

**STATE OF HAWAII OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES'
ADVISORY BOARD ON VETERANS SERVICES MINUTES**

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Phone Conference ID: 470 605 296#
Office of Veterans' Services (Tripler Army Medical Center)
459 Patterson Rd. E Wing, Rm 1-A103 Honolulu, HI 96819
Friday, July 7, 2023
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Board Members:

Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog
Mr. Reyn Kaupiko
Ms. Donna Shimizu
Mr. Michael Lilly

OVS Staff:

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director
Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant

Guests:

Ms. Stacey Bonnett, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs -
Benefits
Ms. Amy Rohlfs, Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health
Care System – Medical
Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD
Engineering
Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home
Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director,
Department of Human Services
Mr. Gene Matias, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the
Pacific
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative

Absent:

Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Mr. Carlos Santana – Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS
Col. Pamela Ellison, Human Resources Officer,
Hawaii Army National Guard

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CALL TO ORDER – A Moment of Silence

Chair Bridget Komine led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, Chair Bridget Komine called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

II. **MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the June 2, 2023 minutes. Donna Shimizu has a change “It was for the National Guard monument over at KMR. It was first memorial service for the National Guard people for KMR and the other one is it was on the front page of the Hawaii Tribune Herald.

III. **COMMUNICATIONS**

None

IV. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Ms. Stacey Bonnett, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - Benefits

Briefed on: Our full-time BVA representative in Hilo recently retired. I will be sending someone from the regional office there for the week of July 17th through the 21st. We do already have a selection in to fill behind that position.

Ms. Amy Rohlfs, Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System - Medical

Briefed on: Introduction of Barbara Terry, she is the Congressional Liaison in the Public Affairs Office. Limited laboratory services (7am – 11am) – will only be servicing 30 patients on Saturdays.

Barbara Terry added more information about her skillset. What I do is I assist with any issues that senators and congressmen bring to our attention, and I provide investigation and then deliver the final results of that investigation to the congressman and the Senators.

Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director OVS

Briefed on: Special project for the Korean and Vietnam War Memorial will include a fence and additional lighting at the state capital around that memorial.

Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report.

Mr. Juan Babiak, Veterans Liaison, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans

Briefed on: Targeting an open house for September. Still need staffing levels to rise.

Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Community and Project Development Director, Department of Human Services

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report.

Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations – Not present, but submitted report before the meeting.

Briefed on: Quest is a (WIOA) Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act allocated worker emergency grant was awarded. It includes paid internships with state agencies. The program is operated statewide.

Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS - Not present, but submitted report.

Briefed on: Catholic Charities was not awarded the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program grant renewal.

Mr. Gene Matias, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Briefed on: No public events for the remainder of the month. Will be hosting several dignitaries' visits. Several construction projects that are still ongoing.

- Columbarium Court, 14 has not been completed, but it's a very close to being completed. Should be done in August.
- New restroom and kiosk where we'll have a grave site locator is almost completed.
- The roads and the striping of the roads has been completed.
- New committal shelters will be installed.

Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative – Present. No submitted report.

Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative – Not Present. No submitted report.

Department of Health – Not present. No submitted report.

V. BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - Report submitted. No additions.
2. Maui - Mr. Michael Lilly - Report submitted. No additions.
3. Oahu - Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair - No report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu - Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - Report submitted.
 - I did not attend the ESGR's Employer Recognition / Military Update event.
5. Oahu - Ms. Reyn Kaupiko – No report submitted. No additions.
6. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne Bruhn - Report submitted. No additions.
7. Big Island - Ms. Donna Shimizu - Report submitted. No additions.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Legislative Committee –No Report or Update
- B. By Laws and Procedures — No Report or Update
- C. Recognition and Awards –No Report or Update
- D. Women's Committee — No Report or Update
- E. Projects and Events Committee-
 - Maui Veterans Cemetery Blessing/Dedication Event Update- Michael Lilly
 1. No Report or Update

VII. ADJOURN – 9:38 am

Mary Kay Hertog motioned, and Donna Shimizu seconded.
Yolanda Ehere – Recorder