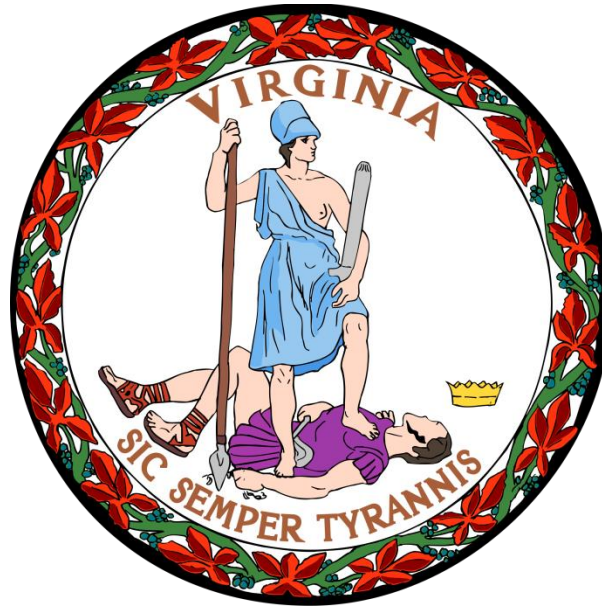


Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Virginia Military Advisory Council 2021 Annual Report



Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
January 2022

2021 VMAC Annual Report

Preface: The Virginia Military Advisory Council was created by the Code of Virginia through §2.2-2666.1. The legislation requires an annual executive summary of interim activity and work of the Council to be submitted to the Governor and General Assembly.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The General Assembly established the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC) as an advisory council to maintain a cooperative and constructive relationship between the Commonwealth and the leadership of the Armed Forces of the United States and the military commanders of such Armed Forces stationed in the Commonwealth, encourage regular communication on continued military facility viability, and encourage the exploration of privatization opportunities and issues affecting preparedness, public safety, and security.

In 2021, the VMAC, led by the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, Carlos L. Hopkins., was comprised of thirty-one (31) military officers representing major military commands and installations in the Commonwealth. The House of Delegates and Senate of Virginia each appointed members to serve on the VMAC. Governor Ralph Northam appointed four individuals with backgrounds in quality of life for military families. Through the normal rotation of installation commanders and appointments, there were eight new members welcomed in 2021.

Under the Secretary's leadership, the focus of the VMAC remained on continuing efforts to make the Commonwealth of Virginia the most military-friendly state in the Nation. This was accomplished by addressing the needs identified by the military service chiefs and installation commanders in the areas of Defense Community Cooperation, and support for Active Duty Military, Reserve, National Guard, Veterans, and their families. The VMAC also kept focus on growing the military mission in Virginia.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The VMAC met three times in 2021. In order to minimize COVID-19 risks, each meeting adhered to social distancing requirements and was offered virtually. Approximately 20% of participants attended virtually.

The Secretariat provided the VMAC briefs and updates on legislative objectives including House Bills 2161 and 2069, and Senate Bill 1150. House Bill 2161 adds "Military Status" as a protected class to the Virginia human rights Act. The law adds protection for Active Duty Service Members by prohibiting landlords from requiring waivers of the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act for rental applications. House Bill 2069 authorizes DMV to issue plates with a "V" for valor to authorized individuals, exempts a one time fee of \$10 for all valor award license plates, and adds numerous military award plates to DMV's inventory. Senate Bill 1150 establishes a Military Spouse Liaison position within DVS to conduct outreach and advocate on behalf of military spouses in the Commonwealth. That position was filled in September.

Virginia's Public to Public Partnerships continued to receive strong attention from the VMAC. In November, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission provided an update on a 2020 road maintenance intergovernmental service agreement (IGSA) shared with the Army, Marine Corps, and the Virginia Department of Transportation. Notable in 2021, was Fort Belvoir's IGSA with Prince William County that provides shared Computer Aided Dispatching & Public Safety interoperability. In July, the VMAC was briefed on Project Search, a unique, business-led, one-year employment preparation program for high school

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seniors with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities. A Project Search program was established aboard Naval Air Station Oceana in September.

The VMAC was updated on the Governor's Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. Military installations are directly affected by the threat of climate change and associated risks. The VMAC was apprised of Secretariat engagement on the Governor's Technical Advisory Committee, including participation as Chair for the Federal Installations Partnerships subcommittee. The Coastal Resilience Master Plan was published in December.

The VMAC was updated on Virginia's 2021 Sentinel Landscapes application; Virginia Secure Corridors. The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership is a coalition of federal agencies, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that works with private landowners to advance sustainable land management practices around military installations and ranges. The partnership connects private landowners with voluntary government assistance programs that support defense, conservation, and agricultural missions; it complements Governor Northam's Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. With the VMAC's support, 20 military commands agreed to endorse Virginia's application. The application was submitted in August, results are expected in late January 2022.

Naval Air Station Oceana's Future Base Design concept received VMAC attention, including an in depth brief from the Commanding Officer of NAS Oceana. Future Base Design is an innovative prototype initiative that integrates military installations and local communities to transform, optimize, and modernize installation support delivery capabilities, and resilience, while also reducing total ownership cost and infrastructure footprints. In August, the City of Virginia Beach and Oceana signed a proclamation for partnership to explore leasing opportunities that facilitate compatible use real estate development proximate to Oceana land parcels in exchange for in-kind consideration.

The VMAC continued a strong relationship with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce including collaboration of military stakeholder perspectives and metrics in development of Blue Print Virginia 2030.

Support of Defense Communities remained a VMAC priority. In November the Secretariat briefed the VMAC on federal grant opportunities for Defense Communities including the Department of Defense (DoD)— Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP). DCIP is designed to address deficiencies in community infrastructure, supportive of a military installation, in order to enhance military value, installation resilience, and military family quality of life. A \$250,000 DCIP grant was awarded to Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads and the City of Portsmouth in 2021. Virginia also won designation as a Defense Manufacturing Community under the DoD Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program (DMCSP). DMCSP is designed to support long-term community investments that strengthen national security innovation and expand the capabilities of the defense manufacturing industrial ecosystem. The designation includes a five million dollar grant that will unite stakeholders from five Virginia economic regions and Congressional districts to develop an industry 4.0 maritime industrial base training pipeline.

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Conclusion

The VMAC is a vital advisory council. Their efforts helped shape and advocate issues that ensure strong and resilient partnerships, support for our Veterans, Service Members and their Families, and make Virginia a national leader in attracting and growing military investment. Challenges and avenues for improvement to serve Virginia's Military members and Veterans, their families, compatibility among our communities and installations, and opportunities to grow the military in Virginia will continue to drive the VMAC. As we remain ever vigilant for growth opportunities, and the potential of DoD budget cuts that could negatively impact the state, it is critical to maintain this valuable council of military leaders and advocates in the Commonwealth of Virginia.