



# FORT ORD REUSE AUTHORITY

920 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite A, Marina, CA 93933

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## VETERANS ISSUES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (VIAC)

**3:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2014**

920 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite A, Marina CA 93933 (FORA Conference Room)

### AGENDA

**1. CALL TO ORDER AT 3:00 PM**

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

Members of the audience wishing to address the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) VIAC on matters within the jurisdiction of FORA, but not on this agenda, may do so during the Public Comment Period. Public comments are limited to three minutes. Public comments on specific agenda items will be heard under that item.

**5. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

a. May 29, 2014 VIAC Minutes

ACTION

**6. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery Status Report
- i. Groundbreaking Ceremony Planning
- b. VA/DoD Veterans Clinic Status Report

INFORMATION  
INFORMATION  
INFORMATION

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Identify Property for a former Fort Ord Museum

INFORMATION/ACTION

**8. ITEMS FROM MEMBERS**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: JULY 24, 2014 (If necessary)**

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### UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 4, 2014: Army Soldier Show at Presidio of Monterey

November 8, 2014: Heroes' Open Golf Tournament at Bayonet and Blackhorse Golf Course

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# FORT ORD REUSE AUTHORITY

## VETERANS ISSUES ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

3:00 p.m., Thursday, May 29, 2014 | FORA Conference Room  
920 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite A, Marina, CA 93933

### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Acting Chair Edith Johnsen called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. The following were present, as indicated by signatures on the roll sheet:

VIAC Members:

Sid Williams, Mo. Co. Military/Vets  
Edith Johnsen, Vets Families/Fundraising  
Jack Stewart, Cemetery Advisory Comm.  
CSM Wynn, POM  
James Bogan, UVC  
George Dixon, MVAO  
Richard Garza, CCVFC

FORA Staff:

Robert Norris  
Crissy Maras

Others:

Nicole Charles, Sen. Monning  
Candace Ingram, CCVCF  
Eric Morgan, BLM

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Acting Chair Johnsen asked Sid Williams to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Acting Chair Johnsen acknowledged Eric Morgan, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representative, and Candace Ingram, Community Foundation representative, were in attendance.

### 4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

BLM rep Morgan provided handouts illustrating the restoration of an armored military personnel carrier and requested help in facilitating a partnership with the Fort Ord Alumni Association and the VIAC to restore additional equipment for public awareness and enjoyment at the National Monument. FORA Principal Analyst Robert Norris provided a copy of an assignment prepared by Monterey Peninsula College students focusing on their tour of former Fort Ord barracks. Acting Chair Johnsen requested that the MPC report be **attached** to the minutes from this meeting.

### 5. APPROVE VIAC MEETING MINUTES: April 3, 2014

MOTION: Sid Williams moved, seconded by Jack Stewart, to accept the April 3, 2014 minutes as presented.

MOTION PASSED: Unanimous

### 6. OLD BUSINESS

#### a. **California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery Status Report**

Mr. Norris described an out-of-the-box coordination meeting with the State and their lead consultants which led to their participation in a FORA training video and cemetery site access. A revised Department of General Services (DGS) schedule was distributed. Cemetery water approval is now awaiting signature by the Deputy Secretary, which is expected in the next several days. Senator Monning's representative Nicole Charles reported that Senator Monning was uplifted by

recent meetings with CalVet and encouraged by the conceptual designs. She added that CalVet and DGS have prioritized cemetery planning and that environmental work is underway.

**b. VA/DoD Veterans Clinic Status Report**

Although there is activity at the site, requests for a construction schedule from the City of Marina have not been answered. Staff anticipates including a schedule in the next meeting packet.

**7. NEW BUSINESS - none**

**8. ITEMS FROM MEMBERS**

Mr. Williams noted that he had requested FORA assistance to identify property for a museum. Mr. Norris agreed to meet separately and bring the request to a future VIAC meeting. Acting Chair Johnsen added that she had recently submitted six tapes of Fort Ord ceremonies toward that effort and encouraged others to do the same as they come across Fort Ord items that would have public benefit. Ms. Ingram added that Defense Language Institute Historian Steven Payne had prepared a presentation on the history of Fort Ord and the DLI. That presentation is being scheduled for FORA staff in the near future.

Mr. Williams noted that the Marina Foundation wants to increase awareness of the local veteran population and added that they had raised funds to install a flag pole at Martinez Hall. Mr. Williams asked that Steve Emerson be invited to the next meeting to provide an update. James Bogan announced a retirement appreciation ceremony on June 14<sup>th</sup> at Stilwell Hall; cemetery updates will be provided at a County-sponsored booth. George Dixon announced a booth at the Fort Ord PX on May 30<sup>th</sup> which would provide information regarding veterans' services. Sgt. Major Wynn invited members to the Army Soldier show on September 4<sup>th</sup> at the Presidio of Monterey. Acting Chair Johnsen announced the Heroes' Open golf tournament on November 8<sup>th</sup> and requested that upcoming events be added to the agenda.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Acting Chair Johnsen adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

18 May 2014  
Aaron Loveless  
Monterey Peninsula College  
980 Fremont Street, Monterey

Mr. Robert J. Norris, Jr.  
Principal Analyst  
Fort Ord Reuse Authority  
920 2nd Avenue, Suite A

### A Stroll through Main Garrison

1942: The Battle of Midway begins, the USS Lexington and Yorktown take to the bottom of the Atlantic, and Thailand declares war on the United States. The year also marks the completion of Fort Ord's Main Garrison. Hundreds of timber barracks light the way of 2nd Avenue with gridded, cookie-cutter perfection, as uniformed men fill the sidewalks moving to and from their pre-determined destinations. Flashing forward 55 years reveals a completely different spectacle. As quickly as they came, a desertion fell upon those once brilliant streets to reveal a plague of abandonment comparable to that of downtown Detroit.

Walking through Fort Ord's Main Garrison is a sight not to be taken lightly. Powerlines resembling bird nests hang low besides aching walls, peeling with blistered beige paint. Splintered supports lie adjacent to collapsed staircases, that appear to dissolve into the foliage below. Each of the desecrated structures throughout the decades have strayed far from their original blissful uniformity, gaining a degree of character with each fate whether it be a fallen pillar, or tag from one of the many troubled youths that consider it their playground. A river of garbage flows through many of the forgotten avenues, often in heaps sporting everything from used mattresses, to shredded hot tubs. It is easy to forget the history that once laced every street corner of this ghost town when confronted with such a sight of disrepair. What previously stood as one of the most booming locations of wartime Monterey, lies in a state that could shed a tear in the eyes of those who served in the glory days of this bold reservation.

The first emotions we shared as we stepped closer to the buildings was a shock of disappointment followed by concern. It was troubling to know that these beautiful pieces of local history weren't considered worthy of maintenance over the decades, and would soon be facing demise because of such. The two story, 63-man quarters now harbor wildlife and the few homeless that use them for night shelter, evident by the piles of clothes and liquor bottles visible from the entrances of some of the buildings. A short walk to the top of the hill reveals a hand full of well done restorations of the barracks, followed by a meeting hall of some sort, with a parking lot full of vehicles. It was a breath of fresh air seeing the restorations, knowing that some effort was made at preserving a piece of the base's heritage before the excavators arrive. A drive down the street reveals exactly that. A huddle of 1950's era dormitories stand surrounded by cranes and trucks hauling wreckage off site. We were eager to see what CSUMB has planned for the soon-to-be open lot. On the way to the demolition site our group

couldn't help but stop and notice the roller rink on 2nd avenue and do some research. We were nothing short of impressed to find that the building has been used for recreation for the past 72 years. Afterward we took a moment to admire the 1940s church and barracks beside the rink. We found throughout the week that the barracks have integrated their way into the lives of many in the community. Students and tourists alike walk the empty streets to take in the depth of the ruins and snap endless pictures of the wreckage. Hobbyists drive remote control cars in the fields besides the buildings on Giggling, while elderly metal detector wielding fellows pop coins from the gopher-pillaged baseball fields. One set of barracks has even been recycled into a field for war games involving pellet rifles and men in full combat attire. Students have set up disc-golf fields between the structures and the word "Ording" has actually become a term among curious CSUMB students for exploring the base's standing time capsules. Only time and funding will tell what innovations and surprises the base will have to offer in the near or distant future, but until then the buildings will remain prominent reminders of the military world that used to thrive in our community.