

Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

Present Ms. Patricia Ross, Chairman
By Phone: Mr. Shawn Hanley, Secretary
Mr. John Kubinec, Member
Mr. Eddie Whitted, Member
Mr. Joshua Kopsie, Member
Mr. Mike Roby, Commissioner

Visitors: Mr. George Canavaggio, Assistant Commissioner, Field Operations & Appeals, GDVS
Present by Mr. Mark Bannister, Assistant Commissioner, Administration, Health & Memorials
Phone: Mr. Kerry Dyer, Director, Operations Division, GDVS
Ms. Catherine Graeber, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
Mr. Vince Pritchett, Director, Veterans Benefits South Region, GDVS
Mr. Dale Bell, Director, Veterans Benefits North Region, GDVS
Mr. Doug Middleton, Chair of the Veterans Service Foundation, Inc.
Ms. Ramona Roper, Director, Training and Professional Development, GDVS
Mr. Bob Norman, Training and Professional Development, GDVS
Ms. Shelly Ann Simpson, Director, Appeals Division, GDVS
Mr. Eddie Asberry, American Legion, Department of Georgia
Ms. Belinda Boldoe, VFW Service Officer, Appeals Division, GDVS
Mr. Carlton Deese, Executive Director Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home
Ms. Tonya Jarrett, Clinical Director, GWVH, Milledgeville, GA
Mr. Russell Feagin, Director, Health & Memorials Division, GDVS
Mr. William Wilson, Network Administrator
Mr. Michael McClendon, Guest
Mr. Dan Holtz, Secretary, GMOAA
Mr. Kevin Hammond, State Commander, VFW, Department of Georgia
Mr. Willie Atkinson, Alt. State Commander, DAV, Department of Georgia
Ms. Elizabeth Holmes, Blinded Veterans Association, Department of Georgia
Mr. Drew Craig, Veterans Experience
Ms. Melodii Peoples, Comm. & Outreach Spec., Public Information Division, GDVS
Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS
Ms. Veda Brooks, Director of Women Veterans Office, GDVS
Mr. Bobby Davis, Director, Veterans Education & Training, GDVS
Ms. Dawn Thomas, Appeals Division, GDVS, American Legion Service Officer
Mr. Steven Fay, Training & Professional Development Division, GDVS
Ms. Debbie Gregory, Administrative Specialist
Ms. Julie Hammond, Confidential Secretary to Commissioner Mike Roby, GDVS

On Wednesday, June 23, 2021, the Veterans Service Board meeting was held by video/tele-conference.

Ms. Ross called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

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Mr. Whitted gave the invocation. Ms. Ross led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Ms. Ross welcomed the guests and performed a "roll call" of people listed above.

Mr. Hanley made a motion to approve the June Agenda. Mr. Whitted seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call vote.

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

The following reports were submitted from the Veteran Service Organizations:

Ms. Ross thanked Mr. Asberry for his service. Mr. Asberry stated that he was appreciative to be able to serve as Commander for the American Legion for his term.

Commander Eddie Asberry, American Legion:

Our Annual Boys State camp was held at Gordon State College, June 13 - 19, 2021. Boys State is a comprehensive one week course in state and local government.

102nd Georgia Department Convention, Duluth, GA June 25 - 27. Mr. Roby will be one of the speakers.

This is my last official meeting. I want to thank everyone for the honor to serve the great Veterans of Georgia.

Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women and VetLanta:

Ms. Stevens did not submit a report this month, but wanted to express her appreciation for the women's event at the Georgia Aquarium, where Ms. Ross was the speaker. Ms. Stevens is leaving for Okinawa, where she will be a counselor for one year. She mentioned the VETLANTA event on September 8 at Mercedes Benz and asked everyone to save the date.

Ms. Belinda Boldoe, VFW:

- The Department Service Officer attended an Atlanta VBA Regional Office Directors/VSO Quarterly with Acting Directors Angela Seelhammer, Patrick Zondervan and Staff on VA benefit programs to include compensation, veteran readiness and employment, loan guaranty and education held on May 19, 2021 at 9AM. The meeting provided an update on activities affecting the Atlanta Regional Office and the VBA system.

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- The Department Service Officer attended the Atlanta VAMC Town Hall meeting with Direct Ann Brown and VAMC Staff providing the update with events within the VAMC 7th District. The Town Hall allowed the guest to participate in a Q&A session. A summary of the meeting was provided to the VFW Commander, Staff, and community.
- The Department Service Officer attended the Atlanta VAMC Stakeholders Listening Session with Direct Ann Brown and VAMC Staff on May 26, 2021 from 1PM – 2PM. Director Brown wants to hear from Veterans and other stakeholders in the communities on ways to build the best VA health care system that meets the needs of Veterans today and for generations to come. The meeting allowed the guest to participate in a Q&A session and to provide input on ways to improve the VAMC. A summary of the meeting was provided to the VFW Commander, Staff, and community.
- The Department Service Officer attended a Microsoft Team meeting with GDVS Commissioner Roby and Assistant Commissioner Canavaggio. The Commissioner provide update on issues affecting the department. The meeting was held on May 27, 2021 at 9AM.
- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Veteran of Foreign Wars Department Zoom meeting held on June 01, 2021 at 6PM. During the meeting we discussed the projects the Department is sponsoring that helps veterans and their family.
- The Department Service Officer attended a VFW Sr. Vice-Commander family fun day on June 05, 2021. The event was hosted by GA Post 7402 – Buchanan at 5760 Highway 120, Buchanan, GA 30113. The family fun day gave veterans and their families a day to fellowship with one another.
- The Department Service Officer participated in a VFW GA Recruiting Drive at the Fury Harley Davidson 900 Dogwood Drive SE, Conyers held on June 12, 2021 The Department Service Officer provided information to veterans and their family members on federal and state benefits.
- The Department Service Officer attended GDVS monthly training class via state training website. The GDVS training provided updated information on Hearing Loss and Tinnitus. The training was held on June 11, 2021.
- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Veteran of Foreign Wars Department Zoom meeting held on June 15, 2021 at 6PM. During the meeting we discussed the projects the Department is sponsoring that helps veterans and their family and the GA State Convention scheduled for June 17-20, 2021.

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Ms. Ross asked Commissioner Roby if he had anything to add to his report. Commissioner Roby attended a VFW convention in Macon on May 18th and asked everyone to keep Commander Joel Willis in their prayers. He also attended the Medal of Honor dinner for Col. (Ret.) Ralph Puckett in Columbus, Georgia on May 18th. He gave an update that all employees in the GDVS offices will be back to five days a week in the office beginning on July 6th. The Field Offices will be keeping the appointment system in place, but will also welcome walk-ins. Both Ms. Ross and Commissioner Roby advertised the July 2nd concert featuring Ms. Takosha Swan at Liberty Plaza.

Commissioner Mike Roby, Georgia Department of Veterans Service:

On Thursday, May 27, 2021, Commissioner Roby had a Town Hall meeting at 9:00 a.m.

On Wednesday, June 2, 2021, Commissioner Roby, Assistant Commissioner Mark Bannister, and Director of Operations Kerry Dyer attended the Fort Benning Leader's Luncheon. The Commissioner from Alabama was also in attendance.

On Saturday, June 5, 2021, Commissioner Roby and Director of Operations Kerry Dyer attended the AMVETS Summer Conference in Warner Robins at 9:00 a.m., where Commissioner Roby provided a briefing on GDVS.

On Friday, June 11, 2021, Commissioner Roby held a Director's Meeting at 1:00 p.m.

On Saturday, June 12, 2021, Commissioner Roby spoke at the Certificate and Pin Ceremony in Villa Rica at the American Legion Post 70 at 4:00 p.m. Also in attendance were: Kerry Dyer, Director of Operations; Charlotte May, Director, Public Information Division; Melodii Peoples, Communication & Outreach Specialist, Public Information Division; Ramona Roper, Director, Veterans Training and Professional Development Division; Dale Bell, Director, Veterans Benefits North Region; Nikitia Hall, Office Manager, Carrollton Field Office; and Sean Seader, VFSO1, Carrollton Field Office.

On Thursday, June 17, 2021, Commissioner Roby attended the Returning Veterans Task Force Meeting at 9:30 a.m. After the meeting, Commissioner Roby, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio and Veda Brooks, Director, Women Veterans Office, met with Senator Kay Kirkpatrick on the subject of veteran homelessness.

On Friday, June 18, 2021, Commissioner Roby was the Guest Speaker at the VFW's Summer Convention in Macon, Georgia at 8:30 a.m. Kerry Dyer, Director of Operations, also attended.

On Friday, June 18, 2021, Commissioner Roby and Operations Director Kerry Dyer attended the Fort Benning Medal of Award Honor Ceremony for Col. (Ret.) Ralph Puckett at 5:00 p.m.

Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Field Operations and Appeals:

GENERAL

- On June 8, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio went through the order of merit list and recommended 15 individuals for pay increases.
- On June 15, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio attended the Governor's Challenge Task Force Meeting at the National Guard Armory in Ellenwood, Georgia. We discussed Suicide Prevention Policies, Training, National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, Georgia's Priority Implementation Roadmap.
- On June 17, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio conducted a WebEx meeting of the Returning Veterans Task Force.
- DD 214's and Welcome Home Letters:
 - 11 Welcome Home Letters were mailed out for the month May.
- Department Electronic Claim's Assistance Processing System (Vetra Spec) currently 306,146 entries, this is an increase of 9,275 from May 22, 2021.

PROJECTED POSITIONS

- Current openings: Decatur VAMC, Waycross, LaGrange, Lawrenceville CBOC, Valdosta CBOC

Veda Brooks, Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC)

- May 26, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in Georgia & *The Governor's Challenge VA/SAMHSA Governor's Challenge TA Center Mentor meeting*. Ms. Brooks held a Task Force Meeting to address the question sent to the Task Force by Senator Matt Brass' office. (Research is ongoing)
- May 27, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in Commissioner's Town Hall Meeting.
- May 28, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the *Homeless Outreach and Veteran Officer Meeting*
- May 29, 201 Ms. Brooks participated in placing flags on the graves of veterans.
- May 31, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the Coweta County Memorial Day Service.
- June 1, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in *Rep. McBath Veterans Benefits and Resources Webinar*.
- June 3, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the *Governor's Challenge Portal Launch*.
- June 9, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the *Women Veterans Health Committee Monthly Meeting*.

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- June 10, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the Veterans Collaborative Coweta.
- June 11, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in *"On the Frontlines: PTSD in Female Veterans,"*
- June 14, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in *SSVF Shared Geography Meeting*.
- June 15, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the Georgia Governor's Task Force Meeting.
- June 17, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the Returning Veterans Task Force June 2021.
- June 21, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in Governor's Challenge am Lead Call.

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
- The Birdwell Foundation Board Member
- Coweta County Race, Equity, and Justice Committee

Ramona Roper, Training and Professional Development Division:

- May 20, 2021, Steven Fay made a site visit to Newnan VFSO.
- May 20-present, 2021, continued mentoring program on a weekly basis.
- June 1, 2021, the Training and Professional Development Division participated in the HVS Telephone Training via WebEx
- June 10, 2021, Ramona Roper, and Steven Fay made a site visit to Newnan.
- June 23, 2021, Ramona Roper participated in a webinar training briefing with the Centers for Disease Control via Zoom

Upcoming Events:

- Continued ongoing support and monthly trainings to the Regional Directors and Veteran Field Service Offices.
- Preparations for Annual Training

Ms. Ross asked Ms. Simpson for any updates to her report. Ms. Simpson talked about the transition of moving and rearranging offices. The remodel will group the departments so that they are not sharing space, but have their own. Veterans will be served on the first floor when the remodel is complete.

Shelly-Ann Simpson, Director of Appeals

- The total number of actual hearings conducted by the Appeals Division for May 2021 was 68.
- The total number of pre-hearing actions for May 2021 was 234, while post-hearing actions was 160.
- The total number of correspondence conducted by the Appeals Division was 1700 (with veterans, BVA/VA employees, and VSO field offices) during the month of May.
- As of May 1, 2021, the Atlanta VA Regional Office completed the following claims for the Service Organizations represented by GDVS:

Types of Claims	Number of Awards	Benefits paid out
Compensation	99,195	\$167,073,821
DIC	2,778	\$3,993,716
Survivor Pension	903	\$669,760
Veteran Pension	1,888	\$1,969,769
Grand Total	104,764	\$173,707,067

Ms. Ross asked Mr. Bell for any updates. He noted that he is busy with personnel changes and still in the hiring process. Mr. Whitted questioned is the personnel changes are because of turnover. Mr. Bell stated that it is partly regularly expected turnover, but also because of a delay in filling positions that came about because of Covid.

NORTH GA, Dale Bell, North Area Director

- On May 3rd, Ian Ketterer of Augusta VAMC gave a GDVS Benefits Brief at the Virtual Caregiver's Summit and Resource Fair at Augusta VAMC. He also provided State Benefit Books, Business Cards, and GDVS Pens to include in their "Drive-By Swag Bags".
- On June 5th, Rebecca Moran of Decatur VAMC represented GDVS at Sconiers Homeless Preventive Organization Resource Fair in Jonesboro. She set up a table and provided information about State and Federal VA benefits.
- On June 12th, Nikitia Hall and Sean Seader of Carrollton and myself assisted with a Vietnam Certificate & Lapel Pin Program in Villa Rica.
- May 2021 total retro awards reported by North Georgia Offices: \$1,009,531.00.

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- Director Site Visits / Inspections: Cedartown, Decatur VAMC, Dalton, Lafayette, Rome
- North Region Gains/Losses:
 - Sakinah Allah terminated from Decatur VAMC June 1, 2021.
 - Anjelica Davis started in Newnan June 1, 2021.
 - James Hood transferred from Lawrenceville to Marietta June 7, 2021.
 - Vetineet Hueitt started in Ft McPherson June 15, 2021.
 - Charolette Hamilton started in Decatur VAMC June 17, 2021
- North Georgia Region Veteran Population: 443,313
- Office Visits

Average Visits Per VFSO							
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO							
Region:		North					
Month:		May-21					
A	B	C	D	E	D / E	G	G / E
			Total	Work	Average	Total	Average
	Veterans' Field		Monthly	Days	Office	Claims	Claims
	Service Officer (VFSO)		Office	In	Visits	Submitted	Submitted
Office Name	Last Name	#	Visits	Month	Per	To	By VFSOS
					Day	VA	To VA
						Monthly	Daily
	Number of VFSOs:	59	12,457	876	14.22	2,078	2.37
Number of Offices:	34	Average Visits/Office:		366.38	Average Claims/Office:		61.1176471

Ms. Ross asked Mr. Pritchett for any updates. Mr. Pritchett stated that he is looking to fill 2 positions on July 6 after holding interviews on June 16 and 22.

SOUTH GA, Vincent Pritchett, South Area Director

- On June 5, 2021, Vincent Pritchett presented certificates during the Vietnam Veteran Certificate of Honor ceremony in Roberta, GA. The event was hosted by Mrs. Sandra Darby of the Nathaniel Macon DAR Chapter of the daughters of the American Revolution. 45 certificates and pins were distributed to veterans or their surviving spouses.
- On June 16, 2021, Reggie Lewis and Vince Pritchett interviewed candidates for the open Veterans Field Service Officer 1 position in Savannah.

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- On June 22, 2021, Jason Lane and Vince Pritchett interviewed candidates for the open Veterans Field Service Officer 1 position in Valdosta.
- South Region offices reported retroactive payments totaling \$261,064.38. The highest single payment was \$118,257.43 to a veteran living in the Albany area.
- South Region Gains/Losses: Tara Phillips joined our Dublin field office effective June 15, 2021.
- South Georgia Region Veterans Population: 244,963
- Office Visits for May: South Georgia offices handled 5,826 phone calls and emails.

	Average Visits Per VFSO					
	Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO					
	Region:		South Region			
	Month:		May-21			
				</		

Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information Division

INFORMATION OUTREACH

News Releases

1. Memorial Day Message – Commissioner Roby released a message to the veterans and families in Georgia in remembrance of our nation's servicemen and women. The message was shared on social media and released to media outlets.
2. Veterans Memorial Cemeteries to Hold Private Memorial Day Ceremonies – PID released information to the public and media outlets regarding a change to the annual Memorial Day ceremonies. All veterans were honored with graveside flags and a private flag raising was held at both cemeteries.

3. Cemetery Roll of Honor - the Public Information Division continues to update the online Roll of Honor for veterans interred at the Veterans Memorial Cemeteries in Milledgeville and Glennville throughout the COVID-19 outbreak in Georgia.

Facebook Post Highlights

1. Memorial Day Message and video – featured Commissioner Roby's message and acknowledgement of our military service members and veterans. Shared a video of the Governor's Memorial Day Ceremony featuring Commissioner Roby and Assistant Commissioner Canavaggio.
2. Colonel Puckett receives Medal of Honor – shared video of Georgia native Ralph Puckett covering his military history and celebrating his receipt of a Medal of Honor from President Biden.
3. VA announces major decisions for Agent Orange and Gulf War presumptive conditions – shared information from VA Secretary Denis McDonough
4. Highlighted the retirement of two long-time GDVS employees and featured photos of both receiving Certificates of Appreciation from the department

Public Information Division Contacts *(Since January 1, 2020)*

- Replies to VA eBenefits Messages = 2,725
 - Service paused as of May 1, 2021. eBenefits services were moved to VA.gov as part of a transition to a single service website. While migrating data and merging systems, the ability to request information from a state veterans agency or veterans service organization was broken.
- Replies to General Questions = approximately 1,125
- Individual Request for the State Certificate of Honor = approximately 205

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 28,800
(Honors Ceremonies and Central Office Mail Outs)

DoD Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins presented via GDVS – An estimated 23,085

Honors Ceremonies supported/coordinated by GDVS – 345

Defense Department's Vietnam Veteran Surviving Spouse CoH – 268

EVENTS

- Daughters of the American Revolution Honor Vietnam Veterans – June 5
 - Vince Pritchett, Director of Veterans Benefits South Region, represented the department at a ceremony in Roberta, Georgia. Mr. Pritchett presented Vietnam Certificates of Honor to 50 veterans and their families.
- Villa Rica American Legion Post 70 Honors Vietnam Veterans – June 12
 - Commissioner Roby presented Vietnam Certificates of Honor to 45 veterans and their families. The Commissioner also presented 12 Surviving Spouse certificates.

Ms. Ross asked Mr. Davis if he had any updates. Mr. Davis stated that the upcoming August conference will be virtual instead of in-person. Ms. Ross added that both the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia approved extending in-state rates indefinitely to anyone using GI Bill educational benefits.

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

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 1,769 educational institutions and training establishments where Georgia veterans may attend school or job training and utilize their GI Bill educational benefits.

Item *	Number
Approved Educational Institutions	391
Approved Training Establishments	1,378
Veteran Students Enrolled in Educational Institutions	19,610

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

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Ms. Ross asked Mr. Bannister for any updates and also asked for updates from individuals within his department. The following comments were made:

Mr. Bannister stated that his department is busy closing out the fiscal year and that Chris Hambright and Camala Ball are doing a great job. He has had good conversations with State Properties, OPB regarding the possible Augusta cemetery.

Mr. Kerry Dyer gave an update on the new office locations.

Mr. Russell Feagin discussed the proposed Augusta cemetery. He is ready for the July 1 pre-application deadline. A discussion ensued as to why it takes 3-4 years for the entire process and was clarified by Mr. Feagin. Once funding is actually available, which takes some time, construction begins. The full process can be completed in 3-4 years, from funding to opening. The State of Georgia has allocated their portion of the funds, and the federal government will be responsible for the remaining funds needed. Current cemeteries have priority to expand over new cemeteries being constructed. Mr. Feagin has requested two grants – one to expand the Milledgeville Cemetery and one to build a new cemetery in Augusta. There has also been a request for two additional grants – one for the home in Milledgeville and one for the home in Augusta, both for additional construction. Mr. Hanley stated that working with the National Cemetery Administration is a long and hard process, especially to get a new cemetery approved, and thanked Mr. Feagin for undertaking this process.

Ms. Tonya Jarrett stated that they continue to be Covid free. They have hosted ten on-site vaccine clinics since January, 2021.

Mr. Carlton Deese stated that they remain Covid free and are continuing testing and vaccine clinics. They are hoping to have family visits back to normal on July 1. They hope to have students and volunteers back in soon.

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

FINANCE

Accounting

Routine operations are continuing.

Budget and the General Assembly

The Department is currently undergoing the annual fiscal year closeout processes for FY 2021, which ends on June 30th. All *systems* are on go status and we will complete the fiscal year within budget. As is the case each fiscal year, we will have some end of year *fallout* moneys that will be spent on purchases of items we need for operational purposes in the various fiscal programs.

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Preliminary reviews of the FY 2021 budget and current spending in each of the four fiscal programs (Administration, Cemeteries, Nursing Homes and Veterans Benefits) indicate is within budget and on track for a successful closeout.

The FY 2022 Approved Operating Budget (AOB) for the GDVS was submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) this month for approval and entry into the OPB's tracking system, which is used by the OPB and all state agencies for budget and expenditure monitoring and budget compliance. The AOB is based on the FY 2022 appropriation approved by the General Assembly and the Governor.

We will begin the Amended FY 2022 and FY 2023 budget development process during the month of July. The department's budget requests are due to the OPB on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.

The first budget item request will be a pay adjustment for all GDVS employees earning a salary of \$50,000.00 dollars and below. Going into FY 2022 we are focusing on employees whose salaries are below the market average for their pay grade in the Statewide Pay Structure.

Other activities for FY 2023 are generally regular operating items.

HEALTH AND MEMORIALS

State Veterans Homes

State Veterans Homes Census (Through June 11, 2021)⁺

Current Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	100	121	221
Service Connected *	20	47	67
Total Patients	120	168	288
Last Month			
Regular Patients	98	119	217
Service Connected *	20	46	66
Total Patients	118	165	283

* 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 May 14, 2021 through June 11, 2021.

Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home – Augusta

Routine operations are continuing.

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Georgia War Veterans Home – Milledgeville

Routine operations are continuing.

State Veterans Cemeteries,

Burial Statistics (Through June 11, 2021)+

State Veterans Cemetery	Cumulative Last Month	Cumulative Current Month	Increase
Glennville	1,862	1,878	16
Milledgeville	4,387	4,409	22
Total	6,249	6,287	38

+ The report to the VSB are the total numbers from May 14, 2021 through June 11, 2021.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Glennville

Routine operations are continuing.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Milledgeville

Routine operations are continuing.

Augusta Veterans Cemetery Project

On Tuesday, June 15, 2021, at 1:30 pm, the Director, Health & Memorials Division and Mr. Bannister attended a virtual meeting with members of Augusta University, State Properties Commission and the Office of Planning and Budget. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed property for the planned State Veterans Cemetery at Augusta.

OPERATIONS

Human Resources

Routine operations are continuing.

Personnel Actions (Gains / Losses)

(May 14, 2021 – Jun 16)

Location	Position	Status	Name	Date
Decatur VAMC	VFSO-1	Terminated	Allah Sakinah	05/28/2021

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Newnan Field Office	VFSO-1	New Hire	<i>Anjelica Davis</i>	06/01/2021
Douglas Field Office	Office Manager	Retired	<i>Del Parisella</i>	06/01/2021
Central Office	Confidential Secretary	Retired	<i>Mary Aukerman</i>	06/01/2021
Valdosta Field Office	Office Manager	Retired	<i>John Jeffery</i>	06/01/2021
Milledgeville Cemetery	Grounds Maint Tech 1	New Hire	<i>Stephen Brown</i>	06/01/2021
Savannah Field Office	VFSO-1	Resigned	<i>Erica Benjamin</i>	06/04/2021
Dublin Field Office	VFSO-1	New Hire	<i>Tara Phillips</i>	06/15/2021
Fort McPherson F.O.	VFSO-1	New Hire	<i>Hueitt Vetineet</i>	06/15/2021
Decatur VAMC	VFSO-1	New Hire	<i>Charlotte Hamilton</i>	06/15/2021
Appeals Division	VACO-1	New Hire	<i>Tawana Wiley</i>	06/15/2021
Milledgeville Cemetery	Grounds Maint Tech 1	New Hire	<i>Michael McDade</i>	06/15/2021

Properties

The new veterans service field office at Fort Benning is located at the Soldier for Life Plaza, adjacent to the Post Commissary. Phone and internet service installation is scheduled for Friday, June 18, 2021. Operations to service veteran clients and eligible family members will begin on Monday, June 21, 2021, initially on a part-time (1-2 days per week) basis and by appointment. Walk-ins will be welcomed and accepted as the schedule permits. As business increases, the office will transition to a Monday-Friday schedule to better serve the Fort Benning and Columbus communities.

Information Technology

Routine operations are continuing.

Records Management

Routine operations are continuing.

Vehicle Management

Routine service and maintenance are performed as required.

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Veterans Service Foundation Board

The Foundation Board Chairman, Mr. Doug Middleton, is currently working to secure a financial institution to establish a bank account to begin accepting donations.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Ross opened the discussion on the budget and proposed raises for GDVS employees making less than \$50,000.00 and the necessity for everyone having the same talking points as they present the need to legislators. The recent survey has shown that pay is the biggest complaint. The Board discussed the need to raise the employees from poverty level and the \$3,000.00 request for each of these is the beginning of this process. The Board hopes that this can eventually be raised so that everyone is making at least \$15.00 per hour. Ms. Ross said she will put the talking points together and send to the Board, the Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioners so that everyone has the same talking points.

NEW BUSINESS:

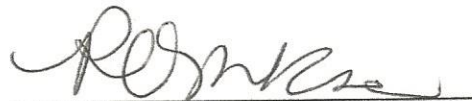
The August 25 board meeting was scheduled. It will be a combination virtual and in-person meeting, set up at the GDVS. Ms. Ross made a motion for this and Mr. Whitted seconded it. The motion passed.

The Governor's office has requested that we publish all board meeting minutes online. They will be posted on the GDVS website.

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

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:43 p.m.

SIGNED:



Patricia Ross, Chairman

ATTEST:



Shawn Hanley, Secretary

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The next Veterans Service Board meeting will be held in person but will also be available via video/telephone conference call on Wednesday, August 25, 2021, at 12:30 p.m. The WEB X link is <https://georgiadepartmentofveteransservice.webex.com/georgiadepartmentofveteransservice/j.php?MTID=ma116e35e8fc4df52bedac28feb7c61c8>

Meeting password: TDhBSi9h3y4

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

Access Code: 173 042 6311