**Monterey County**

MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Sid Williams, Chairperson

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**Meeting: 09/13/2023**

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Williams

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| **Roll Call by Chair Sid William, Quorum Established** | Voting members present:District 2 – Lois FlintDistrict 3 – Mark HartunianDistrict 4 – Gary KreegerDistrict 5 – Phillip ButlerBoS – Louise GoetzeltBoS – John Gay, Vice-chairBoS – Mary EstradaBoS – Bennie CooperBoS – Dan PresserBoS – Sid Williams, ChairIn attendance: Representative from 1st District Supervisor’s Office, Javier GomezRepresentative from Representative Panetta’s office, Erin DavisonRepresentative from Senator Laird’s office, Isabel MezaRepresentative from Assemblymember Addis’ office, Mauricio AriasRepresentative from Assemblymember Rivas’ office, Dominic DursaMilitary and Veterans Affairs Office, Jack MurphyMilitary and Veterans Affairs Office, Staff Liaison, Adam Errahebi |
| **Pledge of Allegiance** | Led by Mary Estrada |
| **Public Comment** | None |

**Report from the Chair:**

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| **Chair Williams:**  | * Wilbur Mitts’ repatriation and honors had a large turnout. The Family and community is very thankful. Thank you for spreading the word.
* I have Veteran of the Year tickets for sale at $50 a ticket. You must have a ticket to enter the event this year. We are not conducting online sales. There are only 200 tickets so please purchase one if you haven’t.
* The Heroes Open will be on October 28th. We are looking for donations for the auction.
	+ Dan Presser comment:
	+ The raffle for the three-day four night stay at Sandals does not include airfare. If you win, you must pay your own way there.
* The Sam Farr and Jack Stewart Awards are also due on September 27th. These awards are for non-Veterans or Businesses who are supportive of Veterans. You may submit a nomination at UVC-MC.com.
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**Committee Reports**

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| **Veteran Home Update,*** Jack Murphy:
 | * No update at this time.
* Adam Errahebi comment:
	+ At the recommendation of Supervisor Alejo, we will look to coordinate a meeting with Speaker Rivas’ Office to discuss next steps.
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| * Javier Gomez:
 | * No update at this time.
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| **Veteran of the Year Program Report,*** Vice-chair John Gay reported:
 | * The program is almost finalized.
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| **State Legislation Report*** Representative from Senator Laird’s office, Isabel Meza reported:
 | **AB 531 (Irwin) - Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2024.*** This bill would enact the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act (VHHPA) of 2024 to authorize the issuance of bonds in an amount not to exceed 600 million to provide additional funding for VHHPA. The bill would provide for the handling and disposition of the funds in the same manner as the VHHPA. This bill is ordered to Third Reading in the Assembly Floor.

**AB 718 (TA) - Veterans: Mental Health*** This bill requires CalVet to, upon appropriation by the legislature, establish a program to fund an academic study of mental health among women veterans in California. It would require the department to submit a report summarizing the finding and recommendations of the study to the legislature no later than July 31, 2025. This bill was ordered to Third Reading in the Senate Floor.

**AB 1350 (Soria)- Veteran Memorials*** This bill would continuously appropriate the fund to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing memorials in the State Capitol. It would make the department responsible for administering the fund, including the prioritization of work, management of projects, and coordination with the state and private bodies. Lasty, it would require the department to prioritize memorials that do not have formal support from another body for their maintenance, including but not limited to Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The bill is on its way to the Governor’s Desk.

**AB 444 (Addis) - CA Defense Community Infrastructure Program*** This bill would create the California Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP), which matches federal grants from the Defense Community Pilot program for infrastructure projects in military communities. Specifically, AB 444 would authorize the Office of Planning and Research to provide grants to meet matching requirements for DCIP projects. Communities often need assistance in identifying, planning, and implementing these projects when they cannot afford to do so with local funds. This bill died in Senate Appropriations Committee.

**Legislative Update Related to Veterans Affairs*** Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo, Chair of the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs in the Assembly.
* Senator Bob Archuleta remains the chair for the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs in the Senate.
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| **Federal Legislation Report*** Adam Errahebi reported:
 | * Taylor with Rep. Panetta’s Office let us know that there is no changes with the NDAA at this time. Rachel Dan and Xochitl Guerrero are no longer with Rep. Panetta’s Office.
	+ Erin Davison Comment:
	+ We are currently interviewing for Xochitl’s previous position and will interview for the District Director’s position.
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| **Military and Veterans Affairs Report,*** Jack Murphy reported:
 | * AB 46 is currently held in suspense. The bill is going to be a two-year bill which will hopefully pass once funding is secured. We look forward to this moving forward in the future.
* AB 684 which would provide funding to County Veterans Service Offices for outreach at Active-Duty Installations is currently in suspense as well.
* Jack explained MVAO’s data report, see attached:
* CAL TRANS and CAL VET came to an agreement to amend the language identifying the Central Coast Veterans Cemetery as a State Cemetery. Once amended, a sign can be authorized on Highway 1 N/S.
* We have hired Luis Carrillo as our Office Assistant.
* We have hired Lupe Javier-Diaz as our newest Vet Rep.
* Adam explained various Veteran events going on this month, see attached.
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| **Central Coast Veteran Cemetery Update,*** Chair Williams reported
 | * Eric Chaney no longer works for CAL VET.
* The Cemetery is hiring for an Office Manager.
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| **VA Clinic Report,*** Kintina Edouard reported:
 | * Flu shots are available on a walk-in basis from 9:00am – 12:00pm and 1:00pm – 3:00pm at the Monterey Clinic.
* The Clinic will be receiving the new COVID vaccine soon.
* Dan Presser question:
	+ Do you have the elderly flu and the RSV shots?
	+ Kintina responded:
		- We are giving the higher risk flu shots, but I will need to follow up about the RSV shots.
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**Commission Member’s Comments:**

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| * Vice-Chair John Gay
 | * Santa Lucia Rotary Club has a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life at the Fox Theater on the 14th at 5:00pm. Tickets are $7 for adults and $5 for children.
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| * Louise Goetzelt
 | * CALMOAA’s Sponsored Facebook page in support of AB 46 provides a sample support letter which must be sent before the 1st of October. There is a link to Change.org which has various petitions to support (which will be sent to the appropriate agency on your behalf).
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| * Lois Flint
 | * The Fishing Derby is this Saturday. Post 593 will make sandwiches and brownies for the event. They will have dinner at Post 694 the night before. After the event they will have lunch at Post 41.
* There are 11 Veterans at the Ridge Convalescent home in Salinas that would appreciate visits.
 |
| * Jack Murphy
 | * Dentistry 4 Vets is hosting its donor appreciation event in Pebble Beach on November 5th.
* There is a surprise birthday party for a 100-year-old WWII POW Veteran in late October. There will be more info to follow.
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| * Javier Gomez
 | * Thanked the Office and Commission for their help and attendance at Wilbur Mitts’ Repatriation.
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**Adjournment:** Chair Williams

