

The Honorable Mayor Jonathan Rothschild
And Honorable Council Members
City of Tucson
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Subject: Veterans Affairs Committee 2015 Annual Report

In 2015, the Veterans Affairs Committee (VAC) pursued its function to provide a common forum to member organizations for discussion and coordination of activities. Each meeting participating organizations including the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 106, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Auxiliary Cactus Unit 2, Tucson Jewish War Veterans Post 201, Marine Corps League, Marana Nighthawk, Tucson Veterans Cemetery Group, Southern Arizona Chapter American Red Cross, DAV Chapter 4, Arizona Korean War Veterans Association, Missing in America Project, AMVETS Post 770, Tucson Airport Authority, Women's Army Corps Veterans Association, Tucson Veterans Serving Veterans, American Legion Post 7, Esperanza en Escalante, Military Officers Association of America, and representatives from the Southern Arizona Veterans Affairs Health Care System had a chance to distribute information and report on upcoming events, programs and projects.

The Committee's activities rely on the contributions of its member organizations and the generosity of local businesses and citizens. The VAC sponsored or had members participate in several Tucson 2012 events:

- The Four Chaplains Ceremony usually held in February honors the four military chaplains of different religious faiths and denominations who gave their lives to save others when the U.S.A.T. Dorchester was torpedoed and sunk during World War II. 2015 marked the 72th Anniversary of the sinking of the U.S.A.T. Dorchester.
- The Veterans Day Parade was held November 11 and sponsored by the American Legion Post 7. The VAC participated in the honoring of all veterans by participating and representing the VAC within their various Veteran Service Organizations.
- Operation Exodus sponsored by the VAC took place late December (Push) and early January (Pull), just before and after the Christmas holiday. It is an annual event designed to make the trip of young soldiers on their way home at Christmastime more comfortable by providing healthy snacks, refreshments, and other essentials to ease their journey. For many of the troops, some expected to have late flights and long layovers; it is their last stateside leave before being sent to Afghanistan or other military installations overseas. Committee members and volunteers provided conversation and thanks for the soldiers' service.
- Paul Marsh was instrumental in securing, maintaining and executing the land garnishment and details of the administration and construction of the new Marana Veterans Cemetery, slotted to break ground in March 2016.
- VAC members supported the groundbreaking, construction and opening of the Fisher House (expected 2016), located on SAVAHCS campus.

- VAC Committee members participated in and helped executes the 2015 Homeless Veterans StandDown.
- VAC Members participated in and supported numerous parades, events and memorials notable to Veterans county-wide for their respective organizations, including The Moving Wall event, reporting back for the good or the order.

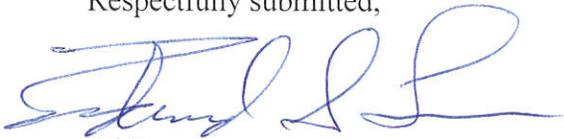
The VAC did not hold meeting during June, July and August of 2015.

Presentations during the 2015 Committee sessions were made by:

- Bob Brubaker, Office of Senator Jeff Flake (January)
- Luke Johnson from SAVAHCS (February)
- Lizette Eckerman from American Legion Post 7 – Veterans Day Parade (March)
- Dee Bruner, Tucson Airport Authority – Honor Flights / Operation Exodus (April)
- Ray Tilkins, DES Veterans Employment – Hilton Honors Military Program (May)
- David Alegria of City of Tucson, DoT – “Hats Off to Heroes” week and Fisher House presentation (September)

The Veterans Affairs Committee appreciates the Mayor, Council, and City Clerk support.

Respectfully submitted,



Ed Torres
Chairman, Tucson Veterans Affairs Committee

Prepared by:
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Secretary, Tucson Veterans Affairs Committee