



**Service and Benefits Program
Charlotte Hall Veterans Home
Cemetery and Memorial Program
Outreach and Advocacy Program**

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
ANNUAL REPORT

2014

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State of Maryland

Martin O'Malley

Governor

Anthony G. Brown

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Department of Veterans Affairs

Edward Chow

Secretary

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A Message from MDVA Secretary Edward Chow

It is my pleasure to present the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs 2014 Annual Report. This report provides a comprehensive review of the work being done to ensure veterans and their families in Maryland are aware of the benefits they've earned in service to our great country.

The 2014 Annual Report gives our Department the opportunity to share successes and highlight collaborative partnerships which have supported programming for our veteran community across the State.

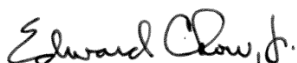
Challenges exist for our veterans in Maryland however opportunities are present as well. Younger veterans are returning to school and looking to start civilian careers, while older veterans are reaching critical lifestyle changes with transitioning healthcare and housing needs. Women veterans are experiencing their own set of trials as well. One thing is certain, they are our Maryland veterans, and as they served us, we stand now to serve them.

In support of veteran employment, the MDVA has partnered with the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation and Business and Economic Development to support businesses as they hire veterans. The Department has worked with the library system to train staff on services and resources for veterans in Maryland.

Charlotte Hall Veterans Home collaborates with community organizations to enhance services to its veteran residents. The Service Program continues to partner with local jurisdictions to expand benefits assistance to our veteran community.

Through a host of Departmental initiatives, the MDVA continues to work side by side with nonprofit organizations, local governments, as well as State and Federal Agencies to ensure we are effectively serving our veterans. Thank you to our partners for helping the MDVA to fulfill its mission.

Sincerely,



Edward Chow
Secretary

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Executive Summary

In accordance with §9-946 and §9-928c of the State Government Article, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) submits its 2014 Annual Report.

The MDVA is a State Government Executive Department with a service mission to provide representation to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), to manage and operate authorized Maryland State Veteran Cemeteries and to care for memorials for the Maryland World War II, Vietnam, and Korean War Veterans and a Civil War Cemetery. The Department manages the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home Program and also provides benefit referrals to eligible veterans and dependents for other federal, state and local government programs.

According to USDVA data projections, there were an estimated 437,762 veterans living in Maryland as of September 30, 2014. To help address the challenges facing Maryland Veterans as they separate, retire, or return home from military service the MDVA continues to provide safety nets, wherever possible, to help augment services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Defense. The Department continues to collaborate with other State agencies to advocate on behalf of veterans and their families. The MDVA diligently works to ensure that providers are informed on veteran needs and that those veterans and their families have access to benefits they have earned.

In FY2014, *The MDVA Service Program* submitted 5,138 disability compensation and pension claims for adjudication to the USDVA on behalf of veterans, dependents and survivors, a seven year high. Maryland Veterans received over 23 million dollars in FY14 in new/increased and one-time monthly cash benefits with support from this program. *Charlotte Hall Veterans Home* continues to provide quality assisted living and skilled nursing services to our aging and disabled veterans, along with eligible spouses. The most recent 2014 YTD census reached 96% capacity in skilled nursing and 84% capacity in assisted living.

The MDVA Cemetery Program is a leader among the nation in state veterans cemetery programs with three out of the five cemeteries among the top ten busiest cemeteries in FY14. Over the past three years, the MDVA Cemetery Program provided an average of 3,353 interments. To ensure that Maryland Veterans and their families are aware of benefits and services, the *MDVA Outreach and Advocacy Program* connected with over 9,200 individuals at events in 2014 and increased its email distribution list to over 22,000 contacts.

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MDVA Programs

SERVICE PROGRAM

The MDVA Service Program provides assistance to the men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces, their dependents and survivors, and the general public, in obtaining benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), the Department of Defense (DOD), the State of Maryland, and other programs for veterans and their families. MDVA Benefits Specialists are accredited by the USDVA and are able to provide representation and advocacy in a respectful manner, on a first come first serve basis. MDVA Benefit Specialists can also assist the veteran community in reviewing previous USDVA rating decisions.

Services Offered:			
comprehensive benefit Counseling	claim development, preparation, submission	case management	appeal initiation when appropriate
Federal, State and Local Agency networking	public speaking	outreach event attendance	information and referral services
Information and Referral Services:			
crisis intervention	public assistance	homeless services	social security

The Service Program is able to enhance services by having direct access to USDVA claims tracking systems. Access to these systems allows Service Officers to obtain claim status and updated information for clientele served.

Clientele include veterans who served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, who may present with geriatric, Alzheimer's and dementia issues, as well as the effects of Agent Orange exposure and post-traumatic stress. Additionally, veterans of recent conflicts may present with the impact of traumatic brain injury as well as post-traumatic stress or toxic exposures. The nature of an individual contact varies greatly depending upon the needs of the individual veteran, dependent or family member.

Individual contacts may include one on one detailed interviews, involving the review of military separation or discharge documents for the purpose of determining eligibility for USDVA programs, as well as claim development, or providing general information to family or friends of a veteran.

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Examples of individual contacts and length of interview time:

General information request for a friend or family member	5 to 10 minutes
Providing a claim status update	10 to 15 minutes
Responding to a complex and detailed U.S. VA development letter	15 to 30 minutes
Claim development, preparation, and submission interviews	45 to 60 minutes

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, the MDVA Service Program made 91,590 contacts with veterans, dependents and survivors.

The Service Program submitted 5,138 disability compensation and pension claims for adjudication to the USDVA on behalf of veterans, dependents and survivors.

Impact:

In FY 2014, Maryland Veterans received over 23 million dollars in new/increased and monthly cash benefits with support from the MDVA Service Program. Studies show that monies spent in a community could turn over between three and seven times; this is a fairly accurate measure of the spending impact on a community. Using the conservative multiplier of three, this equates to a spending impact of at least 70 million dollars from the monetary benefits received by Maryland Veterans.

Please note: The State of Maryland investment into the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Service Program is approximately 1.1 million dollars. In accounting for moneys described above, this makes the investment return 70 to one. Hence, the MDVA Service Program can be described as one of the most cost effective programs in State government.

It should also be noted that there is no direct correlation between claims filed and benefits received in any one particular year. Many claims filed in FY 2014 will not be adjudicated until 2015 or 2016. MDVA currently has over 2,000 claims pending adjudication with the USDVA.

Additional Benefits and Services:

Education: Maryland Veterans received \$4,757,711 in education benefits from various USDVA education programs in 2014.

Power of Attorney: The MDVA Service Program accepted representation for 2,282 veterans in 2014.

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DD214 Repository: Since October 15, 1979, the MDVA Service Program has served as a repository of DD214s for Maryland Veterans released from active duty. In FY14, 6,740 DD214s were received and processed. In coordination with the Outreach and Advocacy Program, addresses on DD214s are used to send mailings ('Welcome Home' Packets) to recent honorably discharged veterans.

MDVA Service Program Office Locations			
Baltimore	Hagerstown	Easton	Charlotte Hall
Frederick	Cumberland	Salisbury	Rockville
Camp Springs	Bel Air		

2014 Service Program Highlights:

- After a temporary closure due to staffing, the Montgomery County Service Program Office, located at Montgomery College, is once again staffed and open for service
- To address high demand, increased staffing from one service officer to two at the Prince George's County Service Program Office, located in Camp Springs

CHARLOTTE HALL VETERANS HOME

"We are so glad we decided to choose Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. The administrative support is superb. The entire facility is wonderfully maintained and clean. We truly appreciate your compassionate approach in supporting both Dad and us. We cannot say enough good things about the staff members who provided Dad's daily care." -A veteran's family member

Located in St. Mary's County, Charlotte Hall Veterans Home (CHVH) is a 454 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.

The highest ever census for CHVH was 422 residents, which occurred in October 2012. Overall this year the total census numbers were slightly lower. The 'percent capacity filled' is reported below.

Charlotte Hall Veterans Home Census Data		
1st Quarter	Census 408	90% capacity
2nd Quarter	Census 406	89% capacity

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3rd Quarter	Census 408	90% capacity
Current	Census 412	91% capacity

The current 2014 YTD Census includes:

274 Skilled Nursing	96% capacity
141 Assisted Living	84% capacity

Volunteer Services:

The strong support from volunteers continues at CHVH. This year CHVH is on track to exceed 19,000 donated hours – an all-time high.

An excess of 19,000 donated hours represents having an additional 8.7 people on staff full time.

2014 Charlotte Hall Veterans Home Highlights

- **In-House Pharmacy**

CHVH is on schedule to open an in-house pharmacy in January 2015. Pharmacy operations were included in the management contract modification and extension which took effect July 1, 2014, and extends to June 30, 2016. To create the necessary space required for pharmacy services, four prior resident care rooms and a former resident lounge were renovated into a single space of adequate size to support operations. The pharmacy will be located on the second floor of 'A' wing, which also serves as the professional services wing.

The room has been equipped with shelving, counter space, phones, computers, fax machine, security cameras and upgraded door locks. Also included is a state-of-the-art tablet packager. The packager will withdraw tablets from bulk storage canisters and generate single dosage blister packs that will be stored in portable medicine dispensary carts for each care unit. A pharmacist and supporting staff have been hired and resident medicine requirements are now being entered into the new system. This effort is being supported by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and the necessary sharing agreement is being finalized to allow medicines to be obtained from the USDVA.

- **Electronic Medical Records**

In March 2014, CHVH implemented a new electronic medical records system. This system will benefit residents and staff by reducing errors, improving care and streamlining the charting system.

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- **Demand Response System**

With three new generators in place, CHVH is able to participate in the State's Demand Response Program with SMECO and the PJM Interchange. This program requires CHVH to have our generators available to pick up our electric load demand during times of peak generation requirements. Each contract calls for CHVH to be available for a total of 60 hours of operation during the year. The rebates for calendar year 2014 have totaled \$121,019. These funds have been requested to remain in a fund to support generator maintenance.

- **Veterans Service Officer**

As part of the contract modification a veterans service officer (VSO) was hired to assist residents in determining eligibility of additional benefits through the USDVA. The VSO's services have proven beneficial to CHVH and its residents. To date 54 current residents have received an increase to their USDVA benefits resulting in a monthly savings to the State of \$89,442.

- **Nurse Call Replacement Project**

CHVH completed the installation and upgrade of the Nurse Call System. With the facility having been constructed in phases, there were separate nurse call systems serving the building. These systems were as old as the phase in which they were installed, dating the oldest system to the opening of the Home in 1985. Though having served reliably since original installation, the various components were failing with greater frequency. To compound the challenges with maintaining the aged equipment, parts availability was becoming a greater problem with each failure. This being a life safety concern, it was imperative to move forward with the replacement.

The newly installed system has enhanced features to better provide two-way communications between the resident and nursing staff. In addition to the audio improvements, the visual alerts are also more capable to identify the specific location of calls for assistance. The new system also includes a historian feature that will provide record of the length of time required for nursing staff to respond to a call. The historian feature will assist nursing supervisors with greater oversight of response times and identify areas for possible staffing and training improvements.

- **CHVH Veterans Day Celebrations**

This was the fifth year that CHVH residents participated in the Veterans Day Parade in Leonardtown, MD. Following the parade, those residents were invited to a meal at Mission Barbecue in California, MD; where the CHVH veterans were the

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honored guests. In addition, special remembrances and a celebration meal were conducted at the facility for those residents that remained at CHVH. Veterans Home Commissioner, Gary Knight was the guest speaker and presented the Governor's Proclamation.

- **Annual Volunteer Appreciation**

The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet was held on April 16th with about 120 guests. Over 19,000 hours were credited to CHVH volunteers.

- **Maryland Veterans Home Commission**

Robert M. Johnson, Chairman (1987-2014), passed away February 14, 2014. BG Warner Sumpter, USAR (Ret.), was elected as Chairman. Gary Knight, was elected as Vice Chairman and Secretary.

- **Tri-County Veterans Advisory Committee**

Director Mattia continues to attend meetings every other month. The Committee is very interested in the USDVA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (located on the grounds of CHVH) as well as veteran's issues and services in the Southern Maryland area.

- **USDVA Annual Survey and MD Office of Health Care Quality Survey**

The USDVA Annual Survey was conducted August 26 – August 29, 2014 with CHVH receiving full certification from the USDVA. The OHCQ Assisted Living Program Survey and Medicare/Medicaid Skilled Nursing Survey are expected to occur before years end.

- **USDVA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)**

The USDVA is moving forward with plans to construct a new CBOC on the corner of Rt. 5 and Charlotte Hall School Road. Deed searches were conducted as there were inconsistencies with ownership of some of the adjacent properties. USDVA plans to proceed with the two acre lot as the designated location. The new building will be multiple stories instead of a single level. Once the new CBOC is constructed the space utilized by the current CBOC (2nd floor of the Maintenance Shop) will be reverted back to storage space for CHVH.

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- **USDVA Vet Center**

CHVH continues to provide 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. Dr. Fred Lockard, Prince George's County Veterans Center, reports appointment days are full.

- **Donations**

CHVH continues to benefit from donations to support the veterans. With many significant donations again this year, Cruisin' Southern Maryland continues to support our veterans, most recently with a new six passenger golf cart to take residents who cannot get around on their own on rides around the facility.



CEMETERY AND MEMORIAL PROGRAM

I would like to commend, and thank, the military personnel and cemetery staff at Cheltenham National Cemetery, who performed honors and burial for my step-father, a veteran of the Korean Conflict. The ceremony was beautiful, and...it was a fitting and lovely tribute to him. All was done with decorum and tact, despite the inclement weather. Thank you for sending him off in this fashion. As my mother told the assembled mourners, this is what my step-father would have wanted--and he got exactly that. And, it's a credit to the personnel and staff that this occurred as he had hoped it would. –Step son of a veteran

"It had been my parents' plan for a military cemetery internment, and they had retained my Father's discharge papers, but they had not taken any action to ensure that it could happen when needed. It is very important to my family to have a place to visit our parents' final resting places, and I want you to know how helpful your staff was during such a difficult time." –Son of a veteran

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Cemetery Program maintains five (5) State veterans' cemeteries, providing a final resting place for eligible Maryland veterans and their eligible dependents. 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.

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Since the program's inception in the mid-1970s, more than 91,000 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 within the system in accordance with National Cemetery Standards (NCA). 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 FY14. The State Cemetery program in the past seven years has conducted the highest number of interments of state veteran's cemetery programs 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 3,311 interments annually over the past three years. The annual interment rate represents 29% 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 for every interment. The operations and maintenance personnel provide perpetual care to ensure that our State Veterans Cemeteries are maintained as national shrines, dedicated to preserving the history of our nation and state, nurturing patriotism and honoring the service and sacrifice veterans and their families have made.

MDVA is a national leader with three out of the five Maryland's cemeteries among the top ten busiest state cemeteries in FY 2014.

Collectively, for the past three years, the MDVA Cemetery Program provided an average of 3,311 interments.

Over the last seven years, the MDVA Cemetery Program conducted the highest number of interments of any state veteran's cemetery program in the nation. (Source: USDVA National Cemetery Administration)

2014 Cemetery Program Highlights

- For FY15 two new expansion projects were submitted and approved by the State Capital Improvements Program for Eastern Shore and Rocky Gap Cemeteries totaling

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more than 5 million dollars in grants awarded by the USDVA State Cemetery Grant Program.

- A USDVA State Cemetery Grant Program Operations & Maintenance Grant at Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery was approved for \$1,712,444. Half of the project is complete to date, and is expected to be finished in 2015.
- Crownsville Master Plan and Expansion Phase III. The legislature approved \$700,000 for design which will be completed in December of this year. This Design completion will allow us to move to the PG-1 Ranking on the USDVA State Cemetery Grants Priority List for FY 15 and begin construction this summer.
- 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, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial honoring the service and sacrifices of our State's veterans.
- Replaced the outdated ATRACK inventory program with a modernized web based MITS inventory program to ensure better tracking of MDVA equipment and physical assets.

CHELtenham VETERANS CEMETERY

- Began cross training all of the new work crew on all equipment and ground maintenance.
- Removed all trees that have become infected with borers and are dying.
- Hired five new cemetery staffers.
- Purged and cleaned all buildings to include the administration, shelter, and storage rooms.
- Purchased new sound system for use at events to replace inadequate public announcement system.

CROWNSVILLE VETERANS CEMETERY

- Hired Assistant Superintendent, Contractual Secretary and Cemetery Caretaker.

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- Participated in Organizational Assessment Improvements review from the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) - implemented several new procedures to meet National Shrine Standards.
- Completed training of grounds crew offered by Baltimore National Cemetery staff to help meet NCA standard.

EASTERN SHORE VETERANS CEMETERY

- Office space formerly used by Service Program converted to conference room for cemetery committee meetings and private meetings with families.
- Cemetery committee donated a table, refrigerator, microwave, coffee machine and art work for the conference room.
- Second service office converted to grounds supervisor's office and file room, third service office space converted to storage room for cemetery.
- Updated the lighting throughout the cemetery to LED lighting.

GARRISON FOREST VETERANS CEMETERY

- New metal roof built to replace the fiberglass on the metal tent frame on plaza.
- Reconfigured back of administration building space for secretary and the new verifications specialist offices.
- Two new plaza lights installed for lighting of the branch of service flag poles.
- New heating & air conditioning unit installed for the committal shelter.
- Replaced pond overflow pipe which was damaged from years of rust and decay.



Pictured Above: Memorial Day Ceremony, Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery

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ROCKY GAP VETERANS CEMETERY

- Placed topsoil and leveled approximately 100 gravesites that had subsided over the years.
- Laid sod on approximately 125 new graves and 75 re-opening graves, and 30 older graves in the cemetery. Repaired 5 in ground vase units.
- Installed two flower beds to improve landscape appearance at main entrance.
- Installed two public information signs outlining cemetery rules and policies to better inform to the public.

MEMORIALS AND MONUMENTS

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

In recognition of those who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice to secure our freedom and democracy, the memorials are open 365 days a year.

2014 Memorial Highlights

- Fourteen (9) patriotic events were held at the memorials throughout the year, including Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Wreaths Across America and other special commemorations.
- Construction of wrought iron fence project completed at War Memorial Building.
- Completed drainage project to prevent slab movement at Maryland Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- War Memorial Building Elevator project completed in November.
- Completed a major shrub pruning project with use of Anne Arundel County Volunteer Bureau, Naval Academy volunteers, Anne Arundel Community College and others, at the WWII Memorial.
- Completed aeration and over seeding of turf at the three Memorials.

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Pictured above: World War II Memorial, Annapolis

OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

"Thank you for your participation in my VETS Count Day of Service at Harmony Hall. Many veterans expressed thanks for your taking the time to discuss veteran benefits, the claims process, survivor benefits, and to share information about VA home loans, health screenings, and much more." -The organizer of a veteran event

"I enjoy your Facebook page; I think it does a good job of keeping Maryland's veterans informed on current issues." -An MDVA Facebook follower

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.

Traditional Outreach Strategies:

In 2014, O & A continued to build upon the established model of reaching out to veterans and families through attendance at a diverse number of events. Examples of venues included homeless disability expos, family resource fairs, and workshops where Maryland veterans and their families have the opportunity to speak with an MDVA staff member, and to ask questions regarding any number of benefits and services. Events are sponsored by Federal, State, and Local government agencies as well as community based non-profit organizations. In addition, the MDVA continues to partner with the Maryland National Guard and U.S. Reserve Components to staff resource tables at Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events. An MDVA Service Officer is sometimes available to immediately assist veterans with filing claims for disability and compensation. There is no cost to MDVA for participating in these events, and no cost to the veterans and family members to attend.

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In 2014, the O & A Program attended 57 events, almost double the number of events attended the previous year. A total of 9,232 veterans and family members were engaged.

MDVA wide, over 90,000 individual contacts were made in 2014 with veterans, family members, community providers and the general public at events.



Pictured above: MDVA Display at the Restoration Worship Temple Veterans Event

E-Outreach Strategies:

The MDVA website, veterans.maryland.gov, is managed by the O & A Program. The site has been streamlined to give users quick access to information, from both a desktop and mobile/handheld device. The website gives users access to a wide variety of local, state, and federal resources pertaining to, but not limited to, employment, health care, housing, and benefits.

In 2014, the MDVA website received 91,589 visits, with 77% of those visits new.

Of the 223,155 individual page views, the top five landing pages on the site were:

- Home Page (87,316)
- Operation Hire (13,948)
- Cemetery and Memorial Program (12,399)
- Jobs and Training (9,622)
- Tax Benefits (7,886)

Constant Contact, an online marketing tool, is used by the O & A Program to maintain email addresses and to share information. With support from the Maryland Department of Transportation and Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, as well as traditional outreach, the MDVA email list grew from 15,860 to 22,618 contacts in 2014. Constant Contact provides a forum to share job related information and general news and announcements with the veteran and provider community.

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In 2014, 42% of emails sent to contacts were 'Jobs for Maryland Veterans' or special MDVA job announcement emails.

Out of 103 emails sent, 42 were sent to inform the veteran community of job opportunities in Maryland. The balance of emails consisted of flag lowering notices, time sensitive news, and other announcements.

In 2014, 27 issues of the bi-weekly MDVA e-newsletter were sent, providing updates and announcements highlighting MDVA and partner news.

With Facebook and Twitter, the O & A Program continues to expand its use of social media. The MDVA Facebook currently has 1,574 'Likes', an increase from 1,239 in 2013. In 2014, Facebook posts reached over 13,000 followers, which enabled MDVA to share more information on resources available to Maryland veterans.

Twitter is used in conjunction with Facebook to tweet updates and news @MDVeterans. The Department currently has 739 followers on Twitter, an increase from 464 in 2013. Using hootsuite, a social media dashboard, the O & A Program will continue providing the most up to date information to veterans and their families in Maryland. MDVA continues to follow the Twitter accounts of other relevant federal and Maryland state agencies.

Via the eBenefits information system, USDVA enables veterans and dependents to request information from their state veterans affairs offices. In 2014, it was identified that the MDVA email address connected to this system was no longer valid. The USDVA was contacted and the request was made for the eBenefits system to connect to the MDVeteransInfo email account. During the second half of 2014 alone, the Outreach and Advocacy Program responded to over 1500 requests for information.

Mailings and Publication Outreach Strategies:

In continuing support of returning Maryland veterans, the O & A Program mailed 4,012 new veteran informational packets in 2014. Mailings include USDVA and State Program information pertaining to, but not limited to, health care, employment and mental health services.

An eight page bi-annual newsletter, *The Maryland Veteran*, is distributed to approximately 45,000 individuals and organizations. Approximately 15,000 copies of the summer 2014 newsletter were distributed electronically with the balance of 30,000 shared in print copy. The newsletter continues to be distributed in print to accommodate our senior veterans and individuals with disabilities. *The Maryland Veteran* is also available for download from the MDVA website. The newsletter is distributed during MDVA outreach

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events and is 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 MDVA State Benefits and Information Guide was updated in May 2014. A total of 30,000 guides were printed. Virtually all copies were distributed via mail or at outreach events and plans are underway to print more copies in 2015. The Guide remains available on the MDVA website.

The mission of the MDVA O & A Program cannot be accomplished without support from personnel from each MDVA department in the form of speaking engagements and public appearances at multiple events each year. Events include, but are not limited to, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day events, Veteran Service Organization (VSO) conventions, veterans and family information days, and civic and community events.

2014 Outreach & Advocacy Program Highlights

- MDVA wide, over 90,000 individual contacts were made at events or via phone with veterans, family members, community providers and the general public.
- MDVA email distribution list reached 22,000 subscribers.
- The Program distributed over 4,000 'Welcome Home' packets to Maryland Veterans.
- The Program responded to over 1,500 requests for MDVA information from the eBenefits system.
- The Program distributed 30,000 printed copies of the State Benefits and Information Guide

MDVA INITIATIVES

The MDVA continues to collaborate with other agencies such as Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR), Business and Economic Development (DBED), and Aging (DoA) in support of **veteran employment and business development**. Since 2009, along with DBED, MDVA has administered loans totaling \$920,000 to veteran business owners through the **Veteran Owned Small Business No-Interest Loan Program**. In partnership with the Department of Aging and DLLR, MDVA continues to assist in the recruitment of senior veterans for employment.

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In June, MDVA served as project manager for a statewide campaign to support veteran employment in Maryland, ***Operation Hire: Maryland's 100 Day Veteran Hiring Challenge***. A total of 184 State and local agencies, as well as private sector businesses participated and 361 hires were reported. The initiative is a call to action to employers to assess their veteran hiring practices and how they are supporting veterans in the civilian work place.

The MDVA formed a partnership in 2014 with the ***Maryland Library System*** in an effort to increase awareness of veteran resources in Maryland. Training was provided in September 2014 to a designated library veteran liaison committee. A number of libraries hosted events and veterans displays in November, to include copies of *The Maryland Veteran*. Plans are in place to sustain the library veteran liaison committee with a follow up meeting and training in 2015.



Pictured Above: Cecil County Public Library Veterans Day Display

Women veterans in Maryland currently account for 15% of the total veteran population in the state. The Department continues to work with other agencies to ensure the community is aware of the service and needs of women veterans. In November 2014, MDVA was proud to play a role in the dedication of the Maryland Women in Military Service Monument, located at the Chesapeake House Travel Plaza in Cecil County.

Since its inception in 2010, ***The Maryland Veterans Trust Fund***, has collected over \$198,911.77 in donations and has distributed \$93,870.08 in grants and loans to Maryland veterans in need of financial assistance. With authorization by the Maryland General Assembly, the Trust Fund acquired 501(c)3 status in 2014, which now enables the Fund to procure more donations and ***help more veterans in need***.

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In 2014, the MDVA collaborated with Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to create the ***Re-Entry Associate Program***. Associates will serve as mentors to an incarcerated veteran for 12 months upon release. The MDVA continues to work with DPSCS to find appropriate matches for trained volunteers.

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Commissions/Boards

Five commissions/boards advise the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in various areas.

MARYLAND VETERANS COMMISSION

The Maryland Veterans Commission advises the Secretary on all issues relating to veterans, including veteran related legislation with meetings 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 are requested for the Cemetery & Memorial Programs.

The Commissioners represent veteran groups and the eight congressional districts in the State. Commissioners are appointed to five-year terms by the Governor, who also names the Chair. The following organizations or categories are represented:

American Ex POWs	Korean War Veterans Association, Inc.	Pearl Harbor Survivors Association (Honorary nonvoting member)
American Veterans AMVETS	Marine Corps League	Polish Legion of American Veterans
Catholic War Veterans	Maryland Officer's Association	The American Legion
Paralyzed Veterans of America	Member at Large	The Retired Enlisted Association
Disabled American Veterans	Military Order of the Purple Heart	Iraq/Afghanistan War Veteran
Fleet Reserve Association	National Association of Black Veterans	Veterans of Foreign Wars
Jewish War Veterans	Vietnam Veterans of America	Women Veterans

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 quarterly. 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.

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MARYLAND MILITARY MONUMENTS COMMISSION

The Governor's Commission on Maryland Military Monuments was established in January, 1989 and was transferred to the MDVA in October 2008. The Commission inventories Maryland military monuments, assigns responsibility for maintenance of each monument and prepares educational and tourism materials for public distribution. Since 1989, the Commission has sponsored or co-sponsored the cleaning and restoration of 104 Maryland military memorials; forty-eight of these are provided routine maintenance by the Commission. Appointed by the Governor, the Commission consists of up to twenty-one members. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs serves as chair of the Commission with meetings held quarterly.

WAR MEMORIAL COMMISSION

The War Memorial Commission shares custody and supervision of the War Memorial Building and the War Memorial Plaza with the City of Baltimore. Both were erected in 1927 in Baltimore to honor Marylanders who died in World War I. The War Memorial Building lies directly across from City Hall. The Memorial welcomes approximately 2,900 visitors each month. Maintenance costs are shared equally by the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore. The Commission meets quarterly and consists of ten members who 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.

COMMISSION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MARYLAND WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE MONUMENT

The Maryland Women in Military Service Monument was formally dedicated on November 11, 2014. The monument is located at the Chesapeake House Travel Plaza on I-95 in Cecil County. Accordingly, the commission was terminated effective September 30, 2014.



Maryland Women in Military Service Monument

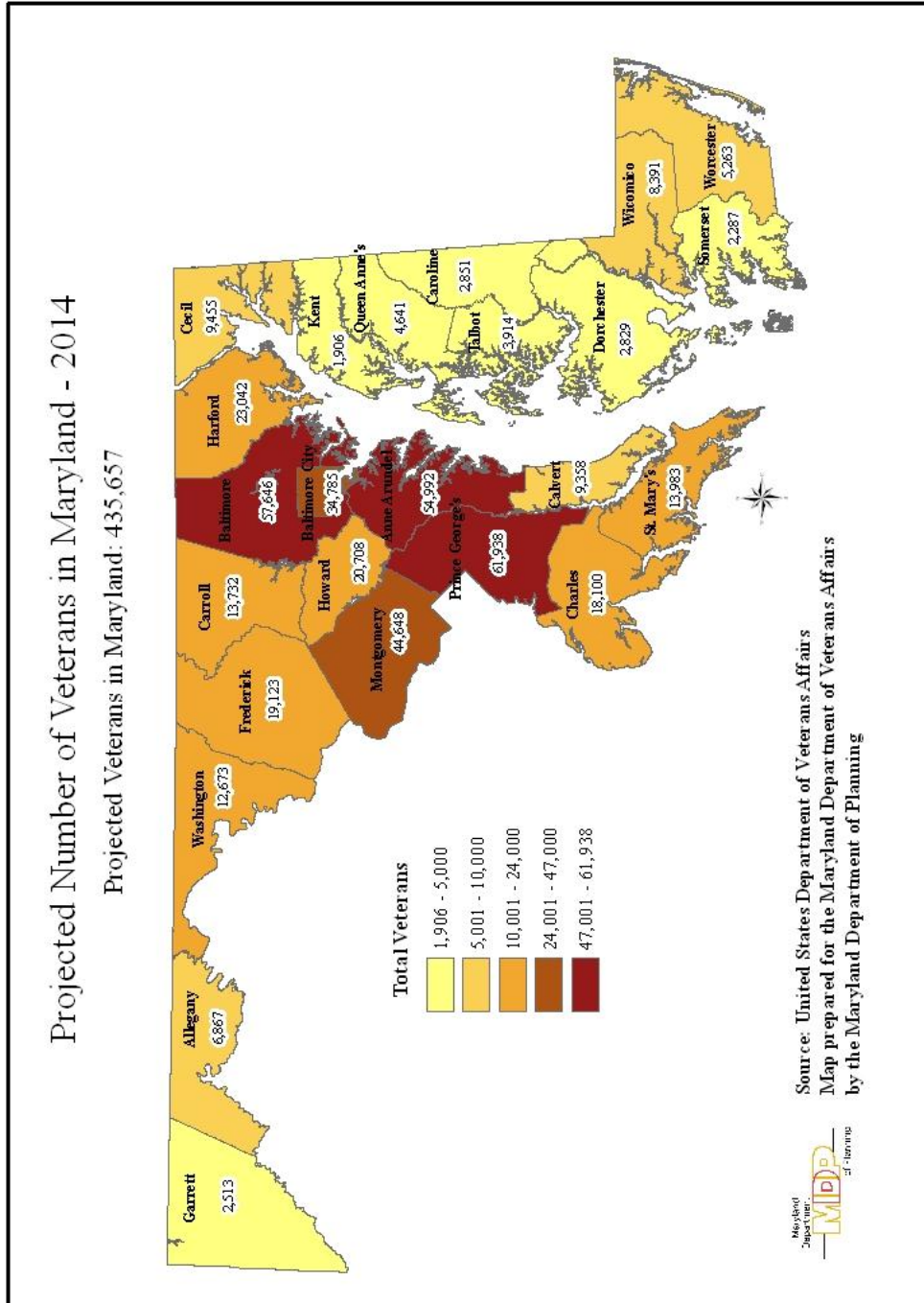


Attachments

- 1.1 Map: Projected Number of Veterans in Maryland in 2013
- 1.2 Maryland Veteran Demographics
- 1.3 Table: Maryland Veteran Population by County 2013
- 1.4 Key Performance Measures

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ATTACHMENT 1.1



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ATTACHMENT 1.2

Maryland Veteran Demographics (FY2014)	
Veteran Population	437,762
Wartime Veterans	330,283
Gulf War (includes OIF/OEF/OND)	166,645
Vietnam Era	127,455
Korean Conflict	30,846
World War II	19,225
Peacetime	107,480
Female	57,627
Male	380,136
Largest Veteran Population by County	Prince George's County (61,938)
Smallest Veteran Population by County	Kent County (1,906)

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Census Data

ATTACHMENT 1.3

Maryland Veteran Population by County (FY2014)			
Allegany	6,867	Howard	20,708
Anne Arundel	54,992	Kent	1,906
Baltimore	57,646	Montgomery	44,648
Calvert	9,358	Prince George's	61,938
Caroline	2,851	Queen Anne's	4,641
Carroll	13,732	St. Mary's	13,983
Cecil	9,455	Somerset	2,287
Charles	18,100	Talbot	3,914
Dorchester	2,829	Washington	12,673
Frederick	19,123	Wicomico	8,391
Garrett	2,513	Worcester	5,263
Harford	23,042	Baltimore City	34,785

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Census Data

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ATTACHMENT 1.4

Key Performance Measures for Veterans Represented by Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (FY2014)	
Inputs	
Potential # of Veterans to be Served	437,762
Number of Veteran Contacts	91,590
Outputs	
Claims filed and developed on behalf of service connected disabled veterans	5,138
Cases pending adjudication for veterans represented by MDVA	2,000
Appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of veterans	252
Outcomes	
Total of awards to veterans and survivors represented by MDVA	\$23,472,215

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The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs is a State Government Executive Department with a service mission to assist veterans, active duty service members, their families and dependents, in securing benefits earned through military service. Under the Department of Veterans Affairs are four major programs: the Veterans Cemetery and Memorial Program; Charlotte Hall Veterans Home; the Veterans Service and Benefits Program and the Outreach and Advocacy Program.