

The mark of a great nonprofit is the reach of its mission. Thanks to your support, we are growing the presence and effectiveness of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation every day.

In 2023, nearly half a million\* people accessed Virginia War Memorial programs on-site, online, and on air.

**OUR MISSION** is to support the Virginia War Memorial in its efforts to **preserve** the stories of veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice, to **honor** all veterans and active-duty military, and to **inspire** love of country through education.

**OUR VISION** is that a global audience will recognize the valor and sacrifice of Virginia’s military veterans in the pursuit of liberty, democracy, justice, and peace for all.

### PRESERVING the Stories of Veterans

#### 50 Years Beyond: A Proper “Thank You” for our Vietnam Veterans —

In January 2023 we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, marking the beginning of the end of the war in Vietnam. Virginia is home to nearly 200,000 veterans who served during the Vietnam era, many of whom did not receive a hero’s welcome upon their return. We created the *50 Years Beyond* exhibit to change that. The exhibit offered an opportunity for 50 veterans from across the state to share their experiences and give new generations a glimpse into the Vietnam experience.



#### D+80 Exhibition Opens June 6, 2024, to Mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day —

Planning is underway for the 80th anniversary of D-Day, including the opening of a new exhibition in June 2024. Over 150,000 Allied troops attacked the heavily fortified beaches in Normandy, France, initiating the largest amphibious assault in human history. The Allied invasion of Normandy served as the turning point of World War II, began the drive to liberate Europe, and ultimately led to an Allied victory. What General Dwight D. Eisenhower described as a “great and noble undertaking,” the D-Day invasion would forever characterize the indomitable strength and spirit of the more than 70,000 American troops who participated. Many of them were from Virginia. We share their stories this summer.

**One Week in October** — The Virginia War Memorial Foundation partnered with Blue Ridge PBS for the first time to produce the documentary *One Week in October*. The film premiered on Public Broadcasting Stations across the Commonwealth. The 29th in the Foundation’s award-winning documentary series, this film examines



the 1983 U.S. Marine Corps Barracks bombing in Beirut, Lebanon, during which 241 U.S. military personnel were killed, along with the U.S. military intervention, occupation, and evacuation in Grenada only two days later. The film’s co-production premiered at the Hotel Roanoke on October 23 and in Richmond at the Memorial on October 25. The film aired on all public television stations in Virginia, Washington, D.C., and parts of Maryland, Tennessee, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

**Oral History Project** — For more than 23 years, the Virginia War Memorial has collected veteran oral histories, mainly from World War II veterans who are now deceased. The collection is the mainstay of our educational programming, and we have the largest single trove of Virginia veteran oral histories in the country.

Thanks to support from the Alfred I. duPont Foundation, we have been able to transcribe and digitize over 75% of the collection. This work is slated for completion in 2024.





Garden Club of Virginia  
★  
2023 Common Wealth Award Winner

## Breaking Ground: The Award-Winning Public Green Space Project

**The Common Wealth Award** — In October 2023, the Virginia War Memorial Foundation was awarded the **Garden Club of Virginia 2023 Common Wealth Award** for our Public Green Space Project. This prestigious and historic recognition dates to the Garden Club of Virginia’s annual meeting in May 1979, when the club voted to provide an annual grant to promote projects in the interest of conservation, beautification, horticulture, preservation, and education. Our Public Green Space Project was nominated by the four Richmond Garden Club of Virginia clubs — the Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton, the Boxwood Garden Club, the James River Garden Club, and the Three Chopt Garden Club — and voted on by each of the 48 Garden Clubs across the state.



**Breaking Ground** — We are proud to announce the official start of planting on the grounds of the Memorial. Friends of the Memorial, landscape architects, and horticultural experts gathered here in 2023 to begin this process. These dedicated individuals helped to raise money to create an enhanced public green space. Together, we have created a thoughtful design and strategy that will enhance the landscape, be environmentally sensitive and sustainable, and be a living testament to Virginia’s fallen heroes. This project is scheduled for completion in 2024.

## Growing Beyond Our Walls

**Reaching the World with the Launch of the Virtual Shrine** — The nearly 12,000 names carved on the walls of the Shrine of Memory show visitors what a tremendous impact Virginians have had on our country’s military history. In the spring of 2023, we launched an online “Virtual Shrine of Memory,” designed to share the same impact to those who cannot visit the Memorial. Meticulous research and editing went toward ensuring this Virtual Shrine is as accurate as possible. We welcome more eyes on the project as we continue to monitor for accuracy.



## 2023 Special Events

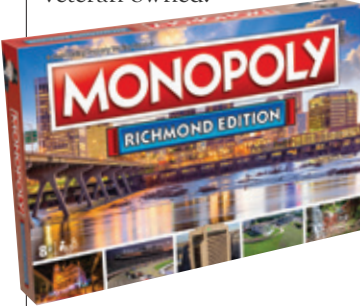


In 2023, our popular **At Ease on the Bus** trips included visits to the Ft. Eustis U.S.

Army Transportation Museum and Yorktown Battlefield, the Hampton Roads Naval Museum and MacArthur Memorial, and Fort Monroe. To learn more, please visit [VaWarMemorial.org/InsiderTrips](http://VaWarMemorial.org/InsiderTrips).



**Sips on the Skyline** welcomed distillery entrepreneurs to the Memorial during Virginia Spirits Month (September). Several of the distilleries are veteran-owned.



## Leadership in America

The **Leadership in America** lecture series brought multiple world-renowned speakers to the Memorial. In 2023, we hosted Vietnam Wall Founder Jan Scruggs, bestselling author and historian Alex Kershaw, and global defense expert Admiral Jim Ellis. Visit [VaWarMemorial.org/LIA](http://VaWarMemorial.org/LIA) to learn more.



We hosted the unveiling of the official Hasbro **Richmond Monopoly** game.

We welcomed back J.B. Hunt for a **Wreaths Across America Key Exchange** in December.





## Veterans' Creative

Veterans' Art Gallery — 2023 gave us an opportunity to celebrate art created by veterans.



Charlie McConnell, a Wise County native and Vietnam Army Veteran, shared his personal collection of artwork last fall.



Retired Navy Aviator and painter Thomas Paulk's work was featured in *Dreams of Flight* through Memorial Day.



Over the summer *Painting with Light: Visible and Infrared* featured the photography of Retired Navy Captain and Roanoke native Rich Davis.

**The Mighty Pen Is Flourishing** — The Mighty Pen Project (MPP) is an intensive writing class designed to help and encourage veterans and their loved ones commit to paper their memories and reflections. In 2023, the Mighty Pen Project has expanded in multiple ways:



**War in Pieces** — Spring 2023 featured the *War in Pieces* festival at the Memorial, bringing to life one-act plays written by veterans in the MPP class. The cast consisted of 30% military veterans. This year, the 2024 production premiered on March 15 in partnership with the Firehouse Theatre.



**The Mighty Pen Podcast** — This new program premiered on January 2, 2024, after nearly a full year of planning and production. The podcast, available on Spotify, YouTube, and Apple, offers dramatic readings of writing pieces from the past 10 years of the MPP archives. Learn more at [VaWarMemorial.org/MPP](http://VaWarMemorial.org/MPP).



## Patriotic Programs

We proudly hosted special commemorations on **Memorial Day** (above), **Veterans Day**, **9/11 Patriot Day**, **K9 Veterans Day** (right), **POW/MIA Recognition Day**, and **Pearl Harbor Day** to honor the fallen, and to recognize veterans and their families.



In January and February, we had volunteers from across the state (right) help write thank you cards to veterans in hospitals and long-term care facilities across Virginia as part of the **National Salute to Veteran Patients Week**.



The annual **Hill of Heroes** flag installation (below) was on view for the two weeks before and after Independence Day. During the installation, we hosted our **Hill of Heroes Day**, a family-friendly event.



# INSPIRING Love of Country through Education

SELECT HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2023

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## GUEST SPEAKERS AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS —

Highlights included the Native American military experience in the 20th century and a panel discussion with veterans who served in Beirut and Grenada in 1983.

UP FROM 2022

57

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS (INCLUDING LIVESTREAMS) —

Our 2023 programs covered diverse topics, from the history of baseball in World War II to an eyewitness interview about Operation Desert Storm. We noted important dates in military history, from V-E Day to Purple Heart Day, and highlighted some treasures from our archives and collections for visitors.

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**COMMUNITY PROGRAMS** — In addition to inviting guests to the Memorial for community programs to commemorate holidays like Memorial Day, we were also out in the community speaking at community organizations, retirement homes, and other memorials and museums.

UP FROM 2022

226

Schools awarded **ASSISTANCE GRANTS** for field trips

UP FROM 2022

**ADMIRAL JOHN MAROCCHI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS** awarded to students entering an ROTC program at a Virginia university

## 2024 Events Calendar

Visit our website and sign up for e-news alerts for details on these events and others at [VaWarMemorial.org/events](http://VaWarMemorial.org/events).

**April 10**

**Leadership in America: Adam Lee** — “Security Threats: Government and the Private Sector”

**May 8**

**At Ease on the Bus** — National Museum of the Marine Corps

**May 27**

**Commonwealth of Virginia’s Memorial Day Ceremony**

**June 6**

**Leadership In America: Gallery Talk and Exhibition Opening** — *D+80: Virginians in the Normandy Invasion*

**June 16**

**Performance — Father’s Day Concert by the Richmond Philharmonic Orchestra**

**June 28**

**Hill of Heroes Installation** — Join us for the installation of 12,000 American flags on our hillside representing the names engraved on the Shrine of Memory.

**June 29**

**Hill of Heroes Celebration and Flag Exchange** — Free family-friendly activities

**August 28**

**At Ease on the Bus** — The Pentagon and Drug Enforcement Administration Museum

**September 11**

**Commonwealth of Virginia’s 9/11 Patriot Day Ceremony**

**Leadership in America:**

**Alex Kershaw** — “Patton’s Prayer”

**September 13**

**Sips on the Skyline**

**September 20**

**National POW/ MIA Recognition Day**

**October 23**

**At Ease on the Bus** — VMI and W&L

**November 11**

**Commonwealth of Virginia’s Veterans Day Ceremony**

**December 7**

**Commonwealth of Virginia’s Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony**

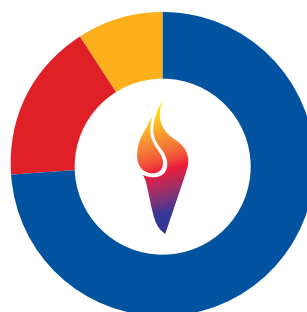


\*460,000+ people accessed our programs: 310,000 online via [VaWarMemorial.org](http://VaWarMemorial.org), YouTube, Vimeo, Blue Ridge PBS, scholarscompass.vcu.edu, and other sites; 96,000 viewership of Memorial Day commemoration broadcast: CBS 6 Richmond, WTKR-TV Norfolk, and WDBJ Roanoke; 50,000 on-site; 5,000 community outreach.

## A Note About Our Financial Statements

As we went to press, the draft of the annual audit of our financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2023, had been reviewed. The numbers, which will be made available on our website when accepted by our board of directors, show how our organization continues to grow. Our growth is only possible because of the remarkable level of private support — from you and other like-minded people — for the Virginia War Memorial Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Thank you.



**\$1,119,000** — 2023 expenses net of endowment investments, cost of goods sold, and cost of direct benefits to donors

**74%** — Program expenses

**17%** — Management expenses

**9%** — Fundraising expenses