

Monthly Stakeholder Newsletter

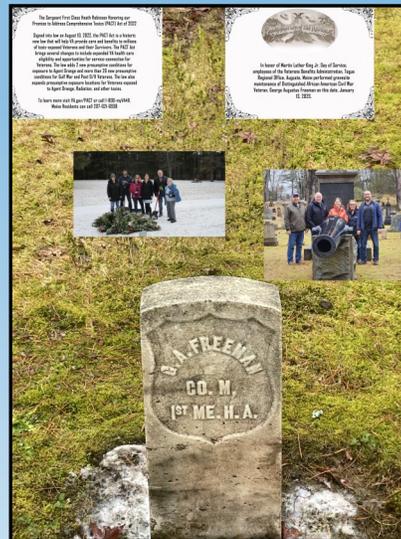


Employees Honor African American Civil War Veteran and Veterans interred at Togus National Cemetery

Born August 5, 1822, in Brunswick, Maine, George Augustus Freeman answered the call to Civil War service as a volunteer for the Union Army with the 1st Maine Heavy Artillery Regiment. As one of four black soldiers in a white regiment, Pvt Freeman broke through race barriers fighting to bring an end to slavery. Pvt Freeman served with distinction in numerous campaigns, the costliest of which was Petersburg, where the 1st Maine charged a heavily fortified line, losing 50 percent of its men, the greatest loss of any Union regiment in a single action throughout the war. Pvt Freeman survived that campaign, but latter suffered gunshot wounds to the hand and foot at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. Pvt Freeman recovered from his wounds and lived to the age of 64. He was laid to rest at Oak Grove Cemetery in Bath, Maine.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's Day of Service and Pvt Freeman's remarkable legacy, employees of the Togus RO traveled to Pvt Freeman's gravesite to clean his marker and perform grounds maintenance to the surrounding plots. Uniquely situated among several plots for Civil War Veterans, Pvt Freeman's stone, illegible due the build-up of dirt over the years, was cleaned with great care, restoring the marker to a version of its original façade. Togus employees then returned to the Togus National Cemetery to assist Wreaths Across America with the removal of wreaths following their placement at each grave marker in December 2022.

Touched by both experiences associated with the Day of Service, Togus has committed to a community supported Spring cleaning of the Civil War plots at Oak Grove Cemetery as well as to assist Wreaths Across America



Do you know someone who is looking for a challenging, fulfilling career that focusses on serving Veterans and their family members?

If so, please direct them to www.usajobs.gov or you may share the below QR Code to see positions as they are announced.



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Special Point(s) of Interest

- Encounter a Veteran in crisis Dial 988, Press 1 for Veterans Crisis Line
- Have a Veteran with benefits questions? Call our Public Contact Team at 207-621-6938 to receive help or to schedule an appointment (in-person, phone, or video).

VA Veteran Pension

The Togus Regional Office often receives questions about VA Pension. Therefore, we would like to share some important information regarding VA Pension to assist you in educating Veterans and their family members in your community.

What is Veteran Pension?

Pension is a needs-based benefit program for wartime Veterans, who are age 65 or older or have a permanent and total non-service-connected disability, and who have limited income and net worth. To learn more about VA Pension benefits, please visit <https://www.va.gov/pension/>. Veterans who are more seriously disabled may qualify for pension at the increased housebound or aid and attendance rates. To learn more about aid and attendance and housebound benefits, please visit <https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/>

Who is eligible?

A Veteran may be eligible if they meet the following criteria: They were discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, **AND** They served 90 days of active duty with at least one day during wartime, ***AND** Their countable income is below the maximum annual pension rate (MAPR), **AND** They meet net worth limitations **AND** They meet one of the following criteria: They are age 65 or older. They have a permanent and total non-service-connected disability. They are a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity. They are receiving Social Security disability benefits.



*Veterans who entered active duty after September 7, 1980, must serve at least 24 months of active-duty service. If the length of service is less than 24 months, the Veteran must have completed their entire tour of active duty.

For the current net worth limit and MAPR, see the Veterans Pension Rate Table at http://www.benefits.va.gov/PENSION/current_rates_veteran_pen.asp.

How to apply?

A Veteran can apply for VA Pension by completing VA Form 21P-527EZ, "Application for Pension," located at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P527EZ-ARE.pdf>.

Documents may be submitted by [mail](#), in person at a VA regional office or electronically. However, VA recommends submitting correspondence electronically as this is the fastest method of receipt at www.va.gov/pension/application/527EZ/

A Veteran or family member can call our Public Contact Team at 207-621-6938 to schedule an appointment (in-person, phone, or video) for more information or help with VA Pension.

Togus in Your Neighborhood

If you or your organization is hosting an event and you want Togus to participate, please contact vavbatog.engage@va.gov.

Look for a Togus Representative at one of the following locations:

- ◆ **February 2** – Wabanki Pleasant Point Veterans Clams Clinic, 22 Bayview Dr., Perry, ME Time: 1pm to 4pm
- ◆ **February 3**– Wabanki Indian Township Veterans Claims Clinic 8 Kennebasis St. Princeton, ME Time: 9am to 12pm
- ◆ **February 15**– Coffee with Vets– House in the Woods 217 Skunk Hill Rd, Lee, ME Time: 8am to 11 am
- ◆ **February 18**– Winter Classic Resource table– American Legion Post 202, Topsham, ME Time: 8am to 6pm
- ◆ **February 25**- “PACT UP” Veteran, Service Member and Family Expo, Anah Shrine Center, Bangor, ME Time: 10am to 2pm

Save the Date!

- ◆ **March 29, 2023** – Vietnam Era Veterans Breakfast sponsored by the [Travis Mills Foundation](#)
Who: Vietnam Era Veterans and one guest
What: FREE full-service breakfast, program and ceremonies
When: 9am, Wednesday, March 29, 2023
Where: Augusta Civic Center, 76 Community Drive, Augusta, ME
Why: To thank all Vietnam era veterans for their service and sacrifice
How: RSVP by March 3, 2023 to this free event: [Vietnam breakfast](#)

Claims Clinics

A Veteran or Family member can schedule an appointment at one of the Claims Clinics by calling 207-621-6938.

- ◆ **February 7**– Lewiston VA Clinic, Lewiston, ME Time: 930am to 2:30pm
- ◆ **February 9**– Bangor VA Clinic, Bangor, ME Time: 10am to 2:30pm
- ◆ **February 14**– Portland VA Clinic, Portland, ME Time: 10am to 2pm
- ◆ **February 21**– Bangor VA Clinic, Bangor, ME Time: 10am to 2:30pm
- ◆ **February 23**– Sanford Vet Center, Springvale, ME Time: 10am to 1pm
- ◆ **February 24**– MCVV Brunswick, Brunswick, ME Time: 930am to 230pm
- ◆ **February 28**- Portland VA Clinic, Portland, ME Time: 10am to 2pm

Togus Regional Office

The Togus Regional Office (RO) is assigned to the Northeast District of the Veterans Benefits Administration. The RO is authorized 270 full time employees to support a State Veteran population of more than 100,000 Veterans. The RO administers a variety of services and benefits including Compensation and Veteran Readiness and Em-

Did You Know about: For the Veterans and Veteran Caregivers in your community: [Shades of Green?](#)

Shades of Green at Walt Disney World Resort

Situated between two of Disney's lush PGA golf courses and boasting a total of 586 guest rooms, Shades of Green offers eligible Veterans and their families an ideal place to vacation a stones throw from Disney and other great Florida attractions.

Origin of the name

It was a long process in deciding what to call the resort as it had to be acceptable to both Disney and MWR. As of February 1994, all branches of the military wore some form of green utility/battle dress uniform. Therefore, It was decided to call the resort Shades of Green to encompass all branches of the Armed Forces.

Contact the Regional Office

Togus Regional Office

1 VA Center

Augusta, ME 04330

207-626-4788

DIR.VBATOG@VA.GOV

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Michael J. Brawn, Assistant Director

Timothy Hum, Veterans Service Center Manager (VSCM)

Thomas C. Whitney, Assistant VSCM

Philip S. Black, Assistant VSCM

Christopher Smith, Staff Assistant—Outreach Supervisor

Allison D. Bubier, Veteran Readiness and Employment Officer

Tracy L. Sinclair, Support Services Division Chief

John Brinzow, Public Affairs Officer

Contact Your Congressional Liaisons

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Helpful Websites

- ◆ File a claim and access self-service benefits (e.g., print a letter): www.va.gov
- ◆ Access the latest information on the PACT Act: www.va.gov/PACT
- ◆ Access the Togus Regional Office website: www.benefits.va.gov/togus