

# Freedom Is Never Free



Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery (DCKMSVC), Institute West Virginia-Dedicated Memorial Day 2012

## State of West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance 2011-2012 Annual Report



**Keith Gwinn, Cabinet Secretary**

The sacrifices made by our fellow West Virginians will forever be remembered and honored by those who share the common bond of service under the flag.



Photo credit: SPC Nancy Van Der Weide (Old Guard)

**IN MEMORIUM**  
**OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**  
**AFGHANISTAN**

Robert N. Barton III SGT	06/07/10	New Haven
Bobby Edward Beasley SGT	08/07/04	Inwood
Julian L. Berisford SPC	11/04/09	Benwood
Brent S. Cole CWO4	05/22/09	Reedsville
Andrew M. Harper PFC	03/11/11	Maidsville
David Alan Hess PFC	10/10/10	Mineral Wells
Garrett T. Lawton CAPT	08/04/08	Charleston
Charles John McClain SGT	10/31/06	Colliers

Daniel F. Mehringer SPC	04/27/07	Morgantown
Jamie S. Nicholas SFC	09/29/08	Maysel
Nicholas H. Null CPO	08/06/11	Washington
Anissa Ann Shero SSG	06/12/02	Grafton
Jeffrey Scott Taylor PO1	06/28/05	Beckley
Juston Tyler Thacker LCPL	06/24/04	Bluefield
Gene Arden Vance Jr. SSG	05/19/02	Morgantown
Robert Frank White SSG	09/26/05	Cross Lanes

**IN MEMORIUM**  
**OPERATION IRAQ FREEDOM**

Jesse Adam Ault SSG	04/09/08	Middlebourne
Jeremy Alexander Brown SSG	07/03/05	Mabscott
John Thomas Byrd II LCPL	10/30/04	Fairview
Adam J. Crumpler LCPL	06/18/05	Charleston
Danny Bruce Daniels II SPC	07/20/04	Varney
John W. Engeman CWO4	06/21/06	Princeton
William Bradley Fulks CPL	06/18/06	Culloden
Richard William Hafer PFC	11/15/03	Cross Lanes
Matthew David Hunter SGT	01/23/06	Valley Grove
Romulo Jose Jimenez II CPL	11/10/04	Belington
Brian Christopher Karim SGT	12/13/05	Talcott
Otie Joseph McVey SFC	11/07/04	Oak Hill
Jason Nicholas Marchland SPC	10/05/07	Greenwood

Bradley Lee Parker LCPL	11/15/04	Rachel
Stanley Brian Reynolds SSG	08/14/07	Rock
Bryan James Richardson CPL	03/25/05	Summersville
Stephen A. Seale SSG	08/06/06	Grafton
Michael J. Slater PFC	04/21/07	Scott Depot
Ernest Harold Sutphin PFC	03/18/04	Parkersburg
Deforest Lee Talbert SGT	07/27/04	Charleston
Benjamin D. Tiffner CAPT	11/07/07	Pigeon
Duane A. Thornsby SFC	09/12/09	Bridgeport
Roger Clinton Turner Jr. SSG	02/01/04	Parkersburg
Brian Scott Ulbrich SPC	06/05/05	Chapmanville
David E. VanCamp CAPT	06/29/11	Elm Grove
Darren Dale Vankomen SSG	12/21/04	Beckley
Joshua Shane Wilfong CPL	04/30/04	Walker



**DONEL C. KINNARD MEMORIAL STATE (DCKMSVC)  
VETERANS CEMETERY**

**MEMORIAL DAY DEDICATION CEREMONY**

**MAY 28, 2012**



**Governor Tomblin & Rebecca Kinnard**



**Mrs. Rebecca Kinnard  
Widow of Donel C. Kinnard**



**Governor Tomblin  
with  
The Family of Donel C. Kinnard**

**Governor Tomblin Welcomes Guests to DCKMSVC Dedication – Memorial Day 2012**



**US Senator Rockefeller**

**Posting of Colors  
Nitro High School JROTC  
Color Guard**



**US Senator Manchin**



**Governor Tomblin speaks to the large crowd of Veterans & families. ←**



**Congresswoman Capito**



**Miles Epling, Chairman  
WV State Veterans Council**



**Governor Tomblin &  
Major General Hoyer**



**Governor Tomblin  
& Secretary Gwinn  
with First Responders**

## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

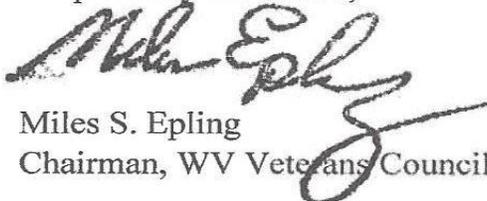
Dear Governor Tomblin:

In Compliance with the West Virginia Code Section 9A-1-4, which Reads: "...to make annual reports to The Governor respecting the service of The Department...", I have the honor of presenting to Governor Earl Ray Tomblin the Annual Report for the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance for fiscal year July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

In preparing this report, we have endeavored to make it informative, as well as, economical. It is believed that our effort to economize has in no way detracted from this report, or from the importance of the information relating to the service provided to our veterans.

The Veterans Council wishes to acknowledge the outstanding work Accomplished by the Cabinet Secretary and his staff in providing service to the Veterans of West Virginia, during this past year.

Respectfully submitted,



Miles S. Epling  
Chairman, WV Veterans Council



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance (DVA) is to obtain for a veteran or their dependents all benefits that they are entitled to and to assist them in obtaining and preparing the evidence that will prove their entitlement. In addition, the DVA encourages communities to develop and enhance local veteran's services. The department has 16 field offices and two claims offices located throughout the state where veterans and their dependents can receive assistance in filing claims, obtaining medical benefits and applying for educational benefits. The DVA also provides representation during the appeals process. These offices are staffed by trained and accredited Veteran Service Officers.



**Keith Gwinn**  
**Cabinet Secretary**

## THE SECRETARY'S FORWARD

The mission of the Department of Veterans Assistance is to aid, assist, counsel, advise and look after the rights and interests of all persons known as veterans, who have served in the armed forces of the United States in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard as defined by the laws of the United States and whose separation there from has been other than dishonorable, and who are citizens and residents of this state, including their widows, dependents and orphans, who are or have become citizens and recipients of this state.

(WV Code -Chapter 9A-1-1)

The Department of Veterans Assistance, through its sixteen field offices and two claims offices, assisted veterans and their dependents this year with monetary benefits obtained and retained in the amount of \$229,453,090; which represents the 7,338 VA claims awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs to West Virginia veterans.

The West Virginia Veterans Home in Barboursville provides an excellent domiciliary style facility for up to 150 West Virginia veterans who are disabled but can still care for themselves or who have become homeless.

Following the passage of the West Virginia Veterans Bonus Program by the State Legislature, the Department established a Veterans Bonus office for the processing of bonus applications. The application was also placed on the Department's website so that it can be downloaded by our citizens who are in the armed services stationed around the world. As of the end of June 2012, the bonus office had paid out \$5,615,600 in Veterans Bonuses.

As in the past, the Department worked in close cooperation with the following veterans organizations in promoting veterans benefits: The American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Non-Commissioned Officers Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, The American Red Cross, American Ex-POW's, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, Marine Corps League, Veterans of the Vietnam War and the West Virginia Veterans Coalition.

The Department took an active role in providing information and support to West Virginia troops as they returned home from their deployment. On each occasion, a field officer was dispatched to the various guard armories around the state to inform those members of the West Virginia National Guard about the benefits they are entitled and how they are to secure those benefits. The Department worked in conjunction with the various state veterans service organizations and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to provide training and updates to all Service Officers located in our State.

The Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery located in Institute was dedicated May 28, 2012. This is the first state veterans cemetery to be constructed from a 14.1 million dollar grant from the federal VA.

The Veterans Outreach Program is in full operation with 4 Social Workers conducting outreach to veterans in the rural areas of our state. They will be working closely with the federal VA Vet Centers and the VA Medical Centers to ensure that these veterans are not forgotten.

The State Veterans Nursing Facility located in Clarksburg received certification for its specialty unit which has been designated the Alzheimer's wing. The facility is now at its full capacity of 120 residents.

The Veterans Transportation program received 7 new vans that were delivered to the 4 VA Medical Centers in the state. These vans will assist veterans who are unable to drive or who have no means of transportation to their medical appointments.

I look forward to meeting the challenges that face the veterans of our great state and to ensuring that they are provided the best possible service available.

Keith Gwinn  
Cabinet Secretary

# **WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS COUNCIL**

In accordance with Chapter 9A, Article 1, Section 2, as amended, The West Virginia Code provides that there shall be a Veterans Council consisting of nine members who must be citizens and residents of this state and who have served in and been honorably discharged or separated under honorable conditions from the armed forces of the United States and whose service was within a time of war as defined by the laws of the United States, either Public Law No. 1 – 73<sup>rd</sup> Congress, or Public Law No. 346 – 78<sup>th</sup> Congress, and amendments thereto. At least one member of the council must be a Veteran of World War II, at least one member of the council must be a Veteran of the Korean Conflict, at least two members of the council must be Veterans of the Vietnam era, one member must be a Veteran of the first Gulf War and at least one member must be a Veteran of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts.

The Governor makes appointments to the Council which is then confirmed by the State Senate. Council members are appointed for a six-year term and may be reappointed. It is the duty and function of the Veterans Council to advise the Secretary on the general administrative policies of the Department; to select at their first meeting in each fiscal year a Chairman to serve for one year to promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary; to examine the efficiency of the Department; to advise the Governor and the Legislature with respect to legislation affecting the interest of Veterans, their widows, dependents and orphans; and to make annual reports to the Governor reflecting the service of the Department.

## **VETERANS COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Miles Epling, Chairman – Point Pleasant – Mason County - Vietnam**

**Randall Bare – Sandyville – Jackson County – Vietnam**

**Patrick Farrell – Bridgeport – Harrison County – Iraq**

**Chester Fleming – Charleston – Kanawha – Korean  
(Mr. Fleming resigned in 2011\*)**

**\*Governor appointed James DeCarlo – St. Albans – Kanawha County – Korean as replacement 10/27/11**

**Cedric Greene – Charleston - Kanawha County - Gulf**

**Bill Harris – Glen Easton – Marshall County – WW II**

**Ralph Stump – Mt. Claire – Harrison County – WW II  
(Mr. Stump resigned in 2012\*)**

**\*Governor appointed Woody Williams – Ona – Cabell County – WW II as replacement 07/27/12**

**Debra K. Tompkins – Mt. Nebo – Nicholas County – Desert Storm**

**Robert Vass, Sr. – Huntington – Cabell County – WW II  
(Mr. Vass resigned in 2012\*)**

**\* Governor appointed Harrison B. Gilliam – Huntington – Cabell County – Iraq & Afghanistan  
as replacement 01/15/13**

**The West Virginia Veterans Council holds four quarterly meetings per Fiscal Year. (July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>) beginning with the first meeting in July\*.**

These meetings are open to the public and are held at various regions of the State. Detailed copies of minutes from previous meetings can be obtained by visiting the WV Department of Veterans Assistance website at [www.veterans.wv.gov](http://www.veterans.wv.gov) and searching on **Council Meeting Minutes**. Notices of these meetings go out in advance by E-Blasts and Social Media notifications to various State Veterans Organizations, WVDVA Website Contact List, and the general public. You may be added to the WVDVA Contact List for notifications and/or request copies of the minutes by contacting Angela Meadows, Executive Secretary by email at [Angela.S.Meadows@wv.gov](mailto:Angela.S.Meadows@wv.gov) or by calling her at the WVDVA Cabinet Secretary/Administrative Office at 304-558-3661.

**We have been very encouraged by the increased attendance to the WV Veterans Council Meetings and appreciate all the input and efforts from the various State Veterans Organizations, State Veterans and their families. – Thank you!**

**\*Due to inclement weather, only three Veterans Council Meetings were held for the 2011-2012 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012). The first meeting was held October 28, 2011.**

Summary of discussions at each meeting are listed. If you would like to read more detail on the topics, please visit the WVDVA website at [www.veterans.wv.gov](http://www.veterans.wv.gov) and search on **Council Meeting Minutes**.

**The first quarterly meeting was held on October 28, 2011 at the Veterans Nursing Facility in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Meeting called to order by Miles Epling, Chairman**

- **Meg of Senator Rockefeller's Office announced that Senator Rockefeller is planning on the very first TeleTown Meeting and he wants to do it with the topic of Veterans.**
- **Lewisburg Clinic Signs (proposed by Woody Williams):**

Secretary Gwinn: Lewisburg Clinic Signs are now up on the Interstate and on the highway going up to the clinic and they've been up about three weeks now. They've been taken care of.
- **Proposal by Woody Williams: According to Chapter 9A, Section 3, as amended, the Veterans Council is charged with, among other functions, "And to advise the Governor, and the Legislature, with respect to legislation affecting the interests of veterans, their widows, dependents and orphans".**
- **It is proposed that the Chair of the Veterans Council appoint one of the members of the Council to serve as "Legislative Officer".**
- **Another proposal from Woody Williams read by Secretary Gwinn: Term limit for the position of the Chair of the Council be for four (4) years to give more members the opportunity to be selected for that position.**
- **Veterans Lottery Ticket Sales**
- **New Budget for West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance**

In your folders is the new budget for the WVDVA, as you can see the current budget for this fiscal year is \$11,557,904.00. The proposed budget would stay the same for general revenue...no decreases. We also have submitted improvement packages: The Bonus program, Nursing Facility, Outreach (requested to add two more Social Workers), the Van driver per diem increase (not the amount paid, but enough to cover how many drivers that we have), Re-education for veterans and the Jack Bennett fund for grave markers. So we have asked for improvement packages of over \$2 million dollars (\$2,039,420.00) for the budget and so far it's going through the process.

- **Secretary Gwinn states, We have hired a new Deputy Cabinet Secretary and a Public Affairs Coordinator**
- **We have received permission from Governor to relocate the Cabinet Secretary/Administrative Offices**
- **A Sound System has been purchased, including microphone for future meetings.**

#### **VETERANS HOME REPORT – Stacy Brown, Administrator**

- **Positives: As you know, the Veterans Home is a very collective group of men and sometimes women who have their residence there.**
- **We work with the Regional VA to meet their needs, but this is their home and I want to make sure that I have staff that can appropriately care for them.**
- **We started an education program and we had an agreement with Mount West Community College,** through a grant, we were able to start some education classes for veterans for free and we're very excited about that.

- **Question raised by Council Member, Bill Harris: Stacy, how many residents do you have that don't have a High School education?**

Stacy responded: Well actually as time goes by, it's getting to be less and less. A lot of people at least have a Bachelor degree. But as far as our Korea and Vietnam veterans, there are several. I don't want to put a number on it, because a lot of these folks, on their record, have an eighth grade education. We try in the most respectful way possible to help them...some of our veterans cannot read or write and if they can, it's not very well...and we try to treat that as delicately as possible. What we have done through Mount West, is they have actually assisted our veterans with getting more college credit for their service and the job that they had in the Military. So they are actually able to help them come up the level so that they can attend college in some cases.

- **Question raised by Jim DeCarlo of Veterans Council: What is the ratio to capacity versus number of residents now?**

Stacy responded: When home first opened, they had it down as 199 beds, officially on paper, it's 150. I'll be honest with you, as you all know this was a college at one time, then became a mental health hospital and the layout of this facility is good but it does have problems with some rooms are smaller.....I'm getting off track and I apologize, I have so much information in my head....right now we have 104 residents.

#### **CLARKSBURG NURSING FACILITY – Dr. Kevin Crickard, Administrator**

##### **Secretary Gwinn gave report in absence of Dr. Kevin Crickard:**

- **As of September 22<sup>nd</sup> of this year, the Veterans Nursing Facility was deemed to be 100% compliant from the first inspection for the Specialty Unit which is called now the Alzheimer's Unit. We are now in full compliance and we have opened it and we expect by December that the Unit will be full and the Nursing Facility will be 98% full by that time.** With the Federal VA, the whole facility is in compliance with the standards and we have received 100% for everything in the facility, the first time the facility has received 100% for compliance.
- **Alzheimer's Unit expected to be full by December.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Veterans State Cemetery Requirements- Discussion tabled until next meeting which will be held at the DCKMSVC Veterans Cemetery.**

**Secretary Gwinn requested that Mr. Billy Wayne Bailey give a brief presentation of his history:**

- **I'm Billy Wayne Bailey, former State Senator.** I was Majority Whip for 14 years, member of the Senate for 18 years, served on the Military Committee for the Senate as Vice Chairman for a few years, and more importantly, I served on the Finance Committee so if somebody questions the budget, I think I can work my way around that one

**Chairman Epling: On behalf of the Council, Welcome Aboard**

**Chairman Epling: Chester Fleming resigned due to health issues and we're glad to have Mr. DeCarlo.**

- **Mr. DeCarlo, Newest Council Member:** I worked with past Senator Bailey here for the Legislative Sessions through the years and had occasions to talk with him many times. I'm the Korean War Veteran, for those of you who weren't here at the last meeting, I was introduced at last meeting.

**Chairman Epling: Welcome Aboard.**

- **We're going to have the dedication of the Female Veterans Statue on November 11<sup>th</sup> at noon on the Capitol Grounds.**
- **Stacy Brown, Veterans Home Administrator requests to speak again:**  
I have mentioned this to Mr. Gwinn, but I would like the Council to consider it:  
  
Due to the layout of the facility, we do have a few private rooms with baths for females. We have maybe four, not a lot. We do have some property out behind the maintenance building that's really not being used for anything at all and I would like to propose and I'll be happy to (with your permission) look into possibly writing a grant-because I look at a lot of transitional veterans. **Discussion Followed**
- **Meg Cianfrocca (Senator Rockefeller's Office): We are only allowed so many Nursing Home beds in the State of West Virginia** and I'm not sure where we are, or close to capacity, I don't know. There's a limit on how many nursing home beds, not just the VA, but even with the private.
- **Randall Bare, Council Member: The first thing I want to talk about is financial support for our veterans who are in trouble. The Veterans Organizations cannot continue, based on the donations that they receive, to pay the bills.** Discussion followed regarding the urgency of the number of requests and the fact that they are draining most of the Veteran's Organizations, who are already hurting due to a decline in donations because of the poor economy. Concern that the State is going to have to step in and produce programs to help these Veterans and their families.
- **Deputy Secretary Bailey: Discussed with Dr. Lewis, DHHR Secretary about cross training, and not only do I want our Social Workers to be trained like his Social Workers to be able to help fill out the paperwork** and help somebody get you know \$200 worth of emergency food stamps, get their lights cut back on, and water, and stuff like that, which they have the money for emergencies for people who call in, but I want his people, his Social Workers, to know what Veterans Assistance does.

**Jim DeCarlo, Council Member: ... Does the Active Duty Services have any transitional training for troops?**

**Deb Tompkins, Council Member: ...Before you retire or get out of the Military, they have a program that you go through to help you adjust.**

➤ **Mr. Bare, Council Member: Admission to the Barbourville Home**

Discussion continued regarding utilization of the Veterans Home

**Stacy Brown, Nursing Home Administrator: ...and I want to add that that's an**

**awesome idea.** Our main concern obviously when getting people together, you want to make sure that no one has TB or .... Even when it's transitional, you have concerns of health and needs and stuff...so right now the transitional we utilize is kind of between us and the VA and through the City Mission, and they actually have some transitional housing right now...**But yes, as far as having more space available for that type of need, we can certainly look into it.**

➤ **Rick Givens of Marine Corp League: Yes, I'll pass out an email that I received from**

**Woody Williams.** After information was disbursed, Mr. Givens went on to discuss topics listed in Woody's email:

**This is pretty well self-explanatory. We are hoping to get some backing on this and**

**make the Council at least talk to the Governor about this.** Mr. Givens explained that he is speaking on behalf of Woody Williams who had a previous commitment in Dallas today and was unable to attend.

**Mr. Chairman, Members of Council, Secretary Gwinn, and Mr. Bailey:**

**I certainly want to second Woody's compliment on Angela and all her hard work of getting the minutes together.** They have the details necessary to make them meaningful.

This is Woody's quote "They are the best that he has seen." – So, thank you very much.

**Mr. Given went on to read Woody's email which read:**

➤ **There are several subjects I would like to suggest for discussion, perhaps these could be discussed with the Governor.** I have discussed them in minute detail with Becky Neal. She called me to see if the Marine Corps League had anyone they wished to be considered for the vacant member position. Paraphrasing, the main thing being that Woody supports Mr. DeCarlo as newest Council Member.

➤ **Number One Issue:** Because of the age of the Korean and Vietnam Veterans and the limited number of WWII veterans, I suggest that—The Governor's appointments of members to the council be for (4) years instead of (6) to be equal with the Governor's term and to give more veterans an opportunity to serve their State on the Council.

➤ **Number Two:** I suggest that the position of the Chair of the Council be also limited to (4) years to give more members the opportunity to be selected for that position.

➤ **Number Three:** In almost any job or position, there is a job description of duties and responsibilities. I recommend that a separate job description of the duties and responsibilities of the Chair and the members of the Council be produced to remove any questions as to the duties of the persons occupying those positions.

➤ **Number Four:** Section 9A-1-2 Veterans Council; Administration of Department --- be changed to remove the clauses in the law that now require "at least one member of the council must be a veteran of WWII, at least one member of the council must be a veteran of the Korean Conflict, at least two members of the council must be veterans of the Vietnam era, at least one member must be a veteran of the first Gulf War and at least one member must be a veteran of the Afghanistan or Iraqi Conflicts". I recommend that this section be re-written to include veterans who served in peacetime and remove the requirements now indicating that the veteran must have been in the conflicts or war and outline some basic experience necessary to qualify. There should not be any requirements that the veteran actually be in combat which is now implied.

**Chairman Epling:** We're going to leave this up to some of these veterans, like Jack and these guys....

- **Number Five:** Should the Council designate a legislative person, that information should be distributed to all Veterans Organizations immediately. Mr. Givens continues – I've been informed by the Secretary that Number Five has been taken care of. (Deputy Secretary Bailey voted in as Legislative Officer")

**Secretary Gwinn: Number Four, Mr. Chairman, unless it's changed.** What they did is add additional language "if possible". There's no designating language saying they had to be "in combat", it's just saying they had to be in during the combat.

**Rick Givens: So we're going to use that time frame that's being designated by Congress then.** The Vietnam Era.....

**Secretary Gwinn: ...Yes, that's correct.** That's in the statue and the codes that they had to be serving during that time frame.

**Rick Givens: So they actually must be in the combat zone?**

**Deb Tompkins, Council Member: No, not in the combat zones, just serving during that time frame, a member of the armed services.**

**Chairman Epling: Yes, that's been changed.**

**Rick Givens: Well Mr. Chairman, I brought it to your attention...**

**Randy Bare, Council: I would question that part. If you have a Council that no-one served in combat and ... what possibly could happen, I think, is that you're talking about a Council that could not be anyone serving in combat. I do not want the Council making decisions for combat veterans who never served in combat and know what they went through...**

**Deb Tompkins, Council: Perhaps we should just offer a balance...**

**The second quarterly meeting was held on January 27, 2012 at the Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery (DCKMSVC) in Institute, West Virginia. Meeting called to order by Miles Epling, Chairman**

- **Requirements for Council Members:**  
Secretary Gwinn: Mr. Chairman, I put into each member's package a copy of the code, changes that were made last year stating that if a member was not present from that era that a peace time person can be nominated.
- **West Virginia Dept. of Veteran's Assistance Budget**  
Secretary Gwinn: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the first thing to discuss is the WVDVA Budget. The Governor made a couple of changes in our budget. We had no cuts, we had a million dollar increase for the Veteran's Bonus Program. We had a \$225,000.00 increase in our van drivers program. We had enough for increase in salary for staff for the Administration Office. One thing we have to take up with the committee next week during the budget hearings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> is the move. We have found a new location and are moving March 1<sup>st</sup> to 1514 Kanawha Blvd. where we will have a whole floor and conference room to ourselves. We will have that move done by the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, we will be moving that week. The only thing we will be requesting from the Budget Hearings is an additional \$30,000 for an increase in rent.

➤ **Launched new website along with National Guard and Workforce, WV**

Secretary Gwinn: We launched a new website [www.wvmilitaryconnection.org](http://www.wvmilitaryconnection.org) last week, along with National Guard and Workforce, West Virginia. It's called The WV Military Connection. It shows employment for veterans, allowing companies to post jobs on that website. During the first week, it had 2,000 hits and 75% of those were asking questions and looking for employment. It's going very well and if we can get more companies to list these jobs for veterans, we can get these veterans hired.

➤ **Memorials Approved**

Secretary Gwinn: In discussion the last three weeks with the Governor, along with the Military Order of Purple Heart Memorial, we also approved the Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial. I met with the State Commander, Kelly Goddard, and he approved the Memorial to be a selected statue. The Governor also approved last week, a Gold Star Memorial, to be placed on the Memorial Walkway and next week the architects are coming down to work with Woody Williams on designing of the Gold Star Memorial for Mothers. We have also been approved to have a memorial for the American Legion, so I will be working with the State Commander and Miles Epling to get a memorial for that.

➤ **Donel Kinnard Memorial Veterans State Cemetery**

Secretary Gwinn: I would like to go over the Cemetery real quickly while discussing the memorials. We are having this meeting in the Maintenance Building. After this Council meeting is over, we will be having a tour of the facility. Larissa Wines, Administrator, will lead you on the tour. You're welcome to drive.

Some of the things we are waiting on are: Memorial Walkway to be finished, we're putting the fountain in, the statues, the memorials, the Global War on Terrorism Memorial. What you see out here right now is the first layer of asphalt and we plan to wait until April, when we put the sod in, we will put the top coat of asphalt in and that way this whole place will be beautiful. So right now, we're in the last phase of construction.

**Chairman Epling: What is our dedication date?**

**Secretary Gwinn: Dedication is still Memorial Day.**

➤ **Purchase of Vans**

Secretary Gwinn: We just received our money for the vans and will be able to purchase eight new vans this year and have already ordered them.

**VETERANS HOME REPORT - Stacy Brown, Administrator**

**Stacy reported: Basically we have 101 residents in the home at this time.** We have been getting a lot more applications for paroles, Veterans who are paroles and I have discussed with my bosses and I really don't want to turn the home into a halfway house for paroles. I want to make sure that we are reminded of the mix that we have there, based on the residents. The residents don't want to have a lot of those with criminal backgrounds. Of course, I have stressed too, that it is the Parole Board's non-violent offenders. *Regrettably though, we have been getting a lot of applications for violent offenders. That's been difficult,* to say the least, having to make decisions based on that. I'm looking at maybe keeping it at 10% of non-violent offenders that having served their time, need somewhere to parole. It's been successful in the past, we've always had paroles there. We always want to remind everyone that we're still educating the public of who we are. Sometimes they still think we are a nursing home or assisted living.

**Speaking of that, we've brought up the issue of perhaps adding on an assisted living or some beds and I've done some research on that.** Sir, in regard to your question, unlike nursing home beds, there is no cap to the number of beds in assisted living and there is not as many headaches involved in getting certified or being approved. However, in beginning the site survey, I looked at the property in the back of the hill and we have about an acre and a quarter of flat land that is not being used that if we were going to go forward to look at maybe adding some assisted living. I have to tell you that in this last year, we've had several veterans who have been here a long time and still have a lot of their faculties, it's just that their bodies are giving out and it's difficult to place them elsewhere and have to say goodbye. If we had a few beds potentially with that next higher level of care that would definitely be a benefit, I think. I talked to the Director of the one who is in charge of the Assisted Living Care evaluations and I printed out all the rules and regulations with that, and she encouraged me to, at the very least, research it, ask for a site survey, it doesn't cost anything to have them come out and tell us if it's even viable. We also discussed perhaps all females. Looking at the past applications, we've only received in the last (going on three) years that I've been there, five applications from females, three of those were housed at the Veteran's Home. Right now we're not seeing a lot of female applications, and so I don't know if that would be beneficial at this time. I do believe this is going to change with the current situations that we're having overseas and a lot more women serving.

**Mr. Bare, you also asked about perhaps emergency housing. We continue to research this.** One of the issues is obviously emergency housing. If they come in and they have let's say, active Hep B which is transferrable, so we would have to look at how we could house them and things of that nature. I did put together for the Board and have printed off copies of a contact list of the Huntington and Charleston Areas. I tried to put detail in the information regarding what they do, such as where is the best place to call for assistance for women, and/or men, or children. If you have any questions, you can call me anytime. Discussion followed

**We had an inspection and we did well.** The only draw-back to the new inspections is that it's a new team every year because the VA contracted inspectors and so last year, our care plans were fine and received no deficiencies. This year, the team did not like our care plan, and regrettably, here again, the inspectors still try to throw us in with nursing home or assisted living. We try to educate them as best as we can, as far as letting them know that we don't have the same rules and regulations as those. This year the tags were regarding documentation and I spoke with Mike and Doctor Syler, at the VA Hospital. One of our tags is about information not being received by them in a timely manner including medical records of our residence, such as proof that they are getting their annual physicals. I told Dr. Syler, I said Sir, we have been trying to work through the clinical side as far as getting information and making sure we know when Meds change. It's bad when your van driver knows more about the medical goings on of your residents and can report more to you than what you're receiving from the VA. So that's my current, you might say, focus right now. Those are the kinds of problems we are currently faced with.

**Lastly, we have always had issues and problems at the Veteran's Home. I love my veterans...they tickle me at times, because like right now, we have all kinds of nice TVs that no one wants because they're not flat screens. My veterans want flat screens now and will accept nothing less. With that said, we have problems waiting on purchasing to say ok, we approve this contract, we will get this bid out – it's a headache and a half. Anyone's welcome to come and speak with me to look at what we are doing, what we're not doing and any problems, you can certainly call me and I will give an open honest answer as I always have. These are some of the problems and issues that we have and will always have, but I thank you for your time.**

**Question raised by Woody Williams:** Are any communications being sent out from the Veterans Home to folks at the VFW Posts and their division posts as to the status of the Veteran's Home, the fact that you have 101 or 104 but can handle 150 to encourage and let those people know that there are vacancies there. We have with us today, maybe for the very first time, the State Commander of the VFW. He needs to stand up and take a bowel. Mr. Commander, did you get any questions or do people know out there in the community that there is a veteran's home and vacancies and that there's a possibility of getting in there?

**VFW State Commander, Kelly Goddard:** As far as communications to us, we get requests from the General Store when you're low on supplies and information like that, but a fact sheet or a flyer or anything, I would be glad to publish it to every VFW Post in the State.

Stacy: Sir, if I could get your email.

**Secretary Gwinn:** Mr. Chairman, what we could do is take their staff report weekly and send it out on our distribution list which everybody gets on the meetings. That would take care of that.

**Woody Williams:** What is the distribution list, I'm not familiar with that.

**Secretary Gwinn:** Our distribution list, just like you get emails of minutes, date, agenda. We can put that on the agenda list and send it out.

**Woody Williams:** They do let the public know, but there are an awful lot of people who still don't know that there's a Veteran's Home down there. An awful lot of people don't know that they could get in there. We're not doing any public service announcements, no radio, or newspaper announcements. How are we supposed to know that it is available and people can get in it. If I were a Legislator providing money for that thing, I would be upset. When we could handle 150, but we just can't seem to get more than 104 or 102 then it bounces back to 95 and then it goes back up again. For some reason, we are hooked right there in that 100 bracket.

**Stacy:** As I said in the last meeting, sometimes they leave for positive reasons. Some of them are able to get their education and get back on their feet and leave, so we do have that fluctuation. Looking at the layout, to say that we can handle 150, and I know that Sir, that when you ran the hill, you had more than that at one time, you're looking at 125 comfortably, but if you get above that, it's going to get more crowded. Here again, the VA standards for footage per man is actually quite small and we try to have more than that. I don't want my veterans to feel like they are incarcerated or that their room is a cell. We try to give them as much room as possible to make it more comfortable for them. Speaking of comfort, we're stuck with buying things on contract and we can't always get what we want or what the veterans want. That's also an issue, like our day care furniture is practically brand new, they would like to have a more living room feel and we can't blame them. But because of the fire codes, we can't move in nice loungers and things of that nature.

**Secretary Gwinn:** Mr. Chairman, on the issue about the Public Service Announcements, we had requested \$20,000 in our budget for next year to do Public Service Announcements since we have a Public Affairs Coordinator now, that was not included in our budget and we are trying to take that up in our budget hearings next week.

**VFW State Commander, Kelly Goddard:** Yes Mr. Chairman, I'll stand beside Stacy so she can answer my questions. I've been down to the Veterans Home for three visits since my term in office. My first meeting there, back in July. I went back for the Christmas party. In December when I was there, I was approached by the chairman of your Resident Council, Earnie. Earnie said he had some concerns and he would like to give me some material. He sent this information to me and I got it last Saturday night up in Flatwoods. He had some concerns, as I and some of my other officers. You addressed about the water fountain being out, we were told three months, I believe it was six weeks that we had to order parts and get outside maintenance to fix it. Don't we have four maintenance people that work there. I'm not pointing fingers or anything, but I believe there are five gallon buckets setting in the hall where water is leaking. The Council has asked for handicap doors to the Rec Center for two years and been told that we don't have the money, but yet we have the money to buy other things?

**Stacy responds:** We have the money, Sir. We just can't put it where they want it.

**VFW State Commander, Kelly Goddard** I have a packet here that this chairman wrote to Veterans Affairs on February 10, no response. He wrote to Manchin, who was Governor on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, no response. Finally he wrote to Senator Rockefeller on October 4<sup>th</sup>, and got a response on November the 8<sup>th</sup>, a letter was received from you on November 16<sup>th</sup> and a meeting was set up with you and the Director and they feel that nothing was accomplished at this meeting. There is a list of 13 issues they have in here. What I am recommending to the Council here today is to set up an independent committee, with a representative from each VSO, to go to the Veteran's Home and sit down with Stacy and the Resident Chairman and go over these issues to see if we can get some of them resolved. I don't know of any other way. I'm not saying he's right and you're wrong, because I don't know. But if the Council would make the recommendation to appoint a committee with representative from each VSO and go down and let's talk about it. Discussion continued.

Chairman Epling: Thank you Kelly. Are there any other questions?

**Secretary Gwinn: Mr. Chairman, can I comment on that?** We have provided responses to their questions, but when they didn't like them, they wouldn't recognize them. They wanted residents thrown out because they didn't bathe. I said, I can't do that, so they didn't like that. I will welcome an investigation if someone wants a committee to go down and check into these, I will welcome that and work with them.

**Chairman Epling: My proposal would be to appoint a committee to go down and meet with Stacy to check into these issues.** So we'll appoint a Committee of: Robert Vass from the Council, Kelly Goddard from the VFW, Tommy Hayes from the American Legion, Dennis Rayburn, AMVETS of West Virginia, Joe Wilson, State Council of Vietnam Veterans, Owen Stout of Marine Corp League, and Secretary Keith Gwinn. You all can work out your time and all that.

Comment directed to Stacy: You stated that handicap doors on the recreation building cannot be provided.

**Stacy responded:** There **is** a handicap door but they don't like the location. They would prefer that it be on the front of the building which, if you notice, is where the little ramp is and the glass doors. We've already had it looked at and we can't do that. The access is on the side when they come down (where the barbecue grill is). Stacy continues, I love my veterans, I don't blame them, everyone wants convenience and you would like to have everything where you want it and when you want it, but it's not always possible. But yes sir, it is provided.

## CLARKSBURG NURSING FACILITY – Dr. Kevin Crickard, Administrator

- **I have some really awesome news to report and that's that we are now in the "end of the beginning"**. For the longest time, it seems like at the State Veteran's Home, we have always been at the beginning, in formation, trying to get this done, get that done. The fact is that two weeks ago, we hired the last of our nurses. We're talking about state workers. I had twenty nurses in our organization class, 7 LPNs, 13 Health Service Workers, a few stragglers that are getting larger than normal notices that are coming in next week or two weeks, but the fact is that all 180 positions are now filled are going to be filled with state's employees making what I consider to be excellent wages. Since July 1<sup>st</sup>, we've hired 30 licensed nurses, many who have come in at wage exceptions. The existing nurses within our facility that were there originally, the Secretary, (it was actually his idea from the very beginning), we went back and did what is called an internal equity adjustment and that was approved through the Personnel Board and there were nurses that received an increase to bring them up to what we are now hiring other experienced nurses in at a wage exception. So, in essence, what this means is, we are in our last two to three weeks of using any agency nurses.

**There have been some very, very positive changes**, but unfortunately, the US Nursing Network, the temporary nurses that we use, that company didn't take the news well that we weren't going to be paying them a million dollars this year. I don't know why anyone would be upset that they weren't going to get a million dollars this year. **The fact is, with the recommendations that the Secretary has made, and the approvals that the Governor has given, we will save the State of West Virginia in this next fiscal year, 1.2 million dollars. 1.2 Million Dollars out of our budget alone and part of that will be offset by some minor increases in the better wages that we are now paying our licensed nurses, a feat that has been a long time coming. So it's really a win, win for us right now.**

**I can tell you, for example, questions like, when are you going to open the Alzheimer's Unit?** Well my dad's down there, so I'm certain that it's up and running or I wouldn't have my father there. He was a Navy Chaplain. We are admitting three veterans per week.

**The last time we had spoken, I had given you December as the date that we were to be completely full and I can tell you that December and January were a couple of the most difficult months that I have ever had there. Primarily because we had fifteen of our dearest veterans pass on and these were all natural deaths, they were deaths as a result that our vets come to us, often times, very frail.** I could stand here today and say that we would have been completely full right now, but the fact is that we lost some wonderful people and I think many of you know exactly who I was talking about. They were good, close, and personal friends of mine. The average length of stay at a State Veteran's Nursing Home is 3.6 years. I've been there 3.6 years and so now I'm seeing people that I've known and have been with, as a matter of fact, this June, I will have spent as much time at this Veteran's Home as I spent in my entire stint in the US Marine Corp. So I'm really vested in this right now, it's something that I take very seriously and personally. I'm also very proud to tell you and announce that we are at the end of the beginning. This is it...we really are going to be, from a statistical standpoint, at or near 100% in the next several weeks and there is nothing to hold us back now, thanks to the Secretary's support. That being said, I will be glad to answer any questions.

**Question raised:** What's the waiting list now?

**The last time I checked, we have 138 veterans to get in our home. The average waiting time is 1.2 years.** That's at 3 admissions a week. We keep bringing people in....but our normal death rate is 3 deaths a month. Fifteen in two months hurt...it hurts us emotionally.

**Bill Harris (Council Member) asked:** Are you saying that the federal salary equates to the WV salary level?

**Kevin: Not necessarily, I will tell you that, based on years of experience, for licensed nurses, we're as competitive now as anybody in our market.** We're certainly not the highest paid, you're not going to get rich working for State Government, but I will tell you that we're in the ball park now, we're not outside trying to get in. We are in the ball park and we're attracting some truly wonderful nurses, I have some unbelievable talent. By the way, there are 48 licensed nurses on the payroll at State Veteran's Home, there are 58 Health Service Workers, there are 106 nurses taking care of 101 veterans. We actually have 100 plus 1 in the hospital today.

**Question raised:** If a veteran is not in the system, how easy is it to get them into the State Veterans Nursing Home?

**Kevin:** We experience the same problem, not with every veteran. With a lot of our admissions, we have referrals from veterans throughout the state who are not in the VA system. They've never stepped foot into a VA Hospital, they've never enrolled. We then have to take two steps backwards, because in fact, they do have to be registered in the Federal System, before I can admit them. So what you're saying is 100% correct, I see what you're talking about on a pretty regular basis and we do have to add an extra step if they're not in the system. I don't know what the answer to getting them into the system.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ➤ **Military Credit for State Employees under CPRB:**

**Secretary Gwinn: The first part of new business is military credit for State Employees under CPRB, that's Consolidated Public Retirement Board.**

As some of you may or may not know, a couple of weeks ago, a veteran went up to have his military time included on his retirement, or counted for a conflict that is not listed by Retirement Board. The Retirement Board states that they will not recognize anything that is not in the code. They only recognize the Persian Gulf, Vietnam, WWII, Korea, and the current conflicts they are looking at. So, people are losing their military time and this resulted in them having to go outside and go to the court and sue them. I think the last one won, this one just filed his case with the court. This has been going on for several years. Former Governor, now Senator Manchin, put in a bill to try and get it changed to recognize the conflicts and got turned down, cut down to committee. Again, for the third year in a row, I put a copy of the bills in your record. There are copies of the bills on the tracking report that we have out now and will be emailing out every week. There are two bills in there: One of them is to include military time for those conflict eras, the other one is to just straight recognize how much time you did up to five years, you get those five years credit. So, there are two different versions of the bill. We should be working with the Legislature to try and get one of these bills passed to resolve this situation.

➤ **Adjustment Requirements for Operation Recognition High School Diploma (WV Code §18-2-34):**

**Angela Meadows, WVDVA Manager over this program, has composed a letter to the Council requesting that a review and adjustment to the current language used in WV Code §18-2-34 be recommended to the Legislature this session.** She has included this letter in the Council packets and handed out information, along with supporting documentation of two or three well deserved applicants whom she recently had to deny their diplomas, due to the current language contained in Code. She requested and received approval by Secretary Gwinn to pursue this change and to invite Ms. Jordan from WV Board of Education to speak at the Council Meeting and to relay the Board's support.

Secretary Gwinn: We have someone here to speak on that. Ms. Jordan, would you introduce yourself?

**Ms. Betty Jo Jordan: I would be delighted to. My name is Betty Jordan and I work with the WV Department of Education and the Department is privileged to work with the WV Veterans Affairs in the administration of Operation Recognition providing Diplomas to West Virginia Veterans: WWI, WWII, the Korean Conflict, as well as, the Vietnam Conflict.** I do have some information for the Council that might be helpful, if I may distribute it. I also have some extras for the audience, if anyone would like a copy of the material.

I thought it might be of interest to the Council, first of all to know how we have progressed since 2000 when the Legislature passed, WV Code §18-2-34 and the State Board of Education approved policy 4350 with the procedures that we use.

**As of yesterday, when we queried, of course January was a busy month for diplomas for West Virginia veterans. We have an ebb and flow of applications. As of yesterday, the State Board of Education had approved a total of 1,473 applications for Operation Recognition, High School Diplomas for Veterans. Those diplomas have been issued in 25 different counties.** You can see on the chart how these diplomas go across the various wars and conflicts. We have not awarded any diplomas to any WWI veterans. Mr. Buckles, with his passing, I believe was our last surviving WWI Veteran in the state. 514 WWII Veterans have received their High School Diploma through this program, 299 Korean, 660 from Vietnam. All were males, with the exception of one female. So I come to the Council with that information, but also with a conversation that Secretary Gwinn's office and our office have had that the Code provides that any WWI or any WWII veteran, as long as they have an honorable discharge, automatically receive their diploma.

**There is a provision however, and we have provided in the hand out, a copy of the WV Board of Education Policy, as well as the State Code, so that you can see that language. If the veteran was a veteran of either the Korean Conflict or the Vietnam Conflict, they must have been attending school upon their entry into the military. Unfortunately, that is where we have an issue. We have not had a lot of applications that have been disapproved, but we have a little less than 100, most of them being from the Vietnam era where individuals for some reason decided to exit school. There was a down time of sometimes five, six, or seven months, before they decided they were going to enter the military. Therefore, the provision in the State Code, that said they had to be in school when they entered, means that we can't approve those diplomas.**

**Secretary Gwinn said that with the Department and the Board being willing to consider a recommendation to the Legislature to entertain a code language change** that would give those veterans the same stance as our WWI and WWII veterans if they provide evidence of honorable discharge or having served our State and our Country, said diplomas could be awarded to those individuals too. I told him I would be delighted to join the meeting today for the purpose of that conversation. Of course, I cannot speak for the WV Legislature in terms of what they would be willing to entertain or change in the code, but certainly, the State Board would be willing to partner, in support of that.

Just a little bit of historic information, if I may. I did a little bit of research, in terms of why that particular condition was added to the code for Korea and Vietnam and the thinking at that time was that the individuals who enlisted or may have been drafted at that time, still had an opportunity to complete their High School Diploma, whereas, the urgency of WWI and WWII seem to be leaving immediately to serve their Country. Perhaps, the urgency was not the same. So, that was some of the reasoning at that time. I can give you that bit of history, and I would be glad to entertain questions from the Council or from anyone from the Audience.

**Mr. Bill Harris: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Veteran's Council recommend a change to the code to the Legislature to accommodate these individuals that are being denied a High School Diploma from Korea and Vietnam. Motion seconded, voted on, and carried.**

- **Effective June 2012, the West Virginia Legislature passed HB 4433 which now allows a veteran to be eligible for their High School Diploma even if they did not immediately go into service after leaving or dropping out of High School. Many of our Honorably Discharged Veterans found it necessary to drop out of school to aid in providing for their families, along with a variety of other reasons they faced during that era.**
- **Chairman Epling introduced a guest speaker, Dr. Bob Henry Baber to speak on the WV Veteran's Legacy Project (Glenville State College)**

**Mr. Baber discussed a \$350,000 grant that we have been working on for the last year and half called the Veteran's Legacy Grant and came out of Congress.**

It's a listening grant, an interview grant, where we interview vets, transcribe their interviews, and upload those interviews onto the web. I have information for you and if you know any vets, young or old, who want to be interviewed and have their interviews uploaded. We also give them a copy themselves of their interviews.

We're going to be asking for an extension to this project. There's about \$100,000 left in it. We really want to take this thing to the next level.

We want to capture WWII Veterans. We are very centrally located in West Virginia. We really want to get around the state. We are hoping to make an hour long PBS quality DVD that can go across the United States. We will probably have to raise in the neighborhood of an additional \$100,000, but I am a Major Gifts Office at Glenville State and I have no problem getting out and begging for money for beautiful products that show off our WV Vets. Please anyone who wants to be interviewed, or anyone who has lost someone, we would be willing to come to you or you can come to Glenville.

- **James McCormick:** I'm a veteran of the Persian Gulf War and the Operation Iraq Freedom and I'm telling you that those two wars are totally different.

My experience in Persian Gulf War and my experience in Operation Iraq Freedom are totally different. I would like to see equal representation. I would like to see two veterans from the Persian Gulf War and two veterans, one from Afghanistan and one from Iraq. They face different things over there. The issues I had coming back from the Persian Gulf War were nothing compared to what I am dealing with now, coming back from Operation Iraq Freedom. I cover a 10 county area and work with disabled veterans and I'm seeing so many of these guys and gals coming in with traumatic brain injury and PTSD. Not only do they not have a flat screen TV, but they don't have electricity to plug a TV into. So the jobs, and having someone to speak for them would probably encourage them to get involved and I know right now, there's not very many involved. We'd love to reach out. I know that I've had people in the American Legion, VFW, Jack Tincher, and all these people who have reached out to me. So, it's happening, but if we had people with fair representation, I believe that's going to bring in more people. I believe that if they feel like they're not being represented as well as the WWII, or the Korea, or Vietnam Veterans, they're going to feel second best. That's the only thing I have and thank you.

**Mr. Baber:** We also have the same problem. We have very, very few young vets so we don't want to put out a documentary that doesn't recognize the younger vets.

There is attention to the older vets who we really do need to catch, but we have very few modern vets.

- **Joe Wilson:** Dave Simmons, State Council President, Vietnam Vets sent me an email the other day regarding a vet who went to DMV and was turned down due to a change in documents needed at the DMV. Beginning January 1, 2012, under the Real ID Card Law, you have to provide an original Social Security card. They will not recognize Military ID Card. Need to work on this through Legislature.

**Woody Williams made suggestion that the Legislative Officer, Billy Wayne Bailey, make a proposal to the Legislature to get this changed.**

**Cedric Greene:** This cannot be changed, this is from the Federal level due to Homeland Security.

**Billy Wayne Bailey:** We might be able to get the State Legislature to adopt a resolution asking Congress to revisit that. Sometimes it gets cumbersome to try to do business, but I will ask the Legislature.

**Meg Cianfrocca, (Rockefeller):** Should talk with all Congressional Officers about this.

**Ira Latimer:** Like a lot of people, I'm a veteran of two conflicts, the Korean War and the Cold War. Also, the cemetery really looks good and I look forward to coming here in the Spring, when the grass is growing and the flowers are blooming. I'm proud to have served on Don Kinnard's Committee to put all this together.

- **Jack Tincher:** It's Legislation time. Veteran's Visability Day this year is going to be on February 20<sup>th</sup> It will start at 9:00 in the House Chambers.

The last couple of years, the legislation gets to a committee and it dies. A veteran is not a public servant. We have to educate our Legislatures somehow that we are veterans and not public servants.

**There are a couple of bills coming out.** A resolution for an additional cemetery somewhere between Summersville and Bluefield and another Veteran's Nursing Home to be located at the Beckley VA. We've still got 150 on the waiting list at Clarksburg and this list is not going to go down. If we can't get the funding for these projects this year, we'll work on the funding if we can get it through. The bill for this cemetery was passed in 1985 and it laid there for 20 years before we got the funds to build it. Sounds to me like, we probably need another Veteran's Home somewhere in the northern part of the state. I don't think there is anything up there in that part of the state for the Veterans. I went to a meeting last week, and got Billy Wayne involved in it, The Center of Excellence for Disabilities down at WVU that already has a built in program for PTI, for anybody, if you fall off a horse and get hurt, or are in a car wreck. Now this is being expanded to include veterans.

There is a HB 2087 that sets up a Traumatic Brain Injury Commission that's primarily for veterans. So we want to get behind that piece of legislation and try to get this done this year. If you know anyone with TBI, Billy Wayne has the contact information about this.

Further discussion continued regarding developing a committee to address these issues of TBI and PTSD. Also concern expressed regarding the negative news that the media is putting out about our veterans, our young veterans that are coming back now. We need to educate our people in the United States about what they are going through and what they have experienced in war. The veterans and organizations need to come together and discuss this and get a call to the news media to explain why these things do happen.

- **Woody Williams: Discussion about the Council. This is a terrific crowd and group of people with a tremendous amount of influence in the state who are here. This hasn't always been the case. This is how we get veterans together. I see a mixture here where we're all going down the same path. The only interest is the veteran. That's it. I compliment the Council on that.**

Woody read the Code regarding the responsibility and term of the Council Members. Woody expressed that the eligibility requirements for Nursing Home, Veterans Nursing Facility, and Cemetery should be the same, but somewhat differ on the website of WV Dept. of Veteran's Assistance.

Chairman Epling: Woody, those have been changed.

Keith Gwinn: We've been having an issue with "ghost websites" and are trying to get them eliminated.

Jack Tinchler suggested that the standardized forms be attached to the minutes when they are disbursed.

Chairman Epling: Once something gets on the internet, it's very difficult to get it off.

Woody continued: The term of the Council is currently 6 years, and that's too long. I recommended that this should be changed. I suggested that the position of the Chair of the Council be for four years.

Chairman Epling: I'm up this year and I won't be back.

**Woody:** At the VFW Convention this past weekend, by the graciousness of the State Commander. The person who introduced the resolution and got it passed. This means that in the State of West Virginia, 17,000 people agreed to this resolution, because it was the Commander who introduced it, and the Commander signed it. That says that the VFW as a whole approved this resolution. If we're going to get anywhere with the Legislature, we've got to convince those people that we're not out here alone. I'm not fighting this battle myself. I have 17,000 people back here, that if I write a letter and say that if you guys aren't doing your jobs, I've got 17,000 people that just might climb on you one of these days when you're out trying to get elected.

- **Resolution to establish a Veteran's Court:** Because of the extra ordinary number of veterans returning from war with PTSD, and the minimal facilities of expertise to treat them, and the court being overwhelmed; the purpose of this resolution is to respectfully request that a Veteran's Court be established that can assist and adjudicate those veteran cases of a non-felony nature, assuring that those who suffer trauma, as a result of war, are given compassionate consideration and treatment...

**Woody continued:** **There are 13 states now that have a Veteran's Court.** If it's working in those states, why wouldn't it work in West Virginia? I have a copy for Governor Tomblin, One for the Chair of the House Veterans Committee, and one for the Senate Veteran's Committee. These are signed by the Commander of the VFW. The American Legion should also pass this resolution so that their members would be in support of the Veteran's Court. I have copies for anyone who wants a copy.

**James McCormick:** **I want to say thank you for bringing this up.** I have a case load of about 68 veterans that I'm working with in a 10 County area and twenty of these veterans are combat veterans who came home, got in trouble, got a DUI, got in trouble with drugs. Their DD-214 reflect excellent troops and they came home and got in trouble and I can't get them a job at McDonald's because they got arrested.

**Woody:** **It's just not fair...we're letting them slide right through our fingers and not doing anything about it. Folks, we've got to be more concerned about our fellow man, because some of us have been there and only by the grace of God, did not end up in prison.**

Woody: Discussed the need to have the road and bridge signs that are designated to honor the memory of a veteran who died serving our Country, identify the branch of service or war that they served in. A resolution has been presented to get the current signs changed and all upcoming signage to reflect these details.

Woody: The purpose of this resolution is to support HB 2087 regarding developing a *Commission* to identify those who need treatment and care and to coordinate the services that they need.

Discussion followed regarding the importance of disbursing information statewide and the best way to get information out there.

**The final quarterly meeting for FY 2011-2012 was held on May 4, 2012 at the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance Cabinet Secretary/Administrative Offices in Charleston, West Virginia. Meeting called to order by Miles Epling, Chairman.**

➤ **Recommendations resulting from meeting on April 18, 2012 at Veteran's Home in Barboursville:**

Woody Williams: Passed out copies of and read the list of seven recommendations resulting from meeting with Veteran Residents and Mrs. Stacy Brown, Administrator, and other representatives of Veteran's Organizations on April 18, 2012. \* Copy attached with minutes

Secretary Gwinn: Mr. Chairman, my recommendation is to take these recommendations and upon vote of Council, make effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

Chairman Epling: Ok, what's the feeling of the Council? Say "I" to approve these recommendations – Discussion from Council and attendees followed.

Patrick Farrell: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Mr. Williams and the group that went down and put these recommendations together. In light of the fact that Mrs. Brown just saw these for the first time, before we take a vote on it, I would like to give her the chance, not today, but in the coming weeks to respond with any of her thoughts on these recommendations before we take action on it.

Chairman Epling: Motion made and seconded, voted on and carried to bring this back up at the next Council Meeting.

➤ **West Virginia Dept. of Veteran's Assistance Van Driver's Budget**

Secretary Gwinn: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the budget came out after the last Council Meeting and unfortunately they did not approve any changes/increases requested for the van drivers. The Governor's Office is working with me right now and currently, as it stands, we will not have funds available to pay the drivers for May and June. After July, we'll be able to pay them for next Fiscal Year back but then after that, we'll be short next year too. The Governor's Office is working with me to resolve this problem probably when the special session comes in or he'll direct it from his rainy day fund and I will keep you updated as soon as I have an answer.

➤ **Couple of Bills Did Get Passed**

**Secretary Gwinn: One was the Drivers HB 4330, effective June 4, 2012.** Veterans who have a driver's license, even though it's not expired, can go into DMV to get it renewed and they will put a "V" on the license to show "veterans status" and honorably discharged veteran. We're working with companies to get this information out to allow them to get discounts if they are being offered, like through Lowes and Home Depot.

➤ **Dedication of DCKMSV Cemetery still scheduled for May 28 at 3:00 pm**

Secretary Gwinn: The dedication for the DCKMSVC is still on for May 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm and Governor Tomblin, Senators Rockefeller and Manchin, Congresswoman Capito will be there. Have a sad report that we did have vandalism there the night before last. Someone got onto one of the machines, decided to do some donuts and wheelies on the concrete pad in front of the committal shelter, damaged a few of the concrete pads, broke a few of the curbs, tore up some of the grass, knocked the light tower over – we're in the process of repairing now. Security cameras were supposed to be in two months ago and we're trying to find out why they're not in now. Trying to get that taken care of and hopefully, that will remedy the situation. It is gated, but unfortunately it was not locked on one end. It is permanently locked now – but we will never be able to stop 4-wheelers from getting in. – It's sad.

## **VETERANS HOME REPORT – Stacy Brown, Administrator**

**Stacy reported:** Currently have 98 veterans/residents at our facility. We have two admissions scheduled for next week. Ironically, we lost two veterans this week due to positive reasons, they got employed and left – So we lost two and gained two.

**We've really been pushing the education and especially since we're seeing a younger generation coming in.** They are motivated and excited about their opportunities and we've certainly been trying to help them there.

**The Social Workers are currently working on 19 applications.** We are receiving more applications from around the state, so as people are talking about us, they're getting to know that we are there.

**Roofing Project:** Bids were received and the vendor was selected by the agency but not awarded yet by purchasing. Obviously, we cannot disclose who was selected until the award. This contract covers all roof structures on the property, with the exception of one residential building that was redone in 2010. We don't have a tentative start day until it gets awarded.

**The Treasurer's Office will start charging the agency \$15 for every return check received for resident's who present checks with NSF for maintenance fees.** It doesn't happen that often, but it does happen.

**All doors in the facility are receiving new locks and handles; the intercom system takes a lot of electricity hits during electrical storm and they fry.** We did take hits earlier this week and nursing can still page but no one else can. We're looking into maybe changing the contract so that we can have an emergency system. We will also be adding a couple of new additional speakers to assist the residents with hearing the announcements and putting them in strategic places.

**Ramps are ADA compliant,** but with the newer scooters, they don't turn quite as easily as some of the older scooters, so we're looking at what we can tweak there as far as assisting our residents in getting around in there scooters.

**The "Recreation poppy program" is running smoothly** and all the kinks have been worked out and we are getting paid on time.

I do want to thank Mr. Williams and Kelly Goddard and all of those that worked on the committee to assist me in trying to help our veterans.

**Patrick Farrell:** Are you having any problems with drugs up there?

**Secretary Gwinn: Let me comment on that.** I did order a drug sweep down there, just a minor one. I asked the State Police to bring the drug dog in, which is allowed in policy. Not to go into the resident's rooms, but through the common areas, through the hallways, and there were no hits with no warning of the drug sweep. What was strange about this was that the resident president had requested that we do one, but then the day we did it, he came forward and told the residents that it wasn't fair and he asked Mr. Williams why did we do that? Mr. Williams pointed out that it's in the rules and bi-laws that we are allowed to do that.

## CLARKSBURG NURSING FACILITY – Dr. Kevin Crickard, Administrator

- **Secretary Gwinn: Dr. Crickard is unable to attend and I am giving the report on his behalf.**

**We have currently 109 residents. We had two more pass away last week.**

We are now putting the emergency chiller in. We had that issue last year where some days it got up to 100 degrees and got very hot. They are currently putting this emergency chiller in to back up in case of more hot days.

That concludes the report.

- **Nominations for Replacing Ralph Stump on Veterans Council:**

We have two so far and the closing date is next Friday.

Chairman Epling: Get them into Keith or the office.

Secretary Gwinn: We will forward them to the Council for review before submitting to the Governor.

Chairman Epling: The recommendation was for Afghanistan Veterans but we've got two other wars on here, so I guess we will accept any.

At the last meeting, everyone was on us about getting the other vets on, so that's why we put Afghanistan Vets –

- **Introduction of Guest Speakers:**

**Kent Morrison and LeAnn Bills:** Spearheading an effort to raise money for homeless veterans through the Huntington Regional VA. A group of bicycle riders from Huntington are doing a ride from Huntington to Washington, D.C. - Riding 425 miles in 6 days to raise awareness and funds for the Homeless Veterans Resource Center in downtown Huntington. The Resource Center is a VA-run facility that has a goal of finding permanent housing and employment for homeless veterans. - Initial Goal to raise \$6,000 and it's gone far better than we thought – right now we have \$18,000 and we're fairly certain we're going to hit the \$20,000 mark before we go and what this money will be used for is 100% of what we raise will go to the Veterans. We have a home starter kit to give to the homeless veterans helping them find a new place to stay. \*Information on this program is attached

**Secretary Gwinn:** Mr. Chairman, if they will get this information to Heather, she can get posted and distributed on our website.

**Woody Williams:** Are the funds for them to stay just in the Huntington area?

**LeeAnn Bills:** **The homeless veteran's resource center opened last July. Our homeless program is located in various sites across the community.** We took our homeless vets and put them in one building downtown Huntington within a block of the Huntington City Mission, but we provide on-going homeless services. It's a one-stop shop for any homeless veterans. Past three years, we've averaged housing one homeless person a week and we are covering ten WV Counties, twelve in Kentucky and two in Ohio. This is the hub of our services - however, our products are used for all of our veterans, whether they're in Huntington or any of our communities. We have about 70 in one of our housing programs here in the Charleston Area. The moving kits that will be purchased through this will be going to those who will be moving in. Handouts were passed out during the meeting. We welcome anyone to come by and see our facility. Last year about \$2,000 was raised, this year we are at \$18,000 and we have a specific plan on how to use the money.

**Bob Henry Baber: Provided update on the Veteran's Legacy Project through Glenville State College which has raised about \$57,000 toward memorabilia, photos, and capturing stories of veterans.** Current waiting list of about 55 people and though we are trying to branch out, must be currently placed on a waiting list. Will debue from November 3 – 10 in Glenville and many projects will then travel the state. Agreed to interview Mr. Stump, as suggested by Patrick Farrell of Council.

**Secretary Gwinn: Would like to thank Dennis Rayburn, who has helped through AmVets to enable us to purchase a bell tower which will be up before the DCKMSVC dedication date and also former Secretary Rob Ferguson who worked very hard getting veterans service corrected before the veterans retirement board and to me...**

**Meg Cianfrocca (Rockefeller's Office) – We are networking for an abandoned cemetery (Bethel Cemetery) of veterans graves which was very overgrown.** I am asking for manpower and volunteers in the Huntington area. We have set a date of May 12 and 13 for an initial clean out. If it rains, we will reschedule.

➤ **Chairman Epling: Requesting visitor questions or comments**

**Woody Williams:** I want to apologize for last time. I didn't know I was wound up like an 8 day clock until I read the minutes. I must have been wound up for a 16 day clock. **I have copies of a resolution that was passed by the Legislature this year on a Veteran's Court and we are very pleased that this happened and that we now have something concrete to say that something is going to happen.** I have extra copies if anyone needs a copy.

**Mr. Simmons tells me that right now in West Virginia, even in my own county, Cabell County, that we do have a Veteran's Court already established and the other one is in Fayetteville.** They are unofficial because they had no authority to do it, but this actually gives the authority to have Veteran's Courts. If we just sit back and let it happen, it may not happen. The individuals in the county are going to have to pick this up and work it or it's not going to happen. The recommendation was and the resolution that they passed was that it be established in Charleston, WV on a one year trial basis so that we could see if it's going to work. Unless we keep on top of it, it could just drop dead.

**Secretary Gwinn: Mr. Chairman, I've already had one meeting with Steve Canterbury, Administrator for the Supreme Court** and we have another meeting next week that we will try and set some rules for the future for the Veteran's Court, similar to the drug courts.

**Jack Tinchler: James McCormick is the new chairman of the Veteran's Coalition.** Also, I passed out to some of you a resolution that passed this year – SR 15 to build a new Veterans Nursing Home in Beckley and this has to go through the process and the interim sessions to get funding for this project. We need to make this a joint effort from the Council, Secretary's Office, and from every Veteran's Organization to get this Veteran's Home built in Beckley as soon as we can...we need it – the Clarksburg Nursing Home still has a waiting list of 150 people on it. We need to get this done this year. Messing around for the last 15 years has doubled the cost and if we fool around another 10 years and watch it go to 80 million which means that we'll never get it. The veterans in West Virginia need this veteran home and we all need to sign up for this thing together. – That's it, Mr. Chairman

**Chairman Epling: What's the waiting list on the Nursing Home in Clarksburg?**

**Secretary Gwinn: I think the primary is 79 right now** and we have been taking in three per week for the last two months.

**Chairman Epling: So we've got a need, the need is there.**

**Ira Latimer: I came across a veteran's organization I hadn't heard about before and it was kind of unique, it's called "[Missing in America Project](http://www.miap.us)".** Every year thousands of veterans without family ties or homeless pass away and they are usually cremated and their remains stored in Funeral Homes around the Country. In fact, two funeral homes in Virginia had twenty seven hundred cremated veterans in storage. This group reaches out to make sure that veterans have a decent burial in a veteran's cemetery. I thought this was interesting. If you want to learn more, go to [www.miap.us](http://www.miap.us)

**James McCormick: Thanks to Jack Tincer for his service as the chair with the WV Veteran's Coalition and to everyone that is here for your service and for your service now.** To add to what Jack was saying, we really want to put together a powerful team that's going to be working with the veterans so if there's anything I can do, I am available anytime – email me, call me – if it's 1:00 in the morning, it doesn't bother me. Thank you

**Chairman Epling continued through the entire list of attendees and welcomed any and all comments and/or concerns.**

**Randall Bare, Veteran's Council: Barboursville Home – they are on the tax payers dollar and that gate swings both ways and they will not be changing the laws in West Virginia to benefit themselves as four or five people in a power struggle.** That has to come through this Council and it's not going to happen that way. That's the first thing. Second thing: Thank you for what you do down there for our homeless, there's a lot of them and we need all we can do. How does that conflict with you? (Question addressed to Stacy Brown, Administrator).

**Stacy Brown: Oh it doesn't conflict at all. Actually, it's a good partnership. They make a lot of referrals to us, if they're appropriate, we of course, we take the veterans in.** We had talked about the assisted living because they sometimes have homeless veterans who need a little more assistance so they're not appropriate for the dom, but if we were able to utilize that back lot, which I'm still looking into, I feel that would be most beneficial all the way around. There is definitely a need in that area. We appreciate their help and as a matter of fact, we finally got our new pamphlets/brochures updated and printed. We have their information in them as well and we gave a little more information of what they need to get into the home, as far as requirements. In regard to the this (the by- laws), I had an opportunity to look at this during this meeting and I'm ok with it, if you want to go ahead and vote on it.

**Randall Bare, Council Member: One last thing and I'll be quiet. We had an opportunity last March to visit with our elected officials in Washington and one of our biggest concerns, of course, was the retirement plan for active duty and if they do away with that retirement plan, they might as well do away with the all-volunteer force because we're not going to have an armed group at all out there. But more important than that, are the guys who are coming back home.** They're not processed out and Staff Sergeant Bales showed us that when he went back to Afghanistan and killed seventeen people. The man had a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), was found fit for duty, and sent back to Afghanistan. That could have happened in Rand, that could have happened in East Charleston, or that could have happened in South Charleston, he could have flipped out there as well. He should have NOT been put back into active duty. But because they felt that his TBI was taken care of, they sent him back, so we've asked our folks in Washington for a process for when they come back. The families need to be briefed, maybe a two or three day process at the airport. The families need to know what to expect, what to see, where they can go for help. It's not just for the mother to pack her bags, grab the kids and head out the door.... They need it TODAY or they wouldn't be asking for help today.

When it's going to take thirty days to process them, and I'm just using you for an example down in Barboursville, that's not the answer. If they have nowhere to go, they could be under a bridge someplace committing suicide.

**James McCormick (Current Chair of Veteran's Coalition):** Sir, I've been mentoring wounded warriors, both active duty, reserves, National Guard and wives and family members. What is happening on the return deployment physicals is that our soldiers are being lied to by their Commanders and they're being told that if they put anything down, they won't be going home.

**Randall Bare:** That's my point about the process. It needs to be a **MANDATORY PROCESS - Three or four days where they have to sit there and they have to listen, and bring the families in.** The last thing is that, on Tuesday evening in Washington, they brought in Wounded Warriors, you talk about a sad situation...those guys with no arms, no legs, they laughed and sat at the table with us. That's what we're all about, taking care of those guys and we need to keep that in focus at all times. Thank you.

**Bill Harris (Council Member):** I would like to have a resolution or something to recognize Ralph Stump as he is departing from our table here.

**Chairman Epling:** Ralph, do you have anything to say?

**Ralph Stump (Council Member):** It's been a pleasure working with the Council for the last twelve years and you are good people to work with for all this time.

**Chairman Epling:** Ralph, thank you for your service. (Applause by all in attendance)

Ralph Stump: Will I be replaced by another WWII Veteran?

Secretary Gwinn: The Governor's plan right now, he is looking at redoing this Council and is taking the conflict off and unfortunately the WWII Veterans are getting older and trying to find someone to replace the WWII Veterans is getting harder. He's looking at taking away the conflict and taking nominations to see who is best qualified to replace it. Right now, he's asking for Afghanistan and Iraq vets to try and get some of these younger veterans who have these problems, to try and get their views on the Council.

**Secretary Gwinn:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to recognize a couple of people on my staff, **Heather and Angela.** They've worked very hard to get these new pamphlets out and get this information out to the public and Angela has been distributing through emails and you can see our turn out is getting larger now.

**Chairman Epling:** Heather, you and Angela stand up so everyone will know who you are. (Applause)

**Chairman Epling:** On behalf of the Council, I want to thank all of you for coming out and being here with us, it's what makes this thing work. Don't forget all you organizations, if you have a nomination for the Veteran's Council, get it sent in because the cut-off date is May 11<sup>th</sup> and please don't forget Memorial Day, and if you can, come out to the Dedication of the Cemetery, but if you can't come to the Cemetery, don't forget the Veterans on Veterans Day.

**###**



## DEPARTMENT SERVICES

The following represents a statistical summary of the services performed by the offices of the Department of Veterans Assistance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 and a comparison with last fiscal year.

	FY 2012		FY 2011
1. Consultations	66,800	>	65,860
2. Telephone Calls (Incoming only)	78,784	<	82,087
3. Correspondence (Outgoing only)	211,675	<	221,497
4. Applications-Compensation-Pension	4,649	<	4,695
5. Reopened Claims	2,689	>	2,503
6. Veterans Cases Reviewed	12,015	>	10,728
7. Hospital Referrals	14,106	>	13,745
8. Appearances in Behalf of Veterans	787	>	656
9. Total Awards	14,546	>	10,730

### **MONETARY BENEFITS RECOVERED FY 2012 compared to FY 2011**

	FY 2012		FY 2011
10. Annual Income Obtained for Veterans and Dependents from Compensation and Pension Awards	\$147,638,194.00	>	\$104,763,181.00
11. Widows Death Pension, DIC, VR&E, Burial Allowance, EVR's, Confirmed & Continued Awards	\$ 79,274,891.00	>	\$ 57,066,759.00
12. Life Insurance Benefits Recovered	\$ 2,540,005.00	>	\$ 499,990.00
13. <b>Grand Total of All Monetary Benefits Recovered for Fiscal Year 2012</b>	<b>\$229,453,090.00</b>	<b>&gt;</b>	<b>\$161,474,566.00</b>

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS ASSISTANCE  
 FINANCIAL STATEMENT – FISCAL YEAR 2012  
 PERIOD 07/01/11 THROUGH 06/30/12

LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATION FOR 2011-12 FISCAL YEAR - \$12, 564,384.00

<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>AMOUNT APPROPRIATED</u>	<u>AMOUNT EXPENDED</u>	<u>UNEXPENDED BALANCE</u>	<u>UTILIZATION PERCENTAGE</u>
Personal Services (Benefits)	\$1,781,821.00	\$1,684,295.00	\$ 97,526.00	95%
Unclassified	\$2,824,887.00	\$2,025,805.00	\$ 799,082.00	72%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,606,708.00</b>	<b>\$3,710,100.00</b>	<b>\$ 896,608.00</b>	<b>81%</b>

WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS HOME AT BARBOURSVILLE

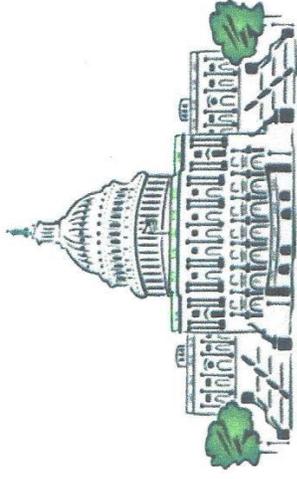
<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>AMOUNT APPROPRIATED</u>	<u>AMOUNT EXPENDED</u>	<u>UNEXPENDED BALANCE</u>	<u>UTILIZATION PERCENTAGE</u>
Personal Services (Benefits)	\$1,152,291.00	\$1,015,982.00	\$ 136,309.00	88%
Unclassified	\$ 6,096.00	\$ 6,096.00	\$ - 0 -	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,158,387.00</b>	<b>\$1,022,078.00</b>	<b>\$ 136,309.00</b>	<b>88%</b>

WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS NURSING FACILITY AT CLARKSBURG

<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>AMOUNT APPROPRIATED</u>	<u>AMOUNT EXPENDED</u>	<u>UNEXPENDED BALANCE</u>	<u>UTILIZATION PERCENTAGE</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,799,289.00</b>	<b>\$5,798,638.00</b>	<b>\$1,000,651.00</b>	<b>86%</b>



# West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance



GENERAL REVENUE APPROPRIATIONS

FEDERAL MONETARY RECOVERY

**\$ = \$12,564,384.00**

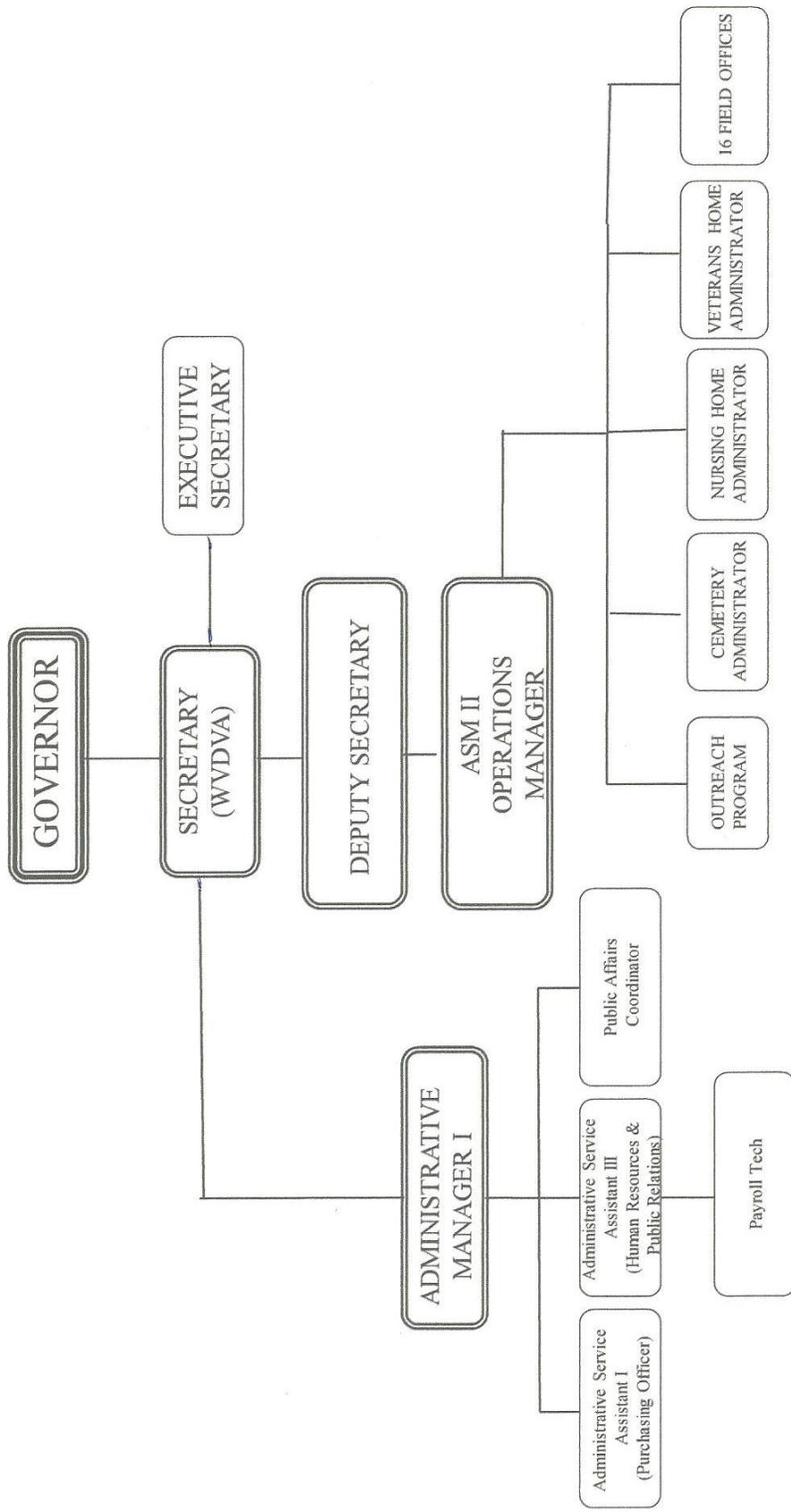


**= \$229,453,090.00**

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**FOR EVERY STATE \$1.00 EXPENDED,  
THE DEPARTMENT RECOVERED \$18.26 IN FEDERAL FUNDS**

**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS ASSISTANCE  
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



Division elevated to Department effective July 1, 2011

08/10/11

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**Mike Lyons, Operations Manager**  
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**Angela S. Meadows, Executive Secretary**  
(Front-Left)

**Heather Miles, Public Relations Coordinator**  
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**Connie Hodapp, Fiscal Officer**  
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MALISSA TETER, Veterans Outreach/Social Worker

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OFFICE ASSISTANT II  
REBECCA SUMMERS



## PARKERSBURG

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VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER  
THOMAS COAKLEY (Back)

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER ASSISTANT  
KAREN STORDAHL (Right)



### PRINCETON

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VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER  
DANNY HONAKER



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VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER  
AMY CARDER

OFFICE ASSISTANT II  
SHARON LEWIS



### SUMMERSVILLE

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VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER  
DAREK IGO

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER ASSISTANT  
GAIL THOMAS



### WELCH

McDowell County Library  
90 Howard Street  
Welch, West Virginia 24801  
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E-mail: [Kesha.R.Nealen@wv.gov](mailto:Kesha.R.Nealen@wv.gov)

KESHA NEALEN, VSOA (Right)

KASEY VOLOSKI  
Veterans Outreach/Social Worker

### WHEELING/PITTSBURGH

51 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 300  
Wheeling, West Virginia 26003  
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E-mail: [Michael.K.Craig@wv.gov](mailto:Michael.K.Craig@wv.gov)  
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CLAIMS MANAGER  
MICHAEL CRAIG, VSO II

DEBI MCGRAW, VSOA II

### PITTSBURGH

Federal Bldg, Rm 1615  
1000 Liberty Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
Telephone: (304-238-1085



**WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS NURSING FACILITY  
ONE FREEDOM WAY  
CLARKSBURG, WV 26301**

The West Virginia Veterans Nursing Facility is located adjacent to the Louis a Johnson VA Hospital in Clarksburg. This 120 bed facility began operation in 2007.

Basic admission criteria requirements are: Veterans who have served on active duty or performed active service in a reserve component of the armed forces for a period of at least twelve consecutive month; or have been medically discharged for a service connected injury prior to twelve month service. Veterans whose discharge status from military service is honorable. Veterans who have continuously been a citizen of the state of West Virginia for one year prior to application to the WVVNF, or who was a resident of West Virginia at the time they initially entered active military service. Veterans who are physically unable to maintain themselves in their own home by reason of age, disability or disease and meet the criteria for intermediate or skilled nursing care.

The WVVNF shall not admit any applicant who requires treatment primarily for mental retardation, mental illness, or substance abuse, or who has a documented history of physical violence and/or disciplinary problems, or whose needs cannot be met by the facility. As a matter of clarity, prospective residents with Alzheimer's disease or dementia are eligible for consideration. Spouses of the veterans are eligible to participate.

The facility now has a 20 bed unit for Alzheimer patients.

There shall be no income limitations as an eligible requirement.

We are a smoke-free facility. No veteran is allowed to smoke on facility grounds.

Emphasis is placed on maintaining a warm, attractive and comfortable facility for West Virginia veterans in need of nursing home care. Visitation to the home is encouraged.

We have our own in-house pharmacy and a pharmacist that provides individualized attention to the medication needs of our veterans. We offer remote storage lockers for our veterans to store valuable or extra personal items. Personal laundry is processed in-house, and other linens are cleaned through a state agency that hires personnel with disabilities.

As the newest constructed nursing facility in the state, our fire detection and suppression systems are exceptional. Our rooms have oxygen and suction capability built in, and all of our rooms come with free TV and local phone coverage. We also offer a wireless network for computer web access.

We are a value to the veterans because our maximum room rate is roughly one-third of what it would cost to pay privately in a typical nursing facility. In fact, no veteran will be turned down due to finances.

**WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS NURSING FACILITY  
CLARKSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA**



**Dr. Kevin Crickard, Administrator**



**Therapy Room**



**Dining Area**

# **WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS HOME**

## **512 Water Street**

### **Barboursville, WV 25504**

The West Virginia Veterans Home is located in the Village of Barboursville, fifteen miles from downtown Huntington. This home for West Virginia veterans was authorized in 1975 and became a reality in 1981.

Basic eligibility requirements are:

- Veterans must have been discharged from the service with an honorable discharge or with a general discharge under honorable conditions
- Veterans discharged after September 7, 1980 must have served at least 24 consecutive months.
- Although priority will be given to veterans who are residents from the state of West Virginia, the previous one year state residency requirement has been rescinded.
- Due to the health and welfare of residents of the Barboursville Veterans Home, there are certain pre-admission medical tests which must be completed prior to being admitted to the home.
- All qualified veterans must be ambulatory and independent in all activities of daily living. The home is not a treatment facility and cannot accommodate veterans in need of daily care or skilled assistance. The home provides a nursing department and a contact physician. All medical treatment is provided by the VA Medical Center located in Huntington. Transportation is provided to the medical center three times daily.

Rooms available for occupancy accommodate two, three or four persons. Every effort is made to ensure compatibility between occupants. Female veterans are most welcome and special lodging accommodations are provided as they become available.

A person's income is not a factor in gaining admission, although residents are required to contribute one-half of his or her monthly income as their maintenance contribution. The home is very liberal in its rules and regulations. Residents may leave on a pass for up to three days by simply signing a daily log sheet. All residents are authorized up to 30 days of furlough per year. Visitation to the home is encouraged and visitors may enjoy a meal with the residents at a nominal fee.

Emphasis is placed on maintaining a warm, attractive and comfortable "home" for the West Virginia veteran who is in need of a place to live. We, the residents and staff, wish to extend an invitation to each of you to visit our facility. You will be proud, as we are, that such a home exists.

Assistance with applications for residency can be obtained through any of the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance Field Offices or you may contact us directly at 304-736-1027.

# **WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS HOME BARBOURSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA**



**Stacy Brown  
Administrator**

# West Virginia Veterans Home Staff



Veterans Home Administrative Staff



Veterans Home Nursing Staff



Veterans Home Dietary Staff



Veterans Home Housekeeping Staff



Veterans Home Maintenance Store Room Staff

# Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery



The Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery had its groundbreaking ceremony on October 14, 2010. Within two weeks of that date excavation and construction had commenced. Through its lifetime, the cemetery will be able to inter approximately 60,000 qualified veterans and family members. Burial options include in-ground single sites, in-ground double crypts, in-ground cremated sites and columbarium options for cremated remains. On site are a storage facility, maintenance building, administrative office and information center, interment site and a memorial to the war of terrorism. It has been estimated that the cemetery will inter approximately 600+ veterans and family members per year. The cemetery will be following Federal guidelines and requirements for eligibility. The dedication of the DCKMSVC was Memorial Day, 2012.

Eligibility is as follows, but is not limited to:

- Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty.
- Any veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable and had a minimum of 24 months of active duty.
- The spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible veteran.
- The minor children of an eligible veteran. For purpose of burial in a national cemetery, a minor child is a child who is unmarried and: Who is under 21 years of age; or, Who is under 23 years of age and pursuing a full-time course of instruction at an approved educational institution.

Any state or federal Veterans Affairs office can assist in determining eligibility for burial in a VA national or state veteran's cemetery.



# Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery (DCKMSVC)



**Donel C. Kinnard**

The cemetery is named after Donel C. Kinnard in recognition of his extraordinary valor and exemplary service to his country, fellow veterans, community and his state. Don completed seven tours of duty in Vietnam and was the most highly decorated veteran in Putnam County. During his retirement, he served as the state commander of the VFW, president of the Hurricane Lions Club and held membership in several military service organizations. Don played an instrumental role in the establishment of the state's 120-bed veterans nursing facility in Clarksburg and served as Chairman of the West Virginia Veterans Council. Before his passing on February 14, 2009, he asked that his final resting place be at the new state veterans cemetery.



# **Donel C. Kinnard Memorial State Veterans Cemetery Institute, West Virginia**

## **Larissa Wines, Administrator**

(Pictured left front)



**Larissa Wines, Administrator  
Jaime Reed, Office Assistant II**

**Owen Hawk, III, Building Maintenance Supervisor I  
Russell Wible, II, Groundskeeper (Back Center)  
Bobby Bryant, Jr., Groundskeeper (Back Left)**

## **VETERANS BENEFITS**

The Department of Veterans Assistance of West Virginia shall assist eligible veterans their widows, dependents and orphans in proper preparation and presentation of their claims for the benefits of their right and privileges under federal and state laws enacted for their benefits.

**HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN ELIGIBLE VETERANS:** Specific information is available through the local County Assessor's Office.

**AGENT ORANGE PROGRAM:** The program administered by the West Virginia Division of Health expired July 1, 1989. However, assistance is provided to Korean and Vietnam veterans exposed to certain chemicals, defoliants or herbicides or other causation agents, including Agent Orange, from the US Department of Veterans Affairs Medicine and Surgery.

**STATE WAR ORPHANS EDUCATION:** **Under State Code §18-19-1**

Provides for a waiver of tuition and registration fees in a state supported college or university for children between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five whose veteran parents served in World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict, Vietnam Era, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq or any time of conflict as declared by Congress. Parent must have died in such wartime period, or, if subsequent to discharge, death must have been the result of disability incurred in such wartime service. Children attending private, out-of-state and state education or training institutions will receive one thousand dollars in any one semester or a total of up to two thousand dollars in any one year.

**STATE OPERATION RECOGNITION- VETERAN'S HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM:**

**Under State Code §18-2-34** - Provides for the awarding of high school diplomas, either by the county board in the county in which the veteran resides or the county in which the veteran would have received his or her diploma, whichever location the veteran chooses, to any surviving World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict, or Vietnam Conflict veteran who meets eligibility requirements.

**FREE LICENSE – AUTOMOBILE:** Provides special vehicle license plates or DV Tags without fee to any veteran in receipt of an auto grant or who is permanently and totally disabled due to service-connected causes, and former POW Tag as certified by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Also, recent legislation provides for Purple Heart Tags for those wounded in action and Pearl Harbor Survivors Tags for West Virginia veterans who were at Pearl Harbor during the attack on December 7, 1941. Recent legislation provided for special license plates for veterans in receipt of the Congressional Medal of Honor, The Distinguished Service Cross, The Navy Cross, The Air Force Cross, The Silver Star and the Bronze Star. The Department of Motor Vehicles requires a one-time fee of \$10.00 over and above the regular license fee for Honorably Discharged Veteran, Combat Veteran, Marine Corps League, American Legion, Disable American Veteran, National Guard, World War II Veteran, Korean War Veteran, Vietnam War Veteran, Persian Gulf Veteran, Women Veterans, Retired Military Air Force, Retired Military Army, Retired Military Coast Guard, Retired Military Marines, Retired Military Navy, Combat Infantry Badge, and Combat Medic Badge, Afghanistan Campaign and Iraq Campaign plates.

**FREE HUNTING AND FISHING PRIVILEGES** for 100% service-connected veterans and those veterans in receipt of a VA auto grant.

**STATE VETERANS HOME (DOMICILIARY):** Domiciliary care in the Veterans Home is for ambulatory veterans who are able to go to the dining room without help; can dress themselves; can make their own beds, and can participate in an assigned therapeutic activity. A veteran may be charged for care if he is able to pay.

**VETERANS PREFERENCE:** Under the West Virginia Civil Service System, all veterans who have served under honorable conditions in the armed forces of the United States during World War II, Korean Conflicts, and Vietnam Era or during hostile conflict shall have five (5) points added to a final passing

score. An additional five (5) points are added to a veteran's score if in receipt of the Purple Heart or has a compensable service-connected disability.

**VETERANS BONUS:** The West Virginia State Legislature approved four separate bonus programs for payment to veterans of World War I and World War II, Korean Conflict, the Vietnam Era and veterans of conflicts in Lebanon, Panama, Granda and Desert Storm. The deadline for making applications for these bonus programs has expired as indicated: World War I and World War II – December 31, 1955; Korean Conflict – June 30, 1959; Vietnam Era – December 31, 1976; Lebanon, Panama, Granada and Desert Storm – June 30, 1994.

The West Virginia State Legislature approved Veterans Bonus Amendment for payment of bonuses and death benefits to veterans of the conflicts in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq or to their relatives. Kosovo - November 20, 1995 – December 31, 2000; Afghanistan - October 7, 2001 and the date determined by the President or Congress of the United States as the end of the involvement of the United States armed forces in Afghanistan. Iraq March 19, 2003 and the date determined by the President or Congress of the United States as the end of the involvement of the United States armed forces in Iraq.

**VETERANS RE-EDUCATION ACT FUND:** The West Virginia Legislature provides tuition assistance to those veterans who need a new vocation due to dislocation or unemployment. Veterans must have exhausted the G.I. Bill and be in need of tuition assistance.

### **SIXTY-FOURTH ANNUAL SERVICE OFFICERS TRAINING CONFERENCE**

For the 64th year, the West Virginia Dept. of Veterans Assistance was privileged to host the annual West Virginia Service Officers Training Conference. This annual event is held in coordination with the US Department of Veterans Affairs and all active Veterans organizations in West Virginia.

Starting this year, we will begin a rotation of different locations around the state. This conference is designed to instruct all Veteran organizational officers, especially service officers, regarding their commitment to council and assist veterans and their dependants in obtaining VA benefits. Conference attendees receive intensified classroom instruction from the US Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office, located in Huntington, West Virginia. Areas of instruction include compensation, pension, appeals, personal hearings, vocational rehabilitation, medical and insurance benefits and details about eligibility at the Veterans Home located in Barboursville, West Virginia.

Attendees at this year's conference represented various organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, Marine Corp League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS and the Korean War Veterans Association. In attendance also were several Veterans Affairs Officers from the local offices under the jurisdiction of the Dept. of Veterans Assistance. Representatives from the State Job Services and the VA Vet Centers were also present and conducted training seminars.

Mr. Mike Lyons, Operations Manager of the West Virginia Dept. of Veterans Assistance, opened the conference on Friday evening and presented an update regarding various programs that affect veterans. An open discussion period was held with representatives from the VA Regional office and the Beckley, Clarksburg, and Huntington VA Medical Centers, along with staff from local VET Centers.

Conference attendees received intensified training concerning changes in law, appeals, changes in health care and eligibility, PTSD and the returning veterans outreach program throughout the day on Saturday.

# State War Orphans Education

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## **WV Code §18-19-1 - Appropriation to provide educational opportunities.**

The purpose of this article is to provide educational opportunities for the children and spouses of those:

(1) Who served in:

(A) The Army, Navy or Marine Corps of the United States during the world war from the sixth day of April, one thousand nine hundred seventeen, to the second day of July, one thousand nine hundred twenty-one, all dates inclusive;

(B) The Armed Forces of the United States of America at any time between the first day of December, one thousand nine hundred forty-one, and the declaration of peace by the Congress of the United States, all dates inclusive;

(C) The Armed Forces of the United States of America at any time between the twenty-seventh day of June, one thousand nine hundred fifty, and the thirty-first day of January, one thousand nine hundred fifty-five, all dates inclusive;

(D) The Armed Forces of the United States of America at any time between the fifth day of August, one thousand nine hundred sixty-four, and the seventh day of May, one thousand nine hundred seventy-five, all dates inclusive; or

(E) The Armed Forces of the United States of America at any time during which the forces or members of the reserve components are called to active duty by the President of the United States under Title 10 of the United States Code for the purpose of entering into armed combat; and

(2) Who were killed in action or have died or may hereafter die from disease or disability resulting from their war service.

(b) For the purpose of this article, there is appropriated from the State General Revenue Fund the sum of at least five thousand dollars for each fiscal year commencing the first day of July and ending on the thirtieth day of June of each year of the next biennium to be used for the benefit of these children and spouses while attending post-secondary education or training institutions.

(c) This benefit also shall be given to children and spouses of a service member killed during hostile actions as defined by the agency administering this section.

(d) The term "children" as used in this article includes any child of a veteran who has been legitimized by operation of law prior to the veteran's demise.

(e) The term "spouse" as used in this article includes any spouse who remained married to the veteran prior to the veteran's demise and who was neither the plaintiff nor defendant in any active divorce or annulment proceedings against the veteran at the time of the veteran's demise.

**For more information - please contact:**  
Angela Meadows, War Orphans Education Officer  
WV Department of Veterans Assistance  
1514-B Kanawha Blvd., East  
Charleston, WV 25311  
Phone: 304-558-3661 Fax: 304-558-3662  
Email: [Angela.S.Meadows@wv.gov](mailto:Angela.S.Meadows@wv.gov)

# EDUCATION OF WAR ORPHANS PROGRAM

## STATE EDUCATION OF VETERANS WAR ORPHANS PROGRAM:

**Under State Code §18-19-1** - Provides for a waiver of tuition and registration fees in a state supported college or university for children between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five whose veteran parents served in World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict, Vietnam Era, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq or any time of conflict as declared by Congress. Parent must have died in such wartime period, or, if subsequent to discharge, death must have been the result of disability incurred in such wartime service. Children attending private, out-of-state and state education or training institutions will receive one thousand dollars in any one semester or a total of up to two thousand dollars in any one year.

A total of five students received benefits under the Education of War Orphans Program administered by the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance during the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2012.

Known as the "Education of War Orphans Program", this legislation entitles children to educational benefits whenever their veteran parent has died of disability resulting from his service in the Armed Forces during World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict, Vietnam Era, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq and other hostile actions as declared by congress.

No funds appropriated from the "Education of War Orphans Program" are to be used for administrative expenses. Orphan students received payment for matriculation fee, board, room, books, supplies, and any other necessary living expenses. The law provides for automatic waiver of tuition by state operated schools for students approved under the program.

During the past 12 month period, all five students attended institutions at the college level or comparable institution. The law authorizing this benefit specifies that the orphan of West Virginia's War Veterans, to be eligible, must be between 16 and 25 years of age; consequently, only students of high school age or higher can qualify.

March 11, 2006 Senate Bill No. 32 was passed by the Legislature which gave all students attending an out-of-state or state education or training institution \$2,000.00 per year. Fifteen students were originally enrolled in the program.

The following represents the disbursements during Fiscal Year 2011-2012 from the "Education of War Orphans Fund".

A total of Five (5) students: Four (4) renewing and One (1) new applicant for a total disbursement for FY 2012 in amount of \$5,000.

All five (5) students were approved for waiver of tuition and registration fees.

# Operation Recognition – High School Diploma Program

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## **WV Code §18-2-34. High school diplomas for surviving World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict, and Vietnam Conflict veterans.**

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, the state board shall provide for the awarding of high school diplomas, either by the county board in the county in which the veteran resides or the county in which the veteran would have received his or her diploma, whichever location the veteran chooses, to any surviving World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict or Vietnam Conflict veteran who:

(1) Left school prior to graduation and served in the armed forces of the United States

(2) Did not receive a high school diploma;

(3) Was discharged from the armed services under honorable conditions; and

(4) Completes the application process as provided by the joint rules of the state board and the veterans' council.

(b) The state board and the veterans' council, created in article one, chapter nine-a of this code, shall jointly propose rules for the identification of eligible veterans and for the awarding of high school diplomas. The rules shall provide for an application process and the credentials required to receive the high school diplomas.

(c) For purposes of this section:

(1) "World War I veteran" means any veteran who:

(A) Performed wartime service between April sixth, one thousand nine hundred seventeen, and November eleventh, one thousand nine hundred eighteen; or

(B) Has been awarded the World War I Victory Medal;

(2) "World War II veteran" means any veteran who performed wartime service between September sixteenth, one thousand nine hundred forty, and December thirty-first, one thousand nine hundred forty-six;

(3) "Korean Conflict veteran" means any veteran who performed military service between June twenty-seventh, one thousand nine hundred fifty, and January thirty-first, one thousand nine hundred fifty-five; and

(4) "Vietnam Conflict veteran" means any veteran who performed military service between February twenty-eighth, one thousand nine hundred sixty-one, and May seventh, one thousand nine hundred seventy-five.

**For more information - please contact:**

Angela Meadows, Operation Recognition Education Officer  
WV Department of Veterans Assistance  
1514-B Kanawha Blvd., East  
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Phone: 304-558-3661 Fax: 304-558-3662  
Email: [Angela.S.Meadows@wv.gov](mailto:Angela.S.Meadows@wv.gov)

# VETERAN'S DIPLOMA PROGRAM

## STATE OPERATION RECOGNITION- VETERAN'S HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM:

**Under State Code §18-2-34** - Provides for the awarding of high school diplomas, either by the county board in the county in which the veteran resides or the county in which the veteran would have received his or her diploma, whichever location the veteran chooses, to any surviving World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict, or Vietnam Conflict veteran who meets eligibility requirements.

Since October 2007:

- 66 Applications have been received
- 61 were eligible, 4 were not and 1 was an erroneous submission
- 65 applications have been reviewed and of them:
  - 39 were veterans of Vietnam
  - 9 were veterans of Korea
  - 17 were veterans of WWII
- The 4 that were NOT eligible for the program were all veterans of Vietnam
- 99% of applicants are male; 1% are female
- Expected graduation dates range from 1942-1975
- 25 counties are represented in this population

**Great News! WVDVA and the Veteran's Council requested a change in the former language of WV State Code to provide opportunity for these well-deserved Veterans to obtain their High School Diploma. Effective June 2012, the West Virginia Legislature passed HB 4433 which now allows a veteran to be eligible for their High School Diploma even if they did not immediately go into service after leaving or dropping out of High School. Many of our Honorably Discharged Veterans found it necessary to drop out of school to aid in providing for their families, along with a variety of other reasons they faced during that era.**



**Through the Operation Recognition Program and pursuant to the change in Code through HB 4433 which became effective June 2012 –**

**Vietnam Army Veteran Malcomb Bradley proudly receives his High School Diploma in 2012. He left High School in 1958 – Joined Service in 1960.**



**VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS**  
**2012-2013 ELECTED OFFICERS**

**Mr. Jack Gerrard, Commander**  
**The American Legion**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
RR 4, Box 39G  
Clarksburg, WV 26301  
Telephone: (304) 783-5453  
Email: Gerja@frontiernet.net  
[www.wvlegion.org](http://www.wvlegion.org) [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

**Mr. James Talerico, Commander**  
**Veterans of Foreign Wars**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
1312 Adams Avenue  
Clarksburg, WV 26301  
Telephone: (304) 677-0080  
<http://www.vfw.org>

**Michael K. Dawson, Commander**  
**Disabled American Veterans**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
P O Box 274  
Oceana, WV 24870  
Telephone: (304) 682-6592  
Fax: (304) 682-6592  
Email: [wvmail@davfrat.org](mailto:wvmail@davfrat.org)

**Mr. Randy Pleva, President**  
**Paralyzed Veterans of America**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
336 Campbells Creek Drive  
Charleston, WV 25308  
Telephone: (304) 925-9352  
Email: [info@wvpva.org](mailto:info@wvpva.org)  
Web: [www.wvpva.org](http://www.wvpva.org)

**Mr. Miles Epling, Adjutant**  
**The American Legion**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
P O Box 3191  
Charleston, WV 25332  
Telephone: (304) 343-7591  
Email: [wvlegion@suddenlinkmail.com](mailto:wvlegion@suddenlinkmail.com)  
[www.wvlegion.org](http://www.wvlegion.org) [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

**Mr. Donald Young, Adjutant**  
**Veterans of Foreign Wars**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
5532 MacCorkle Ave., SW  
PO Box 9431  
South Charleston, WV 25309  
Telephone: (304) 768-7514  
Email: [vfwqm@frontier.com](mailto:vfwqm@frontier.com)

**Jacob N. Stafford, Adjutant**  
**Disabled American Veterans**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
P O Box 274  
Oceana, WV 24870  
Telephone: (304) 682-6592  
Fax: (304) 682-6592  
Email: [wvmail@davfrat.org](mailto:wvmail@davfrat.org)

**Mr. Dave Simmons, President**  
**Vietnam Veterans of America**  
**West Virginia State Council**  
P O Box 49  
Nemours, WV 24738  
Telephone: (304) 248-8488/ (304) 320-3606 (Cell)  
Fax: 304-248-7316  
Email: [incountryvet@comcast.net](mailto:incountryvet@comcast.net)  
Web: [www.westvirginiastatecouncil.com](http://www.westvirginiastatecouncil.com)

**VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS**  
**2011-2012 ELECTED OFFICERS**

**Ivan Freeland, Secretary**  
**Vietnam Veterans of America**  
**West Virginia State Council**  
RR 9, Box 188  
Fairmont, WV 26554  
Telephone: (304) 366-3131  
Cell phone: (304) 657-5489  
Email: [freeland6768@aol.com](mailto:freeland6768@aol.com)

**Frank Goff, State President**  
**Korean War Veterans Association**  
160 Riverview Drive  
St. Albans, WV 25177  
Telephone: (304) 722-1204  
Web: [www.kwva.org](http://www.kwva.org)

**John B. Nanny, Commandant**  
**Marine Corps League**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
1007 Sumit Street  
Wheeling, WV 26003-3203  
Telephone: (304) 233-5289  
Email: [nanny1007@comcast.net](mailto:nanny1007@comcast.net)

**James Ingram, Jr. - Vice Commandant**  
**Marine Corps League**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
75 Lakeshore Drive  
Charleston, WV 25313  
Telephone: (304) 776-1775 (Home)  
Work Phone: (304) 545-2318

**Charles Baisden, Commander**  
**Military Order of the Purple Heart**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
360 Harts Creek  
Harts, WV 25524  
Telephone: (304) 784-6330  
Email: [grunt6970@hotmail.com](mailto:grunt6970@hotmail.com)

**Cyril L. Kammier, Adjutant**  
**Military Order of the Purple Heart**  
**Department of West Virginia**  
10 Tocomo Court  
Inwood, WV 25428  
Telephone: (304) 229-7445  
Cell: (471) 218-5235  
Fax: (707) 897-2637  
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**Mitch Carte, Chief Service Representative**  
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# THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF WEST VIRGINIA INC.

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December 6, 2012

Keith Gwinn, Cabinet Secretary  
WV Department of Veterans Assistance  
1514-B Kanawha Blvd. East  
Charleston, WV 25311

Dear Cabinet Secretary Gwinn:

On behalf of The American Legion, Department of West Virginia, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you and your staff for the outstanding service provided to this state's veterans and their families.

I appreciate our close working relationship, and it gives me great satisfaction to know that we are striving for the same goal – to help each veteran reap the benefits to which he or she is entitled.

The field offices are most helpful in assisting veterans in their own communities. This allows an individual the luxury of getting help without having to travel a long distance to receive it.

I commend you for your hard work and dedication to the veterans of this great state.

If I can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Miles S. Epling  
Department Adjutant



“For God and Country”



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

[www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) | [info@vfw.org](mailto:info@vfw.org)

December 11, 2012

Keith Gwinn, Secretary  
West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance  
1514 B Kanawha Blvd., East  
Charleston, WV 25311

Dear Secretary Gwinn:

As the year comes to a close, I would like to commend the West Virginia Division of Veterans Assistance employees who are helping veterans file claims for compensation, pension, education, and other benefits at the Department of Veterans Affairs. West Virginia's service officers are first-class, well trained, accredited and certified individuals who ensure that veterans and their families receive all the benefits to which they are entitled.

As has been the case for many years, the State of West Virginia's highly trained service officers play an invaluable role and are relied upon to help the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) continue providing representation before the Department of Veterans Affairs. We highly value our association with you and your team of professionals.

In 2012, that relationship has been enhanced through joint training of three of your accredited service representatives who directly perform their mission for the VFW. We believe in establishing high standards for all our service officers, an ideal obviously shared by the leadership of the State of West Virginia.

Again this year, it is a pleasure for me to say thank you to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

  
WILLIAM L. BRADSHAW  
Director, National Veterans Service