



VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

222 W. Hospitality Ln., 3rd Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92415-0470

Minutes of the Meeting September 22, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE –Members: Demarius Carmichael (Deputy Director, San Bernardino County VA), Jeff Allen, Ralph Figueroa, Jimmy Lona, Paul Marsh, Clint Miller, Michael Rector, and recording Secretary Johnna Yuhás were present. Matt Knox (Board Liaison), Jim Frost, Terry Porter and James Willingham were absent.

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Ralph Figueroa led the committee in a moment of silence for veteran suicide awareness.

REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – Minutes from the meeting held on July 28, 2025, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE – San Bernardino County Veterans Affairs Deputy Director, Demarius Carmichael, provides an update.

- Legislative Updates: AB53 by Assemblymember Ramos is effectively “dead” this year, but it can be revived. The \$20,000 income tax exemption was included in the state budget bill for this year, making the exemption valid for one year. If the bill is revived, the exemption would be for a period of 10 years. SB296 by Senator Archuleta has made it out of the senate and is at the assembly but has been placed on suspense. SB694 by Senator Archuleta is supported by CACVSO, and the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. It has been returned to the Senate to approve amendments that were made in the Assembly.
- The Department has hired two new Veterans Service Officers. One started on September 8, 2025, and the other is expected to start in the next 4-6 weeks.
- On September 3, a presentation was given to the Central Valley Regional Steering Committee to provide awareness of the department and what services we offer.
- ON October 8, 2025, the department will be participating in a Veteran Standdown and Shelter Court event at the Rialto City Park from 10 am – 2 pm.
- The week of November 4 – 11 is designated for Operation Green Light.
- The department is part of a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) for homeless management. The goal is to freely share data as needed to connect the homeless population with resources across applicable county departments. The MDT is working on identifying opportunities to address the needs proactively rather than reactively.

Since the last meeting the department has attended the following events:

- July 30 – Shelter Court in San Bernardino
- July 31 – Barstow State of the City/County event
- August 21 – Shelter court in Colton
- August 28 – Big Bear Job and Resource Fair
- August 28 – Open House for Supervisor Armendarez in Rancho Cucamonga
- July 12 – Assemblymember Rodriguez’s Resource Fair in Chino

The department will be attending these upcoming events:

- September 24 – Shelter Court at Heritage Park in Redlands
- October 8 – Veteran Standdown and Shelter Court at the Rialto City Park
- October 23 – Barstow Job Fair and Resource Event
- November 8 – Supervisor Hagman’s Claims event in Chino

Minutes of the Meeting

Monday, September 22, 2025

Page 2

FROM THE MEMBERS

Paul Marsh – No Update currently

Jim Lona – Recently attended the City of Big Bear Lake City Council meeting on September 13. Mr. Lona attended a “lunch and learn” at Bear Valley Hospital where community care and veteran resources was discussed. Attended Congressman Obernolte’s Veterans Advisory Committee on September 21 which was attended by members of several veteran organizations. On September 11 there was a ceremony at the high school. Transportation for veterans up and down the mountain remains a challenge, however mountain transit is pursuing a Grant 5310 to get a bus to transport veterans up and down from Big Bear to Loma Linda. The American Legion is working to create a food pantry for the community. The city of Big Bear started actively sharing Veterans Affairs information on their social media page. Operation Dirt Bike Freedom is available in the desert.

Clint Miller – There was a Job Fair at the Ontario Convention Center on August 27 with 52 resource/employers and 593 job seekers, including veterans. It wasn’t a veteran specific event, but the number of veterans was tracked. If a veteran presents with employment needs, please reach out. The VFW in Rancho Cucamonga will be doing their annual season of giving program including Thanksgiving meals and Christmas toys. It can be a bright spot for a veteran and their family. Recently Mr. Miller participated in an honor flight as a guardian. There were about 36 veterans that participated in this trip.

Ralph Figueroa – On September 9, attended a commissioner only meeting hosted by Supervisor Joe Baca, Jr. This meeting allowed appointed members from various county committees to discuss issues and build relationships. During that meeting, it was shared that the county is assisting U.S. Vets on a project that will be adding 29 housing units in Colton. Bloomington will be participating in a veteran program as well. The veteran who initiated the veteran’s monument that was just unveiled will be leading the way for a monument for a marine out of Rancho Cucamonga. The California State University of San Bernardino (CSUSB) veterans’ roundtable is back in full swing and meets every Thursday. The group is a mental health and peer support group. Veteran Suicide Awareness Day is September 25 and from 9 a.m. to noon there will be a Suicide Awareness and Prevention Symposium in Riverside. Fontana will be holding a job fair and expungement event on September 30 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. In April of 2026 CSUSB is working on a national conference called “Defining the Future” to prepare our students to get into emerging technology. CSUSB is working on a program that’s going to be specifically geared towards veterans in emerging technology. The goal is to build a direct bridge, not for recruitment, but for employment using the skill sets that our veterans gained through their service. CSUSB is also working on developing a program for veteran ready rehabilitation counselor certification. This would allow veterans the participants to work at the VA with extensive training and knowledge of how to work with veterans. In October, Mr. Figueroa has been selected to be a senior leader for Student Veterans of America and will be going to DC to assist some students that have applied and will be attending the leadership institute. DAV Chapter 12 will be holding their annual turkey giveaway on November 21.

Jeff Allen – September 27 is Relay for Life at Colton High School football stadium. Grand Terrace is working on the banner program, where banners are placed on light poles to recognize local veterans.

Minutes of the Meeting

Monday, September 22, 2025

Page 3

DATE/TIME/LOCATION OF NEXT MEETINGS

Monday, January 26, 2026, at 3 p.m. in the Veterans Affairs conference room, and via Zoom.

Monday, March 23, 2026, at 3 p.m. in the Veterans Affairs conference room, and via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT - Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Figueroa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ralph Figueroa
Chair