

LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

2615 S. GRAND AVE., SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007



United We Stand



Ruth A. Wong
Acting Director

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Present:

Commissioners

Bob Archuleta, Chair
Carvel Gay, Vice Chair
Dave Culmer
Fred Flores
Ramon Rodriguez

County Department

Military and Veterans Affairs

Tatiana Rosas, Executive Secretary
Stephanie Stone, Chief Deputy

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Approval of Minutes

Chair Bob Archuleta called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m., and welcomed everyone for attending. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Dave Culmer. Due to a lack of a quorum, only five Commissioners present; the approval of minutes was postponed.

Roll Call

As noted above.

Chairman's Report

Chair Archuleta welcomed everyone and asked for a moment of silence for our Commissioner Steve Rosmarin who is very ill and will probably not make it through the week. "May the good Lord watch over him."

Chair stated he is looking towards the new year soon we'll be recognizing our veterans on Memorial Day and on Veterans Day in November we'll continue to honor our men and women in uniform.

Today, a young Marine, a Sheriff Deputy was laid to rest in Riverside. Those in law enforcement lost a brother. Many deputies are veterans and continue to serve; want to publicly thank Sheriff Lee Baca for honoring those that serve their positions when returning from service. "As we prepare for Memorial Day be advised your presence is required and recommended."

Comments from Audience (three minutes each)

Del Amo Military and Veterans Programs

Lt. Col. Valvincent Reyes, retired Army and military liaison at the Del Amo Military and Veterans Programs in Torrance addressed the Commission with an update on the program. He stated that Del Amo Military and Veterans Program serves active duty service members on two levels: inpatient PTSD program and inpatient PTSD for

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veterans of all eras. In March, they will commemorate women veterans month with a kick-off ceremony. They are doing outreach in support women groups at Cal State Dominguez Hills and the surrounding colleges. Commissioner Rodriguez asked if the program was a non-profit and Lt. Col. Reyes responded, there is a fee for service and veterans made aware of this and that their insurance carrier like Tricare and Blue Shield will pay for the treatment.

Assembly member Al Muratsuchi (66th Assembly District)

Miguel A. Cordova, Veterans/Military Liaison for Assembly member Al Muratsuchi. Mr. Cordova stated the Assembly member and now Chair of Veterans Affairs in Sacramento is looking forward to serving the men and women of our country. He also provided some background on the Assembly member.

Assembly member Al Muratsuchi served as a prosecutor and a school board member before he was elected in November of 2012 to represent California's 66th Assembly District, which includes the cities of Gardena, Hermosa Beach, Lomita, the Los Angeles communities of Harbor City and Harbor Gateway, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, Torrance and the unincorporated communities of El Camino Village and West Carson.

Mr. Cordova provided his phone number (310) 615-3515 and e-mail miguel.cordova@asm.ca.gov. He stated he is the field representative and can be called upon on any issues, concerns and/or recommendations.

Fourth Supervisorial District - Supervisor Knabe, Chair Pro Tem

Dickie Simmons, Deputy, Fourth District, a veteran and the Supervisor's veteran representative. The Supervisor extends his appreciation to the Commission and has made his selection to fill his vacancy on the Commission. Sheryl Schaffer, is a former Commissioner with the City of Carson, and will be an asset on the Commission.

George Wiley, Special Assistant to the Speaker of the Assembly, John A. Perez wanted to introduce himself to the Commission and state that veteran's issues are a priority to the Speaker. They are working closely with Secretary Peter Gravett on veteran issues and seeking additional funding for the veteran service organizations. There will be new legislation on the CalVet Home Loans. Also, they will meet with labor agencies to advocate for employers to hire veterans.

VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Center – Jeff Blake

Jeff Blake, Assistant Chief of Communications, Veterans Affairs, provided the following update:

- The Department of Housing Homeless Count dropped 20% from 2011 to 2012
- Ground breaking ceremony at the West LA Medical Center for a project benefiting LA homeless Veterans on Jan. 25. Once renovation is complete, Building 209 will serve as a therapeutic and supportive residence for chronically homeless Veterans.
- Construction in Building 4 & 5 (Sepulveda) a project with New Directions and A Community of Friends. 147 units for people transitioning into permanent housing.
- The Schepp score will be sent electronically.
- Flu shots are still available

Chief Deputy Stone stated that it was very interesting to see the figures on the Red, White and Blue report because it was an in-house report and the Schepp report is done by an outside source.

Mr. Blake stated he will invite Ms. Debbie Lasken to a future meeting and she'll be able provide patient's experiences. He also stated that patients have to be seen within 14-days for their desired date.

Chair Archuleta stated that he is interested in the public's perception. He also suggested that the VA run a PSA on cable TV to bring in veterans to file for claims.

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Charles Green, Associate Chief, Outreach, Office of Communications and External Affairs, provided the following outreach efforts:

- Yellow Ribbon Events
- Welcome Home Events
- Taking a team of doctors and nurses to the units. He stated they go to the colleges and are expanding to trade schools.
- Open office hours to VBA every Wednesday, 9am-3pm.
- Job Fairs in collaboration with Open House
- In June, EDD at Van Nuys Armory – doing physicals to veterans
- PGA Golf Tour at Fisher House (tickets available to veterans)
- Starting next week there will be office hours at Sepulveda
- Participate at Veterans Parade
- Member of the Cemetery Committee

If there are any events he can go and do outreach at, please let him know.

Escorting Pledge Vet to Board of Supervisors Meeting – Ramon Rodriguez

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that each Commissioner should escort the Pledge Veteran at the Board of Supervisors meeting that is representing their respective supervisorial district.

He will be escorting the pledge veteran that is representing the Fourth Supervisorial District at the end of February.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report – Brig. General Ruth Wong

Stephanie Stone, Chief Deputy Director, provided the written Department Report for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in lieu of Ruth Wong, Acting Director's absence and requested it be accepted as written and includes the following updates:

Upcoming Events:

- March 9th – Ready-Set-Earn College Expo, W. Valley Occupational Center, Woodland Hills
- March 9th – Veterans' Yellow Ribbon empowerment Project, Pacific Community Center, Glendale
- March 20th – USC Veterans' Hiring Event, USC, Los Angeles
- March 27th – The 12th Annual Community Job Fair & Resource Expo, Robinson Park, Pasadena
- May 25th – Remembering our Veterans & their Families Past, Present and Future, Arcadia County Park, Arcadia

Public Awareness

- ❖ The Department participates in the Veterans Navigator Program in partnership with the Department of Mental Health and the USC School of Social Work.
- ❖ Johnny Reynoso, Work Study, attended the National Day of Service Event in celebration of the inauguration of President Barack Obama, "Helping the Homeless" on January 19, 2013.
- ❖ Our new website went public February 13, 2013, the link is <http://mva.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/mva>.
- ❖ Major General Megan Tatu is the new incoming Commanding General for the 79th Sustainment Support Command. The Change of Command held on February 9, 2013 was attended by Chief Deputy Director.
- ❖ Community meetings also supported included:
 - LA County 211 Veteran Advisory Collaborative
 - Women Veterans Collaborative

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- California Hispanic Consortium
 - Los Angeles County Veterans Collaborative
 - District 7 Consortium (Colleges and University Veterans)
 - VEC (Downtown, SFV and South Bay)
 - Joint City/County WIB Veterans Subcommittee
 - VA Stakeholder Meetings (LB and West Los Angeles)
 - Congresswoman Hahn Veteran Advisory Committee
 - Assemblywoman Mitchell Veteran Advisory Committee
 - Goodwill So Cal Women Veterans Breakfast
 - South Bay Women Veterans Breakfast
- ❖ Zocalo Public Square article written by Chief Deputy Director, "Why I'm Glad Women Will Officially Face Withering Enemy Fire"
- ❖ Chief Deputy Director has been invited to speak with The Little Hoover Commission to discuss Women Veteran projects in the County on March 13, 2013.

American Legion, 17th District, Los Angeles Post No. 8

Jay Morales, retired Marine, Vietnam Veteran and Adjutant, American Legion, 17th District, Los Angeles Post No. 8, stated that they are in support of all proposals that will come before the Commission. He stated the even number floors at Bob Hope Patriotic Hall no longer have the space they had prior to the refurbishment. The odd number floors are no longer useable for office space. It now houses handicap and women facilities.

The gym has new men and women showers and as well as men and women restrooms. All floors have state-of-the-art video conferencing and wide screens and the 4th, 6th and 8th floors have kitchenettes or break rooms.

Jay Morales stated, "We support the Veteran Administration and Mental Health and as long as we don't forget the veteran that were there we support. We now have a professional building to meet in."

Chair Archuleta thanked Jay Morales for all the work he has done for the County's veterans.

New Business

No new business.

Item's for Next Month's Agenda

- VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Center – Jeff Blake
- Escorting the Pledge Vet to Board of Supervisors Meeting – Ramon Rodriguez
- Fisher House – Timothy Byk
- Habitat for Heroes Sylmar
- Commissioner Fred Flores will invite two Veterans for November's meeting to offer the Invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Culmer stated there is a comprehensive program available for veteran benefits. This website has dozen of icons that provide very informative veteran information, web address: www.veteransnetwork.net.

Commissioner Flores stated he is glad to back; and is still a 100% advocate to all the veterans in the valley.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated, "Welcome back Fred Flores!"

Commissioner Gay stated, "Welcome back Flores! Looking forward to another year."

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Chair Archuleta thanked all of those that keep coming to the meetings. He acknowledged Dickie Simmons and all the Assembly and State representatives that attended. "We need your attendance and your input. Don't forget it takes an entire team."

Chair Archuleta adjourned meeting at 3:25 p.m.

Tatiana Rosas
Executive Secretary
February 13, 2013

Note: The next Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, March 13, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. in Suite 100 at the Department of Public Social Services site at 2615 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA.