

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

Present Ms. Takosha Swan, Vice-Chair
 Mr. Shawn Hanley, Secretary
 Mr. John Kubinec, Member
 Mr. Joshua Kopsie, Member
 Mr. Timothy Paslawski, Member
 Ms. Patricia Ross, Commissioner

Visitors: Mr. George Canavaggio, Assistant Commissioner, Field Operations & Appeals, GDVS
Present Mr. Mark Bannister, Assistant Commissioner, Administration, Health & Memorials
 Mr. Kerry Dyer, Director, Operations Division, GDVS
 Ms. Mary Catherine Greaber, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
 Mr. Matthew O'Brien, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
 Ms. Monisha Rallapalli, Office of Planning and Budget
 Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women and Vetlanta
 Mr. Dan Holtz, Secretary, GMOAA
 Ms. Belinda Boldoe, VFW Service Officer, Appeals Division, GDVS
 Mr. Vince Pritchett, Director, Veterans Benefits South Region, GDVS
 Mr. Dale Bell, Director, Veterans Benefits North Region, GDVS
 Mr. Ken Childre, Rome Field Office, GDVS
 Ms. Ramona Roper, Director, Training and Professional Development, GDVS
 Mr. Bob Norman, Training and Professional Development, GDVS
 Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information Division, GDVS
 Ms. Shelly Ann Simpson, Director, Appeals Division, GDVS
 Mr. Ernie Cowart, Director, Glennville Cemetery
 Mr. Carlton Deese, Executive Director GWVH, Milledgeville, GA
 Ms. Tonya Jarrett, Clinical Director, GWVH, Milledgeville, GA
 Mr. Russell Feagin, Director, Health & Memorials Division, GDVS
 Mr. William Wilson, Network Administrator, GDVS
 Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS
 Ms. Veda Brooks, Director of Women Veterans Office, GDVS
 Mr. Bobby Davis, Director, Veterans Education & Training, GDVS
 Mr. Steven Fay, Training & Professional Development Division, GDVS
 Ms. Monica Dorsey, Communications & Outreach Specialist, GDVS
 Ms. Shareka Monday-Robinson, HR Generalist, GDVS
 Ms. Debbie Gregory, Administrative Specialist, GDVS
 Ms. Barbara Beedles, Administrative Assistant, GDVS
 Ms. Julie Hammond, Confidential Secretary to the Commissioner, GDVS

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

On Wednesday, December 15, 2021, the Veterans Service Board meeting was held in person and by video/tele-conference.

Ms. Swan called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. Mr. Paslawski gave the invocation. Mr. Kopsie led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Ms. Swan welcomed the guests and performed a "roll call" of people listed above. Ms. Mary Catherine Greaber announced that she will no longer be our liaison with the Attorney General's Office. We were introduced to our new liaison, Mr. Matthew O'Brien.

Mr. Kopsie made a motion to approve the December Agenda. Mr. Paslawski seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Kopsie made a motion to approve the November minutes, which were previously distributed for members to review. Mr. Paslawski seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The following reports were submitted from the Veteran Service Organizations:

Ms. Dawn Thomas, Appeals Division, GDVS, American Legion Service Officer:

- The Department Service Officer conducted a benefits training with CeCe Walker on Teams on November 16, 2021.
- The Department Service Officer attended a VSO/CMA Meeting on December 9, 2021
- The Assistant Department Service Officer (Ed Kent) Post 13 Valdosta hosted the 2021 Annual Veterans Day ceremony in Valdosta at the Valdosta High School Gym. 8 elected Representatives, the Valdosta Chief of Police and a former Senator spoke at the ceremony. The Guest Speaker was the Commander of the 23rd Wing (The Flying Tigers), Colonel Russell "Bones" Cook. At least 100 Veterans and the Air Force and Navy JROTC units were in attendance. The school Band played Gathering Music and the Branch Songs.
- Department Service Officer has submitted her letter of resignation with my last day in this position 31 Dec 2021.

Ms. Belinda Boldoe, VFW:

- The Department Service Officer attended and participated in the VFW Post 12180 Veterans Day program and Buddy Poppy Drive on November 11, 2021.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

- The Department Service Officer attend the VFW Intermediate Skills Level Training (ISLT) Conference held at the DoubleTree hotel in Annapolis, MD on November 14-19, 2021. The presentation slides were share with the GDVS Training Team, the North and South Directors, and the Appeals Director.
- The Department Service Officer hosted a VFW GA Post Service Officer training course via Zoom on November 29, 2021 from 6PM-8PM.
- The Department Service Officer attended and participated in a joint project with Helping Hands non-profit organization and the VFW Post 12180 drive-thru toy give away on December 04, 2021. The organizations issue toys to girls and boys ages 1-12. Also, the finale was seeing the smile on the faces of 20 girls and boys that won a new bike.
- The Department Service Officer completed her VFW Intermediate Skills Level Training (ISLT) test on December 06, 2021.
- The Department Service Officer attended VA Regional Office Monthly VSO/CMA meeting with Brian Morgan, held on December 09, 2021 at 10AM.

Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women and VETLANTA:

When asked if she had anything to add to her report, Ms. Stevens added that Georgia Military Women had a holiday party in which 60 ladies participated.

Georgia Military Women continues to have more growth and activities. All state-wide in-person groups are back scheduling meetings. These remain small group activities with 10-20 attendees. Information and resources on-line through website links or zoom meetings share about finances, education, housing options, and job opportunities. Current groups are meeting in multiple Atlanta areas, Athens, Augusta, Columbus, and Savannah. We work closely with the Atlanta VA Women's Health Program. Starting in December, we will be meeting regularly also with the Augusta and Dublin, and VISN 7 Women Program Directors to improve outreach in those catchment areas.

During the open season for insurance renewals, education has been provided about Medicare and VA Champus options. The biggest challenges reported during the past month by members is access to healthcare. The VA is not yet back fully online for either appointments at the VA or through Community Care. Health topics this past month have focused on getting mammograms back up to date as many have been neglected during COVID. Also, emphasis on maternal care for pregnant veteran women to initiate care in their 1st trimesters rather than waiting. Georgia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates (death of mother) in the country, so we are trying to be more aggressive on getting younger women to enroll sooner in healthcare.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

The other key challenge for women is access to affordable housing. We are aware of empty beds for women veterans because the system is very challenging and often delays placement. Housing vouchers appear to be excessively difficult to access for those needing HUD/VASH support.

Re VETLANTA, we are back live and in person. VETLANTA had a very successful event on November 18th at the Metropolitan Club in Alpharetta. Our next Q1 VETLANTA Summit is now scheduled for February 10th at 12 Hotel in Atlanta. The theme will be "Military Families". Please save the date and watch for registration to open in January.

Commissioner Patricia Ross

Commissioner Ross highlighted her meetings with the assistant commissioners and directors her first two weeks in office. She added that she is learning the ins and outs of the job and that the legislative session will begin on January 10. This morning, Commissioner Ross met with the department field service officers and she will begin visiting the offices in 2022. Commissioner Ross highlighted the fact that the homes/cemeteries are using federal dollars that are for plot fees and patient fees to offset salaries. She then announced the resignation of GDVS North Director Dale Bell and wished him farewell and God speed. The new North Director will be Ken Childre.

On Wednesday, December 1, 2021, Commissioner Ross began her tenure at the Georgia Department of Veterans Service. Her first order of business was to meet with all department employees in the Floyd Veterans Memorial Building. She also attended the Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony at 2:00pm.

On Thursday, December 2, 2021, Commissioner Ross met with both Assistant Commissioners. For her meetings with the Assistant Commissioners and Directors, she has asked them to provide her with the following information:

1. What are the highlights or significant events over the last year?
2. What are your short-term plans and goals for your area during the next year?
3. What are your longer-term goals for your area (3-5 years)?
4. Where do you see yourself professionally in the next year, in the next 3 years or beyond?
5. What can I do to assist?

On Friday, December 3, 2021, Commissioner Ross met with the Human Resources Specialist, the Director of Operations and the Director of the Public Information Division.

On Monday, December 6, 2021, Commissioner Ross met with the Director of Veterans Benefits North Region. She also spoke with the Lyons Field Office about an upcoming Women's Veteran Ceremony in January 2022 which she will support and attend.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

On Tuesday, December 7, 2021, Commissioner Ross met with the Director of the Appeals Division, the Director of the Veterans Training and Professional Development Division and the Director of the Veterans Education and Training Division. She also attended a meeting regarding Military Law Enforcement training and potential proposed legislation.

On Wednesday, December 8, 2021, Commissioner Ross met with the Director of the Women Veterans Office and the Director of Accounting. She also attended the Returning Veterans Task Force Meeting and held a staff meeting for the department employees in the Floyd Veterans Memorial Building.

On Thursday, December 9, 2021, Commissioner Ross attended the Joint Defense Commission meeting at Clay National Guard base and learned about the work being accomplished by the Georgia Tech Research Institute and the Georgia Economic Development's Center for Aerospace Innovation (#1 export for Georgia). Additionally, as part of the meeting she met the new GA Department of Education's military family liaison who will assist with issues as military families transition in and out of the state and between school systems.

On Friday, December 10, 2021, Commissioner Ross met with the Network administrator, the Director of Health and Memorials, and the Director of the Glennville Cemetery.

On Monday, December 13, 2021, Commissioner Ross met with the Director of Veterans Benefits South Region. She also interviewed candidates for the North Region Director position. Commissioner Ross spoke at the Wreaths across America Ceremony at the Capitol sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

On Tuesday, December 14, 2021, Commissioner Ross met with the Director of the Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Milledgeville, the Executive Director of the Georgia War Veterans Home in Milledgeville, and the Executive Director of the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home in Augusta. She also attended the FISERV and Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs Partnership ceremony where they announced their Back2Business grant program. She also spoke with Dr. Greentree about FISERV's support to the military community and military spouse employment.

Other items of interest:

The over-arching themes of what the GDVS team is looking for from the Commissioner are:

- Communication and transparency
- Decisiveness
- Responsiveness
- Support for initiatives
- Funding

Introduction to National Association of State Department of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA). Have connected with most states and pending meetings with Southeast VP (FL) and Alabama

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

Areas for assistance:

- Salary increases, restoration of budget back to 2020 (have taken significant unplanned for reductions due to the retirement of the previous Commissioner and North Region Director (leave payouts and retirement); increases in rents, software, etc.

Upcoming:

- January meeting, budget update
- Legislative Session begins 10 Jan

Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Field Operations and Appeals:

Assistant Commissioner Canavaggio stated that he had nothing to add to his report. A discussion ensued regarding the vacancies in the department. Director of Operations Kerry Dyer stated the number of vacancies at 16, roughly 10% of the department.

GENERAL

- On December 08, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio conducted a WebEx meeting of the Returning Veterans Task Force.
- DD 214's and Welcome Home Letters:
 - 15 Welcome Home Letters were mailed out in November 2021.
- Department Electronic Claim's Assistance Processing System (Vetra Spec) currently 311,037 entries, this is an increase of 758 from November 18, 2021.

PROJECTED POSITIONS

- Current openings in Appeals, Columbus, Decatur CBOC, Statesboro, Warner Robins, Waycross

Veda Brooks, Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC)

Ms. Brooks amended her report to state that she was unable to attend the December 13 event at the Cobb County Senior Center.

- November 22, 2021, Ms. Brooks attended online SMVF Leadership meeting.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

- December 1, 2021, Ms. Brooks saw veterans in Smyrna, GA.
- December 2, 2021, Ms. Brooks attended the Coweta Veteran Court.
- December 3, 2021, Ms. Brooks attended Veterans Helping Veterans Roundtable.
- December 7, 2021, Ms. Brooks attended Unite Georgia Community Advisory Committee Meeting.
- December 8, 2021, Ms. Brooks attended a meeting with Commissioner Ross and participated in the RVTF Meeting.
- December 9, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the NASWVC, TEAMS meeting. Participated in an outreach event for American Legion.
- December 10, 2021, Ms. Brooks will participate in community engagement and see veterans in Coweta County.
- December 13, 2021, Ms. Brooks attended the Women Veteran Meeting at Cobb County Senior Wellness Center, participated in the communities of Practice Lethal Means Safety Planning Meeting.
- December 14, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the IPRCE Violence Prevention Task Force Meeting.
- December 15, 2021, Ms. Brooks presented at the AARP Suicide Prevention Panel. She also attended the Birdwell Foundation Board Meeting.
- December 16, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in Coweta Veteran Court.

Current committees

- Women's Veterans Health Committee (monthly meetings and joint outreach events)
- Georgia State VFW Homeless Committee
- VA/SAMHSA Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Georgia Team
- Atlanta Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans
- The Birdwell Foundation Board Member
- Coweta County Race, Equity, and Justice Committee

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

- Unite Georgia Community Advisory Committee

Ramona Roper, Training and Professional Development Division:

Ms. Roper added that her department will be busy in the upcoming months training the new hires that will be coming in.

- December 1 – present, 2021, GDVS Mentoring Program reactivated.
- December 4, 2021, Mark Demers participated in the VFW Post 1280 Drive Thru Christmas Toy Give Away in McDonough, Georgia.

Upcoming Events:

- Daily continued ongoing support to the Regional Directors and Veteran Field Service Offices.
- Merry Christmas

Shelly-Ann Simpson, Director of Appeals Division

Ms. Simpson announced that they had four decisions on December 14 that amounted to \$620,000. She then expressed her concern regarding the well-being of her employees, considering several have left and will be working in close proximity, yet making significantly more money than the GDVS employees. Mr. Mark Demers and Ms. Veda Brooks will be assisting by doing hearings, as will Ms. Simpson. The new hires will need training, and also time to get their PIV cards, which can take up to four months. Hearings are scheduled from January through March. She responded to Mr. Hanley's question about any backlog in cases that we do not have any, and was commended for her hard work in making this happen.

- The total number of actual hearings conducted by the Appeals Division for November 2021 was **111**.
- The total number of pre-hearing actions for November 2021 was 279. Post-hearing actions was **77**.
- The total number of correspondence conducted by the Appeals Division (with veterans, BVA/VA employees, and VSO field offices) for the month of November was **1,790**.
- As of November 1, 2021, the Atlanta VA Regional Office completed the following claims for the Service Organizations represented by GDVS:

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

Types of Claims	Number of Awards	Benefits paid out
Compensation	99,897	\$170,875,218
DIC	3031	\$4,372,963
Survivor Pension	915	\$686,427
Veteran Pension	1,845	\$1,926,016
Grand Total	105,688	\$177,860,624

NORTH GA, Dale Bell, North Area Director

Mr. Bell announced his retirement plans. He stated that they have 3 vacancies in the North Region, with pay being the main reason employees leave. He then highlighted the numbers listed below for the North Region. He will interview for two positions on December 16. Mr. Bell also stated that the veteran population in North Georgia has grown, with 10,000 additional being reported living in the area this year.

- On December 1st, Marie Lundquist of Oakwood conducted a Benefits Briefing at American Legion Post 127 in Sugar Hill.
- November 2021 total retro awards reported by North Georgia Offices: \$1,236,434.00. Included in that amount are single awards of \$165,782.00 reported by Emily Waters (Cartersville), \$150,753 reported by Glenn Massey (Gainesville), and \$106,799.00 reported by Rico Johnson (Gainesville).
- Interviews Conducted: Lawrenceville CBOC on November 22, 2021; Decatur VAMC on November 23, 2021.
- Director Site Visits / Inspections: None
- North Region Gains/Losses:
 - Daniel Osei stated in Decatur VAMC December 1, 2021.
 - Anjelica Davis (Newnan) terminated December 3, 2021.
 - Otis Bush starts in Lawrenceville CBOC December 16, 2021.
 - Kareem Reddick starts in Decatur VAMC December 16, 2021.
- North Georgia Region Veteran Population: 454,055
(this reflects an increase of 10,742 over prior year total)

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

- Office Visits

		Average Visits Per VFSO					
		Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO					
Region:		North					
Month:		November-21					
A	B	C	D	E	D / E F	G Total Average Claims Submitted To VA Monthly	G / E H Average Claims Submitted By VFSOS To VA Daily
Office Name	Veterans' Field Service Officer (VFSO) Last Name	#	Total Monthly Office Visits	Work Days In Month	Average Office Visits Per Day	2,315	3.04
Number of VFSOs:		59	12,855	761	16.89		
Number of Offices:		34	Average Visits/Office:		378.09	Average Claims/Office: 68.0882353	

- Total Monthly Office Visits includes Remote Work: 2,136 In-person Office Visits and 10,719 phone calls and emails

SOUTH, GA, Vincent Pritchett, South Area Director

Mr. Pritchett made one change to his report: Retro payments totaled \$828,298.79.

- On November 19, 2021, Tara Phillips (Dublin field office) and Vince Pritchett interviewed Ms. Nicole Clark for the vacant Veterans Service Officer 1 position in Dublin. Ms. Clark was the only candidate of 5 to interview. She did a terrific job and will start on December 16, 2021.
- On November 29, 2021, the Lagrange Department of Labor resumed allowing full time, in-person office visits. This enabled our Lagrange field office to resume normal operations. Also on this date, the Soldier for Life Center at Fort Benning began renovations which will prevent access to our field office. Chris McKan will work out of our Columbus field office until the renovations have progressed enough to allow him to return to his office.
- On December 3, 2021, Reggie Lewis (Savannah field office) supported a veterans' assistance clinic at American Legion Post 184 in Savannah.
- On December 4, 2021, Courtney Cleare (Macon field office) provided a benefit briefing to attendees at a veteran's workshop hosted by Union Baptist Church in Macon. Also on this date, Kevin Gibbs (Statesboro field office) supported a veterans' assistance clinic at American Legion Post 90 in Statesboro.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

- South Region offices reported retroactive payments since the last board meeting totaling \$410,298.79 with the highest single payment of \$218,626.30 reported by our Warner Robins field office.
- South Region Gains/Losses: Effective November 22, 2021, Cara Cooper left the Warner Robins field office. On December 1, 2021, Avia Poole joined our Columbus field office.
- South Georgia Region Veterans Population: 242,136
- Office Visits for November: South Georgia offices handled 5,470 phone calls and emails.

		Average Visits Per VFSO					
		Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO					
Region:		South Region					
Month:		November-21					
A	B	C	D	E	D / E F	G	G / E H
			Total Monthly Office Visits	Work Days In Month	Average Office Visits Per Day	Total Claims Submitted To VA Monthly	Average Claims Submitted By VFSOS To VA Daily
Office Name	Veterans' Field Service Officer (VFSO) Last Name	#	2,467	637	3.87	1,662	2.61
	Number of VFSOs:	37					
Number of Offices:	30		Average Visits/Office:	82.23	Average Claims/Office:	55.40	

Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information Division

Ms. May reported that she completed a news release announcing Commissioner Ross' appointment. She is working on revising the website and department forms. She highlighted the Wreaths across America event. A news team is at the cemetery interviewing Ms. Linda Lavender today. We are hoping that donations will be generated as a result.

GENERAL

Personnel

- Charlotte May, Director (Speeches, Major News Release Announcements, Digital Media, Websites [External & Internal])

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

- Monica Dorsey, Communications Specialist (Administrative support in all aspects of the GDVS Public Information mission/function [External & Internal])

INFORMATION OUTREACH

News Releases

1. State Veterans Service Board Selects New GDVS Commissioner – shared information on the appointment of Patricia Ross as the next Georgia Commissioner of Veterans Service with our statewide media contacts, partners at other agencies, state veterans service organization commanders, the communications team in the office of Governor Brian Kemp, and GDVS leadership to reach a broad audience. The announcement also links to Commissioner Ross's new webpage at <https://veterans.georgia.gov/commissioner>.

Social Media Highlights

1. Wreaths Across America –
 - a. Shared a link and information on how to donate to Georgia's veteran memorial cemeteries to help ensure both received donations for all gravestones. Cemeteries will not host public ceremonies, but encourage the public to visit and help safely distribute wreaths on December 18 to celebrate Wreaths across America Day.
 - b. Daughters of the American Revolution State Capitol Wreath Laying ceremony – shared invitation to join the DAR and Commissioner Ross in laying a ceremonial wreath at the State Capitol Building on Monday, December 13.
2. Spotlight on GDVS Annual Training and Employee Recognition – shared a selection of photos from the Department's Faithful Service award presentations celebrating the dedication of our employees and moments from the 2021 annual training week in Peachtree City.
3. National Guard 385th Birthday Livestream – shared invitation to join the Georgia National Guard in a livestream event as the Guard celebrates their history at the Clay National Guard Center on Monday, December 13.
4. Military anniversaries –
 - a. Fort Stewart's 3rd Infantry Division celebrated their 104th birthday. Shared information and celebratory media from the U.S. Army.
 - b. 80th Anniversary of the Attack on Pearl Harbor – shared media from state and federal agencies in remembrance of the over 2,400 killed and the 1,000 more who were wounded on December 7, 1941. Media included links to historical information about the attacks, the US entrance into WWII, and photos of the USS Arizona Memorial.

Public Information Division Contacts (Since January 1, 2021)

- Replies to VA eBenefits Messages = 3,255

- Replies to General Questions = approximately 1,510
- Individual Request for the State Certificate of Honor = approximately 265

GOVERNOR'S (VIETNAM VETERAN) CERTIFICATE of HONOR PROGRAM-

- The latest and most accurate totals (since March 2015) –

State Certificates of Honor issued via GDVS – An estimated 29,235
(Honors Ceremonies and Central Office Mail Outs)

DoD Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins presented via GDVS – An estimated 23,255

Honors Ceremonies supported/coordinated by GDVS – 350

Defense Department's Vietnam Veteran Surviving Spouse CoH – 285

Mr. Bobby Davis, Director, Veterans Education and Training Division (State Approving Agency):

Mr. Davis stated that they are awaiting the update on COVID-19 protocols, and is hoping it will be signed into law by Tuesday, December 21. Commissioner Ross asked Mr. Davis to explain the OJT (On the Job Training) Program, which he did.

VETERANS STATE APPROVING AGENCY

- The approval and compliance surveys of educational institutions, training establishments and training programs approved for veterans training is continuing with no significant problems in any area being noted.
- Approval of new veteran's On-The-Job training sites (OJT) continues to increase. As of this date the State Approving Agency (SAA) has granted approval to 1,789 educational institutions and training establishments where Georgia veterans may attend school or job training and utilize their GI Bill® educational benefits.
- The SAA is currently tracking legislation in Washington to potentially extend current COVID-19 protocols for schools until June 2022. Current COVID-19 protocols are set to expire on December 21, 2021.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

Item *	Number
Approved Educational Institutions	394
Approved Training Establishments	1395
Veteran Students Enrolled in Educational Institutions	20,281

* Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, Education Division, November 2021.

Mr. Russell Feagin, Director, Health & Memorials Division

Mr. Feagin highlighted the upcoming wreath laying ceremony on December 18. It will begin at 12:00 and will continue until all the wreaths are placed.

Mr. Feagin expressed thanks to Shawn Hanley and Green Veterans for the Thanksgiving meals provided for the veterans in the homes.

Commissioner Ross highlighted the report provided by Dennis Mize regarding the Georgia War Veterans Home. There are some challenges with the facilities and renovations. The Augusta home is 53 years old and houses four people to a room.

Covid statistics and re-infections were briefly discussed.

Tonya Jarrett, Clinical Director, Health & Memorials Division

Ms. Jarrett highlighted the fact that they remain Covid-free.

Georgia War Veterans Home - Milledgeville, GA												
Tuesday, November 30, 2021												
Category	Population	Positive Cases	Positives % of Population	Deaths	Deaths % of Positives	Deaths % of Population	Recovered	Recovered % of Positives	Reinfected	Reinfected % of Population	Currently In Isolation	Positive for current month
Patients	314	101	32.17%	27	26.73%	8.60%	74	73.27%	12	3.82%	0	0
Staff	507	119	23.47%	0	0.00%	0.00%	118	99.16%	7	1.38%	0	0

Cumulative figures since March 1, 2020.

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

Recovered category was initially patients/staff who tested positive and subsequently tested negative twice.

In August the CDC changed their criteria to time based. Patients with no symptoms after 14 days are Presumed to have recovered from the virus.

Reinfected category includes patients/staff who were in the Recovered Category and have since been tested positive again.

In Isolation category includes either self-quarantined, hospital, or COVID-19 unit at GWVH.

Positive for current month includes the number of veterans/staff who have tested COVID positive for the current month.

Vaccine Update 11/30/21

169 out of 173 patients, 97.68 %, have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

252 Pruitt staff out of 255 Pruitt staff, 98.82 %, have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Three Pruitt staff members that have not been vaccinated due to an exemption status.

Onsite Vaccine Clinics

Onsite Vaccine - Date of Clinic No. 3 - Feb. 23, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 4 - Mar. 12, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 5- April 2, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 6- April 16, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 7- April 30, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 8- May 14, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 9- May 28, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 10- June 11, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 11- June 25, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 12- July 9, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 13- July 23, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 14- August 6, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 15- August 18, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 16- August 31, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 17- September 3, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 18- September 15, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No.19- September 17, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 20- September 28, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 21- October 1, 2021
Onsite Vaccine- Date of Clinic No. 22 - October 29, 2021
Onsite Vaccine - Date of Clinic No. 23- November 12, 2021

Mr. Carlton Deese, Executive Director, Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home

Mr. Deese expressed thanks to Shawn Hanley and Green Veterans for the Thanksgiving meal. *Fox and Friends* was present and highlighted the event on their morning show.

Mr. Deese stated that they have had zero Covid reinfections after the vaccination process.

Mr. Kerry Dyer, Director of Operations, GDVS

Mr. Dyer expressed congratulations to Mr. Ken Childre, the new North Region Director. He stated that job vacancies have been posted, with the goal being to have 4-5 viable candidates by December 27 or 28. The plan is to interview candidates the first week of January. The new employees will then be trained.

Mr. Mark Bannister, Administration, Health, and Memorials:

Mr. Bannister stated that the legislative session will begin January 10 and last until March 31. He visited the sub-acute construction project, which is at 75% completed. It is estimated to open during the Spring/Summer of 2022.

A discussion took place regarding the number of patients in the homes. There is no waiting list and we are not turning people away. The numbers reported can vary due to the differences in tracking and the dates on the reports. There are patient deaths and discharges, which also affect the daily numbers. Also, the Covid report shows a snapshot in time, and also cumulative data.

FINANCE

Accounting

Routine operations are continuing.

We are continuing to complete end – of – year reports to provide information for inclusion in the Consolidated Accounting and Finance Report (CAFR), to be published by the State Accounting Office (SAO) in December 2021.

Budget and General

We are looking forward to the start of the 2022 Session of the Georgia General Assembly on or about January 12th, 2022. As we anticipate some of the same COVID-19 protocols as in the last session, we are prepared to present our FY 2023 budget request safely and efficiently.

HEALTH AND MEMORIALS

State Veterans Homes

State Veterans Homes Census (through December 3, 2021)+

Current Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	92	129	221
Service Connected *	22	40	62
Total Patients	114	169	283
Last Month			
Regular Patients	94	128	222
Service Connected *	23	41	64
Total Patients	117	163	272

* One-hundred percent of the cost of these services is paid by the VA. No state funds are involved.

+ The report to the VSB are the total numbers from November 6, 2021 through December 3, 2021.

Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home – Augusta

Routine operations are continuing.

Georgia War Veterans Home – Milledgeville

Routine operations are continuing.

State Veterans Cemeteries

Burial Statistics (through December 3, 2021)+

State Veterans Cemetery	Cumulative Last Month	Cumulative Current Month	Increase
Glennville	1,974	1,987	13
Milledgeville	4,588	4,612	24
Total	6,562	6,599	37

+ The report to the VSB are the total numbers from November 6, 2021 through December 3, 2021.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Glennville

Routine COVID-19 contingency operations are continuing.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Milledgeville

Routine COVID-19 contingency operations are continuing.

OPERATIONS

Human Resources

Routine operations are continuing.

Personnel Actions (Gains / Losses) (November 22, 2021 – December 1, 2021)

Location	Position	Status	Name	Date
Warner Robins	VFSO 1	Resignation	<i>Cara Cooper</i>	11/22/2021
Glennville	Grounds Maint Tech 1	Resignation	<i>Rob West</i>	11/30/2021
Columbus	VFSO 1	New Hire	<i>Avia Poole</i>	12/01/2021
Central Office	Commissioner	New Hire	<i>Patricia Ross</i>	12/01/2021

Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

Glennville	Grounds Maint Tech 1	New Hire	<i>Cade Flournoy</i>	12/01/2021
Decatur VAMC	VFSO 1	New Hire	<i>Daniel Osei</i>	12/01/2021
Newnan	VFSO 1	Terminated	<i>Anjelica Davis</i>	12/01/2021

Properties

Routine operations are continuing.

Information Technology

Routine operations are continuing.

Records Management

Routine operations are continuing.

Vehicle Management

Routine service and maintenance are performed as required.

Veterans Service Foundation Board

The Foundation Board Chairman, Mr. Doug Middleton will provide an update to the Veterans Service Board.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS:

Board elections were held. For the position of Secretary, Mr. Paslawski nominated Mr. Kopsie, which was seconded by Mr. Hanley. Mr. Kopsie accepted and the motion passed.

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Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
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For the position of Chair, Mr. Kubinec nominated Mr. Hanley, which was seconded by Mr. Kopsie. The motion passed.

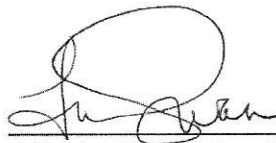
For the position of Vice-Chair, Ms. Swan decided to resign from her current post so that all three positions could be decided at the same time. Mr. Paslawski nominated Ms. Swan to serve another term as Vice-Chair, which was seconded by Mr. Kopsie. The motion passed.

The January 20 board meeting was scheduled. It will be a combination virtual and in-person meeting, set up at the GDVS. Mr. Paslawski made a motion for this and Mr. Kopsie seconded it. The motion passed.

Mr. Kopsie made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Paslawski. The motion passed by voice vote.

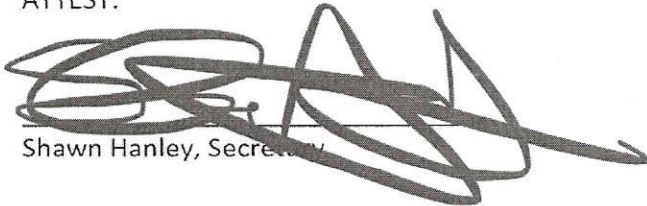
The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:45 p.m.

SIGNED:



Takosha Swan, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:



Shawn Hanley, Secretary

The next Veterans Service Board meeting will be held in person at GDVS but will also be available via video/telephone conference call on Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 12:30 p.m.

The Webex link is:

<https://georgiadepartmentofveteransservice.webex.com/georgiadepartmentofveteransservice/j.php?MTID=m4f34c797bfca83189cf8c029cb8a88e0>

Meeting password: **EmaMMt2hF38**

Or you can call: **1-844-621-3956**

Access Code: **2349 300 6114**