

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

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Office of Veterans' Services (Tripler

Army Medical Center)

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

96819

**Friday, April 4, 2025**

**ATTENDANCE**

Board Members: Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair  
Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair  
Ms. Mary Kay Hertog  
Mr. Aris Banaag  
Mr. James Hussey

OVS Staff: Mr. John Alamodin, Director  
Ms. Ms. Yolanda Ehere,  
Secretary  
Ms. Yam Yi Lee, Administrative Services Assistant

Guests: Ms. Stacey Bonnett, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Mr. Maurice Martin, Community Outreach Coordinator /Interim Public  
Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System – Medical  
Mr. Wade Ishii, Asst. Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering  
Ms. Kauai Chartrand, Long Term Care Administrator, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home  
Mr. Kenneth Fink, Director, Department of Health  
Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Family Resource Center Coordinator, Department of  
Human Services  
Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS  
Mr. Lance Pridemore, Assistant Cemetery Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific

Absent: Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn  
Maj. Shaoyu Lee, Chief Engineering Officer, State of Hawaii DOD Engineering  
Ms. Carol Kanayama, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations  
Mr. Lance Pridemore, Assistant Cemetery Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific  
Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative Senator  
Mazie Hirono's Office Representative

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

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

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 7, 2025**

The Board reviewed March 7, 2025 minutes. Mary Kay Hertog motion to approve the minutes. Aris Banaag seconded.

**IV. COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Ms. Stacey Bonnett, Director, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Benefits - Present and no additions to the report.**

**Mr. Maurice Martin, Community Outreach Coordinator /Interim Public Affairs Officer, VA Pacific Islands Health Care System – Medical**

Briefed on: Announcement - Tandy Nelson Brooks as the interim Medical Center Director as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, It's the one-year anniversary for the Akaka Clinic on April 8<sup>th</sup>, there will be a ceremony to celebrate. There are a few new services at the Akaka Clinic: MRI services, traditional pain management, and chiropractic services.

**Mr. John Alamodin, Director, OVS**

Briefed on: Senate Bill 1377, Senate Draft 2 on April 1st, the bill was heard in the Committee on Finance And it passed with no objections with technical amendments. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, we had the Daniel K. Akaka Dedication ceremony. Mahalo to everyone that attended. On the operational aspect of the facility, they are still in the process for the CMS survey and currently have six residents. I would like to know if it's appropriate to have a discussion with regard to letting Maui veterans know more about the third veteran home on Maui. Board Member Aris stated that he is on the Maui Veterans Council, and they will be sending testimony when they know the timeline.

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

Briefed on: There is a \$35 million appropriation that was requested for this upcoming CIP budget and it was governor approved. It was in House Bill 300 draft one, but unfortunately, it didn't make it into the Senate draft. The WAM Committee reviewed it on March 31st and it was taken out of their budget. It will be going to conference.

**Ms. Kaui Chartrand, Long Term Care Administrator, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home**

Briefed on: Our third nursing training cohort was completed this month (April). We have been approved for yet another cohort to begin in May. This is part of our initiative to for recruitment, so that we can increase the census.

**Mr. Kenneth Fink, Director, Department of Health - No submitted report.**

Briefed on: Measles update - There has not been a measles case yet in Hawaii, but 600 nationwide.

**Ms. Katherine Korenaga, Family Resource Center Coordinator, Department of Human Services - Present and no additions to the report.**

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

**Ms. Ann Greenlee, U.S. Department of Labor, VETS**

Briefed on: On May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Akaka Clinic, there will be the VA homeless veterans Stand Down

**Mr. Lance Pridemore, Assistant Cemetery Director, National Cemetery of the Pacific– Not Present. No submitted report.**

**Ms. Nicole Gray - Congresswoman Jill Tokuda Office Representative - Not present. No submitted report.**

**Senator Mazie Hirono's Office Representative - Not present. No submitted report.**

**VI. BOARD MEMBER'S REPORTS**

1. Kauai - Ms. Mary Kay Hertog - No report submitted. No additions.
2. West Hawaii - James Hussey - Report submitted. No additions.
3. Oahu - Mr. Blair Suzuki, Vice Chair - No report submitted. No additions.
4. Oahu - Ms. Bridget Komine, Chair - Report submitted No additions.
5. Oahu - Ms. Roxanne (Rocky) Bruhn - No report submitted. No additions.
6. Maui - Mr. Aris Banaag - No report submitted. No additions.

**VII. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

SAB 2025-1: Presentation by Permitted Action Group to explore various state veterans benefits and identify areas where the SAB can effect change for Hawaii veterans

ACTION: Mary Kay Hertog motioned that we as a board author a letter to the chairs of the FIN and WAM conference committees supporting the Maui Veterans Home. Aris Banaag seconded and All were in favor.

**IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Legislative Committee – Report submitted
  - SB1377, the veteran cemetery board. Bill received passed Fin Committee hearing, so that should go to conference and is moving along.
- B. By Laws and Procedures
  - Mary Kay Hertog motioned that the recommended changes to the bylaws be agendized for the May meeting and Yolanda. James Hussey seconded the motion.
- C. Recognition and Awards – No Report or Update
- D. Women's Committee - No Report or Update
- E. Projects and Events Committee - No Report or Update

**X. ADJOURN – 10:05 am**

Blair Suzuki motioned, and Mary Kay Hertog seconded.

Yolanda Ehere – Recorder