

A Future of Promise...

The American Veterans Heritage Center & Dayton VA Campus 2016 Strategic Plan

BACKGROUND

The American Veterans Heritage Center (AVHC) is an independent non-profit organization located on the Dayton VA campus. It was founded with the goal of raising public and private awareness of veteran's contributions, patriotism, and the restoration of the Dayton Soldiers Home historic facilities. The organization has targeted several structures for restoration and is working closely with local and national VA officials and other private organizations to bring these efforts to fruition. Additionally, the AVHC with its dedicated board members, volunteers and partners, seeks to develop a complementary education program for regional schools, an exciting series of museum and preservation facilities for the VA campus, and a revitalization project that could help to stimulate economic growth across the region. The goal of the AVHC is not simply to preserve history but to breathe life into it and to harness Dayton's rich military legacy as a springboard for revitalization, education and inspiration to all those who live, work or play in the Miami Valley region.

Executive Summary

Long known as the “Gem City,” Dayton’s true unpolished gem is its ongoing contribution to American freedom through support for the U.S. military. The city, its residents, and its businesses/industry have played key roles in numerous national defense and national pride initiatives, including, but not limited to, Wright Patterson Air Force Base’s aeromedical contributions to the American space program, Monsanto’s involvement in the Manhattan Project, NCR’s World War II manufacturing efforts and role in breaking the Enigma Code, Dayton’s status as ‘birthplace of aviation’ and all its subsequent military and civilian aerospace contributions, and, of course, the role of the sprawling Dayton VA campus as a birthplace of veteran’s medical care in the United States. However, these historic achievements don’t even begin to scratch the surface of what the Miami Valley has done and been . . . and what it *can be* again.

On the surface, this strategic plan is a document that proposes the restoration of historic structures on the Dayton VA campus. Additionally, it ties in the creation of new public facilities/non-profit entities on the campus (within the aforementioned restored structures), as well as a campus-based educational initiative and a variety of on- and off-campus community outreach projects. Finally, it seeks to leverage the October, 2012, Department of the Interior designation of the campus as a National Historic Landmark. This strategic plan does not merely manifest the American Veterans Heritage Center’s (AVHC’s) desire to work closely with VA officials to revitalize the Dayton campus; rather, it envisions a much larger cooperative effort that revitalizes the entire Miami Valley, as it spurs the destination dollars of heritage tourism, the economic stimulation of new or invigorated businesses and industry, and the creative energies of citizens with renewed hope and opportunity. To further institutionalize our collaboration with the Dayton VAMC and regional community, we have jointly developed an overarching Memorandum of Understanding between the AVHC and Dayton VA officials to guide our initiative planning, and confirmed that this AVHC Strategic Plan is consistent with and wholly supportive of the Greater West Dayton Improvement Plan

This plan proposes utilizing the VA campus as the western underpinning of a heritage tourism and ‘collaborative community’ corridor stretching across the city and incorporating non-profits, the National Park area, the historic Wright-Dunbar neighborhood where the Wright Brothers and Paul Laurence Dunbar lived and worked, historic sites, businesses/industry, military and veterans services, and medical facilities that can be marketed together as a coherent whole which will serve as an engine of economic development. We feel strongly that our collaborative community concept, coupled with dynamic educational initiatives, can and will help Dayton address its current need to stimulate job growth, defeat the specter of recession, and strengthen the unity, initiative, and morale of our neighborhoods.

In the late 1800s, Dayton had more patents per capita than any other city in the nation. It has long been a community of innovation and exploration. The combination of military, medical, technology facilities, as well as businesses/industry inspired a unique blending of the creative and financial capital of private industry, the military and the government. While economic woes and business losses have plagued this community in recent years, those losses can serve to motivate us, rather than to define our future. This community is neither dead nor dying. After all, the patents and innovations of yesterday did not spring from a vacuum . . . rather, they grew out of a need; out of a desire for something better. Dayton and the Miami Valley are, without question, in need of something better. It is not necessary to invent a new identity, it is only necessary to rebuild and unite the unique, historic aspects of Dayton, and polish them with a 21st century luster.

While historic preservation and heritage tourism play a definitive role in this plan, they are by no means the only element. Preserving history is noble, necessary and essential to the continuity of any evolved society. However, preservation as its own reward means little. While that statement may sound harsh, consider this . . . a young disadvantaged student living in Dayton and struggling to understand his/her role in society could not care less whether buildings on the VA campus have new ceilings and floors, whether Orville Wright’s notebook or Paul Laurence Dunbar’s poems are carefully preserved in a glass case somewhere on Third Street, or whether the parts and pieces of the Memphis Belle are being cataloged and restored in a hangar on the east side of town. Historic preservation and heritage tourism truly *mean something* only when

they are used as a means to an end, when they become part of a larger community-wide initiative; when they give back to the community via education, inspiration, motivation, and opportunity.

Tell that same disadvantaged student that this preservation effort, this union between past, present, and future, is going to *change* his or her life and create new realities, circumstances and opportunities, THEN and only then does it begin to mean something. When the preservation project puts new, exciting, and relevant materials into the classroom, it means something. When the preservation project inspires a renaissance on the west side of Dayton as people gather once again on the VA campus for social activities, entertainment, and inspiration, it means something. When the combined power of the Miami Valley's private industry, military, medical, and governmental entities begin to generate new ideas, technologies and digital initiatives, it means something. When those innovations and technologies, and the opportunities and employment born of them, become tangible for the citizens of Dayton, THEN it means something.

This is why the AVHC has sought to define and develop a plan whose goal is not simply to dress up a piece of real estate or preserve a stack of documents for posterity. The restoration goals of the AVHC each have specific, practical objectives that will enhance the value of the VA campus to the community, and that will tie the campus and its initiatives to the goals and objectives of other entities in the Miami Valley. Likewise, each of our objectives has specific educational and motivational benefits tied to them. These benefits are designed to be shared with other institutions in the region and to be augmented by inputs and innovations from the business, academic and medical communities.

The AVHC was started as a means to raise funds and awareness for restoration efforts on the VA campus and to honor and preserve the legacy of America's veterans. Those elements will always be the core of its mission, but it is eagerly defining exciting new opportunities for expanding the impact of our initiatives, working cooperatively with other Miami Valley organizations, and building a dynamic economic future for this region. The pages that follow explain the changes it seeks for the historic Dayton VA campus, and how those changes and accompanying initiatives and partnerships can and will create a collaborative community within the Miami Valley and a vital new engine for economic development. The AVHC welcomes and invites your comments and participation.

Subsequent to the drafting of this 2016 revision to the American Veterans Heritage Center and Dayton VA Campus Strategic Plan, an announcement was made by the Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington, DC, that the Dayton Campus had been selected as the site of the National VA Archives. A Memorandum of Agreement is currently being circulated, with every hope and expectation that it can be signed and publically announced prior to the end of calendar year 2016. In order to avoid confusion with other archival entities, the site of the VA Archives has tentatively been named The National Department of Veterans Affairs History, Research and Heritage Center (hereinafter referred to as "The Center"). Once the full scope of the Center has been determined, this Strategic Plan, to the extent necessary, will be revised to incorporate the projects listed herein under The Center's operations.

I. Our Vision - Why We Exist

To preserve the assets and history of the Dayton VA Campus and make it the national archetype for honoring and supporting America's veterans, through Preservation, Inspiration and Education (PIE), and to build a collaborative community initiative that will educate, motivate, inspire and revitalize the region for years to come.

Our "PIE" Vision:

Preserve . . .

- The buildings, the heritage, and the history of the Dayton VA Campus, and the personal legacies and recollections of America's veterans.

Inspire . . .

- Our community . . . to support and serve its veterans;
- Our veterans . . . to support and serve each other, and to share their stories, experiences, and wisdom with current and future generations; and,
- Our youth . . . to a higher calling of service on behalf of community, school, neighborhood, and nation.

Educate . . .

- Our nation . . . about our veterans' legacy and the importance of honoring, thanking, and supporting them;
- Our youth . . . about the service of our veterans, both in times of war and when they returned home to build and serve their communities, the meaning of sacrifice for the benefit of a national ideal, the joy of gaining knowledge, and the discovery of their own potential to serve, to lead, to learn, and not to simply preserve history but to write their own names in it; and,
- Our community . . . about the vital resource, the compelling history, and the essential mission that thrives on the Dayton VA campus.

II. Our Mission – What We Do

To endeavor daily to advance the cause of honoring our veterans, preserving their history and the history of the Dayton VA Campus, while educating the public toward a greater understanding of America's rich legacy of citizen service and sacrifice in the name of freedom. To achieve these goals, we will:

- Identify and preserve specific historic facilities located on the Dayton VA Campus and make them viable for organizations and services that will enrich the community and support the mission and vision of the VA and the AVHC;
- Establish and operate on the Dayton VA Campus an American Veterans Hall of Honor that celebrates its veteran inductees not only for their military service but for how they used the lessons, tools, and experiences of that service for the betterment of their communities. Unlike many historic preservation facilities, The Hall of Honor will not simply preserve history, it will use that history and preservation as a means to inspire the future and build dynamic new initiatives and leaders in the Miami Valley, the State of Ohio and beyond. As of this printing, there has not been any National Veterans Hall of Honor or Hall of Fame established in the United States;
- Establish the American Veterans Research Library and The Center to capture and preserve the history of the VA system and individual veteran's histories as recorded through memoirs, stories, articles, journals, diaries, letters, images, audio and videotape, and to guarantee that the materials preserved by this facility are digitized and accessible to the public. The Department of Veterans Affairs has designated our Campus as the home for The Center;
- Welcome on to the campus and into our historic facilities a diverse assortment of organizations and services that complement the VA's emphasis on serving body, mind and soul and the AVHC's emphasis on preserving, inspiring, and educating;
- Endeavor to establish and operate a variety of historic learning defense contributor remembrance facilities, such as: (1) a VA medical Museum that tracks the evolution of VA and military medicine, and individual military museums that spotlight the role Ohio has played in the development and support of the U.S. Armed Forces, (2) a Museum of Military Innovation that traces the evolution of technology and innovative solutions developed by the military during wartime, and how those advancements have been used to enhance the quality of life in the civilian sector at home and around the world, and (3) a Defenders of Freedom Walk of Honor;

- Endeavor within the Greater Dayton community to build exciting new corporate, governmental, and organizational partnerships that spotlight the innovation, creativity, heritage and patriotism of the Miami Valley and its wonderfully diverse population;
- Play both a leadership and supporting role in developing programs and initiatives that help enhance the standard of living in the Miami Valley, through education, heritage tourism, and cross-promotional efforts with for-profit, non-profit and historic preservation entities that will work cooperatively to make Dayton a more appealing location for business and industry, as well as for those seeking to raise families and embrace the American dream;
- Use our veteran-based assets and resources to work closely with the academic community to build programming and activities that will enhance state test scores and rankings for Miami Valley schools, even as they expand student appreciation for American History, language arts, leadership skills, science, math and technology, in addition to giving young people a greater understanding of the roots of their freedom and the men and women who have sacrificed to preserve it; and
- Endeavor to establish the VA campus as the thriving western anchor of a Dayton Historic Heritage Corridor that will not only preserve the community's rich military heritage, but will also contribute to an academic, professional and innovative rebirth of the region.

III. History of the VA Campus and the AVHC

The 382-acre Dayton VA Campus is not only America's largest VA campus (in terms of acreage), but also possesses an incredible wealth of local and national history. Since its founding almost 150 years ago, the Dayton VA has hosted numerous American Presidents and dignitaries, and boasts an impressive assortment of "firsts" that testify to the cultural and social impact of this majestic facility.

In addition to being the "birthplace of VA medicine" the campus was also home to the first large scale federal rehabilitation program, in which veterans received specialized vocational training, thus allowing them to eventually leave the campus to become contributing members of society. Even more significant is the Dayton VA's status as the first fully integrated federal facility. Almost a century before America's military began to racially integrate its forces, black and white veterans were thriving together on the campus, with no regard to skin color. This is a significant achievement to preserve and promote.

Other historic firsts range from the significant to the strange. The campus can lay claim to having the first permanent church built on a VA campus (and the second church ever built by the U.S. government). The Protestant Chapel (described in Section IV.A.1) was constructed in 1868, the year after Dayton became the site for the Central Branch of the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. The grounds are also home to the "first monkey house constructed on a VA campus" (leading to the inevitable question "how many other monkey houses dot our nation's VA facilities?"). The monkey house was undoubtedly part of the zoo that flourished on the grounds during the late 1800s. The colorful campus menagerie included an aviary, deer, alligators, antelopes, bear, foxes and a wolf, in addition to a full complement of livestock such as cattle, hogs, sheep and chickens.

Veteran-residents helped tend the livestock and care for the more exotic four-legged residents. Likewise, they took care of the campus grounds which were a popular destination for local residents and tourists. The VA facility became an important cross-country stop for traveling show business companies that would entertain campus residents and members of the community alike. Evenings would find an enthusiastic crowd clustered around the ornate bandstand to be entertained by the Home Band, which was popularly regarded as the second finest military band in the country, second only to the Marine Band.

The Dayton VA campus was not only a bustling hub of social activity for the entire Miami Valley, it was a visible testament to America's concern for its veterans. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the campus was the leading tourist destination east of the Mississippi River, attracting thousands upon thousands of persons from throughout the country and beyond. As the years flew by, the sprawling campus continued to thrive, but some of its structural and landscape attractions fell into disrepair. Funding cuts and changes in the social climate of the Miami Valley meant fewer visitors, fewer residents and less need, all of which has translated into gardens, grounds and buildings that have lost their usefulness. The campus has become more isolated from the community. Most Miami Valley residents either don't know it is there or don't realize and appreciate its unique history and somber beauty.

Since its founding in the late 1990s, the *American Veterans Heritage Center, Inc.*, an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit, has sought to revitalize and restore some of the neglected buildings on the campus. Progress has been slow but steady and AVHC Board members and volunteers have devoted countless hours and energies to advocating on behalf of the campus and working closely with VA officials to identify potential restoration projects and available funding. We have achieved some notable successes. In 2001 AVHC obtained a "Save America's Treasures" matching grant that dedicated \$130,000 to restore the Protestant Chapel floor, making it once again usable by the campus and the community for a variety of activities. In 2012, the Dayton VAMC provided appropriated funds to complete the Chapel facility restoration, leaving only restoration of the Chapel organ as a future objective. Further, following several years, of analyses and assessments, the AVHC succeeded in working with the National Park Service and Department of Interior to enable the Dayton VAMC campus to obtain National Historic Landmark status in 2012. In 2013, with the commitment of the Dayton VAMC and significant assistance from The Montgomery County Ohio State Extension and the Greater Montgomery County Master Gardeners Association (GMCMGA), the AVHC initiated a major restoration of the Dayton VAMC Grotto and Gardens. While we intend to make further enhancements to the Grotto and Gardens, and put in place a sustainment plan to ensure the grounds will not fall into disrepair again, the significant restoration already completed resulted in this project receiving the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's 2016 Chairman's Award. Also in 2016, AVHC initiated planning for a Defenders of Freedom Walk of Honor to recognize Veterans and others who have contributed to our Nation's security. Finally In April 2016, the SEC/VA announced the selection of the Dayton VAMC as the future home of the The Center.

As these restoration and preservation efforts evolve, AVHC will be developing projects and activities to be shared with the community and educational institutions, both on-campus and by way of collaborative outreach programming across the Miami Valley.

IV. Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities outlined below are broken into four key areas:

- A. Capital Improvements
- B. Public Facilities, Programming & Activities
- C. Public Education
- D. Digital/Virtual Projects

Each of these strategic priorities has a variety of associated initiatives that require prioritization. The goal is to clearly define each initiative, its cost, its benefit to the community and the VA Campus, and the potential funding resources that may bring the project to fruition. Portions of the Public Facilities and Activities priorities, and all of the Public Educational and Digital/Virtual Project priorities, are currently aspirational or, at best, long-term in nature and will require more time to mature. As a result, those priorities are addressed in an Appendix to this Strategic Plan.

A. Capital Improvements (Restoration Project) - Preserve

The buildings identified for restoration in this plan have national historic significance. They are part of a larger AVHC-VA cooperative initiative to preserve campus buildings for adaptive re-use for non-profit, academic, commercial and related enterprises. Adaptive re-use is a process which adapts old buildings that have outlived their original function for new uses while retaining their historic features. Adaptive re-use can be beneficial not only to historic preservation but to sustainable development, as well. The entire process for adaptive re-use will be phased-in as follows, with the identified buildings going through each of these three phases: Phase I – Preparation of phase 2 and 3 construction documents and structural stabilization/restoration to include the foundation system, structural walls and framing, doors and windows, porches, and roofing system; Phase 2 – Interior rehabilitation to include walls, ceilings, flooring, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection system, and fire and security detection systems; and Phase 3 – Interior build-out for approved end-use.

The projects have been prioritized below in numerical order, but it is the intention of the AVHC to pursue funding for these projects simultaneously. In the event that it is necessary to prioritize, we will do so in the order presented. The first restoration priority, recently completed, except for needed restoration of the century and a quarter old pipe organ, is the Protestant Chapel, also known as the Soldier's Home Chapel, which was constructed by Civil War veterans between 1868 and 1870. The Chapel, however, is merely the first step in a much larger undertaking to honor our nation's veterans. Also on the priority list for the Capital Improvements initiatives are: the 1871 Headquarters Building (now known as the Administration Building), the 1880 Patient Library (also known as the Putnam Library), the 1881 Clubhouse and, most recently added, the 1898 Catholic Chapel and the bus/trolley station. It is anticipated that the Administration Building and the Clubhouse will house the newly designated Center.

The goal is to allow restored buildings to serve their original purposes, or a modern variation thereof, when possible, especially the Chapels and the Library, or to introduce an adaptive reuse that reflects the spirit and/or purpose of the VA. Some of the uses proposed in this plan include: a national Veterans Hall of Honor, The Center and research facility, a museum documenting the history of VA medicine, educational and conference facilities, office space for veteran-oriented organizations, space for veteran-owned businesses or organizations (VETS Town), and even commercial properties that are tied to historic and/or veteran-oriented themes.

The AVHC works closely with the VA, the Dayton business community, and other regional non-profits and organizations in order to identify a "best use" strategy for restorable and/or currently usable structures on the campus. Likewise, we must discuss with our partner organizations their individual objectives for growth and revitalization, and tie those objectives into the overall plan for marketing, promotions and fundraising in an effort to spur economic development for the entire region. While historic preservation is a priority, the overarching goal is to use such preservation as a springboard to economic and workforce development, and educational initiatives that will inspire and motivate the Miami Valley's young people toward a greater appreciation for learning and for their own unique potential, as well as helping them to embrace the concept of service to their school, community and fellowman.



Priority 1 - Protestant Chapel

Historical significance: As the oldest building on the campus, the Protestant Chapel is rich with history. It was once a gathering place for the community at large and has become so once again following recent restoration work. The Chapel was built in 1868, and is the first permanent chapel ever constructed by the VA System and the second federally-funded place of worship. Dedicated October 26, 1870, the structure has Gothic architecture with limestone quarried from the VA grounds. The building is a simple oblong with two projecting entrances at one end and a 64 foot tower. At the other end is a slated spire that is 63 foot high. The east gable has a 14 x 27 stained glass window. The interior seats about 600 people and offers a stunning view of five stained glass windows. The original woodwork was of walnut and ash. Originally, heating coils under the pews provided warmth, but they aggravated veterans' old leg wounds and were removed in 1883.

The Chapel was used for both Protestant and Catholic worship until 1898, when the Catholic Chapel was built. Catholic services were held semi-monthly on Thursday mornings and were directed by community priests, until Catholic priests were employed at the Home. At the veterans' request, a German Baptist minister was hired to conduct German language services. Church services were well attended by both veterans and citizens from the community.

By July, 1998, the Chapel floor had deteriorated to such an extent that it was closed to the public. AVHC's first priority was to repair and restore the flooring to allow the building to reopen to the public. This was done through a "Save America's Treasures" grant. The restoration project was completed in 2012 using Dayton VAMC-appropriated funds, and the Chapel is now being used for campus religious services and initiatives, as well as by the community, for religious services, weddings, funerals and other public gatherings. Only the restoration of the chapel's historic organ remains before total restoration is complete

Cost remaining for restoration of the pipe organ - \$175,000

Benefit to the Campus and Community: This beautiful old church has again become a gathering place for any number of religious and secular organizations. Indeed, it could function as an inter-faith facility for multi-denominational Christian organizations and perhaps even for Jewish activities on the VA campus. Since there is no synagogue on the campus, there may be considerable value in terms of good will and community participation in encouraging a Jewish presence and inter-faith activities. It might also open up additional funding opportunities in terms of available restoration grants from private philanthropic organizations.

Priority 2 – Administration Building

Historical Significance: Built in 1871, the Administration Building (originally known as the Headquarters Building) is the second oldest structure on the campus, and housed the administrative offices for the Central Branch. The offices of the VA Governor, Secretary, Treasurer and Adjutant were located on the first floor. The Putnam and Thomas Libraries were located on the second floor and were named for noted individuals. In 1891, both libraries were moved to the Patient Library (see Priority 3), due to the need for increased space.

The facility was remodeled numerous times over the years and has been used as a space for a variety of offices and organizations including:

- Domiciliary Officer and Domiciliary Office
- Utility Officer
- Supply Officer, Deputy Supply Officer, and Supply Office
- VFW Office and Storage Room
- DVA Office
- Legal Department with Chief and Assistant Chief Attorneys
- Special Services
- Chaplain Service
- Recreation Service
- The Sentinel Office and Publication Room

- Firing Squad Locker Room
- Credit Union
- AFGE (Labor Union)
- Veterans Handicraft Store

The Headquarters Building was used until 1989 when AFGE and the Credit Union relocated to other buildings.

Total cost for stabilization, renovation and restoration: \$10,800,000

Benefit to the VA Campus and Community: Just as the Headquarters building was once home to many organizations and activities, it will be once again. In April 2016, the SEC/VA announced the Headquarters Building will be one of two existing historic facilities to be restored and re-purposed to house The Center. While funding arrangements have yet to be finalized, this announcement allows the Dayton VAMC and regional community to initiate planning for these Archives, with the eventual creation of temporary construction jobs, as well as long term management/archivist positions.

Priority 3 – Patient Library/Putnam Library

Historical Significance: The Patient Library was erected in 1880 and was originally used as the Quartermaster’s Building. In 1891, it was converted into a library to house the Putnam and Thomas Libraries. Both Libraries were originally kept in the Headquarters Building. The libraries accumulated so many volumes that space was at a minimum and more space was needed.

The first floor was used as a reading room and circulation area, while the Putnam Library was placed on the second floor and the Thomas Library on the third floor. The building was used as a library until May 2000. Today, it houses the AVHC and a volunteer-run military museum (The Miami Valley Military History Museum) on the first floor.



The

Total cost for restoration: \$4,936,000

Benefit to the VA Campus and Community: This structure could be utilized as the American Veterans’ Research Library, the sister facility to the American Veterans Hall of Honor and VA Archives.

In addition to the research library concept, the private military museum (currently housed in the Putnam Library) could be expanded within this facility, or blended with the Hall of Honor or the proposed military learning centers on “Doctor’s Row.” As a research facility, this structure would be an ideal location for a dynamic “Military Melting Pot” exhibit that emphasizes the military contributions of a broad spectrum of cultures and ethnicities. This would be an important attraction for young people seeking to understand how their heritage has played a role in shaping the United States Armed Forces. Through materials, interactive displays and reference resources, this exhibit would be tied to the Hall of Honor, the Research Library and the campus’ education initiatives.

Priority 4 – Clubhouse

Historical Significance: The Clubhouse is a three-story Renaissance Revival style building with a full basement and a partial mezzanine floor. The building has brick walls and quoined corners on a stone base. The main entrance has an elaborate, arched ornament with a fleur-de-lis sculpted in relief. The second floor windows are colonnaded on all four sides. An exposed steel fire escape is at one side. The roof is hipped asphalt shingles with metal gutters and deep eaves, with exposed ornamental rafters. The building is separated into two sections by a central hallway. The northern section once housed the billiard room that was overlooked by two tiers of galleries, with small rooms that were used for club purposes. Two large halls occupy the southern section of the building. The upper hall was used by organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic, the Union Veteran League, and the Naval Veterans Association. The lower hall, once known as the Social Hall, was used by members for visiting, reading, writing, card playing and chess.

Total cost for stabilization, renovation and restoration: \$13,000,000

Benefit to the VA Campus: This facility is currently the second of the two selected by the SEC/VA to house The Center.



facilities

The AVHC and partner organizations will initiate a targeted capital campaign at the local, regional and national level (see Marketing Plan) to raise the funds necessary to restore this beautiful structure and establish The Center. The restoration of the Putnam/Patient Library can and should be tied to this effort. By promoting the specific goals tied to these two buildings, attention will be drawn to the overall restoration initiative on the campus.

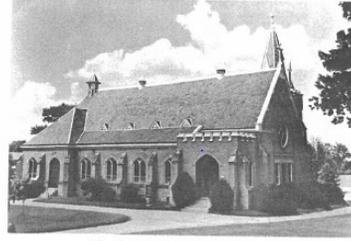
Building restoration is not easy to fund, particularly in a slumping economy, unless there is a clear and immediate use for the restored structures. The AVHC intends to work with the VA to assign specific occupants and usages for the proposed restoration projects, and to develop detailed cost analyses, timelines, and benchmarks so that targets can be set and met (or exceeded) and donors can follow the progress as their funding achieves its desired results. Once the restoration efforts ramp up, progress will be trackable online, via the AVHC website, which will keep donors up-to-date, and will serve as a critical fundraising tool and energize others toward participation.

Priority 5 – The Catholic Chapel

Historical Significance: The Catholic Chapel, built in 1898, provided a place for worship for the many members of the Catholic faith on campus for over a century, although it is now closed to the public due to its deteriorated conditions.

Total cost for restoration: \$2,000,000

Benefit to the VA Campus: While the restored Protestant Chapel presently serves as an interfaith place of worship, the large Catholic presence on campus deserves a sanctuary of its own.



The Catholic Chapel built in 1898.

Priority 6 – Grotto & Grounds

Once a scenic centerpiece of the VA campus, the Grotto had been consumed by nature and lack of attention. In 2013, with the support of Ms. Darlene Richardson from the Department of Veterans Affairs History Office, the AVHC, the Dayton VAMC, The Montgomery County Ohio State University Extension, and the Greater Montgomery County Master Gardeners Association (GMCMGA) initiated the effort to restore the Grotto to its previous glory using Dayton VAMC funds, and private donations. Today it is visible to passersby and creates a welcoming attraction to campus visitors. The restoration already completed has been so significant that the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation awarded its prestigious Chairman’s Award to the Grotto and Gardens. We are currently working with the VA and numerous landscapers and/or garden clubs, specifically the GMCMGA, to expand the restoration project to include the second lake, and coordinate future Grotto maintenance responsibilities. These private organizations are interested in providing this support in exchange for recognition and related promotional perks. We will also contact local Boy Scout Troops to determine if some aspect of Grotto maintenance could be completed as one or more Eagle Scout projects, i.e., contact the Miami Valley Boy Scouts of America with the idea of creating a huge, multi-Eagle project that brings together Scouts from different neighborhoods and regions of the Miami Valley, each working on a separate element of the project, but working in unison toward the larger goal. It would be a wonderful opportunity to not only spotlight the VA campus, Scouting and the Dayton region as well, but also to encourage young people of different races, religions, ethnicity and economic backgrounds, by working together, to realize there are no important differences between us.

Priority 7 – Defenders of Freedom Walk of Honor

AVHC has initiated efforts with the Dayton VAMC to create a walkway at three locations in the historic section of the campus. . We envision a concrete walkway which would be “edged” with commemorative bricks to be sold to the public, and installed as sales progress. Proceeds from brick sales will be applied to other projects in this strategic plan.

Additional Projects

As funding becomes available, there are numerous other projects that will be undertaken on the VA grounds through a cooperative effort between the AVHC, the VA, and other private or public organizations.

Liberty House – Liberty House is being examined as a future site for VETS-Town, an initiative to house veteran-owned small businesses or disabled veteran-owned small businesses at reduced rental cost. Liberty House could also be an ideal location for a Museum of Military Innovation. This facility would offer a state-of-the-art exploration of how military and combat situations have necessitated and nurtured emerging technologies. It would look at the improvements in transportation, weaponry, textiles, synthetics, communications and electronics that have been initiated or refined through military use and/or under the extreme demands of the battlefield. The objective would be to help civilians understand how defense dollars do not simply support war and soldiers, but can also lead to a better quality of life on the home front.

Doctor's Row – We are currently reviewing two options for the five houses known as Doctor's Row. The first is to convert these five houses into 5 duplexes to house homeless veterans with families as part of a larger Enhanced Use Lease homeless veterans housing project which would also include new construction of a multi-story facility to house single homeless veterans. The second option is to dedicate each house to one branch of service. Contained within that house would be a recruiting office, a veteran's services officer and a modest museum/learning center that features the history of that specific branch of service, with an emphasis on ties to Ohio and the Miami Valley.

Dayton VAMC Grounds - The grounds themselves offer tremendous opportunities for campus-based and community outreach activities. One relatively inexpensive option would be the development of a combination community and Veterans' Therapy Garden. This project would provide plots for community vegetable gardens and could possibly tie in with the Dayton MetroParks' 'Grow with Your Neighbors' program. It, would also feature land dedicated to helping veterans by means of horticultural therapy, which is used in a variety of medical facilities and settings. Additionally, the therapy gardens could be used as a mentoring opportunity between participating veterans and young people in the community, providing inter-generational exposure to agricultural learning opportunities as well as job and business skills. The end result could be an annual Farmer's Market, developed and manned by the therapy vets and the participating young people. This is the type of project that excites potential funders, because of its medical and rehabilitative elements, as well as its educational and mentoring components tied to a solid concept of workforce development and inter-generational experiences.

A clever promotional and historical component would be to declare that this is "Dayton's Victory Garden," drawing attention to the World War II Victory Garden concept and emphasizing that these Gardens constitute a victory in revitalizing the VA campus and a victory in helping Dayton residents overcome the recession and reinforce their own self-sufficiency.

Tunnel Facade – Once the channel through which deceased soldiers were transported from the hospital to the cemetery, this partially covered stone archway offers a macabre historic appeal. While the tunnel itself is beyond repair, restoring the tunnel façade would be of interest to historians and military enthusiasts, and would provide a compelling stop on campus tours, as well as a fascinating component to the VA Medical Museum, serving as a reminder of how far we have come with our VA care.

Bus/Trolley Station – this small facility located just inside the Gettysburg Avenue gate to the Dayton VAMC once served as the transportation link between campus residents and the city. AVHC is examining the building as a possible site for a gift shop.

B. Public Facilities, Programming & Activities – Inspire & Educate

By involving the Greater Miami Valley businesses, organizations and individuals in the revitalization of the Dayton VA campus and the introduction of on-campus and outreach projects and programs, we will help to stimulate a renaissance of

the community as a whole. This can be done by building relationships between all facets of the VA campus and its external counterparts (medical, religious, academic, historic and/or non-profit organizations and veterans services offices), as well as by encouraging the presence of innovative commercial enterprises that complement or augment the VA mission. The concept of tying this collaborative effort to a specific theme (as San Antonio has successfully done with its “silicon circle” concept) is explained in more detail in Section .D. Cyber Initiatives.

There is a broad range of programs and activities that can help tie together the campus and the community. As explained in the following section, the Heritage Tourism concept is one important element, especially in a region like the Miami Valley that is blessed with a compelling story to tell. However, the tourism aspect is not an end unto itself.

Heritage Tourism – A means to an end – Dayton’s dynamic military and aviation heritage provides a strong bond with the past that can and should be better utilized for the purposes of tourism. Visitors seeking to follow the history of aviation, aerospace, and the American military (specifically the Air Force) can do so through a variety of existing and proposed facilities and initiatives. Like the multitude of museums and learning centers that sprawl across Washington, D.C., Dayton should tie together its vital heritage components into a cohesive network for marketing and promotional purposes.

While the aviation component is certainly one of Dayton’s best known heritage attractions, it is by no means the only one. Projects such as the National Aviation Heritage Area, Dayton’s multi-site National Park honoring the Wright Brothers and Paul Laurence Dunbar, and the Aviation Trail concept can be tied to an overarching heritage theme that emphasizes Dayton’s reputation for innovation and service. That overarching innovation element can then be tied into the “collaborative community “concept outlined in Section D, thus bringing together past, present and future beneath the heritage umbrella.

A 2003 white paper on Heritage Tourism and the Federal Government, prepared by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, makes a strong case for cooperative effort in building any heritage tourism approach. While the paper deals predominantly with inter-agency cooperation at the federal level, it makes numerous valid points about the importance of sustainable public-private relationships.

Statistics on heritage tourism as defined by the Travel Industry Association (TIA) reflect the following realities regarding the appeal and impact of heritage tourism:

- Two-thirds (65 percent) of American adult travelers included heritage or culture on a trip. This translates into approximately 92.7 million travelers per year.
- Heritage travelers typically stay 4.7 nights on trips compared to 3.4 nights for others.
- They stay longer and spend more money – an average of \$631 per trip, compared to \$457 for other travelers.
- Such travelers are more likely to stay in a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast, and 18 percent spend \$1,000 or more on a trip (a higher percentage than other travelers).
- Forty-four percent include shopping (compared to 33 percent for other travelers). Heritage shoppers look for unique items that represent the destination. Such travelers are more likely to take a group tour, and include a broader variety of activities in their itineraries.
- Heritage travelers tend to be older, and are more likely to have a post-graduate degree.

It is clear that heritage tourism, when properly thought out and implemented, can have tremendous value. The argument can be made that a “down economy” only increases its value, as travelers and vacationers seek to derive greater benefits from the dollars they spend. Creating a heritage tourism corridor that entertains, educates and informs will benefit Dayton as it

struggles to recover from the most recent economic downturn, and will help define and reinforce the region's value in a manner that shields it from inevitable future economic shifts.

AVHC Museum (Miami Valley Military History Museum) – (located in the Putnam Library) – Currently an informal facility with artifacts owned by several AVHC volunteers and board members, this modest but compelling museum needs greater definition with regard to its ongoing role on the VA campus. It currently does not have formal museum status or an individual 501(c)(3) designation and, as such, cannot seek sustainable funding or undertake any type of expansion effort. One option is to work toward blending the current assets of the museum with the Hall of Honor facility or one of the other proposed museums. In this manner, it can serve as a starter collection for one of the proposed facilities.

Public Activities and Education:

Memorial Day Event – The AVHC has hosted a Memorial Day event, the Patriot's Freedom Festival, on the campus grounds for over a decade. Each year we achieve progress on our goals to make this event profitable, educational and self-sustaining. There remains a clear need to better educate the public as to the presence and purpose of this event. Media and corporate partnerships need to be better established as early as January and February (in order to aid fundraising). Likewise, local academic institutions and media outlets must be integral parts of the advance planning and promotional process. Media should include not only TV, radio and daily newspapers, but also the numerous community weeklies, alternative publications, and even organizational newsletters. Local veterans organizations such as VFW posts, American Legions, etc., should be contacted individually for participation and promotion months in advance.

Annual Veterans Day Observance – Of course, this is one of the key calendar dates that must be maximized as an opportunity to share the story of the VA as well as the rich history of the Dayton VA campus. One immediate goal would be to secure funding necessary to create a video that can be featured on commercial television, in classrooms and on regional cable access channels, paying tribute to Miami Valley veterans and to the contributions of the Dayton VA campus. Other possible activities could include a student photography and art initiative that brings students onto the campus to sketch and photograph the facility. This activity would lead to an annual Veterans Day art/photo show on the VA campus, spotlighting the campus itself and the talents of local students.

Quarterly Teacher Training Programs - (For CEUs – Continuing Education Units) - Once the education program is fully defined, training sessions for regional educators could be initiated on the VA campus. These sessions would focus on using the historical assets of the campus and the individual life stories of America's veterans as a tool for enhancing student understanding of and appreciation for American history, language arts, math, science, technology and, of course, leadership. Scheduling these activities in conjunction with in-service days, and providing the CEU credits, will encourage greater teacher participation.

V. Summary of Individual Projects (both the active projects described in this basic document and the aspirational, long-term projects described in the Appendix)

Capital Improvements

- Protestant Chapel
- Administration Building
- Patient Library/Putnam Library
- Clubhouse

- Catholic Chapel
- Grotto
- VA Grounds
- Tunnel Facade
- Liberty House
- Freedom House
- Bus/Trolley Station

Public Facilities (with possible facility sites) and Programming

- Heritage Tourism tie-in with Greater Miami Valley
- The Center (Administrative Building and Clubhouse)
- Homeless Veterans housing (Doctor's Row)
- VA Medical Museum (Doctor's Row)
- Museum of Military Innovation (Liberty House)
- Miami Valley Military History Museum (Putnam Library)
- American Veterans Hall of Honor (Liberty House/Freedom House)
- American Veterans Research Library (Putnam Library)
- Commercial Facilities/Veterans Business Incubator (Other)
- Veterans Therapy Garden and Farmer's Market (VA Grounds)
- Community Gardens (VA Grounds)

Public Activities

- Patriot's Freedom Festival
- Quarterly Teacher Training Programs
- Hall of Honor Inductions
- Elder Hosteling

Public Information/Education/Cyber Initiatives/Programming

- Veterans Aloft/History is About Me Educational Programming
- Annual Veterans Day Observance
- Embracing Freedom Book Series
- Virtual Hall of Honor/Research
- Library AVHC/AVI Education Website
- Site Collaborative Digital Community

VI. Budget Overview

More detailed budget breakdowns are available upon request.

Home Chapel

Total Remaining for the Pipe Organ.....\$175,000

Patient Library

Total.....\$4,936,000

Administrative Building (Headquarters Building)

Total.....\$10,000,000

Clubhouse

Total.....\$10,000,000

Catholic Chapel

Total \$2,000,000

Restoration TOTAL.....\$30,911,000

Programming/Facilities

Total

Education Program.....\$885,000

Grotto.....\$750,000

Web development, population, and maintenance (multiple sites/projects).....\$175,000

Museum development, exhibit construction and installation, materials, staffing for five facilities.....\$12,500,000

Operational costs for five buildings for five years.....\$4,000,000

GRAND TOTAL.....\$49,221,000

VII. Conclusion

The success or failure of this plan will depend on the energy, passion and conviction of those who embrace it. It will also depend on the AVHC's ability to energetically, but *systematically*, sell the concepts to its partners and participants across the Miami Valley. This plan is designed either to be introduced incrementally, as funding permits, or rolled out in tandem with related community initiatives. In the best-case scenario, the AVHC, VA officials, community leaders and participating organizations will pool their resources, intellectual capital and enthusiasm to reach out to individuals and organizations who can help make the dream a reality.

Bringing this vision to fruition will require careful coordination, the sharing of resources and information, and the ability to compromise, cooperate and think creatively. The essential first step is to share the vision with local leaders and members of the media. The accompanying marketing plan outlines methods for building the momentum and establishing a network of enthusiastic partners.

Properly implemented, this plan will not only support and honor our veterans, but will also inspire and motivate our young people, even as it builds a coalition of business, academic, non-profit, medical and military partners across the region. In so doing, it will help renew and restore the historic VA campus, revitalize the Miami Valley's economic future, and create a greater sense of connection and understanding between our men and women in uniform and all those who have benefitted or benefit today from their legacy of service and sacrifice.

