



Anne Arundel County

Veterans Affairs Commission

2019 Annual Report

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Veterans Affairs Commission is to promote and enhance the quality of life for veterans, military members currently on active duty and their families by advising the Anne Arundel County Executive and County Council on the coordination and development of government policies, programs, and services, and the allocation of resources to those who have served our country. The current objectives of the Commission are to establish a Veterans Service Coordination Center, broaden the Commission's outreach and activities to engage with other veterans organizations in Anne Arundel County, and represent the County Executive at commemorative ceremonies during the year.

2019 Accomplishments

During the year, members of the Commission accomplished the majority of its proposed 2019 initiatives and the following:

- A. Participated in the county's Veterans Court Mentorship Program.
- B. Supported the Hospice of the Chesapeake's Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event in March at the Hilton Baltimore BWI Airport.
- C. Planned and conducted the Anne Arundel County Veterans EXPO2019 at the Annapolis High School in April (see appendix for listing of veteran-related exhibitors).
- D. Attended the Maryland Veterans Caucus and supported Maryland legislative initiatives pertaining to veterans endorsed by the organization.
- E. Submitted changes to the County code, reflecting the need for more flexibility in how the Commission operates as interests and involvement in veterans' affairs has broadened.
- F. Updated the Commission's website and Facebook presence on a continuous basis.
- G. In partnership with American Legion Post #141, conducted the County's 2019 Memorial Day Ceremony at Maryland World War II Memorial.
- H. Participated in interviews on radio station WNAV to discuss current activities of the Commission prior to both Memorial and Veterans' Day.
- I. Following participation on the new County Executive's transition subcommittee examining veterans' issues and its recommendation to establish a Veterans Services

Coordination Center (VSCC) in the county, developed a VSCC Implementation Plan and established the Veterans Leadership, a planning group to make the VSCC a reality.

- J. Organized and co-hosted the first Veterans Leadership meeting that brought the leaders of Anne Arundel County veteran service organizations together with county and state legislators and administrators for collaboration on matters impacting county veterans.
- K. Broadened the Commission's outreach and coordination beyond county and state organizations (see appendix for listing of individuals and organizations with whom the Commission had contact with in 2019).

Current Initiatives for 2020

In 2020, the Commission will be working and implementing the following:

- A. Continue to execute on the VSCC Implementation Plan and, through the Veterans Leadership group, collaborate with veteran service organizations, county and state legislators, and administrators with the goal of establishing the VSCC. The purpose of the VSCC is to provide guidance, assistance, on-line information and access to county veterans, military families and their dependents and survivors; promote activities that serve veterans of all ages; and collaborate with other service providers to address more complex issues.
- B. Continue to broaden the Commission's outreach to other veterans organizations beyond Anne Arundel County.
- C. Continue participation in the county's Veterans Court Mentorship Program.
- D. Continue support of the Hospice of the Chesapeake's Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event in March 2020.
- E. Continue participation with the Maryland Veterans Caucus and other organizations involved in support of Maryland legislative initiatives pertaining to veterans.
- F. Participate in Memorial Day, Veterans' Day, and other commemorative community events that recognize veterans.

Meetings of the Commission

Eight meetings of the Commission were held on the following dates in 2019: January 30th, March 27th, April 17th, May 15th, August 21st, September 26th, October 24th, and November 20th.

Guest Speakers

During regularly scheduled meetings, the Commission's agenda included presentations by federal and national organizations serving veterans that were useful in educating the Commissioners on resources and legislation that are relevant to county veterans. Details regarding all speakers and related discussions are available as part of the respective minutes for each meeting. Minutes of those meetings can be read at: <https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/veterans-affairs-commission/meeting-documents/index.html>

Key guest speakers and dates were:

March 25th: Mr. Martin Caraway, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs

April 17th: Mr. William Alli, Korean War Veteran and designated Memorial Day ceremony speaker

May 15th: Patrick Guibao, American Legion Department of Maryland, Legislative Commission

September 26th: CAPT Homer Denius, US Navy, Commander, Naval Support Activity Annapolis

November 20th: Patrick Guibao, American Legion Department of Maryland, Legislative Commission; Lois Bennett, Soldiers For Life-Transition Assistance Program, Ft. George G. Meade, MD

Membership of the Commission

The Veterans Affairs Commission has 13 appointed members, eight men and five women, including two members representing the major military installations in Anne Arundel County (Fort George G. Meade and the Naval Support Activity, Annapolis) and as one member representing the Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) as a result of the large veteran student population there. Following the election of a new County Executive in November 2018, six commissioners were re-appointed while seven new commissioners were appointed in January 2019. Four members are U.S. Air Force veterans; four are U.S. Navy veterans; three are U.S. Army veterans; one is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran; and one is a non-veteran. The Commission is chaired by John Church; Adger Stokes, Vice Chairman; and Kathy Reents, Secretary. Full membership of the Commission may be found at:

<https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/veterans-affairs-commission/members/>

Special Thanks

The Commission wishes to thank its member, Curtis “Gunny” Jones, for the assistance provided by American Legion Post #141 during 2019. Mr. Jones is also the Commander of Post #141.

The Commission also wishes to thank Mr. Peter Smith, Military and Veterans Affairs Liaison to the County Executive, for his support during the year.

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

APPENDIX

Outreach to Organizations and Key Individuals

American Legion Post #141, Annapolis
Anne Arundel County Department of Aging & Disabilities
Hospice of the Chesapeake
Maryland General Assembly Veterans Caucus
Maryland Military Alliance
Military Officers Association of America
Office of Anthony Brown, U.S. House of Representatives, Maryland 4th District
Office of Christopher Van Hollen, U.S. Senate, Maryland

Lois Bennett, Transition Assistance Program, Ft. George G. Meade, MD
Dana Burl, Program Director, Outreach & Advocacy, Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs
Martin Caraway, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs
Homer Denius, CAPT, U.S. Navy, Commander, Naval Support Activity Annapolis
Patrick Guibao, American Legion Department of Maryland, Legislative Commission
Rebecca Hass, Programming and Outreach Director, Anne Arundel County Public Library
Dr. Dan Nataf, Center for the Study of Local Issues, Anne Arundel County Community College
Steuart Pittman, Anne Arundel County Executive

EXPO2019 EXHIBITORS—VETERAN-RELATED

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Legion Post #7
AMVETS
Annapolis Fleet & Family Support Center
Anne Arundel County Department of Aging & Disabilities
Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency
Anne Arundel County Police Department
Anne Arundel County Public Library
Anne Arundel County Veterans Court/United Way
Anne Arundel County Workforce Development Corp
Arundel Community Development Services
Charles County Veterans Office
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Office of Service Member Affairs
Corvias Military Housing, Ft. George G. Meade
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
Hospice of the Chesapeake
Maryland Center for Veterans Education & Training
Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, Howard County Multi-Service Center
Melwood Veteran Services
National Association of Black Vets
Regent University, Military Resource Center

The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program

Travis Manion Foundation

University of Maryland, University College (Veterans Resource Center)

U.S. Coast Guard, Curtis Bay

U.S. Veterans Administration Annapolis Vet Center

U.S. Veterans Administration Center for Minority Veterans & Hispanic Veterans

U.S. Veterans Administration Medical Center, Transition & Care Management

U.S. Veterans Administration Military Sexual Trauma

U.S. Veterans Administration National Cemetery Administration

U.S. Veterans Administration Suicide Prevention Team/Veterans Crisis Line

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Wellness House