



Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs

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PRESS RELEASE

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IDVA Announces Assistant Director Anthony Vaughn to Serve as Interim Administrator of LaSalle Veterans' Home

24-year Marine Veteran with 15 years of Service to Department to Lead Home as Search for Permanent Administrator Begins

LASALLE – The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs today announced that Acting Assistant Director Anthony Vaughn will serve as the interim Administrator of the LaSalle Veterans' Home as a search begins for a permanent replacement. Vaughn is assuming responsibilities from former Home Administrator Angela Mehlbrech, who was terminated by the Department. Additionally, the Director of Nursing at the home has been placed on administrative leave pending the ongoing investigation.

These personnel changes follow the announcement of an independent investigation into the outbreak at the home led by the Acting Inspector General of the Illinois Department of Human Services. The response to the outbreak has also included site visits by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, with IDVA fully adopting all recommendations in both reports in the LaSalle Home as well as all state veterans' homes.

Acting Assistant Director Vaughn is a 24-year veteran of the United States Marine Corps where he reached the rank of Master Sergeant and served as Administrative Chief and Personnel Chief, among other roles. Upon his retirement from active duty in 2005, he joined the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs where he has served for the past 15 years. Currently, he oversees the IDVA's team of Veteran Service Officers who provide direct support to veterans across the state.

"IDVA mourns the tragedy of the veteran heroes lost to COVID-19 at the LaSalle Veterans' Home. We will ensure that CDC and IDPH protocols are followed and full accountability occurs for any lapses in protocols," **said Acting Assistant Director Anthony Vaughn.** "All measures will be taken to ensure the health and well-being of the residents we serve and we will continue to support their families and loved ones during this heartbreaking period."

"I am fully committed to ensuring complete transparency and accountability at all of our veterans' homes and our department will fully cooperate with the independent investigation as it moves forward," **said IDVA Director Linda Chapa LaVia.** "It is our moral obligation to do everything in our power to

take care of our veteran heroes. I have full confidence that Acting Assistant Director Vaughn is the right person to take command of the home's operations during the search for a new home administrator. His background in administration in the United States Marine Corps will serve our residents and their families well during this process.”

While a Marine, Vaughn served at all levels of command including an infantry rifle company, infantry battalion, helicopter squadron, air control squadron, vehicle maintenance battalion, and a tour at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. His assignments also included a deployment to Beirut, Lebanon in support of the Multi-National Peacekeeping Force and mobilization of the 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. He supported the Battalion from Camp Pendleton, CA during their deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2004 – 2005. Vaughn is the recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal, Marine Corps Commendation Medal with 2 gold stars and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with 3 gold stars.

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The mission of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) is to empower veterans and their families to thrive.

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