

2017 Annual Report

San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission



San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission

City Hall

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

Room 051

San Francisco, CA 94102



IN MEMORY OF

MAYOR EDWIN M. LEE

1952 – 2017

Edwin M. Lee, the 43rd Mayor of San Francisco, passed away on December 12, 2017. Mayor Lee dedicated his life to helping others and serving the people of San Francisco. During his three decades of public service, Mayor Lee was a steadfast advocate for the powerless, a voice for the overlooked, and a person who fought for those in need including San Francisco military veterans.

He was a loving husband, caring father, and cherished friend. He will be dearly missed.





Executive Summary

The purpose of the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Commission (“SFVAC”) is to advise the Mayor and Board of Supervisors (“BOS”) on matters affecting U.S. military veterans who reside in the City and County of San Francisco. In 2017, the SFVAC provided advice, recommendations, and support on veteran related issues on veteran’s homelessness, workforce development, healthcare, transportation, legislation affecting the veteran population, the annual Veterans Day Parade, the annual Memorial Day Ceremony, advocacy for Filipino-American veterans, transgender veterans, and women veterans.

Membership of the SFVAC in 2017 was at an all-time high; Commission members are representative of the broad community of interests in San Francisco. Appointment to the SFVAC has become very competitive in recent years. In 2017, there were more applicants applying than there were vacant seats to fill on the Commission. There are currently fifteen sitting Commissioners; two BOS vacancies remain.



I. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICER ELECTIONS

A. Commission Diversity

In its current configuration, the Commission meets or exceeds all diversity requirements as per City Code and SFVAC Bylaws. The membership of the SFVAC includes a mix of ages, eras of service, racial/ethnic diversity, and represents many of San Francisco's diverse communities of interest. By the end of 2017, the Commission strength stood at fifteen members, with two BOS appointment vacancies.

B. 2017 Officer Elections

On January 10, 2017, the following officers were elected and installed for the 2017 administrative year:

- Commissioner Mike Maffei, President
- Commissioner Dwane Kennedy, Vice President
- Commissioner Dottie Guy, Secretary (resigned 7/30/2017)
- Commissioner Tristan Wyatt elected Secretary on 9/12/2017

C. 2017 Commissioner Appointments

In 2017, three new Commissioners were appointed to the SFVAC by the Mayor and/or Board of Supervisors:

- Commissioner Dwane Kennedy was re-appointed by Mayor Edwin Lee on February 8, 2017.
- Commissioner Kelsey Campbell was appointed by the Board of Supervisors on February 14, 2017.
- Commissioner David Chasteen was appointed by the Board of Supervisors on February 14, 2017.
- Commissioner Victor Olivieri was appointed by the Board of Supervisors on February 14, 2017.
- Commissioner Tristan Wyatt was appointed by Mayor Edwin Lee on August 8, 2017.



D. 2017 Commissioner Resignations

In 2017, two Commissioners resigned and/or did not seek re-appointment:

- Commissioner Angela Jenkins resigned on July 30, 2017.
- Commissioner Dottie Guy resigned on March 14, 2017.

II. ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Goals Setting for 2017

During the February 2017 General Meeting, Commissioners discussed veteran-related issues, goals, and objectives that would be each Commissioner's focus during the administrative year. The list compiled for 2017 includes the following:

- Commission attendance and meeting efficiency
- Aging veterans
- Veterans housing homelessness
- Opioid use
- Veterans Day Parade and Memorial Day Ceremony
- POW and Filipino American veterans
- Veterans mental and physical health services
- Gender issues affecting veterans
- Improvements to SFVAC social network

B. Improved Relationships Between Elected Officials and SFVAC

In 2017, SFVAC Commissioners continued to build relationships and improve the lines of communications with the Mayor's Office and Board of Supervisors. These improvements have helped fill vacancies on the SFVAC and oppose federal legislation that could harm veterans. SFVAC Commissioners are now encouraged to speak directly with their District Supervisors on issues affecting veterans.

C. Veterans Housing and Homelessness

Veteran homelessness in San Francisco continued to be a top priority in 2017. The prolonged housing shortage and lack of middle- and low-income housing in the City continues to affect the veteran population. The SFVAC has heard from veteran service providers, victims of substandard housing, government agencies, and housing advocates.



In 2017, most of the meetings included some discussion on housing. It's expected that the housing issue will continue to be a high priority topic in 2018.

D. Increased Participation at the Veterans Day Parade

In 2015, the SFVAC supported a resolution to move the annual Veterans Day Parade from Market Street to Fisherman's Wharf. In 2017, after more than 30 years of declining community participation, the Veterans Day Parade continues to gain in popularity among the San Francisco residents, businesses, and tourists. In 2017, parade attendance was estimated to be more than 3,500 people. Since the parade is largely organized and attended by former and current members of the SFVAC, the success of this event is considered a major accomplishment of the SFVAC.

E. Memorial Day Ceremony

The Memorial Day Ceremony held at the Presidio was well-attended by the community in 2017. Dignitaries from many branches of federal, state, and local government were on hand as well current and former servicemembers. The 2017 ceremony program was different than past years because it was professionally managed for the first time. Before 2017, former SFVAC Commissioners were in charge of the Ceremony.

F. Workforce Development and Veteran Job Fairs

SFVAC Members continue to actively support veterans in the workforce. Veteran focused job fairs and private sector recruitment have improved the City's workforce and improved the lives of SF military veterans. Each year VAC Commissioners actively participate to improve the employment opportunities for San Francisco Veterans. In 2017, more than 75 employers attended a job fair at the City College of San Francisco and 100 applications were taken. In a separate event, 50 employers attended a job fair held for the US Marines Corp 23rd Division 43 Regiment. This event was specifically designed to aid transitioning Marines and Sailors.

G. Burial Rights for San Francisco Veteran Neil Taylor

In 2017, funeral services for homeless veterans were provided to SF Examiners Office and San Francisco Interfaith Council. Through collaborative efforts between Veterans Affairs and San Francisco Examiners Office one of the homeless veterans, Neil Taylor, who died unclaimed by a living relative, received burial rights at the National Cemetery in Dixon, California.



H. Veterans Protection Project

In 2017, the San Francisco Veterans Commission worked in collaboration with the Institute of Aging, Department of Justice, Attorney General's Office, Department of Insurance, Adult Protective Service and the San Francisco County Veterans Service Office to prevent elder abuse.

On November 8, 2017, a press conference was held at the front streets at City Hall to introduce the second phase of the San Francisco Veterans Protection Project. The Veterans Protection Project is a program developed to protect elderly veterans residing in assisted living facilities from “poaching scams.” This year, legislation was passed to prosecute individuals who are convicted of scamming and poaching elderly veterans.

III. RESOLUTIONS, SUPPORT AND ADVICE

In 2017, the SFVAC reviewed and approved the following resolutions, endorsements and support letters:

- Advice letter against the discrimination of transgender service-members
- Advice letter against the sexual harassment of women service-members/veterans
- Informational meetings with BOS/Mayor’s Office on a report published by the University of Southern California, School of Social Work, on the state of veterans in San Francisco
- Resolution amending SFVAC bylaws to require ethic training for Commissioners

IV. MEETINGS, ATTENDANCE AND GUEST SPEAKERS

A. Meeting Guests and Public Commentary

The monthly General Meetings of the SFVAC, held at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall, Room 416 on the second Tuesday of every month, were once again attended by a wide variety of guests at speakers. Below is a list of speakers that presented information on topics important to the San Francisco veterans community:

- Sean Ansted, Constituent Services Representative, U.S. Senator Kamala D. Harris
- Rudy Asercion, Commander, American Legion Post 600
- Matt Brauer, Business Manager for Mental Health, San Francisco VA Health Care System
- Dorian Carr, County Veterans Service Office
- Emily Cohen & Nicole McCrary-Dickerson, Department of Housing



- Paul Cox, Chair, American Legion War Memorial Commission
- Ron Mendoza, Fil-Am Legacy Society
- Judge Jeffery S. Ross, Veterans Justice Court, San Francisco Superior Court
- Gil Sanborn, Civilian Aid to the Secretary of the Army
- Jeff Sparks, District Director, State Senator Scott Wiener (11th District)
- SF Veterans affected by the illegal actions of landlords Judy Wu & Trent Zhu



B. Meeting Attendance

There were no un-excused absences during the 2017 administrative year. In 2017, meeting attendance by active members was high and there were no meetings cancelled due to lack of quorum. This is a tremendous improvement over previous years when several meetings were cancelled due to lack quorum.

ATTENDANCE RECORD - 2017

NAME	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Barnickel	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X
Dacumos	P	P	P	P	P	EA	X	EA	EA	P	P	X
Dixon	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	X
Campbell	-	P	P	P	EA	EA	X	P	P	P	P	X
Chasteen	-	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	EA	P	X
Flaherty	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	EA	P	P	P	X
Guy	P	P	P	P	EA	P	X	-	-	-	-	X
Jenkins	EA	P	EA	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	X
Joiner	P	EA	P	P	EA	P	X	P	P	P	P	X
Kennedy*	P	P	P	P	P	EA	X	P	P	P	P	X
Maffei	P	P	P	P	P	EA	X	P	P	P	EA	X
Marshall*	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	EA	X
Miller	P	P	P	P	EA	P	X	EA	P	P	P	X
Noetzel	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	EA	P	X
Olivieri	-	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	EA	P	X
Weeby*	P	P	P	P	EA	P	X	EA	P	P	EA	X
Wong*	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X
Wyatt*	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	P	P	P	EA	X

INDEX TO SYMBOLS:

X	No Meeting	---	Resigned Appointment
P	Present	*	Mayoral Appointments
EA	Excused Absence	UA	Unexcused Absence