



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
Meeting Summary Minutes
February 21st, 2017**

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Dan Bullis, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). Dan asked for all present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing for a moment of silence for all of those who have given their lives and those who have been wounded for our country in the different conflicts in which our country has been engaged. A POW/MIA Empty Chair is placed at all official meetings of the Commission as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the December 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes and the January 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the December 2016 Meeting Summary Minutes and the January 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes unanimously approved. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva

III. Honoring Black History Month: Buffalo Soldiers and the History and Current Activities of the Buffalo Soldiers Central Maryland Group – Trooper Hardrick Crawford

Central Maryland Group Website: <https://buffalosoldiersmccmd.org/>

National Chapter Website: <http://www.nabstmc.com/index.php>

Trooper Crawford gave an overview of the history of Buffalo Soldiers. Shortly after the Civil War, Congress authorized the formation of the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st Infantry Regiments: Six all-Black peacetime units. Later the four infantry regiments were merged into the 24th and 25th Infantries. the Buffalo Soldiers--comprised of former slaves, free men and Black Civil War soldiers--were the first to serve during peacetime. Once the Westward movement had begun, prominent among those blazing treacherous trails of the Wild West were the Buffalo Soldiers of the U.S. Army. These African-Americans were charged with and responsible for escorting settlers, cattle herds, and railroad crews. The 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments also conducted campaigns against American Indian tribes on a western frontier that extended from Montana in the Northwest to Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona in the Southwest. Throughout the era of the Indian Wars, approximately twenty percent of the U.S. Cavalry troopers were Black, and they fought in over 177 engagements. The combat prowess, bravery, tenaciousness, and looks on the battlefield, inspired the Indians to call them "Buffalo Soldiers."

The Buffalo Soldiers Central Maryland Group is available to speak at clubs, churches, schools, youth organizations and other such groups. They also provide high school seniors an opportunity to compete for a \$1,000 scholarship for a graduating senior who has met or exceeded scholarship requirements:

<https://buffalosoldiersmccmd.org/about/scholarship/>.

IV. Chairman and Vice-Chairman Report:

Dan Bullis, Chairman, asked for recommendations for presentations or speakers for future Commission meetings. Betsy noted that Easter Seals has received funding to install a mental and behavioral health clinic for Veterans and their families at their Silver Spring office. The clinic is set to open in Fall 2017. She recommended that someone speak at a Commission meeting about this new clinic.

V. Update on Montgomery County Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC):

Mike Subin Commissioner, reported that the current bus route that will serve the CBOC does not provide mid-day service. Chuck Short, Special Assistant, is working with County Executive Leggett to secure additional funding from the County Executive budget to provide mid-day service on that route.

VI. Announcements:

Jim Campbell, Commissioner, presented the Commission with artwork titled Jaws of the Dragon by artist Stan Stokes. The artwork depicts an F-105 piloted by Fred V. Cherry is during an attack on the Ham Rong Bridge. Col. Fred Cherry was a prisoner-of-war during Vietnam and a Montgomery County resident. Jim is donating the artwork on behalf of the Montgomery County Chapter of Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) to be displayed at the Silver Spring Civic Building. Col. Fred Cherry was a MOAA national member.

Jim reminded Commissioners that Montgomery County MOAA will be hosting a dinner meeting on March 15th at Manor Country Club. The guest speaker will be retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins who was recently appointed as the new President and Chief Executive Officer of MOAA.

Jim Dittbrenner, Montgomery County MOAA BANG, shared information regarding the Montgomery County MOAA BANG Program and flyer for their March 14th meeting: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/MCMOAABangProgram.pdf>

Stan Siedel, Maryland Veterans Commission, reported that [HB1466 – State Personnel – Disabled Veterans – Noncompetitive Appointment](#) would provide non-competitive hiring of Veterans with disabilities for State employment. A hearing is scheduled for March 2nd. Stan will be testifying in support of this bill.

Stan also reported that the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund currently has over \$100,000 available to make grants and loans to Veterans and their family members who are in dire financial situations, or to private organizations that help Veterans (homeless programs, substance abuse programs, etc.). Information about the program: <http://veterans.maryland.gov/maryland-department-of-veterans-affairs-veterans-trust-fund/>.

Octavia Dixon, Commissioner, reported that VFW Post 9862 will be turning in their charter at the end of this operational year. As the charter is for the physical property, the Post will continue to meet at American Legion Post 86. Octavia would like the Commission to put together a subcommittee on female Veterans issues. She has concerns about female fertility issues for OIF/OEF/OND Veterans and would like the subcommittee to ask the State and the VA to address these issues. Octavia noted that she works for the VA Office of Public Health, Post-Deployment Health Services, and provide Commissioners informational literature on environmental and occupational exposures of U.S. Veterans during military service, such as Agent Orange.

Janice M. Freeman, President and CEO, African American Chamber of Commerce of Montgomery County (AACC), reported that on March 8th AACC will be hosting a procurement presentation from the Maryland Department of Transportation for small minority and women-owned businesses to learn about the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), and other government and private sector contracts. The event will be free and held at Rockville Memorial Library.

Mike Subin, Commissioner, reported that he has been appointed as Chair of the Veterans Committee for the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).

Adjournment: 7:30 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Tuesday, March 21st, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, 9th Floor Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850

Respectfully submitted:

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager