

COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Jennifer Anthony
- Reginald Avery
- Jonathan Branch, Co-Chair
- Michael Blum
- Steven Bolen, Recording Secretary
- Michael Griggs
- Greg Jolissaint, Co-Chair
- Kelly Kesler
- Robert Lowell
- Keith McGuire
- Robert Moore
- Paul Rivers
- Lisa B. Terry, Administrator

COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2020

Established in 2011 by County legislation, the 13-member Commission was created to support veterans and military families by strengthening Howard County's capacity to care for them. By connecting them to available resources, promoting educational and employment opportunities, and continuing community outreach efforts, we are committed to honoring our veteran and military families. Monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the commission had many accomplishments as noted below.

Veteran Support Group

In partnership with Howard County National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), four local veterans were certified as peer facilitators and launched the NAMI Howard County Veteran Support Group. The first meeting was an in-person meet and greet, but due to pandemic restrictions, meetings went virtual. The program has been shared by many regional veteran nonprofit organizations and Ft. Meade leadership. Facilitators were featured on Fort Meade Declassified Podcast and all Maryland veteran commissions and boards were encouraged to eventually develop their own program.

Centenarian Veteran Celebrations

In partnership with local veteran service organizations, drive-by car parade celebrations with citations were planned for 100-year-old WWII veterans, LTC Gerald Greenfield and COL Lou Schott, during the pandemic.

Additionally, many veterans observed 102-year-old, WWII veteran Vivian "Millie" Bailey, tandem skydive as she checked this awe-inspiring item off her bucket list.

Grand Opening of Bailey Park

A ribbon cutting ceremony to recognize the opening of the Vivian "Millie" Bailey Neighborhood Park was held on the Columbia Lakefront with a small outside celebration. The new park offers a picnic area, two playgrounds and an area for the future Howard County Veteran Monument.

Racial Equity Subcommittee

A subcommittee was formed to better understand discrimination and systemic racism as it may or may not have affected veterans living in Howard County. A position letter was shared on the Office of Veterans and Military Families webpage and a survey developed to be distributed in early 2021.

Ongoing Partnership Meetings and Programs

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

- Joint County Veteran Commission – Maryland veteran commissions and advisory boards meet every month to share resources, best practices and challenges
- Andrew Rutherford, Veteran Benefit Specialist, supports veterans regarding VA benefits at the MultiService Center in Laurel

Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) – quarterly meetings to include topics related to access to care, behavioral health, healthy aging, nutrition and physical activity resources workgroups.

VA Healthcare – monthly meeting to share updates with local stakeholders

Howard County Joint Military Council – brings local veteran service organizations together to support veteran events and programs such as quarterly flag collection and retirement ceremonies

- American Legion Posts 156 and 300
- Marine Corps League Detachment 1084
- VFW 7472

Howard County Library System – support programs such as Veteran Songwriting and Creative Writing workshops and MD Humanities Veteran Book Club

Howard County Public School System

- Students Partner with Veterans Club – a HCPSS club where students support veteran events and initiatives
- Vet-in-School Program – support Veterans Day programs with speakers
- JROTC Cadet participation in annual Veterans Day Parade events
- Military Children Buddy Program – piloted a program to match new military/veteran students and their families with seasoned Howard County families

Howard Community College – support Student Veteran Organization virtual meetings with resources and guest speakers.

Memorial, Independence Day and Veterans Day Events

- Participated in the Clarksville 4th of July parade
- Attended Howard County Chamber of Commerce Veterans luncheon
- Participated in the Marine Corps Birthday Celebration and Veterans Day Gala
- Organized and participated in the Howard County Veterans Day Car Parade, a video featuring veteran commission members and ceremony which was live streamed for the community
- Participated in the memorial service dedicated to honoring Howard County Veterans, killed in action, during the Vietnam War
- Supported quarterly flag retirement ceremonies; more than 1,400 tattered flags were properly retired.
- Participated in the initiation of and provide continued support for the Howard County “Honor Roll of Remembrance” program with local veteran service organizations

Other Support

- Organized and conducted monthly open meetings of the Commission
- Supported Made With Love initiative collecting 486 scarves and 253 hats for deployed service member care packages through Operation Gratitude
- Participated in the Howard County 4th Annual Toys for Tots Giveaway hosted by County Executive
- Participated in Howard County Chamber GovConnects breakfast with Fort Meade Commander COL Spragg
- Provided content for Office of Veterans and Military Families Resources and Services e-bulletin
- Participated in Wreaths Across America with Howard County Civil Air Patrol

COMMISSION GOALS 2021

- Develop/publish online Memorial Day Tribute page to honor Howard County veterans who died while serving
- Expand webpage to support a Veterans Day Tribute page to honor all Howard County veterans who served
- Update Veteran Resource Directory with new organizations providing programs and services
- Expand support for veteran small businesses
- Work with regional veteran organizations to highlight behavioral health programs such as yoga and equine therapy; family retreats; and arts programs such as songwriting, creative writing, improv and acting
- Continue to lead the effort to finalize the design, funding and construction of the Howard County Veterans Monument
- Partner with the Columbia Association and local VSOs to further expand the annual Veterans Day Parade
- Partner with local businesses to provide incentives to veterans and military families
- Participate in county-sponsored Memorial Day and Veterans Day programs
- Respond to all County Council and County Executive directed actions
- Recruit potential Commission members
- Continue to respond to the needs and concerns of veterans and military families
- Continue the expansion of our Vet-in-School education program
- Continue outreach to business and property owners to install Reserved Veteran Parking signs

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



Vivian C. "Millie" Bailey Park on the Columbia Lakefront, which has been named for WWII African American female veteran. This is the future home of the Veterans Monument.



Wreaths Across America with Civil Air Patrol



COL Lou Schott's 100th Birthday Celebration included a parade and flag ceremony



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At right, hand-made scarves and hats donated to the annual Made With Love initiative courtesy of the Tom Thumb Square Dancing Club.

Below, County Executive Calvin Ball (center) honors vets at the Veterans Day Ceremony with the Howard County Veterans Foundation.

Below, right, LTC Gerald Greenfield and his wife enjoy his 100th Birthday with a drive-by celebration attended by friends, family and fellow veterans.



 Howard County Commission for
**Veterans and
Military Families**
Department of Community Resources and Services

Lisa B. Terry, Administrator
veterans@howardcountymd.gov • 410-313-0821 (VOICE/RELAY)

If you need this information in an alternate format, contact the Department of Community Resources and Services at 410-313-6400 (voice/relay).



NAMI Connections Veteran Support Group - NEW

*A FREE online, peer-led support group for
Veterans living with mental illness*

**First Monday of
each month via ZOOM
from 6 - 7:30pm**

Click [HERE](#) to register
and receive a link to the meeting.

Joining a **Veteran Peer Support Group** can help you to feel better in any number of ways, such as:

- Knowing that others are going through something similar
- Learning tips on how to handle day-to-day challenges
- Meeting new friends or connecting to others who understand you
- Learning how to talk about things that bother you or how to ask for help

Personal Perspectives

"I've been missing the feeling of community ever since I retired, here I feel accepted as a member of a tight knit group with shared lived experiences."

"I have lost some of my friends in combat, and I have the opportunity to express my feelings without being judged."