

Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 12:30 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

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

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
Ms. Monisha Rallapalli, Office of Planning and Budget
Ms. Kaitlin Little, Office of Planning and Budget
Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women and Vetlanta
Mr. Barry Gardner, State President, GMOAA
Mr. Mark Shreve, State Commander, The American Legion
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
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
Mr. Chris Hambright, Director, Accounting, GDVS
Ms. Shelly Ann Simpson, Director, Appeals Division, GDVS
Mr. Carlton Deese, Executive Director GWVH, Milledgeville, GA
Ms. Linda Lavender, Director, Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Milledgeville
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. Ava Redd, Administrative Assistant, Appeals Division, GDVS
Ms. Shareka Monday-Robinson, HR Generalist, GDVS
Mr. Robert Butler, Office Manager, Atlanta Field Office, GDVS
Mr. Gary Jenson, VFSO, Atlanta Field Office, GDVS
Ms. Debbie Gregory, Administrative Specialist, GDVS
Ms. Barbara Beedles, Administrative Assistant, GDVS
Ms. Julie Hammond, Confidential Secretary to the Commissioner, GDVS

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On Thursday, November 18, 2021, the Veterans Service Board meeting was held in person and by video/tele-conference.

Ms. Ross called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. Ms. Swan gave the invocation. Mr. Kopsie 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 November Agenda. Mr. Whitted seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Ms. Swan made a motion to approve the October 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:

Mr. Barry Gardner, GMOAA

Mr. Garner had nothing to report, but was attending the Board meeting for the first time.

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

The following information is submitted for this month's board meeting:

- Assistant Department Service Officer (Ed Kent) Attended The American Legion Fall Conference Oct 22-October 24, 2021 in Place of Department Service Officer.
- Attended an Emergency Meeting with VSO/Stakeholders and Hospital Director Dr. Brown in ref to another news report in ref to the mail in the basement and the death of a vet who received incorrect diagnosis and delay treatment.
- The Assistant Department Service Officer (Ed Kent) had 45 contacts for the month of October (19 At the AL Fall Conference) with one requiring Financial Assistance. Paid the rent for a local Veteran. 19 Vets attended training classes.
- Upcoming events – November 15, 2021 Department Service Office will conduct a benefits training with CeCe Walker on Teams.

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Ms. Belinda Boldoe, VFW:

- The Department Service Officer attend a virtual VFW NVS Director's Forum on VA Building Access and Policies held on October 29, 2021 at 1PM. We discussed key changes happening within the VA and VFW NVS that may affect our day-to-day operation.
- The Department Service Officer participated with the VFW Post 12180 in a Veteran's Day parade held on November 06, 2021 at 11AM in McDonough, GA. The parade was hosted by the American Legion Post 516.
- The Department Service Officer attended an Atlanta VAHCS VSO/Stakeholder virtual meeting with Director Brown and Staff on November 09, 2021 at 2:30PM. The emergency meeting was about the Atlanta VAMC on the follow-up of the mail back log and about media coverage of the care and passing of a veteran.

Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women and VETLANTA:

GMW and VETLANTA are actively doing in-person events and happy to invite attendance. The Q4 VETLANTA Summit will be at the Metropolitan Club in Alpharetta on November 18th starting at 5pm. Please go to www.vetlanta.org to register. VETLANTA events are for all veterans, spouses, corporate and community supporters.

Georgia Military Women is now over 4300 members. We are receiving regular media contacts. It seems this is the Year of Women Veterans and a lot of organizations do not want to be left behind. This past weekend we had 12 events all over Georgia including Athens, Augusta, Columbus, Savannah etc. Of course, Atlanta has the greatest concentration of veterans, so events are held throughout the metropolitan area. Members have been going to the GA Aquarium, the Atlanta Opera, and the Alliance Theatre as well as regular meetups at restaurants. We will be in the Marietta Veterans Day Parade later this week.

Interim Commissioner Shawn Hanley

Mr. Hanley discussed the Veterans Day Proclamation ceremony that was held at the Capitol on November 8. He expressed thanks to Ms. May and Ms. Hammond for their assistance with the event. There was a large crowd of politicians present this year due to the Georgia Legislature being in session.

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In a discussion with Mr. Deese, the new Covid protocols for families were discussed. Families will be able to eat together in the dining room for the first time since Covid began. Green Veterans will be providing Thanksgiving meals for the Augusta and Milledgeville Homes again this year.

Mr. Hanley discussed the protocol for employees on the day before Thanksgiving with Mr. Canavaggio, and it was decided that employees will be able to leave at noon that day.

Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Field Operations and Appeals:

Mr. Canavaggio added to his report that he emceed the Veterans Day Proclamation Ceremony at the Capitol on November 8. There were more attendees this year than he had ever seen.

He also thanked the Training Team for a successful Annual Training in October, citing that it was the best the department had ever had. Great reports have been coming in from the field and all test scores have been high. Mr. Hanley added that he had the opportunity to speak to several people during training and everyone had only positive things to say.

Ms. Ross asked if the VA ever showed up to question people. They had been delayed but Mr. Canavaggio was able to speak with them. The VA was satisfied with the subject matter taught and no one lost their accreditation.

GENERAL

- On November 06, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio spoke at a Veterans Benefits seminar in Warm Springs, Georgia. Approximately 65 veterans were in attendance.
- On November 06, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio attended a 5 K run and wreath laying ceremony in Hampton, Georgia.
- On November 06, 2021, Assistant Commissioner attended the Georgia Veterans Day Association 2021 VIP Evening Reception in Atlanta.
- On November 07, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio spoke to approximately 800 veterans and surviving family members at Rock Springs Church in Milliner, Georgia.
- On November 11, 2021, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio participated in the veterans Day ceremony in Gray, Georgia
- DD 214's and Welcome Home Letters:

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- 1 Welcome Home Letters were mailed out in October 2021.
- Department Electronic Claim's Assistance Processing System (Vetra Spec) currently 310,279 entries, this is an increase of 9,343 from October 22, 2021.

PROJECTED POSITIONS

- Current openings in Appeals, Decatur VAMC, Decatur CBOC, Statesboro, Dublin VAMC, Waycross

Veda Brooks, Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC)

Ms. Brooks added that she has been busy during the month of November with programs to help the homeless population. She has been speaking with Senators about the Housing First Plan. If we can get people into homes, we can then begin to take care of their other issues (i.e. joblessness). Funds have gone to various non-profit agencies and we are trying to track the funds to see how they are being spent to assist veterans.

- October 30, 2021, Ms. Brooks held a suicide prevention event in Coweta County. Emory and Kaiser Permanente Military Programs partnered with the Task Force to make this event successful.
- November 1, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the Governor's Challenge Planning Team Meeting.
- November 3, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in a VBA Hearing and saw 3 veterans at the Atlanta Regional office to prepare for up-coming hearings.
- November 4, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in Veterans Court.
- November 6, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in Cobb County Women Veteran Honor Program.
- November 8, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Shared Geography Meeting.
- November 9, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in Women Veteran Round Table in Union City and Unite Us Training.
- November 10, 2021, Ms. Brooks attended the Veterans Recognition Ceremony at the Veteran Memorial Hall.
- November 11, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the Coweta County Veterans Day Program.
- November 12, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in GA-07n Veterans Roundtable with Congresswoman Bourdeaux.
- November 15-16, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated and spoke at the Atlanta Veterans Helping Veterans Leadership Conference.
- November 17, 2021, Ms. Brooks participated in the National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators.

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

Ramona Roper, Training and Professional Development Division:

Ms. Roper expressed her thanks to the IT Department and to Ms. May and Ms. Dorsey in the Public Information Department for their assistance at Annual Training. She also commended the Training Team for a successful event. We had a 100% passing rate on the tests this year.

- October 25-29, 2021, the 2021 Annual Training and Professional Development Division completed the 2021 Annual Training program in Peachtree City, Georgia
- November 8, 2021, the Training and Professional Development Division attended the Veterans Day Proclamation ceremony at the state Capital
- November 9, 2021, 2021 Annual Training test/accreditation average scores was 91% success.
- November 9, 2021, Mark Demers attended the Atlanta VA VSO/Stakeholder Special Issue Update via MS Teams (Veterans Passing While awaiting VA Healthcare)
- November 9, 2021, Ramona Roper, and Steven Fay attended the Unite Us meeting via MS Teams

Upcoming Events:

- November 13, 2021, Ramona Roper to attend the Vietnam Veterans Certificate of Honor program in Grovetown, Georgia
- Daily continued ongoing support to the Regional Directors and Veteran Field Service Offices.
- November 29, 2021, restart the Veterans Field Service Officer mentoring program

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Shelly-Ann Simpson, Director of Appeals

Ms. Simpson gave an update on the Covid vaccine status of her employees. Two have requested exemptions, and all have complied with the necessary paperwork informing the VA of their status.

- The total number of actual hearings conducted by the Appeals Division for October 2021 was **139**.
- The total number of pre-hearing actions for October 2021 was **231**. Post-hearing actions was **83**.
- The total number of correspondence conducted by the Appeals Division (with veterans, BVA/VA employees, and VSO field offices) for the month of September was **1,713**.
- As of October 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	99,827	\$170,222,773
DIC	2,981	\$4,297,587
Survivor Pension	917	\$690,974
Veteran Pension	1,847	\$1,922,305
Grand Total	105,572	\$177,133,639

NORTH GA, Dale Bell, North Area Director

Mr. Bell highlighted the award amounts, number of contacts, visits, emails, phone calls and claims totals for the month as listed below.

- On November 4th, Emily Waters of Cartersville conducted a Benefits (Retirement) Briefing at Clay National Guard Center in Marietta.
- On November 6th, Winslow Hill of Grovetown conducted a Pre-Deployment Briefing for 3/108th Reg-Signal (Reservists) at Ft Gordon.

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- On November 6th, Randy Brown of Griffin represented GDVS at the South Metro Veterans Expo at McDonough High School in McDonough.
- On November 10th, Herbert Ward & Vetineet Hueitt of Ft McPherson represented GDVS at a Veterans Day Info Fair and Celebration at the US Bureau of Prisons Training Center in McDonough.
- On November 11th, Glenn Massey of Gainesville represented GDVS at a Veterans Resource Fair at University of North Georgia in Gainesville.
- On November 11th, Randy Brown of Griffin delivered Veterans Day remarks at a Veterans Day Breakfast hosted by Southern ReMAX in Griffin.
- On November 11th, Ken Childre of Rome delivered Veterans Day remarks at a Veterans Day Luncheon hosted by Henderson & Sons Funeral Home in Rome.
- On November 11th, Dawn Perry & Kirsten Dennis of Athens represented GDVS at a Veterans Day Ceremony at Prince Avenue Christian School in Athens.
- On November 13th, Ken Childre of Rome presented VN Certificates & Lapel Pins at First Zion Missionary Baptist Church Annual Veterans Day Celebration in Rockmart.
- On November 13th, Dale Bell, North Region Director, and Winslow Hill & Alicia Stephens of Grovetown presented VN Certificates & Lapel Pins at a Veterans Day Ceremony at Liberty Park and Community Center in Grovetown.
- On November 13th, Mark Churning of Washington & Ron Cason of Athens represented GDVS at a Veterans Day Celebration at VFW Post 5899 in Washington.
- October 2021 total retro awards reported by North Georgia Offices: \$1,073,458.00. Included in that amount is a single award of \$198,000.00 reported by Marie Lundquist of Oakwood.
- Director Site Visits / Inspections: None
- North Region Gains/Losses:
 - Kasena Carter of Decatur VAMC resigned October 25, 2021.
- North Georgia Region Veteran Population: 443,313

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- Office Visits

Average Visits Per VFSO							
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO							
Region:		North					
Month:		October-21					
A	B	C	D	E	D / E	G	G / E
					F	H	H
					Average	Total	Average
			Total	Work	Office	Claims	Claims
	Veterans' Field		Monthly	Days	Visits	Submitted	Submitted
	Service Officer (VFSO)		Office	In	Per	To	By VFSOS
Office Name	Last Name	#	Visits	Month	Day	VA	To VA
			Monthly		Monthly	Monthly	Daily
	Number of VFSOs:	59	9,698	622	15.59	1,691	2.72
Number of Offices:		34	Average Visits/Office:		285.24	Average Claims/Office: 49.7352941	

*Total Monthly Office Visits includes Remote Work: 1,544 In-person Office Visits and 8,154 phone calls and emails

SOUTH GA, Vincent Pritchett, South Area Director

Mr. Pritchett highlighted the award amounts, number of contacts, visits, emails, phone calls and claims totals for the month as listed below. He made one correction: retro payments were \$242,565.

- On October 25 – 29, 2021, All Georgia Department of Veterans Service offices closed to attend annual training in Peachtree City. As a result, south region offices reported lower than average contacts and claims for the month of October.
- On November 5, 2021, Sandra Bennett (Columbus field office) and Vincent Pritchett interviewed candidates to fill the remaining Veterans Field Service Officer 1 position in Columbus.
- On November 6, 2021, Brandon Miller, Cara Cooper (Warner Robins field office) and Vincent Pritchett participated in the Vietnam Veteran Certificate and Pin ceremony hosted by the Sukey Hart Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. We presented approximately 70 certificates and pins to the attendees.
- On November 9, 2021, Carol Crawford (Waynesboro field office) did an interview with 'The True Citizen' newspaper. She answered questions about the benefits we provide and the number of veterans and dependents she helps in the Waynesboro area.

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- On November 10, 2021, the Warner Robins field office supported a Veteran’s Day celebration, job and information fair hosted by the Veterans Education Career Transition Resource Center. Also on this date, Steve Futch (Saint Mary’s field office) met with representatives from Fleet and Family Services on Kings Bay to give them an overview of a field service officer’s responsibilities.
- South Region offices reported retroactive payments since the last board meeting totaling \$179,437.82 with the highest single payment of \$153,872.82 reported by our Macon field office.
- South Region Gains/Losses: Effective November 1, 2021, Joi Antoine-Smith joined our Hinesville field office and Tequila McCoy joined our Albany field office.
- South Georgia Region Veterans Population: 244,963
- Office Visits for October: South Georgia offices handled 3,904 phone calls and emails.

Average Visits Per VFSO							
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO							
Region:			South Region				
Month:			October-21				
A	B	C	D / E			G / E	
Office Name	Veterans' Field Service Officer (VFSO) Last Name	#	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
	Number of VFSOs:	36	1,914	631	3.03	1,238	1.96
Number of Offices:		30	Average Visits/Office:		63.80	Average Claims/Office: 41.27	

Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information Division

Ms. May commended Mr. Bell and Ms. Roper for the ceremony for Vietnam Veterans in Grovetown. There were nearly 200 veterans honored. Mr. Pritchett also attended a ceremony in Warner Robins with over 100 veterans honored. We will hopefully be able to hold an additional ceremony for Vietnam Veterans in Kingsland, Georgia in 2022.

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Ms. May presented the updated version of the proposal for an Advisory Committee to the Commissioner.

GENERAL

Personnel

- Charlotte May, Director (Speeches, Major News Release Announcements, Digital Media, Websites [External & Internal])
- Monica Dorsey, Communications Specialist (Administrative support in all aspects of the GDVS Public Information mission/function [External & Internal])

INFORMATION OUTREACH

Social Media Highlights

1. Veterans Day coverage –
 - a. Veterans Day Proclamation Signing Ceremony with Governor Brian Kemp – shared invitation, livestream, and post ceremony photos from the event on GDVS social media.
 - b. Centennial Commemoration of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier – shared livestream from the U.S. Army of the public commemoration and flower laying. This was the first time in 100 years the public was able to walk on the Plaza.
 - c. Johns Creek The Wall That Heals opening ceremony invitation – shared information on the installation of a permanent replica monument at the Johns Creek veterans park.
2. National Veterans and Military Families Month – shared information from the Department of Defense on various programs, facilities, and benefits available to the military families, caregivers, and survivors of our service members.
3. Presumptive period for Persian Gulf War veterans extended – shared information from VA on the extension to December 31, 2026 of the presumptive period for qualifying chronic disabilities rated 10% or more from undiagnosed illnesses in Persian Gulf War veterans.

Public Information Division Contacts *(Since January 1, 2021)*

- Replies to VA eBenefits Messages = 3,190
- Replies to General Questions = approximately 1,465
- Individual Request for the State Certificate of Honor = approximately 260

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 29,190
(Honors Ceremonies and Central Office Mail Outs)
DoD Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins presented via GDVS – An estimated 23,215
Honors Ceremonies supported/coordinated by GDVS – 348
Defense Department's Vietnam Veteran Surviving Spouse CoH – 270

EVENTS -

- Daughters of the American Revolution Honor Vietnam Veterans at the Assembly on Watson Boulevard, Warner Robins – November 6, 11 a.m.
 - South Regional Director Vince Pritchett and the Warner Robins VFSO team presented certificates and pins to over 100 veterans at the DAR ceremony on November 6.
- Daughters of the American Revolution Honor Vietnam Veterans at Liberty Park Community Center in Grovetown – November 13
 - North Regional Director Dale Bell and the Grovetown VFSO team presented certificates and pins to over 150 veterans at the DAR ceremony on November 13.

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

Mr. Davis highlighted that the current Covid protocols for schools is set to expire on December 21, 2021. They may be extended, but he is waiting for the announcement.

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.

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- 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 1,788 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.

Item *	Number
Approved Educational Institutions	394
Approved Training Establishments	1394
Veteran Students Enrolled in Educational Institutions	19,452

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

Mr. Russell Feagin, Director, Health & Memorials Division

Mr. Feagin added that they received a visit from Senator Warnock and his staff on Veterans Day. The visit was well received and appreciated by the veterans. Senator Warnock expressed that he wants to make veterans one of his priorities. He stayed for about one hour.

The local chapter of the Military Officers Association has been assisting visitors of residents by providing hotel rooms for them. They are working to continue this assistance.

Mr. Feagin expressed his thanks to Mr. Hanley and Green Veterans for providing Thanksgiving meals to the residents.

Augusta was not approved for a new cemetery, and will re-submit the request in the next fiscal year's budget. The expansion at Milledgeville was not approved and will also go back on the list for next year.

Cemetery Activities:

- As indicated last month, both cemeteries will participate in the Wreaths Across America program again this year on December 18, 2021. The Glennville cemetery has reached its goal for enough wreaths for all graves. The organization supporting the Glennville cemetery has agreed to transfer 500 of their excess wreaths to the Milledgeville cemetery. The Milledgeville cemetery has reached approximately 65% of its goal. There will not be a formal ceremony at the cemeteries again this year. However, the cemeteries will allow people to come and help

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place the wreaths on the graves starting at 12:00pm until all wreaths are placed on December 18th.

Georgia War Veteran Home (GWWH) Activities:

- Multiple construction projects continue at the GWWH in Milledgeville:
 - One change from last month is the VA grant for adding wired drops to all rooms in the facility to expand the IT capabilities and further support the electronic medical records process has been approved.
- The veterans and staff are looking forward to the special Thanksgiving meal provided by Shawn Hanley and the GreenVeterans. Thank you very much, Shawn.

Tonya Jarrett, Clinical Director, Health & Memorials Division

Ms. Jarrett stated that they remain Covid-free. They have received visitation guidance changes. Visitors will be allowed, but must follow guidelines based on the county transmission rates. The visits will not have to be scheduled.

Georgia War Veterans Home - Milledgeville, GA												
October 31, 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	308	101	32.79%	27	26.73%	8.77%	74	73.27%	12	3.90%	0	0
Staff	499	119	23.85%	0	0.00%	0.00%	118	99.16%	7	1.40%	1	1

Cumulative figures since March 1, 2020.

Recovered category, initially, were 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 GWWH.

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

Vaccine Update 10/31/21

172 out of 176 patients, 97.7 %, have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

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270 Pruitt staff out of 274 Pruitt staff, 98.50 %, have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. There is a total of 4 Pruitt staff members that have not been vaccinated due to medical or religious exemptions. Currently, there are 3 religious exemptions and 1 medical exemption.

GWVH 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. 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

Updated COVID information for 11/1/21-11/10/21 GWVH- Milledgeville

- **Patient status as of 11/10/21**
 - No positive COVID patients between 11/1/21-11/10/21
 - *As of 11/10/21-- 174 patients out of 178 patients, 97.75%, have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine at GWVH*
- **Pruitt Staff status as of 11/10/21**
 - No positive COVID Pruitt Health staff between 11/4/21-11/10/21
 - *As of 11/10/21—270 Pruitt staff out of 274 staff, 98.54%, have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccination*
 - *PruittHealth reports 3 staff religious exemptions and 1staff medical exemption*
- **Updated Status as of 11/10/21**
 - As of 11/10/21, GWVH in Milledgeville transitioned from Code Red to Code Amber. Under this status the following is applicable:
 - Veteran patients and fully vaccinated staff are not routinely tested 2x/week as required under Code Red status

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- Partially vaccinated employees or unvaccinated (exempted) employees are tested 2x/week with rapid point of care (POC) tests
 - Communal dining at 50% capacity is now allowed in each of the buildings
 - Patients can now receive visitors outside at scheduled times, receive video chats, and receive inside visits with guests wearing face shields and masks.
 - Staff must wear face shields or eye goggles, surgical or N95 masks, and any other necessary personal protective equipment in the Wood and Vinson buildings
 - Staff must wear N95 masks in addition to the other outlined PPE on the COVID Unit
- Any positive rapid POC tests are then followed with a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to ensure results

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

Mr. Deese stated that they have the same guidelines in place as Ms. Jarrett stated for visitors. Infectious control procedures will stay in place.

On Veterans Day the residents were provided with a steak dinner by Food Services. They were grateful. Mr. Deese also expressed his thanks to Green Veterans for providing Thanksgiving lunch next week.

Mr. Deese expressed his desire to see building upgrades that will assist with infection control. A discussion ensued with Mr. Feagin's input. The State has to agree to provide 35% of the funds needed, and the VA handles the remaining 65%. The state side is where the issue has been in the past, as they have been unable to provide the matching funds. The price of architectural drawings was discussed (around \$50,000) and Ms. Ross asked Ms. Rallapalli if we can add the request for these funds to the current budget request. Ms. Rallapalli is going to check with her Director and get back to us.

Mr. Kerry Dyer, Director of Operations, GDVS

Mr. Dyer stated that the department is in negotiations to extend the contract we have with Pruitt Health. We have to open up a public bidding process for the contract.

Mr. Dyer attended the Vet Memorial 5K over Veterans Day weekend.

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Work is continuing on the end of the year reports that have to be completed. These include immigration reports and a complaint report. They are also working on turning in and removing old computer equipment from the books.

The process of working with Unite Us continues, with the assistance of Ms. Brooks.

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

FINANCE

Accounting

Routine operations are continuing.

We are in the process of completing 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

At this point and time, we have not received any feedback on the AFY 2022 and FY 2023 budget submissions from the Governor’s Office (policy side or the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), except for the following inquiries.

- Progress of the (proposed) State Veterans Cemetery at Augusta.
- Current COVID-19 protocols and protective measures at the State Veterans Homes.
- The current state of conducting ceremonies at our State Veterans Cemeteries.

HEALTH AND MEMORIALS

State Veterans Homes

State Veterans Homes Census (Through November 5, 2021)+

Current Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	94	128	222
Service Connected *	23	41	64
Total Patients	117	169	286
Last Month			
Regular Patients	98	128	226
Service Connected *	18	41	59
Total Patients	116	169	285

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* 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 October 15, 2021, through November 5, 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 November 5, 2021)+

State Veterans Cemetery	Cumulative Last Month	Cumulative Current Month	Increase
Glennville	1,970	1,974	04
Milledgeville	4,560	4,588	28
Total	6,530	6,562	32

+ The report to the VSB are the total numbers from October 15, 2021, through November 5, 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) (October 15, 2021 – November 5, 2021)

Location	Position	Status	Name	Date
Lawrenceville	VFSO 1	Resigned	<i>Andrea Jacobs</i>	10/18/2021
Augusta (GWVNH)	VFSO 2	Rehire	<i>Sharonica Thomas</i>	10/18/2021
Augusta (VAMC)	VFSO 1	New Hire	<i>Tamika Nicholas</i>	10/18/2021

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Decatur (VAMC)	VFSO 1	Resigned	<i>Kasena Carter</i>	10/25/2021
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Properties

Routine operations are continuing.

Information Technology

Routine operations are continuing.

Records Management

Routine operations are continuing as needed.

Vehicle Management

Routine service and maintenance are performed as required.

Veterans Service Foundation Board

The Foundation Board Chairman, Mr. Doug Middleton will provide a monthly update.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Kopsie mentioned to Mr. Bell and Mr. Pritchett that with the Department of Defense executing new Covid policies for active duty military, there will be a large number of discharges, and possibly a large number of claims as a result of the vaccine mandate.

NEW BUSINESS:

The December 15 board meeting was scheduled. It will be a combination virtual and in-person meeting, set up at the GDVS. Mr. Kopsie made a motion for this and Mr. Paslawski seconded it. The motion passed.

Ms. Swan thanked all the applicants for GDVS Commissioner for their service to our country and our veterans. She also thanked Mr. Hanley for serving as Interim Commissioner while the committee has worked to select a new commissioner. She turned the meeting over to Mr. Kubinec, the Chair of the Sub-Committee to find a new commissioner.

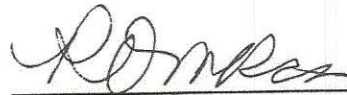
Mr. Kubinec made a motion to select Patricia Ross as the new GDVS Commissioner. Mr. Whitted seconded the motion. A "Yes" vote was spoken by each member of the Board and the motion passed. Ms. Ross will begin a four-year term as GDVS Commissioner on December 1, 2021. Ms. Swan stated that she is looking forward to the fresh ideas and the new culture that Ms. Ross will bring to the Department.

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

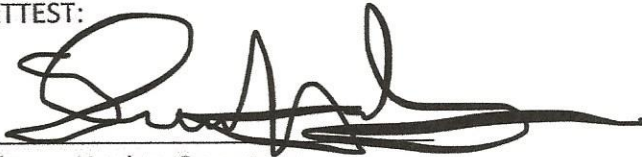
The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:35 p.m.

SIGNED:



Patricia Ross, 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 Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 12:30 p.m.

The Webex link is:

<https://georgiadepartmentofveteransservice.webex.com/georgiadepartmentofveteransservice/j.php?MTID=maf04a682357ccb7ba99439fd6da19c2d>

Meeting password: **JBxHfEKm643**

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

Access Code: **2345 761 1824**