

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

Present Mr. Joshua Kopsie, Chair  
Mr. Tim Paslawski, Vice Chair  
Mr. Shawn Hanley, Member  
Mr. Pete Peterson, Member  
Ms. Patricia Ross, Commissioner

Visitors Mr. Kerry Dyer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Operations Officer, GDVS  
Present: Ms. Shelly-Ann Simpson, Executive Director, Field Operations & Appeals, GDVS  
Mr. Russell Feagin, Executive Director Health, Contracting & Facilities, GDVS  
Ms. Amy Sillmon, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office  
Ms. Kathryn Wright, Governor's Office of Planning & Budget  
Ms. Gail Ramey, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 127, Sugar Hill  
Mr. Don Layne, VECTR Chief Operating Officer  
Mr. Chuck Roberts, Georgia Veterans Service Foundation Board Member  
Ms. Lily Snyder, Director, Veterans Education & Training, GDVS  
Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information and External Affairs, GDVS  
Mr. Steven Fay, Director, Training Division, GDVS  
Ms. Sherri Whitfield, Director, Veterans Benefits South Region, GDVS  
Mr. Ken Childre, Director, Veterans Benefits North Region, GDVS  
Mr. Edwin Berry, Director, Appeals Division, GDVS  
Mr. Jonathan Buggs, VCAO 1, Appeals Division, GDVS  
Ms. Calandra Ferguson, Coordinator, Suicide Prevention & Outreach, GDVS  
Mr. William Wilson, Network Administrator, GDVS  
Ms. Raven Holstick, Transition and Employment Coordinator, GDVS  
Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Homeless Coordinator, GDVS  
Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS  
Ms. Monica Dorsey, Communications & Outreach Specialist, GDVS  
Ms. Kaitlin Little, Business Support Analyst, GDVS  
Ms. Irene Mackson, Business Support Analyst, GDVS

On Tuesday, April 21, 2026, the Veterans Service Board meeting was held by video/tele-conference.

Mr. Kopsie called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m. Mr. Kopsie gave the invocation. Mr. Kopsie led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mr. Paslawski made a motion to approve the April Agenda. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Paslawski made a motion to approve the March minutes, which were previously distributed for members to review. Mr. Hanley seconded the motion. There were no objections. The motion passed.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

The following reports were submitted for the Board meeting:

**Ms. Belinda Boldoe, GDVS, VFW Service Officer**

- The Department Service Officer attended a virtual training session - VSO Coffee Talk, hosted by the GDVS Training Team. The virtual training session was held on March 16, 2026, at 8 AM. We received a presentation on various topics:
  - Power of Attorney (POA)
  - PMF – Annual Evaluations
  - Family Leave – due to death, immediate family vs other family members
  - Other than Honorable Discharges – Do you file the claim
  
- The Department Service Officer attended a monthly VSO VSC Vet Talk hosted by Lateisha Howard, Atlanta Regional Office AVSCM (Quality & Training), and the staff held on March 18, 2026, at 10 AM, at 1700 Clairmont Road, Decatur, GA 30033. Purpose:
  - To conduct a monthly roundtable informational session in collaboration with Veteran Service Officers (VSOs).
  - This meeting aims to foster an inclusive environment and provide current guidance on administering Compensation Benefits.
  - Quality Review Team (RQRS) – Carolyn Vercel, presenter. The primary topic:
    - Supplemental Claims – New and Relevant Evidence
    - Exam w/medical opinion
    - Rating Activity Actions
  
- The Department Service Officer attended a virtual Quarterly VSO/Directors meeting hosted by Mr. Cory Hawthorne, Acting Executive Director, and staff. The briefing was held on March 24, 2026, at 11AM – 12 PM.
  - **Director's Updates**
    - **Rescission of Interim Final Rule** – Evaluative Rating: Impact of Medication
    - On February 27, 2026, VA formally rescinded the interim final rule. The rescission was published in the Federal Register and was effective immediately.
    - Veterans will experience no delay or change in the processing of their claims because of this regulatory rescission.
    - As the interim final rule was never implemented, rescission of the interim final rule does not change current claims processing procedures, and VBA will continue to evaluate disabilities in the same manner as we have historically.
  - **Backlog Reduction** – VBA decreased the rating backlog from

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

- America 250's goal is to reduce backlog claims below 64,782. Backlog Claims are those pending for greater than 125 days. Employees are not replacing them.
- January 20, 2025, by 167,685 (63.3%)
- February 14, 2026, claims--from 264,717 to 97,032.
  
- **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VRE)**
  - Hiring of Counselors (VRC) and Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists (VRS) positions
  
- **Automation**
  - Empowering employees is not replacing them.
  
- **Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act**
  - The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 (Brady Act), Public Law 103-159, prohibits the sale of firearms to certain individuals.
  - Beginning in February 2026, VA will no longer report Veterans or beneficiaries to the FBI's NICS as "prohibited persons" only because they need help from a fiduciary in managing their VA benefits.
  - VA is also working with the FBI to remove all those individuals that VA reported in the past on this basis. VA plans to send affected beneficiaries a letter explaining the change.
  
- **Veterans Benefits Banking Program**
  - Enroll in Direct Deposit. Visit [www.va.gov/change-direct-deposit-or-1-800-827-1000](http://www.va.gov/change-direct-deposit-or-1-800-827-1000).
  - Need a Bank Account. Open a low-to-no cost checking account through Veterans Benefits Banking Program (VBBP). Visit [veteranbenefitsbanking.org](http://veteranbenefitsbanking.org) to choose a financial institution.
  - Debit Card Option. Prepaid debit card for VA benefit recipients. [Directexpression.treasury.gov](http://Directexpression.treasury.gov) or 855.224.8691.
  
- The Department Service Officer attended a virtual training session - VSO Coffee Talk, hosted by the GDVS Training Team. The virtual training session was held on April 01, 2026, at 8 AM. We received a presentation on:
  - VA Educational Benefits – Neil Slay, Coordinator, Veterans Education & Training Division (State Approving Agency). Chapter 35 – Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)
  
- The Department Service Officer attended a virtual Quarterly Center for Development and Civic Engagement CDCE/VAVS meeting hosted by Gwendolyn Ramos, and the staff was held on April 08, 2026, at 1 PM. The following issues were briefed:
  - Update on shooting at VA CBOC
  - VAVS Annual Joint Review
  - VAVS Budget Report
  - VA 2k Walk and Roll

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.  
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting  
Atlanta, Georgia**

- Volunteer Recognition Week – Success
- Summer Student Program
- Disability Olympic Program
- Baby Shower Program
- Mobile Blood Drive - Lawrenceville – April 27, 2026

**Lisa Jenkins, President and Carolyn Cagle, Vice President, GA Dept of American Gold Star Mothers**

The Georgia American Goldstar Mothers would like for the Georgia VSO organizations to know that the Goldstar Mothers of Georgia are working hard to impact the Veterans, Active-Duty Military, and Goldstar Families of Georgia. We are a small group but are passionate about educating our communities on the price of freedom. We are in the process of planning for our Centennial in 2028: a Century of Service. We want to thank all VSO organizations that have helped us throughout this Century of Service.

2026 Collective hours of Service: 1,325.95 Hours of Service in 2026.

2026 Miles traveled in Service: 8,699.1 miles traveled in 2026.

2026 Monetary and In-Kind Donations: \$11,847.86 Monetary and In-Kind Donations.

2026 Georgia American Goldstar Mother Events Scheduled For 2026

1. April 22-25, 2026: Port Wentworth Fundraising GALA and Veterans Parade, Savannah, GA
2. May 23, 2026: American Legion Post 160 Goldstar Family Event, Smyrna, GA
3. June 19-22, 2026: American Goldstar Mothers National Convention, Tampa, FL
4. September 26/27, 2026: Georgia Goldstar Family Overnight and Sunday Event at the Georgia Aquarium.

**Commissioner Patricia Ross**

On Thursday, March 19, 2026, Commissioner Ross attended the Returning Veterans Task Force Meeting. She also held check-in meetings with Charlotte May and Shelly-Ann Simpson. She then attended the Veterans Service Board Meeting. Afterward, she attended a meeting with Bridge My Return regarding the White Label project, which once released will help match veterans, transitioning military and their spouses to employment opportunities in Georgia. She and her outreach team then

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

met with a team in Minnesota to discuss their homeless veteran's program in order to use their lessons learned for the Georgia program.

On Friday, March 20, 2026, Commissioner Ross taught the Leadership Institute and discussed updates from the VA. She then had a check-in meeting with Mark Demers. She also had her bi-weekly meeting with Jeff Bell, Chief Operating Officer of STG International.

On Saturday, March 21, 2026, Commissioner Ross was a guest speaker at the Blinded Veterans Association Convention in Atlanta.

On Sunday, March 22, 2026, Commissioner Ross was a guest speaker at the 76<sup>th</sup> Royal Lao Army Celebration in Acworth.

On Monday, March 23, 2026, Commissioner Ross held a director's meeting. She then attended the meeting discussing the RFP for the Milledgeville Home. She later attended the Unite Us bi-weekly meeting.

On Tuesday, March 24, 2026, Commissioner Ross traveled to the Milledgeville home. A reporter was there to interview her, patients and families of the home. The on-site interview was overwhelmingly positive. She then attended the VA's Readjustment Committee meeting where the team (appointed by the VA) discussed recommendations for the VETCENTERS for this upcoming year. She also briefed the House Veterans Committee.

On Wednesday, March 25, 2026, Commissioner Ross met with Richard Shuster to preview the SCOUT platform demo. She also attended the Vet 22 Suicide Prevention Procession and Luncheon in Stone Mountain at the invitation of Johnetta Williams.

On Thursday, March 26, 2026, Commissioner Ross attended a meeting regarding the Milledgeville Home RFP. She also had check-in meetings with Charlotte May, Mark Demers and Shelly-Ann Simpson. She hosted Mark Eister and Scott Johnson from the Warrior Alliance for a meeting in her office. She then had a discussion with her team and Georgia Tech regarding the HONOR Center.

On Friday, March 27, 2026, Commissioner Ross and her team met with community leaders in Milledgeville regarding the HONOR Center to determine if there was support for this project. Overwhelmingly, all attendees pledged their backing.

On Sunday, March 29, 2026, Commissioner Ross was a speaker at the Vietnam War Monument Dedication Ceremony at Piedmont Park.

On Monday, March 30, 2026, Commissioner Ross met to discuss the vendor contract for the Home with her team. She then held a director's meeting. She also had a check-in call with Mark Demers and later attended the Fox Grant Update Meeting.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

On Tuesday, March 31, 2026, Commissioner Ross attended the “A Seat at the Table: Women Supporting Veterans” brunch. She then attended the ceremony honoring the 2025 inductees into the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame.

On Wednesday, April 1, 2026, Commissioner Ross attended the VSO Coffee Talk. She then met with Brigadier General (ret) Dix about his project in Columbus serving homeless veterans. She later attended the Governor’s ceremony celebrating Georgia’s 250<sup>th</sup> birthday.

On Thursday, April 2, 2026, Commissioner Ross attended the Veterans Service Foundation Board Meeting. She also attended the VA Home Loan Program Webinar and the VA Homeless Programs All Hands-on Deck Call.

Friday, April 3, 2026, was a State Holiday.

On Monday, April 6, 2026, Commissioner Ross held a director’s meeting. She also attended the Unite Us bi-weekly meeting.

On Tuesday, April 7, 2026, Commissioner Ross met with Angel Lugo from Warriors Heart about their plans to expand to a third location. A meeting with DBHDD and Public Safety leaders is scheduled for May so that the broader community knows of this great resource. Commissioner Ross also participated in the Veteran Suicide Mortality Review looking at cases from the last year for veterans residing in a north Georgia county.

On Wednesday, April 8, 2026, Commissioner Ross met with Ernie Cowart and Kerry Dyer to discuss the Augusta Cemetery. She also met with Unite Us for the homelessness grant tracking training. She then attended a luncheon with the VFW, where she was recognized for her support for the VFW. She later had a meeting to discuss the HONOR Center.

On Thursday, April 9, 2026, Commissioner Ross met with Jeff Scruggs to discuss the HONOR Center and workforce training. She then met with the VA to discuss changes to the Fox Grant program. Afterward, she had a call with Laura Pallini and Ken Taylor about assistance through the Dublin VA. Her evening was spent in Columbus at the Black and Tan Dinner where she was a guest speaker kicking off the Best Ranger competition.

On Friday, April 10, 2026, Commissioner Ross and her team met with VetPro to discuss the transition. She also had a meeting with Unite Us to discuss the One Continuum Georgia Panel. She later had a meeting to discuss the RFP for the Milledgeville Home.

On Saturday, April 11, 2026, Commissioner Ross attended and spoke at the Diamonds and Dog Tags event in Warner Robins hosted by AMVETS. This event will rotate annually to other large Veteran Service Organizations.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

On Monday, April 13, 2026, Commissioner Ross attended the Suicide Prevention/Fox Eligibility meeting with her team. She then traveled to Camp Southern Ground in Fayetteville to join the Warrior Week Business Leader Panel. She later attended a Fox Grant Update Meeting.

On Tuesday, April 14, 2026, Commissioner Ross met with Slalom to discuss tackling veteran challenges and homelessness. She also met with the Office of Planning and Budget to discuss the funding identified to reduce veteran homelessness.

On Wednesday, April 15, 2026, Commissioner Ross was a guest speaker at the Daughters of the American Revolution event in Warner Robins. She also visited the Warner Robins office, Macon office and Griffin office.

On Thursday, April 16, 2026, Commissioner Ross was a guest speaker at the Veterans Brain Health Summit in Dunwoody. She then took part in the Statewide Housing Collaboration meeting.

On Friday, April 17, 2026, Commissioner Ross led the Leadership Institute class. She also attended the Georgia Veteran Network month update. Later that day she met with the VA, United Military Care and other partners for the in-progress review for the We Care Vet Fair in Rome, GA on 11-12 June 2026. An invitation to attend was extended to SecVA or another senior VA leader. She also had her bi-weekly meeting with Jeff Bell, Chief Operating Officer of STG International.

On Monday, April 20, 2026, Commissioner Ross traveled to Augusta to discuss the building of the cemetery and walk the property with the architects.

Commissioner Ross added to her report that we are working to schedule a Legislative Breakfast in June. We have the venue – the Buckhead Club – and we have a sponsor. More to follow as we finalize the details.

**Ms. Shelly-Ann Simpson, Executive Director, Field Operations and Appeals**

**GENERAL**

- March 20th - the Warrior Alliance outreach event supported by providing VSO service to veterans in the Savannah area.
- March 21<sup>st</sup> – provided VSO assistance at the first We Care event for 2026 at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.
- March 27<sup>th</sup>- attended The City of Atlanta’s Midnight basketball session honoring service men and women.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

- March 29<sup>th</sup> – attended the unveiling of the City of Atlanta’s Vietnam Veteran Memorial.
- March 31<sup>st</sup>- participated in discussions affecting women veterans at “A Seat at The table”- sponsored by the VHA and our Women Veteran Advisory board.
- April 9<sup>th</sup>- attended the monthly Veterans Roundtable at the Decatur Goodwill Resource Center.
- **DD 214’s and Welcome Home Letters: 476** Welcome Home Letters were mailed out in March 2026.

**Projected Positions:**

- 2 Openings in Appeals

**Mr. Steven Fay, Director of Training Division**

- Charles Isaac- Conducted new hire training in Waycross. Assisted with the “We care fair” in Savannah on March 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Steven Fay and Glenn Massey conducted new hire training at the Griffin (Zebulon) locations. Conducted Department training on VetPro. Steven has also been involved with Reframe, our new scheduling system. New hire training Introduces new VSOs to the accredited training processes and procedures to assist veterans and claimants. Refresher training is required to train and evaluate the proficiency of VA systems after issuance of their PIV card. The Absorb Learning Portal is also introduced. The portal has classes and quizzes to help navigate the vast subjects of filing VA claims.
- Sandra Bennett- Conducted 2 Coffee Talks for April 15<sup>th</sup> (VetPro demo) March 2 - VSO Coffee Talk - Unite Us Training - JT Thompson, Homeless Coordinator GDVS, March 16 - VSO Coffee Talk - What You Want To Know - Sandra Bennett- Training Division, March 20 - COHORT 7 Leadership Academy - Patricia Ross, March 23 - Field Visit to Griffin March 25-27 - Field Visits to Bainbridge, Thomasville, Valdosta, Albany and Moultrie.
- Total retro from Training Division \$86,380.23

**Upcoming Events:**

- D.R.O.P. class for April
- VSO Coffee Talk April 15<sup>th</sup> (VetPro demo/Marion Moses)
- Continued ongoing support to the Regional Directors and Veteran Field Service Offices including Central Office personnel
- Continuation of performing duties as VSO’s
- Annual Training Planning 2026

**Mr. Edwin Berry, Director of Appeals Division**

- The total number of hearings conducted by the Appeals Division for **March 2026** was **92**.
- As of **March 31, 2026**, the Isakson VA Regional Office processed benefits as follows for GDVS and the Service Organizations represented by GDVS during the month of March 2026:

<b>Types of Claims</b>	<b>Number of Awards</b>	<b>Benefits paid</b>
<b>Compensation</b>	<b>113,311 (+203)</b>	<b>\$291,885,572 (+1,819,095)</b>
<b>DIC</b>	<b>4,826 (+23)</b>	<b>\$8,731,420 (+45,000)</b>
<b>Survivor Pension</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>\$618,304 <u>(-9,481)</u></b>
<b><u>Veteran Pension</u></b>	<b><u>1,154 (-16)</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,406,805 (-20,093)</u></b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>119,892 (+200)</b>	<b>\$302,642,101 (+1,834,521)</b>

*\* The numbers inside the parentheses represent the change from the previous month.*

Mr. Berry added to his report that Jonathan Buggs, an Appeals Officer who was present at the meeting, is interested in becoming the American Legion Department Service Officer.

**Mr. Kenneth Childre, Director Veterans Benefits North Region**

**Retro Awards:** \$1,683,883.89

**Director Site Visits/Inspections:** 4

**Community Involvement:**

3/3/2026-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Attended the UNG-Dahlonega open house to brief on GDVS services.

3/7/2026-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Supported the Love Thy Neighbor Dawson Connect meeting. Briefed Veterans of Dawson County and local agencies about services provided by GDVS.

3/10/2026-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Supported the American Legion at Dahlonega Women's event. Provided GDVS information and services to female Veterans in Lumpkin County.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.  
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting  
Atlanta, Georgia**

3/14/2026-Nick Gavalas & Todd Logan (Canton)-Spoke to Veterans about GDVS services at an event sponsored by Trout Unlimited.

3/19/2026-Bill Smith (Rock Spring)-Attended Resource Fair in downtown Lafayette providing attendees with information about services available in local community.

3/26/2026-Eddie Fontaine & Christine Collins (Blairsville)-Setup a table at the Veterans Benefits and Opportunities Seminar hosted by American Legion Post# 121. The event was held at the Union County Community Center in Blairsville. Eddie had a presentation for about 75 Veterans in attendance.

3/27/2026-Bill Smith (Rock Spring)-Attended the Chattooga County Vietnam Veteran Day Ceremony where they recognized Vietnam Veterans and widows of Vietnam War Veterans.

3/29/2026-Christine Collins (Blairsville)-Attended the Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration at the VFW Post# 7807 in Hiawasse. Met with 8 Veterans during the celebration.

Mr. Childre added to his report that he attended a pre-planning meeting for the We Care Fair in Northwest Georgia. The Fair will be June 12 in Rome at the River City Forum.

**North Area Gains/Losses: 0**

Average Visits Per VFSO Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO							
Region:		North					
Month:		March-26					
A	B	C	D	E	D / E F	G	G / E H
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:		54	6,371	22	289.59	2,671	121.41
Number of Offices:		30	Average Visits/Office:		212.37	Average Claims/Office 89.033333	

Total monthly office visits include: 2,384 In- person and 3,987 phone calls/emails.

**Ms. Sherri Whitfield, Director Veterans Benefits South Region**

- On April 16, 2026, GDVS welcomed a new VSO to the Macon office.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.  
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting  
Atlanta, Georgia**

- On April 15, 2026, interviews were conducted for the VSO position in the LaGrange office.
- On April 16-17, 2026, Mr. Dennis Boothe in the Hinesville office presented his yearly briefings to the inmates at the FCI Jesup prison.
- On April 20, 2026, interviews were conducted for the VSO position in the Statesboro office.
- Since the last board meeting, South region offices reported lump sum payments totaling \$982,029.42.
- South Georgia Region Veterans Population: 232,245.

Average Visits Per VFSO  
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO

Region: SOUTH

Month: March - 2026

# of Offices	# of VFSOs	Total Monthly Office Visits	Workdays in Month	Average Office Visits Per Day	Total Claims Submitted to VA Monthly	Average Claims Submitted by VFSO to VA Daily
26	41	2,153	22	86.55	1,205	54.77

Average Visits/Office	73.23
Average Claims/Office	46.35

**Ms. Veda Brooks, Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC)**

- March 13, 2026, Ms. Brooks organized, attended, and facilitated the Georgia Woman Veteran of the Year Ceremony and Luncheon in Douglasville, Ga.
- March 17, 2026, Ms. Brooks participated in the Governor’s Task Force Meeting to prevent suicide.
- March 18, 2026, Ms. Brooks participated in the virtual VSMR Q1 Review Meeting.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

- March 25, 2026, Ms. Brooks participated in the Women Veteran Monthly Meet up.
- March 31, 2026, Ms. Brooks organized, attended, and facilitated “A Seat at the Table.”
- April 3, 2026, Ms. Brooks participated in the Georgia Women Veteran Think Tank.
- April 8, 2026, Ms. Brooks organized, attended, and facilitated the NASWVC Coffee Talk. Participated in a round table discussion about women veteran and poverty.
- April 11, 202, Ms. Brooks attended and co-facilitated the Georgia Women Veterans Advisory Board Work Meeting.

**Current committees:**

- Violence Prevention Task Force
- VA/SAMHSA Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Georgia Team
- Sr. Vice President of the National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators (NASWVC)
- Planning Committee for the annual NASWVC Annual Training Conference

**Ms. Calandra Ferguson, Suicide Prevention and Outreach Coordinator**

- April 1, 2026, Ms. Ferguson attended the VSO Coffee Talk.
- April 1-14, 2026, Ms. Ferguson contacted Veterans who screened Low/Mod/High on Suicide Prevention QR code.
- April 6, 2026, Ms. Ferguson attended the Unite Us Weekly Fox Grant case management training.
- April 7, 2026, Ms. Ferguson attended VSMR monthly Meeting/Reviewed Cases.
- April 8, 2026, Ms. Ferguson attended the UNITE US SPT Homeless Grant tracking meeting.
- April 11, 2026, Ms. Ferguson participated in a Governor’s Challenge Participant Interview.
- April 13, 2026, Ms. Ferguson attend the Suicide Prevention Support team workshop.
- April 13, 2026, Ms. Ferguson attended the National Association for the Advancement of Suicide Prevention NAASP Open House.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

- April 14 – 15, 2026, Ms. Ferguson participated in the pre-Innovations Conference workshop hosted by SAMHSA

**Membership & Committee**

Women Veterans Advisory Board

**Ms. Raven Holstick, Transition and Employment Coordinator**

- March 19, 2026, Transition and Employment Coordinator Participated in the Governor's Task Force meeting centered on transition services for service members, engaging in collaborative discussions aimed at strengthening employment outcomes, streamlining resource alignment, and improving support systems for transitioning veterans statewide.
- March 24, 2026, Transition and Employment Coordinator Attended the VA Regional Quarterly Meeting to receive updates from Atlanta VHA, gaining insight into current initiatives, service delivery updates, and opportunities to enhance coordination in support of veterans.
- March 25, 2026, Transition and Employment Coordinator Engaged in a collaborative WorkSource Coastal Informational Meeting, working alongside regional partners to strengthen workforce alignment and enhance employment pathways for veterans across the coastal area.
- March 30, 2026, Transition and Employment Coordinator Represented the (GDVS) foundation as the Chief of Operations at an Atlanta Hawks game in partnership with Kumho Tire, supporting community engagement efforts and increasing visibility for veteran focused initiatives.
- April 6, 2026, Transition and Employment Coordinator Participated in the Skyhawks Job Fair, connecting with employers and identifying job opportunities to support veteran employment and workforce integration.
- April 13, 2026, Transition and Employment Coordinator Engaged with the Department of Administration to launch a quarterly virtual employment initiative, creating a structured platform for State of Georgia agencies to showcase hiring opportunities, host breakout sessions, and directly connect with veterans to enhance employment outcomes statewide.
- Ms. Holstick added that there will be a virtual hiring fair in the Fall in coordination with the State of Georgia. There are about 1,100 careers available on Team Georgia now. It will not be like a normal hiring fair but will feature breakout rooms where veterans will be able to go into a room that is focused on an area they are interested in, ask questions, and begin the interview process. More to follow.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

**Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Homelessness Coordinator**

- 3/16/2026 – I participated in a collaboration meeting with Everhome and Woodsprings Extended stay suites in Newnan to formulate a partnership to send veterans to their extended stays at discounted rate.
- 3/17/2026- I completed a walkthrough of a home in Douglasville for veterans that would like to rent a room.
- 3/17/2026- I completed a site visit for Everhome Suites and Woodsprings Suites.
- 3/17/2026- I Completed a collaboration meeting with Top Tier group to house veterans in a shared room space.
- 3/18/2026- I participated in weekly Unite Us meeting to discuss the implementation of the new platform directed for the Homeless program.
- 3/19/2026- I participated in a meeting with Minnesota and their homeless program. I was able to take away how they implemented state funding and partnerships with their local COC's and VA partners.
- 3/20/2026- I participated in Session 8 of the Leadership Cohort.
- 3/20/2026- I participated in Warrior Alliance's Resource fair and was able to help a veteran get emergency housing and be connected to Changing Homeless SSVF program.
- 3/21/2026- I participated in the Ebenezer Baptist and United Military Care event. I was able to assist 10 veterans with housing resources and hygiene packets.
- 3/26/2026- I participated in a meeting to discuss the HONOR Center and the plans for the facilities with collaborative partners.
- 3/27/2026- I participated in the HONOR Center's proposal hosted by the Commissioner to get Milledgeville constituents buy in and thoughts of bringing the facility to their community. Commissioner Ross was able to get a full backing from a distinctive group of individuals in the community.
- 3/30/2026- I participated in representing the Ga. Department of Veterans Foundation board at the Kumho Tire Atlanta Hawk's night.
- 3/31/2026- I conducted a site visit for the Everhome Suites in Conyers Ga to collaborate with them and send veterans to their extended stay.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

- 4/2/2026- I participated in the Foundation Board's monthly meeting. We were able to take a vote on a partnership with Kumho Tire.
- 4/2/2026- I participated in the VA by Name List meeting. This meeting discussed all of the efforts the VA has made towards housing throughout GA. A by name list was also created for every homeless person by the Atl. VA.
- 4/8/2026- I participated in the Launch of the Homeless Prevention Program platform on Unite Us.
- 4/8/2026- I participated in a meeting for Honor Center to discuss our next steps for the project and created a to do list for the parties at hand.

**Upcoming Events/Highlights:**

4/16/2026: Statewide Housing Meeting with SSVF and VA partners to discuss new Homeless Prevention Program

4/17/2026: Leadership Session 9

**Mr. Mark Demers, Chief Development Officer/Chief Financial Officer**

**Accounting/Procurement/Compliance:**

- Routine operations are continuing. We are continuously working to improve all accounts payable processing/procurement processing, to apply proper coding, accountability, organization of purchase orders, on-time payments and reconciliations.
- We are continuing to work with the SAO Shared Services to prepare the procurement and accounting data in Team Works for migration to GA@Work.
- Kirsten Dennis processed 11 purchase orders totaling \$1,304,305.77 as well as 12 invoices and 8 quotes.
- Kirsten Dennis attended the REQ/PO Office Support Meeting.
- Irene Mackson attended the P-Card Roundtable meeting on April 13, 2026.

**GA@Work/NextGen Updates**

- Mark Demers and Camala Ball attended GA@Work Monthly Finance Readiness Meeting on March 26, 2026.
- Kirsten Dennis attended the NCN Half-time report on March 13, 2026.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

- Mark Demers attended the Warrants Testing on March 23, 2026.
- Camala Ball attended the Adaptive Planning Budget Build Kickoff and Budget Enterprise Interface Builder Training.
- Mark Demers attended the Banking CTAS Final Testing on March 25, 2026.
- Kirsten Dennis, Mark Demers and Camala Ball attended the NextGen Change Network Meeting on March 24, 2026.
- Kirsten Dennis attended the GA@Work Procurement Huddle on March 25, 2026.
- Camala Ball attended the Budget EIB Office Hours on April 8 and 15, 2026.
- Mark Demers attended the NextGen Security Update Meeting on March 31, 2026.
- Camala Ball and Mark Demers attended the GA@Work Go-Live Support Team Orientation on March 31, 2026.
- Camala Ball completed the in-person GA@Work Financial Budget Management ILT on April 6, 2026.
- Camala Ball completed the in-person GA@Work Accounting I ILT on April 7, 2026.
- Camala Ball, Kirsten Dennis and Mark Demers attended the NCN Half-time report on April 17, 2026.
- Mark Demers completed the in-person GA@Work Financial Budget Management ILT on April 20, 2026.
- The GO-Live date for GA@Work is now July 1, 2026.
- The entire organization was sent invitations for GA@Work Mandatory Training that must be completed prior to May 28, 2026. **As of April 14, 2026, GDVS has completed 1019 out of the 1122 courses assigned with 103 remaining (91% complete).**

**Budget/Travel:**

- Camala Ball continued daily monitoring of general ledgers, purchase orders, and budget projection updates.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

- Camala Ball has reviewed budget projections (Augusta cemetery, plot allowance funds, budget projections for AFY2026 funds with program managers as of the February closing and discussed plans for remaining funds on April 10, 2026.
- Camala Ball attended the FY 2027 Budget Agency Detail Workbook Office Hours.
- Camala Ball completed Cash Conversion office hours.
- Camala Ball met with OPB analyst on multiple occasions this month to discuss budget amendments and projections prior to approval.
- Camala Ball stated that as of March 31, 2026, we have expended 64% of the total FY 2026 (including AFY 2026) budget allocated to GDVS. This is currently below the monthly average of 8.33% over the last 10 months. The breakdown is as follows:

Fund	Total Allotment	Expenditures	Remaining Balance	% Spent
State	\$ 43,441,102.00	\$ 23,056,254.00	\$ 19,568,852.00	53%
State- Prior Yr Res Funds-Unite Us	\$ 1,750,204.00	\$ 1,750,204.00	\$ 0	100%
Federal	\$ 32,406,626.00	\$ 23,654,898.00	\$ 8,774,268.00	73%
ARPA-Unite Us	\$ 1,729,222.34	\$ 1,729,222.34	\$ 0	100%
Other	\$ 4,555,077.00	\$ 2,919,781.00	\$ 1,635,296.00	64%
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$ 83,906,901.00</b>	<b>\$ 53,928,484.00</b>	<b>\$ 29,978,417.00</b>	<b>64%</b>

**AFY 2026 Budget (HB 973)**

Descriptions	Governor's	House	Senate	CC
Baseline Budget (State/Federal)	\$60,820,272	\$60,820,272	\$60,820,272	\$60,820,272
Increase for one time salary supplement \$2k	\$747,091	\$747,091	\$448,094	\$747,091
Reduce funds to reflect employer contribution rate from 29.454% to 20.264%	\$ 0	(\$51,064)	(\$51,064)	(\$102,128)
Transfer funds from GVWH due to delayed implementation of 40 new beds to Augusta Cemetery	\$800,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Redirect funds from GVWH to Augusta Cemetery	(\$800,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

Recognize savings from delayed opening of new beds.	\$0	(\$360,000)	(\$360,000)	(\$360,000)
Provide funds for technology platform (Unite Us)-ask was \$3.4m	\$1,729,196	\$ 2,614,598	\$2,614,598	\$2,614,598
Increase funds to provide rehab services for service members with TBI (pass through-Shepard Center)	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$250,000
Increase funds for additional staffing for Milledgeville Home	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Funds to create new Augusta veteran's cemetery	\$0	\$ 1,000,000	\$800,000	\$800,000
Increase funds for the Cohen Clinic (pass through	\$0	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000
Increase funds to eliminate veteran homelessness	\$0	\$0	\$15,000,000	\$5,000,000
<b>Total Budget (State/Federal)</b>	<b>\$ 63,296,559</b>	<b>\$ 65,770,897</b>	<b>\$80,790,739</b>	<b>\$71,254,762</b>

**Note:** Governor Kemp signed the AFY 2026 budget (HB 973) into law on March 3, 2026.

**FY 2027 Budget (HB 974)**

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Governor's</b>	<b>House</b>	<b>Senate</b>	<b>CC</b>
Baseline Budget (State/Federal)	\$60,820,272	\$60,820,272	\$60,820,272	\$60,820,272
Adjustment telecom (GTA)	(\$21,473)	(\$21,473)	(\$21,473)	(\$21,473)
Adjustment DOAS Insurance programs	\$16,088	\$16,088	\$16,088	\$16,088
Reduce funds to reflect employer contribution rate from 29.454% to 20.264%	(\$612,769)	(\$612,769)	(\$612,769)	(\$612,769)
Adjustment for GA@Work Billings	\$5,237	\$5,237	\$5,237	\$5,237
Increase funds for a director for new Augusta Cemetery		\$102,000	\$102,000	\$102,000
Increase to TRS (GVWNH-Augusta)	\$25,780	\$25,780	\$25,780	\$25,780
Increase funds to reflect an additional 2.92% increase in employer contribution for ERS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$202,502
Increase to match increased federal funds to maintain existing bed count at homes	\$455,159	\$455,159	\$455,159	\$455,159
Increase in funds for FO and Appeals positions to meet minimum salary guidelines	\$258,776	\$258,776	\$258,776	\$258,776

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

Increase funds for 1 position at Savannah VECTR	\$60,986	\$60,986	\$60,986	\$60,986
Increase funds for military/vets TBI and MH	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0
Increase funds for tech platform for referrals	\$0	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
Increase funds to annualize legislative priority of eliminating veteran homelessness	\$0	\$0	\$5,000,000	\$2,500,000
<b>Total Budget (State/Federal)</b>	<b>\$ 61,008,056</b>	<b>\$63,610,056</b>	<b>\$72,810,056</b>	<b>\$68,012,558</b>

**Note:** Governor Kemp has not signed the FY2027 budget as of this date.

**Bond Funds**

Descriptions	Governor's	House	Senate	CC
Bond#65-Provide \$1,835,000 in 20yr bond to fund improvement at GVWH-Milledgeville	\$169,921	\$169,621	\$169,621	\$169,621
Bond#66-Provide \$220,000 in 20yr bond to fund elevator repairs for GVWH Milledgeville	\$20,372	\$20,372	\$20,372	\$20,372

**Strategic Plan/Legislation:**

- The 2026 Regular session of the Georgia Assembly will be in session from January 12, 2026, to April 2, 2026. Session is now closed.
- Kaitlin Little attended the Senate Appropriations Hearing on March 25, 2026, at 341 CAP.
- Kaitlin Little attended the Joint and Senate Appropriations Conference on March 31, 2026.

**Grant Program:**

- SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program- (\$722,747 year 4)
  - We were awarded the grant for a 4<sup>th</sup> Year.
  - Kaitlin Little, Irene Mackson and Mark Demers working on the Fox Grant Data Conversion Project (approx. 50,000 files).
  - Mark Demers attended the Fox Grant Operations National Call on April 15, 2026.
  - Kaitlin Little, Irene Mackson, Kirsten Dennis and Mark Demers attended the Fox Grant New Procedures Meeting on 4/13/2026.
  - Kaitlin Little and Irene Mackson attended Fox Grant update meetings on March 30, 2026, and April 13, 2026.
- Veterans Mental Health Services Program Grant (HB 414)-

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

- FY2025- \$1,000,000 (competitive grant)
  - The grant was awarded to 3 vendors:
    - Cohen Veterans Network- \$776,132
    - KSU-AMES-\$173,868
    - About Face USA- \$40,000
  - All funds for this grant year have been distributed.
  - The second quarterly report was completed on January 15, 2026. Next quarterly report will be due in April 2026.
- FY2026- \$1,000,000 (competitive grant)
  - The grant was awarded to the following:
    - Cohen Veterans Network (Centerstone) -\$806,578
    - AboutFace, Inc. - \$62,800
    - Emory - \$130,622
  - Contracts for Centerstone and AboutFace are complete and money distributed. We are still awaiting finalization of the contract with Emory.
- PTSD study- Emory (HB 68, line 94.12). \$1,000,000
  - To increase funds for research on treatment of PTSD and wraparound services for veterans and their families.
  - Contract was signed and monies were distributed to Emory on September 30, 2025.
  - First quarterly report was completed on January 15, 2026. The next quarterly report will be due in April 2026.
- Irene Mackson and Kaitlin Little participated in GDVS Grant Writing Team meetings on April 13, 2026.
- Irene Mackson contacted Lowe's and Community Foundation of Central GA for possible grant for War Home in Milledgeville.
- Kaitlin Little and Irene Mackson participated in Unite Us & Spt. Case Management) meetings on March 23, April 6, and 8, 2026.

**Events/Other:**

- Leadership Institute conducted a session via Teams on March 20, 2026. Next session will be conducted on April 17, 2026.
- Irene Mackson attended the leadership institute session as a facilitator.
- Mark Demers, Kaitlin Little and Irene Mackson attended the VSO Coffee Talk on April 1 and 15, 2026.

**Mr. Russell Feagin, Executive Director, Health, Contracting & Facilities, GDVS**

**State Veterans Homes**

**State Veterans Homes Census (March 31, 2026) +**

<b>Current Month</b>	<b>Augusta</b>	<b>Milledgeville</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Regular Patients</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Service Connected</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Total Patients</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>Last Month</b>	<b>Augusta</b>	<b>Milledgeville</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Regular Patients</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>Service Connected</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Total Patients</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>290</b>

+ The numbers reported to the VSB are the total numbers as of March 31, 2026.

**Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home**

Normal operations continue.

**Georgia War Veterans Home**

Normal operations continue.

Request for Proposal process is continuing for Home operator.

A bid solicitation has been started for renovation of all elevators at the Home.

A bid solicitation has been started for renovation of bathrooms in the Wheeler Building and Vinson Building for ADA modernization.

**Mr. Ernie Cowart, Executive Director Veterans Cemeteries, GDVS**

**State Veterans Cemeteries**

**Burial Statistics - Through March 31, 2026**

State Veterans Cemeteries	Cumulative Through Current Month	Current Month	Year to Date FY2026
Glennville	2,965	26	183
Milledgeville	6,174	36	294
Combined Totals	9,139	62	477

**Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Glennville**

Cemetery operations continue as normal. (unchanged from last report)

**Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Milledgeville**

Cemetery operations continue as normal. Currently there is one open Cemetery Tech position and another previously open position will be filled as of April 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Augusta Cemetery Project**

Cemetery planning is ongoing with building and cemetery layout design being the current focus. The property transfer from the GA Dept of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities is currently being resolved.

Commissioner Ross, Mr. Dyer, Mr. Feagin and Mr. Cowart met with 2KM, who is the architect on record, and walked the site. It was a great visit, and the community is engaged and excited about getting a cemetery.

**Mr. Kerry Dyer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Operations Officer**

On Friday, March 20, 2026, Kerry Dyer attended the Claims Management RFP meeting along with Mark Meeks, Barbara Burns, DOAS Agency Sourcing Managers. He also processed 1 resignation packet. Later

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

that day along with Marlon Benjamin, GBA Project Manager met with the contractors to discuss the renovation project.

On Monday, March 23, 2026, Kerry Dyer spoke with Leslie Davis, State Properties Leasing Specialist, regarding the renewal of the Cedartown Field Office Lease Agreement. He also processed 1 new hire packet. Later that day he registered 5 employees into the GA@Work Basic Navigation Course.

On Tuesday, March 24, 2026, Kerry Dyer contacted Rhonda Burns, COO for Government Office of Student Achievement to speak about cubicle space. He also spoke with Jeff Waldburg, CEO & President Panoramic Software Corporation about the Certificate of Insurance for VetPro. Later that day he distributed the monthly Alpha Roster to the Senior Leadership.

On Wednesday, March 25, 2026, Kerry Dyer submitted the monthly Fleet Management Report to DOAS. He also contacted Leslie Davis to discuss the Office Space at the Puckett Center. Later that day he spoke to Mark Meeks regarding the Claims Management Notice of Intent to Award Posting.

On Thursday, March 26, 2026, Kerry Dyer along with Russell Feagin and Tonya Jarrett met with Mark Meeks to discuss the War Home RFP. He also contacted Barbara Burns to discuss the process of posting the Notice of Award for the Claims Management RFP. Later that day he processed 1 promotion packet.

On Friday, March 27, 2026, Kerry Dyer processed 1 new hire packet. He also contacted the County Manager for the Cartersville Field Office to discuss the replacement of the carpet. Later that day he spoke with County Manager for the Griffin Field Office to discuss the replacement of dead bolt lock and ceiling tile.

On Monday, March 30, 2026, Kerry Dyer attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also posted the Macon Field Office vacancy internally and externally. Later that day posted the Notice of Award to Panoramic Software Company.

On Tuesday, March 31, 2026, Kerry Dyer spoke with Angela Gaston, Transition Services Manager at Fort Gordon regarding the relocation of the Fort Gordon Field Office. He also contacted Clark Wong, State Properties Land Manager, to discuss the Glennville abandoned road issue. Later that day he distributed the guidance for the FY26 Performance Management Form across the agency.

On Wednesday April 1, 2026, Kerry Dyer contacted Jack Lott, Waycross Landlord to discuss the furniture disposal for the Waycross Field Office. He also distributed the guidance for the employee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter across the agency. Later that day he met with the contractors to discuss the progress on the renovation of the 9<sup>th</sup> floor suite.

On Thursday, April 2, 2026, Kerry Dyer attended the GA@Work Compensation Partner & Planner Role Seminar.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

On Friday, April 3, 2026- Holiday

On Monday, April 6, 2026, Kerry Dyer attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also attended the DOAS HR Director & Specialist Role Seminar. Later that day he attended the GA@Work Recruiting Coordinator & Manager Role Program Seminar.

On Tuesday, April 7, 2026, Kerry Dyer attended the GA@Work Contract Administrator Role Program Seminar. He also attended GA@Work Work Time Absence & Timekeeper Role Seminar. Later that day he attended the GA@Work Sourcing Event Buyer Role Seminar.

On Wednesday, April 8, 2026, Kerry Dyer attended the GA@Work P-Card & Purchase Order Approvers Assessment Seminar. He also attended the GA@Work Requesters Role Program Seminar. Later that day the GA@Work Procure to Pay Overview Seminar.

On Thursday, April 9, 2026, Kerry Dyer attended the GA@Work HR Compensation 1LT Session 3 seminar. He also contacted GBA to have the Wall Socket Cover replaced in room 954 on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor suite. Later that day he spoke with John Piegion, Senior Account Executive for C-W-C Furniture about the cubicle power supply for Government Office of Student Achievement.

On Friday, April 10, 2026, Kerry Dyer along with Mark Meeks, Commissioner Ross, Russell Feagin and Tonya Jarret met virtually to discuss the War Home redactions and redlines. He also attended the VetPro Stakeholder meeting along with Commissioner Ross, Steven Fay, Charles Isaac, Glenn Massey, ShellyAnn, Gerald Lahr and Sandra Bennett. Later that day he processed 1 new hire packet.

On Monday, April 13, 2026, Kerry Dyer attended the SSG Fox Prevention Fox eligibility class along with Commissioner Ross and the Suicide Prevention Team. He also contacted Clark Wong, State Properties Land Manger to discuss the Augusta Cemetery, Glennville Abandoned Road issue and Honor Center. Later that day he emailed Sherri Whitfield 9 resumes for her LaGrange Field Office Vacancy.

On Tuesday, April 14, 2026, Kerry Dyer emailed Sherri Whitfield 12 resumes for her Statesboro Field Office Vacancy. He also sent Tyler Tech a copy of the amended contract for the Claims Management Software. Later that day he spoke to Mark Meeks regarding the Operations and Management contract being sent to HMR.

Mr. Dyer added to his report that the Department is transitioning to VetPro for the claims management system.

Below are the Personnel Actions Kerry Dyer and Shareka Monday-Robinson processed from March 19, 2026 – April 14, 2026.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

Location	Position	Status	Name	Date
LaGrange	Office Manager	Resigned	Amber Haire	04/06/2026
Macon	VFSO 1	New Hire	Kimberly Stanley	04/16/2026
Augusta-WVNH	VFSO 1	New Hire	Dkendrick Roebuck	04/16/2026
Milledgeville	Cemetery Tech 1	New Hire	Tyler Brown	04/16/2026
Appeals Div	VCAO 1	New Hire	Jonathan Buggs	04/16/2026

**Ms. Lily Snyder, Director, Veterans Education and Training Division (State Approving Agency)**

- The approval, risk-based surveys, and supervisory visits 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 2,248 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	529
Approved Training Establishments	1,719
Ch. 35 VA Education Beneficiaries for FY26 Q1	14,586
VA Education Beneficiaries for March 2026 CH 33 ONLY*	11,472
VA Education Beneficiaries for February 2026 CH 33 ONLY*	10,578
VA Education Beneficiaries for January 2026 CH 33 ONLY*	10,098
VA Education Beneficiaries for December 2025 CH 33 ONLY*	10,547
VA Education Beneficiaries for November 2025 CH 33 ONLY*	11,177
VA Education Beneficiaries for October 2025 *CH 33 ONLY*	11,376

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

VA Education Beneficiaries for September 2025 *CH 33 ONLY*	11,052
VA Education Beneficiaries for August 2025 *CH 33 ONLY*	10,110
VA Education Beneficiaries for July 2025	10,798
VA Education Beneficiaries for June 2025	11,419
VA Education Beneficiaries for May 2025	21,878
VA Education Beneficiaries for April 2025	20,972
VA Education Beneficiaries for March 2025	21,867

\* Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, Education Division, WEAMS, Salesforce, Oracle BI CH33 Enrollment

**Ms. Charlotte May, Director, External Affairs & Communications**

**INFORMATION OUTREACH**

**Division Updates**

1. GDVS Newsletter – The department’s monthly e-newsletter features top stories from the month at <https://veterans.georgia.gov/newsletter>. The March edition focused on the selection of Georgia’s next Woman Veteran of the Year, Tracey Lloyd, a West Point graduate who currently serves as the Executive Director of the Emily J.T. Perez Foundation. The newsletter also featured the selection of the 2026 Veteran Impact Award winner, Vedia Barnett, founder of a non-profit organization focused on supporting women veterans. Additional stories included highlighting the work of GDVS Business Support Analyst Kaitlin Little and a recap of this year’s annual Women’s Legislative Breakfast hosted by members of the General Assembly.
2. EAC attended the 2026 Woman Veteran of the Year ceremony and luncheon on March 13. EAC provided support during the planning process to promote nominations and attendance at the ceremony, including Eventbrite event creation and ticket tracking. Post event support for the event, including photos and coverage on GDVS social media and an article in the GDVS newsletter, recognized and promoted the availability of assistance for women veterans.
3. Attended a quarterly Returning Veterans Task Force meeting on March 19. This quarter’s meeting focused on the development of a new state one-stop resource portal website through TCSG. Task force members were encouraged to provide feedback and additional resources as the site is developed. The meeting also featured a highlight of legislative initiatives for veterans and their families, caretakers, and survivors, including legislation supported by the GDVS.

**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

4. Display board messaging – EAC is working with Commissioner Ross and department partners to develop graphics to use on large format media boards to promote department initiatives and share information. Display boards will be trialed at 2 physical locations in the upcoming months.
5. Attended grant management meetings with Unite Us on a weekly basis as the department prepares to add additional functionalities and tracking for grant funds.
6. Attended a meeting of the Georgia Veterans Service Foundation on April 2.
7. Benefits outreach – External Affairs and Communications continues to work with GDVS staff and partners to educate Georgia’s veterans and families on the availability of benefits and resources.
  - a. Woman Veteran of the Year – shared a recap of events and information on the winners of the 2026 award on social media channels.
  - b. Employment support – shared information on job and resource fairs in Savannah and at Fort Gordon from trusted partners.
  - c. Vietnam Veterans Day – shared information from the Department of Veterans Affairs to celebrate and commemorate the service of the nation’s Vietnam veterans. Shared additional information on a community event hosted by the Augusta VAMC for local veterans to celebrate at a Welcome Home event.



**Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.  
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting  
Atlanta, Georgia**



**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business to discuss.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Commissioner Ross announced that we are hiring a program manager, Mr. Steven Hungarter, for the Staff Sergeant Fox Suicide Prevention Grant program. We had to make some changes to the program after meeting with the VA on processes and procedures and a program manager was the recommendation. We look forward to having Steven up in the Central Office location.

Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 12:30 p.m.  
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting  
Atlanta, Georgia

Mr. Childre announced that there will be a We Care Fair on June 12 in Rome at the River City Forum. Commissioner Ross added that there is a specific outreach for women veterans the day before, on June 11.

Commissioner Ross announced that the Notice of Intent to Award for the Milledgeville Home was posted on Friday. We are within the 10-day period in which a protest can be filed. HMR, a company out of South Carolina, was selected.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A resolution was presented by Chair Kopsie regarding the acquisition of privately owned property adjacent to the Glennville Cemetery to develop as a service entrance. The cost is \$14,000. Mr. Hanley made a motion to approve the purchase of the property to be used as a maintenance entrance. Mr. Paslawski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and was signed accordingly (see attached).

Mr. Kopsie announced that after Gov. Kemp signs the final budget for FY27, we may have a separate resolution that would greatly enhance our ability to impact veteran homelessness in Georgia. More to come on this.

The next Board meeting was scheduled for May 27 at 12:30pm. It will be a combination virtual and in- person meeting, set up at the GDVS.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:56 p.m.

SIGNED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joshua Kopsie, Chair

ATTEST:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Mendez, Secretary

**RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
VETERANS SERVICE BOARD**

**WHEREAS:** The Georgia Department of Veterans Service is requesting acquisition of privately owned property of approximately 0.92 acres of land in Tattnall County that is adjacent to the Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Glennville and is generally described in “Exhibit A:” consisting of a property plat that is incorporated herein by reference (hereinafter referred to as the “Tract A”)

**WHEREAS:** The property is currently owned by Jonathon W Eisner & Michelle T Eisner at the address of 1612 Homer Waters Road, Glennville, Georgia.

**WHEREAS:** The Georgia Department of Veterans Service (GDVS) has worked to locate a property adjacent to the current cemetery property for the development of a service entrance.

**WHEREAS:** The Georgia Department of Veterans Service plans to acquire the 0.92 acre parcel of land for the purchase price \$14,000.

**WHEREAS:** The property is currently vacant of any structures or improvements that would require their removal and will require little work to accommodate the intended gated entrance as needed.

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED**

That the Veterans Service Board does hereby grant approval for the acquisition of the above described 0.92 acres from Jonathon W Eisner & Michelle T Eisner for the above stated purpose and does hereby request approval by the State Properties Commission in order to proceed with the acquisition of the stated property. Exhibits regarding this request are enclosed for approval.

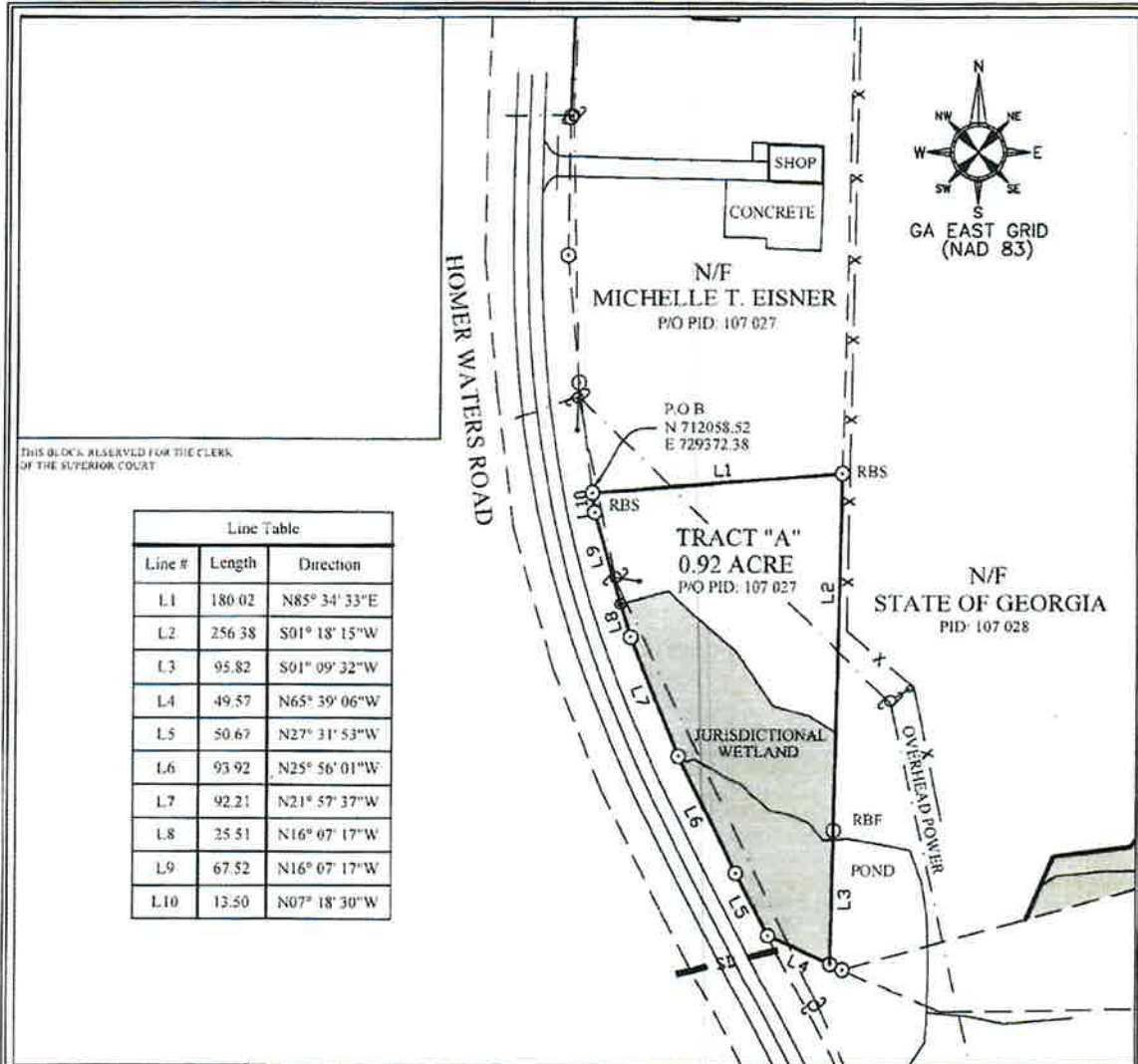
This Resolution is hereby approved this 21 day of April 2026.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRMAN  
VETERANS SERVICE BOARD

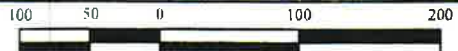
ATTEST:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SECRETARY  
VETERANS SERVICE BOARD

Georgia Department of Veterans Service Veterans Service Board

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Glennville Cemetery Resolution Exhibit A



A PLAT OF  
DIVISION OF PID: 107 027 1512 HOMER WATERS RD  
TATTNALL COUNTY, GEORGIA  
PREPARED FOR:  
**GEORGIA VETERANS  
MEMORIAL CEMETERY**



GRAPHIC SCALE (1" = 100')

PROJECT No.: **24042** FIELD DATE: 09/11/2025  
DRAWN BY: DLJ PLAT DATE: 04/20/2026  
SCALE: 1" = 100'

SHEET **2** OF 2



THIS SURVEY WAS PREPARED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY SURVEYS IN GEORGIA AS SET FORTH IN CHAPTER 180-7 OF THE RULES OF THE GEORGIA BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS AS SET FORTH IN THE GEORGIA PLAT ACT O.C.G.A. 15-6-67.

**JACHENS**  
**LAND SURVEYING, INC.**

Professional Land Surveying • GIS • Mapping

P.O. BOX 16  
EVANS, GA 30809  
PH 706 299 8721

EMAIL djachens@yahoo.com  
www.LANDSURVEY-MAPPING.com  
COA#: LSF001036

**CERTIFICATE**

I, Steve Mendez, Secretary, hereby certify that I am custodian of the minutes of the Veterans Service Board and that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by said Board at a meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia, on the \_\_\_ day of April 2026.

SO CERTIFIED, this 21 day of April 2026.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SECRETARY  
VETERANS SERVICE BOARD