

Paperwork Reduction Act Deficiency Jeopardizes 2023 National and Local Veterans Day Observances

Background

Since 1954, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has overseen the National Veterans Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) to honor the men and women who have served and continue to serve in the U.S. Uniformed Services during war and peacetime. Hundreds of military Veterans from communities throughout America and leaders from across the federal government, including the President of the United States or his designee, participate in the National Veterans Day Observance at ANC each year. In addition, tens of thousands of others participate in VA-approved regional Veterans Day events.

Issue

It has come to the attention of the National Veterans Outreach Office (NVO) that VA is not authorized to collect key information to facilitate the planning of the National Veterans Day Observance at ANC or the coordination of VA-sanctioned regional Veterans Day events such as parades, concerts, and ceremonies because VA never sought approval from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to undertake those data collections. According to VA's Office of Enterprise Integration, OMB approval is required to undertake all data collections. The approval process could take six months or more to complete, placing the 2023 National Veterans Day Observance and regional Veterans Day events at significant risk.

The following four VA forms include the information NVO must collect to plan and execute the National Veterans Day Observance and support regional events:

- Applications to host a regional Veterans Day observance (Form O918D)
- Veterans Day National Committee Associate Member Application (Form 0918E)
- Veterans Day National Committee Dues Payment Form (Form 0918f)
- Invitation, Bench Seat Ticket, and Lapel Pin Request Form (Form 0918G)

Impact

VA must begin collecting information for the 2023 National Veterans Day Observance and start collaborating with regional partners by no later than March 16, 2023, to avoid the risk of having no National Veterans Day Observance or VA-sanctioned local events for the first time since 1954. The March 16 deadline will enable VA to select approved regional sites and mail letters and certificates from the Secretary of VA to local event organizers for inclusion in their event programs by July 31, 2023. By that date, local partners must also request support from the U.S. Department of Defense for marching bands, military aviator flyovers, and other services for their events. The regional observances are vital because they enable the federal government to bring resources closer to the more than 16 million American Veterans living outside the Washington DC Metropolitan area and thank them for their service. Meeting the March 16 due date is also essential for VA staff to gather information from partner organizations to plan a successful National Veterans Day Observance.