



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Veterans Affairs Commission (VAC) is to advocate and to help enhance the quality of life for veterans of military service and their families who live or work within Anne Arundel County (AACo) by advising the County Executive and the County Council on the coordination and development of government policies, programs, services, and the allocation of resources for veterans and their families. Current objectives of the Commission include: continuing to work with the Anne Arundel County Community Engagement and Constituent Services and the Department of Aging and Disabilities to fully implement the Veterans Service Coordination Center (VSCC); broadening the Commission's outreach by engaging with Anne Arundel County veterans' organizations; and representing the County Executive at veteran-related commemorative ceremonies.

For more information regarding the Anne Arundel County Veterans Affairs Commission, please visit our website at: <https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/veterans-affairscommission>

2021 Accomplishments

Commissioner Curtis Jones was honored by The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). He was awarded the Maryland President's Award for his many activities supporting veterans and efforts "to empower people to choose how they live as they age." Commissioner Jones is also the Commander of American Legion Post #141, Annapolis.

As in 2020, activities of the Commission were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, members of the Commission completed most of 2021 initiatives including the following specific activities:

- A. Coordinated with the County Executive's staff and Community Engagement and Constituent Services (CECS) to complete training to support VSCC operations. On Veterans Day, following the Commemorative Program at the Maryland WWII Memorial, the VSCC soft kick off was held at American Legion Post #141, resulting in a variety of veteran claims services being offered to county veterans.
- B. Continued meeting and interacting with state and county-level organizations that support regional veterans' programs. These meeting and interactions included:
 - a. The Joint County Veterans Commission Leaders and veteran Services Specialist Program, hosted by the Maryland Dept of Veterans Affairs.
 - b. The Maryland Military Installation Council (MMIC) Crownsville.
 - c. The Central Maryland Veterans Collaboration Meeting, hosted by Serving Together.
 - d. The Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation.
 - e. The Chesapeake Region Community Veteran Engagement Board (CVEB)

- together with the Baltimore VA Medical Center.
- f. The Chesapeake Veterans Alliance, including the Director, Service Program, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Baltimore, in cooperation with the CVEB.
 - g. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) at Ft Meade.
 - h. The Fort Meade Alliance (FMA) Military and Family Committee.

*Note: See the attached ANNEX, page 6 of this report, for additional activities.

Initiatives for 2022

In 2022, the Commission's goals include implementing the following:

- A. Increase and improve involvement with veteran students at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC).
- B. Work with CECS and the Department of Aging and Disabilities to better serve the county's veterans.
- C. Broaden the Commission's outreach and collaboration with other organizations in, and beyond, AAC that serve the county's veterans.
- D. Continue participation in the county's Veterans Court Mentorship Program.
- E. Support the Maryland Veterans Caucus and the Maryland Military Coalition.
- F. Advise the County Executive and CECS of veteran-related legislative initiatives in the Maryland General Assembly.
- G. Advocate for women veterans and veterans who are homeless or have mental health issues.
- H. Support the Hospice of Chesapeake's Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event.
- I. Participate in Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies.
- J. Participate in Wreaths Across America at Crownsville Veterans Cemetery.
- K. Nominate qualified candidates to fill commissioner vacancies on the Commission.
- L. Participate in American Legion Post #18, Centreville, Sporting Clays Competition.
- M. Consider initiating a veteran's golf tournament.

Meetings of the Commission

The Commission met virtually nine times during 2021 on: January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, September 8, October 13, and November 10.

Guest Speakers

During regularly scheduled meetings, the Commission included presentations by various organizations serving veterans. Details regarding speakers and related discussions are available in the meeting's minutes which can be found at [Meeting Agendas and Minutes | Anne Arundel County, MD \(aacounty.org\)](#). A summary of key guest speakers and dates includes:

- a. January 13: Jaelon Moaney, Senator Van Hollen's Office; Paul Diggs, Director of Operations, Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis; Justin Bieler, Homeless Coordinator, Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services; Patrick Guibao, Chair, Legislative Commission, American Legion; Dana Burl, Director, Outreach and Advocacy Program, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs.
- b. February 10: Jaelon Moaney, Rick Reed, Maryland's Commitment to Veterans (MCV); Megan Brown, County Executive Office; Joseph Belvedere, Outreach Specialist, Annapolis Vet Center.
- c. March 10: Chenelle Chisolm, previous Walter Reed Commander; Kurt Surber, Commander, VFW Post 304; Ray Leone, Chaplain, American Legion Post 226; Gloria Dent, Chairwoman, iCommunity Connection Veteran Services ("ICCVS"); Joe Belvedere.
- d. April 14: Jaelon Moaney, Nicole Butler and Gloria Dent, representing Delegate Mike Rogers, District 32; Ambrose Cavegn, Commander, American Legion Post #175.
- e. May 12: Eric Coller, Veteran and Student, Anne Arundel Community College; Maggie Mallon, VFW Post #2462; Robert Wayland, Commander, American Legion Post #7; Rick Reed.
- f. June 9: Jaelon Moaney. Adam Spangler, Congressman Anthony Brown's Office; Joe Belvedere, Lauren Troxell, County Law Office; Lillie Gillen Hinkleman, Arundel Lodge.
- g. September 8: Pam Jordan, Office of the County Executive, Deputy CAO of Health and Human Services. Gloria Dent.
- h. October 13: Jaelon Moaney, Adam Spangler, Delegate Mike Rogers, District 32; Pam Jordan, and Gloria Dent,
- i. November 10: Pete Baron, Office of the County Executive, Director of Government Relations.

Membership of the Commission

Under the revised provisions of Article 3 §12A of the Anne Arundel County Code, the Commission is authorized a total of 17 members, 13 Voting members and 4 non-voting members. Membership of the Commission may be found at: [Veterans Affairs Commission Members | Anne Arundel County, MD \(aacounty.org\)](#)

A. 2021 Voting Members of the Commission included:

- a. *Nathan Atkins, Secretary
- b. Leah Ballard, Vice-Chair
- c. John Church, Chair
- d. **David Dragics
- e. Curtis Jones
- f. **Brian R. Kelm
- g. Debra Luzietti-Myers
- h. George E. Matthews
- i. *Cathy McKinney
- j. Brock McMunn
- k. **Adger Stokes
- l. *Chad Vaughn

B. 2021 Non-voting Members included:

- a. *Dave Myers
- b. Kat Schorr
- c. *Brooks Tucker

* Designates new member appointed in 2021

** Designates member who resigned during 2021

In Memoriam

A former member of VAC, Candace Antwine, died in July 2021. Candace was a strong advocate for understanding veteran homeless issues in Anne Arundel County. As a member of the county Board of Education and this commission, Candace's passion and dedication as a tireless advocate for county veterans and children of military families were superbly noteworthy in every respect.

Special Thanks

The Commission wishes to offer special thanks to the following individuals for their unflinching and loyal support during 2021:

- a. Major Peter Smith, USMCR, Military and Veterans Affairs Liaison to the County Executive for facilitating a close working relationship with the county leadership, among VAC membership, and with county veterans' organizations.
- b. Pam Jordan, Office of the County Executive, Deputy CAO of Health and Human Services, for ensuring oversight of this commission into 2022.
- c. Sandra Heisch and Heidi May, County Executive staff, for assisting this Commission throughout the year.
- d. Gloria Dent, Chairwoman, iCommunity Connection Veteran Services (ICCVS), for ensuring the success of the Veterans Services Coordination Center.

- e. Commissioner Curtis “Gunny” Jones and American Legion Post #141 for their proactive and aggressive support to VAC and country veterans.

Submitted on January 17, 2022 by:

Signed

John R. Church
Chairman, Veterans Affairs Commission
Anne Arundel County

***ANNEX**

Additional Activities VAC Attended, Supported and/or Participated During 2021

1. AACo Department of Social Services conduct of a point in time "snapshot" of county homeless veterans.
2. Memorial Day Ceremony at Crownsville Veterans Cemetery.
3. Sporting Clays Competition sponsored by American Legion Post #18.
4. Travis Manion Foundation's Operation Legacy landscaping / cleanup of the Gold Star Memorial Monument adjacent to the Maryland WWII Memorial.
5. Annapolis Vet Center's Annual Cookout in conjunction with members of Department of Aging and Disabilities, in honor of local veterans and organizations.
6. 106th Birthday celebration of WWII pilot, LtCol Hintenach. Maryland VA Secretary George Owings and members of VFW Post #304 also in attendance.
7. Veterans Buddy Poppies at the Anne Arundel County Fair supporting VFW Post #304.
8. Cleaned and tidied up grave sites at Annapolis National Cemetery.
9. Major Pete Smith, USMCR, Military and Veterans Affairs Liaison, sang the national anthem at a Bay Sox Baseball game, Bowie.
10. Voices of Vets concert for veterans at the Elks Club, Camp Barrett, including food donations from Mission BBQ and Chicken Fil-A.
11. RAND Meeting, Topic: Discussion on Veterans Policy Issues, Washington DC,
12. The Blue Star Families, The Toys that Built America, Baltimore.
13. Veterans Day Ceremony at the Maryland WWII Memorial, Annapolis including the 229th Army Band, Maryland National Guard and The Maryland Defense Force Band at Crownsville.
14. "Kick off" of the VSCC at American Legion Post #141.
15. First in-person meeting in twelve months of Fort Meade Chapter Military Officers of America Association (MOAA).
16. Partnership between Anne Arundel County Workforce Development, Howard County Workforce Development, and Ft. Meade to provide workforce services to transitioning service members.
17. Toys for Tots, American Legion Post #7.
18. Luncheon for Homeless Veterans, at American Legion Post #226.
19. Wreaths Across America at Crownsville Veterans Cemetery.