orphans of veterans.....	<u>\$ 7,934,462</u>
Total of awards to veterans and survivors represented by MDVA.....	\$30,186,688

# Projected Number of Veterans in Maryland - 2011

Projected Veterans in Maryland: 465,727



Source: United States Department of Veterans Affairs  
 Map Prepared for the Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs  
 by the Maryland Department of Planning.



## MARYLAND VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY 2011

	<b>Total Population 2010 projected*</b>	<b>Veteran Population 2011 projected**</b>	<b>% Veteran Population</b>
<b>State of Maryland</b>	<b>5,774,000</b>	<b>465,727</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>By County</b>			
<a href="#"><u>Allegany County</u></a>	72,750	7,515	10.3
<a href="#"><u>Anne Arundel Co.</u></a>	525,700	58,434	11.1
Baltimore City	644,850	38,875	6.0
<a href="#"><u>Baltimore County</u></a>	801,700	62,288	7.8
<a href="#"><u>Calvert County</u></a>	90,750	10,495	11.6
<a href="#"><u>Caroline County</u></a>	33,500	3,026	9.0
<a href="#"><u>Carroll County</u></a>	173,100	14,441	8.3
<a href="#"><u>Cecil County</u></a>	102,600	9,773	9.5
<a href="#"><u>Charles County</u></a>	143,900	16,498	11.5
<a href="#"><u>Dorchester County</u></a>	32,250	2,736	8.5
<a href="#"><u>Frederick County</u></a>	231,350	21,180	9.2
<a href="#"><u>Garrett County</u></a>	29,700	2,858	9.6
<a href="#"><u>Harford County</u></a>	245,900	26,035	10.6
<a href="#"><u>Howard County</u></a>	285,600	22,911	8.0
<a href="#"><u>Kent County</u></a>	20,300	2,125	10.5
<a href="#"><u>Montgomery County</u></a>	980,000	50,043	5.1
<a href="#"><u>Prince George's Co.</u></a>	850,200	66,844	7.9
<a href="#"><u>Queen Anne's Co.</u></a>	48,650	4,741	9.7
<a href="#"><u>St. Mary's County</u></a>	105,400	12,378	11.7
<a href="#"><u>Somerset County</u></a>	26,200	2,430	9.3
<a href="#"><u>Talbot County</u></a>	36,700	3,899	10.6
<a href="#"><u>Washington County</u></a>	147,800	12,263	8.3
<a href="#"><u>Wicomico County</u></a>	95,300	7,944	8.3
<a href="#"><u>Worcester County</u></a>	49,800	5,995	12.0

\*Estimates as of Nov. 2010 from [Maryland State Data Center](#), Dept. of Planning (most recent data available).

\*\*Estimates from U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs VetPop 2007 (most recent data available).

## **Estimated Impact of Current Military Operations on the Needs of Future Veterans**

The estimated impact of current military operations on the future needs of veterans will continue to be seen in the increased requests for claims counseling and assistance. National Guard members and Military Reservists who have been activated for federal service, 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 continue to have a high demand for counseling and assistance. There are outstanding issues regarding Gulf War illnesses, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Although MDVA had three additional service officer positions approved during the 2008 General Assembly, additional veteran service officer staffing may be required to meet an increased demand for services, as well as additional service office locations based on demographics and census – a general fund issue.

There is a separate, albeit significant concern for difficulties faced by women veterans. Women veterans make up approximately 10.6% of Maryland's veteran population, and this percentage is likely to increase with more women serving in the military. Women experience difficulties in filing claims for benefits and obtaining medical care; MDVA will continue to work with USDVA to ensure our women veterans are receiving the care and service they deserve. We, like the USDVA, are still learning about the unique issues that affect female veterans compared to their male counterparts. Better understanding of these issues will enable us to develop outreach efforts that target women veterans and help them address these issues.

Another item of impact is the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's (BRAC) decision to consolidate various military and federal facilities to Fort George G. Meade, Aberdeen Army Proving Grounds and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda. One aspect of this realignment will be the convergence of high tech companies and defense contractors in Maryland. Although the official BRAC move has been completed, both Fort Meade and Aberdeen have positions that need to be filled. These employers are likely to seek veterans to fill positions created by BRAC because of their desirable military backgrounds, security clearances, work habits and education. In light of all this, it is expected that there will be an influx of young veterans to our communities to take advantage of the employment opportunities offered by these companies. Concurrently, this surge of new veterans will increase the demand for services. The challenge will be how best to inform the veterans and their families of services and benefits to which they are entitled and to ensure that the State can provide for the resulting expansion of local infrastructure in the community.

Current military operations, as with previous military operations, will produce a new generation of veterans with special needs. Today World War II veterans are aging; all are beyond 80 years in age. Many of these veterans have been dependent upon the system for more than 60 years as a result of injuries, diseases and disabilities suffered while exposed to battlefield conditions. For recent veterans of combat and other exposures, access to medical care will be paramount in their recovery. Government agencies at all levels, private and non-profits and the veterans' community should plan and prepare for long term assistance to veterans with medical and special needs.

## **Projected Conditions Affecting Future Services at MDVA**

- Aging and declining veteran population base – WWII, Korea and Vietnam veterans and their dependents.
- Influx of younger veterans from ongoing combat operations in Southwest Asia.
- Largest deployment of Maryland National Guard since WWII.
- The lack of awareness among veterans and their dependents of the services and benefits available to them.
- Limited resources within MDVA to reach and serve the approximately 465,000 Maryland veterans and their families and advise them of and connect them with the benefits and services available to them.