

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

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Office of Veterans' Services (Tripler Army Medical Center)

459 Patterson Rd. E Wing, Rm 1-A103 Honolulu, HI 96819

**Friday, August 4, 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. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn  
Ms. Donna Shimizu

**OVS Staff:**

Mr. Jonathan Kimura, Veterans' Services Coordinator  
Ms. Yolanda Ehere, Secretary

**Guests:**

Mr. Chris McNair, Veterans Service Center Manager,  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits  
Ms. Amy Rohlf, 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:**

Mr. Michael Lilly  
Mr. Ron Han, OVS, Director  
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant  
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**

Vice Chair Blair Suzuki led the Pledge of Allegiance. After a moment of silence, Vice Chair Blair Suzuki called the meeting to order at 0900 hours.

II. **MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the June 2, 2023 & July 7, 2023 minutes. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn motioned to accept the June 2, 2023 & July 7, 2023 minutes and Reyn Kaupiko seconded.

III. **COMMUNICATIONS**

None

IV. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Mr. Chris McNair, Veterans Service Center Manager, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits**

Briefed on: On Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, there will be a VET FEST at Ala Moana Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. There will be 2 briefs at 9am and 11am. VHA will be supporting. There will be a Q&A session as well as counselors taking claims.

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

Briefed on: PACT Act registration will be at the VET FEST on August 6<sup>th</sup>. There will be 5 tables of member services staff on hand to register veterans for the PACT Act. In addition to that, there will be a Veteran Experience Action Center (VEAC) on August 30<sup>th</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> at the Oahu Vet Center.

Questions for Amy Rohlf

1. What is the last day to file or put in for intent to file for the PACT Act? August 9<sup>th</sup> is the deadline. But if you are found that you have compensation, it will backdate for the year. Also, for the National Guard and Reservist. September the 30<sup>th</sup> is their deadline to be considered combat eligible.

**Mr. Jonathan Kimura, Veterans' Services Coordinator, OVS**

Briefed on: New Veteran Services Counselor starting on August 16<sup>th</sup> at our Hilo office. OVS counselors will be at the Veteran Experience Action Center (VEAC) to file claims on August 30<sup>th</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> at the Oahu Vet Center. We are planning a Veteran's Day concert that will not be on the actual day, but on November 10<sup>th</sup>.

**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: CNA training program is being sponsored by Hill Medical Center and our extended care facility and we've had 90 applicants. It's a paid 8-week training program.

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

Briefed on: No changes on submitted report.

**Mr. Gene Matias, Public Affairs Specialist, National Cemetery of the Pacific** - Present.  
No submitted report.

**Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative**

Briefed on: Tokuda, in your town initiative is a place to meet and speak with the Representative and her staff face to face. This will be an opportunity to do open casework and sign privacy release forms.

**Mr. Carlos Santana, Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative**

Briefed on: Senator Hirono will be in the state for most of the month visiting neighbor islands.

**Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations** – Not present. No submitted report.

**Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS** - 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.
  - One of our County Council members has drafted an ordinance to amend the Kauai County Code concerning real property taxes and disabled veterans. You know, right now if you're 100% disabled in the state, you're exempt from it. One of the County Council members is trying to, at least for Kauai, to bring it down between 80 and 100%.
2. Maui - Mr. Michael Lilly - Not present. No submitted report.
3. Oahu - Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair - No report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu - Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - No report submitted. No additions.
5. Oahu - Ms. Reyn Kaupiko – No report submitted. No additions.
6. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne Bruhn - No 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 – 9:24 am**

Mary Kay Hertog motioned, and Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder