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VA Announces Departure of Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Danny Pummill

WASHINGTON – Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the departure of Danny G.I. Pummill from his post as Acting Under Secretary for Benefits at the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). Mr. Pummill has served as the Acting Under Secretary since October 19, 2015. Mr. Pummill had previously planned to retire by the end of 2015, but upon the departure of previous Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey, he remained as head of the administration at the request of Secretary Robert A. McDonald. His continuing service helped ensure the critical continuity required to complete VBA's transformation, and help expand the MyVA effort at the administration level.

"Danny has been the consummate Veteran advocate. He naturally embodies the spirit of MyVA by frequently meeting and talking to Veterans and VA employees where they live and work, listening to their concerns and taking their feedback," Secretary McDonald said of the career Army officer. "His hands-on approach of making Veterans the center of everything we do is exactly what we are all about. I am saddened to see him go but deeply appreciate that he agreed to stay on and lead VBA as long as he did."

Mr. Pummill began his tenure at VBA in 2010 as the Deputy Director for Policy and Procedures for the agency's compensation service. Two years later, he became Director of the VBA/Department of Defense Program Office, and in 2013, he was appointed Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits. Prior to coming to VBA, he served in the Army for 33 years as both an enlisted soldier and an officer and then continued with the Department of the Army as a civilian employee for five years.

While serving as Acting Under Secretary, Mr. Pummill continued the momentum of reducing the compensation claims backlog, closing out 2015 with 75,000 backlogged claims – an 87-percent reduction from the 611,000 peak in March 2013. He pioneered and championed the ongoing compensation and pension exam experience improvement effort, and he oversaw the implementation of the agency's national work queue, the expansion of disability compensation eligibility for Veterans exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune and contract awards totaling \$6.8 billion for medical disability examinations.

"The greatest fulfillment of my life has been serving my country and my fellow Veterans, their families and their survivors," Mr. Pummill said. "In my time at VBA, I continued to be impressed by the dedication and selfless sacrifice of the employees in service to our nation's Veterans. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as their Acting Under Secretary for Benefits and it is with mixed emotions that I leave this great organization to begin the next phase of my life."

Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary Thomas Murphy will be appointed as Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits and assume the role of Acting Under Secretary for Benefits. Mr. Murphy joined VBA in 2009 as the Director of the San Juan Regional Office in Puerto Rico. Prior to becoming Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary, he served as Director of compensation service.

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