

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY  
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

San Diego County Veterans Service Office  
5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 310, San Diego CA 92123  
June 13, 2015

Meeting Held at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center in Balboa Park (VMMC)

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mary Beth Newton, District 1; Ted Kagan, District 2; John Weaver, District 4; Bill Dillingham, Member-at-Large; Mike Robledo, District 5

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Commander, Navy Region Southwest (U); Will Rodriguez, Member at Large (E) Laurie Martell, District 3 (E); Nancy Owen, Member-at-Large (U)

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Wil Quintong, Office of Military & Veterans Affairs

**1. Call to Order**

Mary Beth Newton called the meeting to order at 9:30 am

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Introductions/Public (3 minutes)**

**4. Approval of Minutes Previous Meeting**

Prior meeting minutes were approved as written by all

**5. Chairman's Report**

**No report**

**Legislative:**

Mr. Dillingham said he would ask the Council, at the next meeting to endorse The Women and Family Health Services Act of 2015 (S469). This Federal Legislation would allow the Department of Veterans

Affairs to fund in vitro fertilization where a veteran with spinal cord and/or genital injuries wishes to attempt to have a biological child. Such funding is currently prohibited.

#### **One VA**

**No report**

#### **Chula Vista Veterans Home (CVVH)**

No report

#### **United Veterans Council (UVC)**

No report

#### **County Office of Military and Veterans Affairs (Veteran Service Office (CVSO)**

Wil Quintong provided updated information on the new Military & Veterans Resource Center (MVRC) in Escondido. He also updated the Vet-Connect Pilot Program and the Intel & Recon for Military & Veterans Project. He also briefed the VAC on the upcoming Board Conference for Veterans in November 2015.

### **6. Community Reports**

Mr. Dillingham noted the historical contributions of the Royal Marines to the spirit, emblems and traditions of the United States Marine Corps. He saluted "the Royals" on the celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's 89th birthday. The Queen is Commander in Chief of all United Kingdom Armed Forces. The Queen will soon surpass Queen Victoria as Britain's longest reigning monarch.

Mr. Dillingham said that he was one of those privileged to introduce Army Brigadier General Tammy S. Smith to a gathering in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community on Friday evening. Brigadier General Smith is the first Flag Officer in the United States Military to come out as openly LGBT, a source of immense pride to all LGBT veterans.

Mr. Dillingham noted that the suicide rate for female veterans is approaching that of male veterans (32.1 per 100,000). The rate of suicide amongst female veterans is 28.7 per 100,000 as opposed to 5.2 per 100,000 for female non-veterans. This alarming trend should be of prime concern to all of those addressing veteran's issues.

Mr. Dillingham called attention to an opinion piece in the San Diego Union-Tribune (May 14, 2015) by retired Army Major General Paul D. Eaton addressing the lack of adequate medical care being provided to female veterans. The disparity of care for females compared to males is inexcusable and shocking. Mr. Dillingham urged that all persons concerned with veteran's issues keep this disparity on the front burner of issues that need action.

Mr. Dillingham noted the passing on June 3, 2015 of United States Air Force veteran Dr. Harry Albert (AI) Best. Dr. Best is a San Diego Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community icon for

his historic role in being the first openly LGBT person in San Diego, and one of the first 10 in the USA, to run for public office. Dr. Best suffered the loss of his job and endured many death threats in his heroic quest to break through the barriers against LGBT's serving in elected office.

### **Unfinished Business**

None

#### **7. New Business**

VAC Annual Elections for three officer positions:

There was a motion made by Ben Dillingham that the same slate of officers be nominated and re-elected:

Mary Beth Newton for Chair

Michael Robledo for co-Chair

Wil Rodriguez for Secretary

#### **8. Closing Remarks**

None

#### **9. Adjourned**

**10:30 AM**