

**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs  
2010 Annual Report**



**31 December 2010**

**Reference MSAR #s: 5547 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 471,000 veterans in Maryland, as of 30 September 2010.

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; over the next 12-18 months the Maryland National Guard will have more troops deployed than any time since World War II. 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 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. In 2010, MDVA negotiated contracts for transportation services and provided outreach support.

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 2010 MDVA coordinated with the USDVA and the Maryland Procurement Technical Assistance Program to host a Veterans Business Conference. This conference was attended by over 200 veteran business owners. Veterans learned about procurement preferences available for veteran owned businesses and made valuable contacts for future procurement opportunities at the federal and state levels.

MDVA continues to collaborate with individuals, organizations, commissions and other state agencies to develop, promote and support the interests of Maryland's veterans.

## **Outreach & Advocacy Program**

The Outreach and Advocacy (O&A) Program is the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs' (MDVA) youngest program established by Maryland House Bill 3, 2006. O&A's mission is to develop innovative ways to seek out and inform Maryland's veterans about benefits and services 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 Director of the program resigned in May, 2010 and since that time the Deputy Director has been Acting Director. A hiring freeze exemption has been granted and recruitment to fill the vacant Director position is currently in progress.

In furtherance of O&A's mission we have continued an initiative, implemented in 2008, called the Veterans Muster. The Veterans Muster is an information fair where Maryland veterans and their families may speak with the resources represented to learn about the benefits and services offered by federal, state, local and non-profit agencies. These agencies are invited to participate by setting up and staffing a display table to provide veterans with information. MDVA also sets up a table and has staff present to answer veterans' questions. An MDVA Service Officer is available to directly assist veterans with filing claims for disability and compensation.

A Veterans Muster has been conducted in each county in the state and in Baltimore City. To date, we have held twenty four (24) musters since April, 2008 and have reached approximately 3500 veterans and their family members through this initiative. The musters are held on Saturday mornings in a location and venue that is central to the particular jurisdiction. The organizations that have provided venues have done so at no cost to MDVA, there is no cost to participating agencies and no cost to the veterans and family members. O&A plans to continue to pursue outreach opportunities to muster veterans and their families at churches, colleges, universities and other appropriate community organizations and state government agencies.

Outreach is also conducted through presenting periodic briefings and setting up a display/information table at the Maryland National Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration events. These events are attended by soldiers and airman preparing for and returning from deployments that include Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). The Maryland National Guard Reintegration's training objectives are to educate every soldier and airman 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 O&A staff also works with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), to support the veterans' behavioral health initiative known as Maryland's Commitment to Veterans (MCV). This initiative involves connecting veterans in need of behavioral health resources to the services of the USDVA, the state public health system or a private behavioral health provider. O&A requested and obtained a list of approximately 90,000 names and addresses of Maryland veterans from the USDVA Release of Names and Addresses (RONA) Program to advance the outreach for MCV and

MDVA. The list included names of veterans released from active duty since January, 2004 through July, 2010 and veterans receiving USDVA compensation, pension and education benefits. O&A prepared and mailed a letter thanking our veterans for their service and requesting that they take a moment to complete and return an enclosed postage-paid card with their current contact information. The response to this mailing was quite successful with well over 20,000 cards completed and returned. We now have two volunteer interns to enter the information provided to us into a database. This effort has reached veterans across the state and provided them with an avenue to seek information from MDVA about the benefits and services to which they are entitled.

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; to our Facebook friends; handed out at events attended by MDVA staff; and it 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. We printed 35,000 of each of the past two issues which were sufficient to meet the demand for the printed version. We distribute many electronic copies when requested but there is still a large veteran population that prefers a hard copy due to their inability to access the electronic version.

In addition to the newsletter, a comprehensive State Benefits & Information Guide was updated and published in summer 2008 and is distributed in the same manner as the newsletter. An update and new printing of the State Benefits and Information Guide is planned for calendar year 2011 if funding permits. Current issues of the newsletter and benefits guide are also included with the Secretary's "Welcome Home" letters sent to recently discharged Maryland Veterans.

O&A maintains and manages the content on the MDVA website. MDVA's website has had roughly 3.2 million visits during calendar year 2010 for an average of approximately 265,000 visits per month. The redesigned website was launched in April, 2009 to comply with the state's new branding standards. The redesign enabled us to significantly improve the organization of the site and increase the information available. Feedback from constituents has been positive in that the website is more interactive and user-friendly. Our site includes information regarding services available to Maryland's veterans with links to other state agencies and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Benefits Guides, our newsletters and other documents of interest have been posted to the website in an effort to remotely inform as many of Maryland's veterans and their families as possible.

Personnel from each MDVA program 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; MDVA Veterans Musters; and civic organizations' meetings. These engagements have greatly expanded the number of Maryland veterans and dependents directly contacted and informed of services and benefits available. Approximately 45,000 Maryland citizens have been reached through these events.

## **Outreach & Advocacy Program 2010 Highlights**

- Distribution of *The Maryland Veteran*, the Department's bi-annual newsletter, is approximately 45,000.
- MDVA is on Facebook, reaching a large number of Maryland veterans here and abroad. During the year 2010, the number of MDVA Facebook friends increased from 1,670 to 4,332 friends.
- The number of visits to the MDVA website increased from approximately 3 million to approximately 3.2 million for calendar year 2010.
- More than 20,000 responses were received from our direct mail to a list of approximately 90,000 names and addresses of Maryland veterans through the USDVA Release of Names and Addresses (RONA) Program.
- Conducted Veterans Musters in 10 jurisdictions in Maryland. MDVA has now conducted a muster in every jurisdiction in Maryland; through these musters MDVA has reached over 3500 veterans and family members.

## **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 866 new Powers of Attorney (POA) during the year. We hold the POA for approximately 9,700 Maryland veterans and survivors.

During FY 2010, the service program responded to 89,542 requests for information from Marylanders and was responsible for filing 3,899 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 \$22,252,326 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 2010, and a majority of the \$22.3 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 6,652 DD-214s from July 2009 through June 2010. 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. In addition, the Women Veterans Coordinator is working with the Maryland National Guard, in both their Post Deployment Health Re-Assessment (PDHRA) and Reintegration programs. She is also working with the USDVA Health Care System Veteran Centers in addressing the needs of women veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and sexual trauma issues.

The most valuable services offered to all 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 Service Program staffing is currently at 14 full time employees, 2 short of its authorized level of 16. Vacancies currently exist at our Hagerstown and Salisbury service offices. Exceptions to the hiring freeze were requested for both locations, and granted by Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Recruiting action has not been initiated as we await the results of cost reductions measures the Department. If the two vacancies are lost because of cost reductions measures the Hagerstown and Salisbury offices will be closed with no itinerant services provided. This would result in a considerable reduction in the number of veterans we can serve.

### **Service Program 2010 Highlights**

- Obtained 866 new Powers of Attorney.
- Received 6,552 DD-214s, discharge documents from veterans recently separated from the military, from July 2009 through June 2010.
- Responded to 89,552 requests (all-time high) for information from Marylanders.
- Filed 3,899 claims (all-time high) on behalf of veterans, dependents and survivors.
- Service program claims processed resulted in \$22.3 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.

The census as of January 2010 was 405 residents with 151 assisted living and 254 skilled nursing which included 17 non-veteran spouses. Subsequently, the December 2010 census for CHVH had 155 assisted living residents and 254 skilled nursing for a total of 409 which included 11 non-veteran spouses. The overall census increased by four since the beginning of 2010 and rose to an all-time high of 414 residents in May, 2010. The daily census is constantly changing. Since January 2010 CHVH has admitted 162 residents, discharged 79 and had 79 residents expire, resulting in a net change of plus four.

The December 6 total census of 409 equates to an overall occupancy level of 88%. Considering beds need to be available for transition of residents between assisted living and skilled nursing, residents coming back from the hospital and those residents needing isolation beds, in reality, we are closer to 95% occupancy.

During FY 2010 (July 1, 2009 thru June 30, 2010) CHVH received \$1,901,814 in Domiciliary Per Diem Reimbursement and \$6,895,680 in Comprehensive Care Reimbursement for a total of \$8,797,494 through the USDVA State Home Program Reimbursement

### **Management Contract - Request For Proposal (RFP), Bid Protest, Appeal and Contract Extensions**

#### **Background - 2008 & 2009**

RFP for Management Services was issued November 21, 2008 and a Pre-Bid Conference for the RFP was held December 4, 2008. Bids were initially due January 12, 2009. That date was adjusted to February 10<sup>th</sup> due to response time to answer questions raised by bidders. One bidder filed a bid protest at that time in regards to the pricing sheet. Adjustments were made to the pricing sheet to address the issue raised. Three proposals were received and two were deemed susceptible of award. Financial proposals were opened May 20, 2009. The Best and Final offers were received May 28, 2009. A recommendation of award was presented to MDVA Secretary in June 2009.

On July 20, 2009 a debriefing was conducted with the unsuccessful bidder. A protest was filed by the bidder on July 21, 2009. In August 2009 the Procurement Officer was notified the unsuccessful bidder filed an appeal with the Maryland Board of Contract Appeals.

The management contract with HMR expired June 30, 2009. In order for the State to work through the appeal/protest and the process with the MD Board of Contract Appeals contract modifications/extensions were requested and approved by the Board of Public Works (BPW):

- Contract Modification/Extension No. 2 - June 30, 2009 - September 30, 2009



- Contract Modification/Extension No. 3 - October 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009
- Contract Modification/Extension No. 4 - January 1, 2010 - June 30, 2010
- Contract Modification/Extension No. 5 - July 1, 2010 - September 30, 2010

## **2010 – Timeline of Events**

- A second Agency Report was submitted to the MD Board of Contract Appeals on April 28, 2010.
- The “Production of Documents Request” by Mid-Atlantic Health Care (MAHC) attorney was completed and forwarded on May 7<sup>th</sup>. This entailed copying and scanning hundreds of notes, documents and emails per request.
- A hearing date was scheduled with the MD Board of Contract Appeals in Baltimore for July 12 - 15, 2010, the final step in the Appeal process.
- July 1, 2010 – Procurement Officer met with DBM Procurement Team in preparation for upcoming appeal.
- July 6, 2010 – Procurement Officer met with the Assistant Attorney General (AAG). and attorneys from HMR to review appeal information.
- July 8, 2010 – Steve Hildenbrand, AAG received a request from MAHC for dismissal of appeal.
- July 12, 2010 - Contract on BPW Agenda for August 11.
- August 10, 2010 - Contract forwarded to HMR for signature. Identified as 3 year, 9 month duration with a onetime renewal option of 2 years.
- Contract rescheduled from August 11 to September 1 BPW Agenda because of labor issues.
- Contract removed from BPW September 1, 2010 Agenda
- Contract Approved by the BPW on September 21, 2010 – New management contract began October 1, 2010 for a term of 3 years and 9 months with a two year renewal option.
- October 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010 - State Staff and HMR working together on transition from previous contract to new contract requirements. All new vendors to be in place by January 1, 2011. MBE goal for this contract is 21%.

## **Computerized Patient Records System (CPRS)**

In support of CPRS requirements, five (5) Nurses’ Stations were renovated. The renovations greatly improved access, visibility and provided the space requirements necessary for additional computer work stations.

With input from the District of Columbia VA Medical Center (DCVAMC), mobile medicine and mobile work station units were selected for use with CPRS. One each of the stations was purchased to

assess for serviceability and use by CHVH staff. The sample units were accepted for use by Nursing and Information Technology (IT) staff. All necessary equipment has been ordered. This order includes: 21 desktop computers, 19 laptop computers, 16 mobile work stations and 6 printers.

The servers that were temporarily loaned to CHVH by the DCVA to assist in the initial set-up of CPRS were returned and connectivity issues tested and verified. Also, a back-up server was purchased and installed at CHVH. This server will allow 'read only' information in the event of a failure of the primary server or communications. With the back-up server, the latest resident care information will be available to staff to support the continued proper issuance of medications and prescribed care.

A CPRS trainer was hired to support staff development. The trainer spent the necessary time at the DCVA to become familiar with the CPRS program, templates and requirements for use. Initial training of CHVH Nursing staff has been completed. To further test system and staff capabilities, a 'mock' go-live test was conducted in November. Following the mock test, deficiencies were addressed and the actual go-live implementation of CPRS was December 6<sup>th</sup>.

There was a formal CPRS dedication ceremony in August as part of the CHVH Twenty-Five Year Anniversary.

### **Water Supply / Waste Water Management**

CHVH continues to meet regularly with Maryland Environmental Services (MES) concerning operations of the CHVH water supply and waste water management. With the continuing communications and the alarming devices that were installed in 2009, operations by MES have been event free. There have been no instances of loss of water/loss of water pressure and no instances of interruptions in the operations of waste water treatment and management.

MES is currently conducting a project to replace the drainage beds in several of the sediment ponds. This is necessary due to the current bed material having become 'saturated' with waste material and no longer allowing proper filtration and drainage.

### **CHVH Program 2010 Highlights**

- Two informational meetings were held at CHVH with VA staff regarding changes to the requirements of the VA per diem reimbursement.
- Program Director supported the efforts of the Tri-County Veterans Advisory Board. Those efforts included:
  - Participating in scheduled Tri-County meetings
  - Supporting a tour of the current Community Based Outreach Clinic (CBOC) with Congressman Hoyer, DCVA Medical Director Rivera and Tri-County Advisory board members.
  - Working with the DCVA in preparation of the placement of a modular trailer on the CHVH site to provide space requirements to expand veteran services.

- Supporting a tour of the CBOC with VA Secretary Shinseki, Congressman Hoyer, Tri-County Advisory board members and community veterans to assess current CBOC capabilities and the proposal for a new CBOC located on CHVH property that could offer expanded services to area veterans.
- Received the 2009 Nursing Home Family Satisfaction Survey results. CHVH received an excellent rating. 98% of responding families would recommend CHVH for the care of a family member.
- The following surveys were conducted at CHVH:
  - February, VA audit of State Home Program
  - February, State audit
  - May, DHMH audit. First time audited to the new Quality Indicator Survey (QIS) standard.
  - June, USDVA annual survey
- CHVH provided the space to host the following events:
  - March, Military Order of the Purple Heart D.E.C. meeting
  - March, Maryland Emergency Management Agency, regional meeting
  - April, Disabled American Veterans D.E.C. meeting
  - April, Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary D.E.C. meeting
  - May, U.S. Census Bureau, training of census takers
  - October, Regional Jurisdictional Planning Group meeting (Emergency Planning)
- Emergency Preparedness Planning, continuing to update current emergency plan to the outline provided by DHMH in HB770. CHVH is a participating member of the Jurisdictional Planning Group that has been formed by the St. Mary's Department of Public Safety.
- April, Conducted a Volunteer Appreciation ceremony. Secretary Chow was guest speaker.
- May, Conducted the annual Memorial Day program. This year, three CHVH residents served as speakers.
- August, Twenty-Five year and CPRS Dedication combined ceremony. Lt. Governor Brown, Congressman Hoyer, Delegate Wood, Secretary Chow and other dignitaries and past CHVH management individuals were in attendance.
- September, 9/11 Remembrance Event. Attended by 250 guests. Secretary Chow was key-note speaker.
- October, Facilities Master Plan, Meetings have begun with the selected contractor to support the formulation of a 10 year facility master plan.

- November, Veterans Day. This year CHVH participated in the Leonardtown Veterans Day Parade (St. Mary's County). Residents were allowed the opportunity, based on capabilities, to ride on the CHVH float and/or be in attendance as an observer. For those residents remaining at CHVH, special luncheons were prepared and observances were conducted. Pictures and filming of the parade will be shared with all residents via the in-house broadcasting system.
- Continuing the project of Emergency Generator Replacements. Remains in engineering design phase.

### **Facility Improvements**

- Completed renovation of Dental Suite
- Completed energy reduction project (all lighting and forty-four heat pumps)
- Replaced Core, 'A' wing and 'B' wing plate heat exchangers (HVAC system)
- Replaced the Core Energy Recovery Ventilator unit
- Replaced 1C heat pumps (27 units)
- Replaced floor tile at 1D, 2D and A.L. Dining Room
- Replaced Visitation Room carpet
- Installed computer network cabling for all A.L. rooms
- Installed in-house cable channel broadcasting system
- Renovated five (5) Nurses Stations
- Replaced ceiling tiles and grids in Core hallway and the main dining hall
- Increased the parking lot at the CBOC
- Connected well water pumps to emergency generator circuits
- Constructed storage building

## **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 76,700 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 is a leader in the nation among State veteran's cemeteries with three of our five cemeteries among the top ten busiest State veteran's cemeteries in FY-2010. Maryland conducts the highest number of interments throughout the nation in State cemeteries.

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 3,190 interments annually over the past three years. The annual interment rate represents 21% 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 2010 Highlights**

- Completion of capital construction burial expansion projects at Garrison Forest State Veterans Cemetery through \$4,448,885 of 100% funded USDVA approved grants which includes, grave sites, columbarium's, irrigation systems, roadway and curbs, and building construction and renovation.
- The pre-application for FY -2011 capital construction grant was approved for Garrison Forest State Veterans Cemetery Administration & Maintenance complex by the State Cemetery Grants Program for \$5,700,000.

- For FY 2012 Pre-Applications were submitted for Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery Columbarium total Grant: \$ 400,000 and Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery Columbarium total Grant: \$ 250,000.00.

#### Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery

- Repaved deteriorating roadway from maintenance shop to butler building.
- Installed 20 new donated cherry trees in cemetery for beautification.
- Painted fencing surrounding maintenance shop area.
- Installed new efficient water heater in maintenance shop.

#### Crownsville Veterans Cemetery

- Resealed entire roadway to extend the life use.
- Upgraded seeder, gator, lawn mower and other small hand tools.
- Purple Heart Monument donated by Military Order of Purple Heart.

#### Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery

- DGS installed new roof on cemetery chapel.
- Painting interior of chapel.
- Installation of light sensors in office restrooms for reduced electricity use.
- New pole building built for storage of equipment that was previously stored outside.
- Updated and planted shrubbery to enhance cemetery entrance.
- Installed French drain behind administrative building to relieve flooding at building.
- Surveyed and opened Section G (new burial Section).

#### Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery

- Installed 236 new granite section posts.
- Removed 12 trees that were endangering property of the cemetery and adjacent homeowners.
- Built new office storage room to secure veterans documents.

#### Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery

- Contracted having all headstones in the cemetery raised, leveled and properly aligned.
- Installed energy efficient air conditioners in committal shelter and office.

- The asphalt roadway in the cemetery sealed.
- Applied Sherwin-Williams Concrete Seal to all concrete in the Office and Committal Shelter area to help lengthen its life expectancy.
- Painted metal fences and gates at the entrance to the cemetery.
- Beautified lower section of the cemetery by removing our spoils pile to another area of the cemetery. The temporary maintenance access road was also given a layer of gravel.

### Overall

- Operations and Maintenance Grant of \$1,700,000 which is 100% funded by the USDVA State Cemetery and Grant Program was approved for Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery. This will raise and realign headstones along with renovations of the grounds.
- Four other Operations and Maintenance Grants were submitted to the State Cemetery Grants Program FY 12 for Crownsville, Eastern Shore, Garrison Forest, and Rocky Gap Veterans Cemeteries totaling over \$6,500,000.
- 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.

## **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 Program 2010 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 review iron fencing project at War Memorial Building.
- DGS hired Architectural and Engineering firm to review slab movement at Vietnam Veterans Memorial.
- Installed Skatestoppers at the Vietnam Memorial to prevent additional granite surface damage.



## **Commissions and Boards**

There are four 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.

Twenty-eight 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 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.....	471,238
Maryland Veterans Age 65 and Older.....	168,312
Maryland Women Veterans.....	49,129
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.....	5.2%

## Key Performance Measures for Veterans Represented By the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2010

### Inputs

Potential number of veterans to be served.....	471,000 (Approx.)
Number of veteran contacts.....	89,542

### Outputs

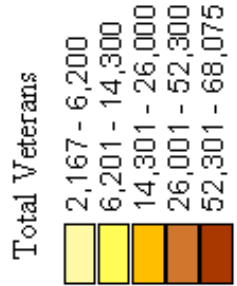
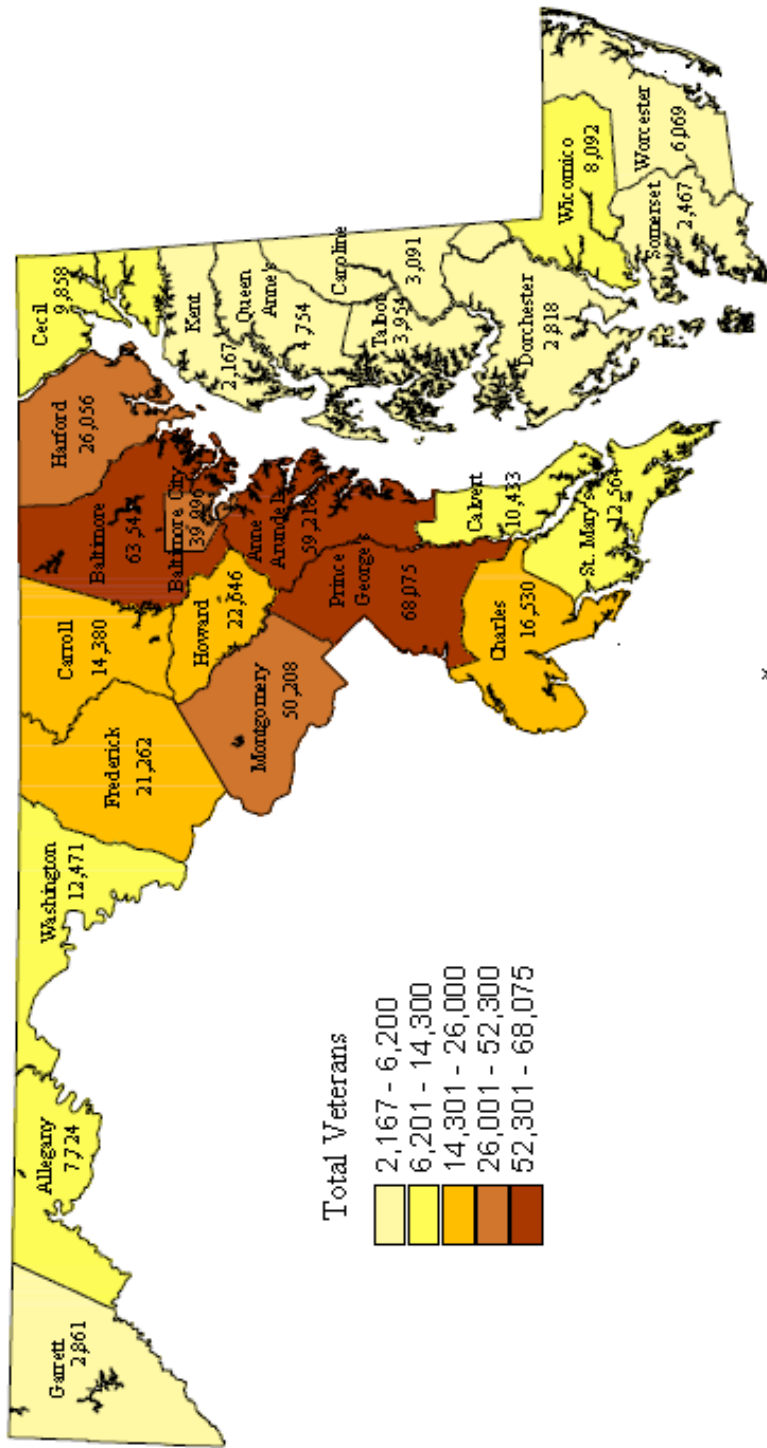
Claims filed and developed on behalf of service-connected disabled veteran.....	3,899
Active cases for veterans represented by the MDVA.....	9,800
Appeals of unfavorable VA decisions filed on behalf of veterans.....	254

### Outcomes

VA awards for Service-connected claims.....	\$11,348,686
VA awards for totally disabled non-service connected claims.....	\$ 6,008,128
VA awards for widows and orphans of veterans.....	<u>\$ 4,895,128</u>
Total of awards to veterans and survivors represented by MDVA.....	\$22,252,326

# Projected Number of Veterans in Maryland - 2010

Projected Veterans in Maryland: 471,238



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



## MARYLAND VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY 2010

	Total Population 2010 projected*	Veteran Population 2010 projected**	% Veteran Population
<b>State of Maryland</b>	<b>5,779,400</b>	<b>471,238</b>	<b>8.2</b>
<b>By County</b>			
<a href="#">Allegany County</a>	73,100	7,724	10.6
<a href="#">Anne Arundel Co.</a>	520,300	59,218	11.4
Baltimore City	638,413***	39,996	6.3
<a href="#">Baltimore County</a>	801,750	63,542	7.9
<a href="#">Calvert County</a>	91,750	10,433	11.4
<a href="#">Caroline County</a>	34,100	3,091	9.1
<a href="#">Carroll County</a>	175,900	14,380	8.2
<a href="#">Cecil County</a>	103,850	9,858	9.5
<a href="#">Charles County</a>	144,950	16,530	11.4
<a href="#">Dorchester County</a>	32,350	2,818	8.7
<a href="#">Frederick County</a>	233,600	21,262	9.1
<a href="#">Garrett County</a>	29,950	2,861	9.6
<a href="#">Harford County</a>	248,450	26,056	10.5
<a href="#">Howard County</a>	281,950	22,646	8.0
<a href="#">Kent County</a>	20,300	2,167	10.7
<a href="#">Montgomery County</a>	966,000	50,208	5.2
<a href="#">Prince George's Co.</a>	862,800	68,075	7.9
<a href="#">Queen Anne's Co.</a>	48,650	4,754	9.8
<a href="#">St. Mary's County</a>	105,400	12,564	11.9
<a href="#">Somerset County</a>	26,550	2,467	9.3
<a href="#">Talbot County</a>	36,950	3,954	10.7
<a href="#">Washington County</a>	149,250	12,471	8.4
<a href="#">Wicomico County</a>	96,100	8,092	8.4
<a href="#">Worcester County</a>	50,550	6,069	12.0

\*Estimates as of Dec. 2008 from [Maryland State Data Center](#), Dept. of Planning.

\*\*Estimates from U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs VetPop 2007.

\*\*\*Extrapolated from a 2000 US census population of 651,154 and a population of 640,961 in May 24th 2008.

## **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). The USDVA Capital Healthcare system (of which Maryland is a part) has treated over 7,000 veterans who have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). 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 10.5% 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. Both Fort Meade and Aberdeen have been identified as major growth areas for consolidation of services. One aspect of this realignment will be the convergence of high tech companies and defense contractors in Maryland. 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. Currently Maryland's veteran's population is the third youngest across the country at 55 years old. 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 70 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 471,000 Maryland veterans and their families and advise them of and connect them with the benefits and services available to them.