

Friday, July 25, 2025 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. Steve Mendez, Secretary
Mr. Pete Peterson, Member
Ms. Takosha Swan, 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. Mark Demers, Chief Development Officer, Chief Finance Officer, GDVS
Mr. Russell Feagin, Executive Director, Health & Memorials Division, GDVS
Ms. Amy Sillmon, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women and Vetlanta
Ms. Belinda Boldoe, VFW Service Officer, Appeals Division, GDVS
Ms. Samantha Brown-Parks, Veterans Service Foundation Board
Mr. Kevin Loncher, Veterans Service Foundation Board
Mr. Destry Rogers, Veterans Service Foundation Board
Mr. Caleb Groves, Atlanta Journal Constitution
Ms. Linda Lavender, Director, Milledgeville Cemetery, GDVS
Ms. Lily Snyder, Director, Veterans Education & Training, GDVS
Ms. Charlotte May, Director, Public Information and External Affairs, GDVS
Ms. Shareka Monday-Robinson, Director, Human Resources, 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
Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Homeless Coordinator, GDVS
Ms. Kirsten Dennis, Purchasing/Procurement, GDVS
Mr. Bernard Toney, Veterans Education & Training, GDVS
Mr. Neil Slay, Veterans Education & Training, GDVS
Ms. Julie Hammond, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, GDVS

On Friday, July 25, 2025, the Veterans Service Board meeting was held in person and by video/tele-conference.

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

Mr. Mendez made a motion to approve the July Agenda. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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

The following reports were submitted for the Board meeting:

Ms. Belinda Boldoe, VFW

- The Department Service Officer attended a Georgia Department of Veteran Service (GDVS) Leadership Institute in-person training session held on May 16, 2025, at 10 AM, VECTR Center, 1001 S Armed Forces Blvd, Warner Robins, GA 31088. This meeting was final preparation for the Customer Service Class for GDVS Annual Training Session 2025.
- The Department Service Officer attended a virtual Quarterly VSO/Director's meeting hosted by Angela Seelhammer, Acting Director and Brian Morgan, Change Management Analyst, (CMA) held May 19, 2024, at 10AM – 11AM. The following issues were briefed.
 - Director's Updates on Emergency Procedures.
 - PACT Act Most Common Granted Disabilities
 - Allergic Rhinitis
 - Hypertensive Vascular Disease
 - Maxillary Sinusitis
 - Bronchial Asthma
 - Malignant Growths of Genitourinary
 - Deputy Secretary – Paul Lawrence (sworn in March 28th)
 - Augusta Veterans Expo – May 14th – Huge Success
 - 350 Veterans served (195 prescheduled appts and 155 walk-ins served)
 - 141 other walk-ins were assisted when staff returned to RO
 - 23 exams conducted
 - Thanks to GDVS
 - Express 30 Pilot
 - Filing claims in 35 days with only one or two issues
 - Employee Mandatory Overtime
 - Overtime focus will be centered around priority backlog development actions, rating claims, and completion work efforts.

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- **Backlog Focus**
 - Backlog Claims are those pending greater than 125 days. The goal is to see a significant reduction in backlog by December 2025.
- **Backlog Initiatives**
 - Backlog Reduction List: VHA Exams Pending 95+
 - Mandatory OT to focus on claims pending greater than 125 days
 - Atlanta Daily Backlog Reporting to show backlog claims rated and completed on station for each month following the initiative
- **Veteran Readiness and Employment (VRE) Updates**
 - The national deployment of the VR&E business line's case management system.
 - The system is called the RES and will drastically improve our efficiency, quality, and production within the business line.
- The Department Service Officer attended the GDVS Annual Training Session held on June 02 - 05, 2025, at 8 AM – 4 PM. The training was conducted at the Central Georgia Technical College, 80 Cohen Walker Drive, Warner Robins, GA 31088, and 71 Cohen Walker Drive, Warner Robins, GA 31088. Training classes included:
 - Wartime Veteran
 - Wartime Pension
 - VA Life Insurance
 - TERA/ILER
 - Survivor Benefits
 - Veterans Cemeteries
 - Service Dog
 - Secondary Conditions
 - PACT Act Concerns
 - Advocating for your Veteran
 - NVLSP Maximizing VA Benefits
 - Caregiver Support
 - Ancillary Benefits
 - Appeals
 - Customer Service
- The Department Service Officer attended the Department of Georgia VFW and Auxiliary State Convention on June 05-08, 2025, held at the Macon Marriott City Center, 240 Coliseum Dr., Macon, GA 31217.
 - VFW National Past Commander-in-Chief, John E. Hamilton, National Representative

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- Commissioner Ross was a guest speaker during the business session.
- The VFW Department of GA installed the new State Commander and Staff for 2025 – 2026, Commander Bill Miles.
- The Department Service Officer attended the Monthly VSO/Community Partner PACT Information and Listening virtual meeting hosted by Lauren Ruchin, Atlanta VHA. The virtual meeting was held on June 12, 2025, at 12 PM.
 - Shared information about the PACT Act and discussed how the Veterans are being impacted by the PACT Act.
 - We discussed ways to ensure that our Veterans gain access to the healthcare, benefits, and resources they earned and deserve!
 - Provided Veterans' feedback about the PACT Act Outreach initiatives.
 - Discussed upcoming Outreach events in the communities.
- The Department Service Officer attended a Retirement Ceremony for Sonya Sawyer, Atlanta Regional Office Hearing Coordinator. The ceremony was held on June 25, 2025, at 11 AM at the Atlanta Regional Office, located at 1670 Clairmont Road, Decatur, GA 30033. Sonya Sawyer is retiring after 37.5 years of federal service.
- The Department Service Officer attended a VFW National Veterans Service (NVS) March 2025 VFW NVS Update virtual meeting held on June 26, 2025, at 2 PM. We discussed the following:
 - NVS Training Schedule
 - NVS Training Topic Poll
 - M21-1 Updates
 - VA Education Updates
 - CAVC Case Analysis Documents
 - VA Foreign Medical Program Update

Ms. Tonjala Moton-Williams, GDVS, American Legion Service Officer

- June 27-29, 2025, 106th American Legion Annual Department of Georgia Convention was held in Duluth, GA. During the convention, the American Legion presented VA hospitals across the state with donations. These donations provide financial support to address the needs and improve the lives of our veterans. Additionally, the convention had keynote speakers, Deputy Commissioner Kerry Dyer (GDVS) and Jon Paul Burkhalter (American Red Cross).
- July 1, 2025, New state leadership was selected.
 - Commander: Michael Schwartz
 - Senior Vice: Ray Humphrey

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Vice Commanders: Ricky Baugh
Bob Carpenter
Thomas Pinkney
Robert Russel
James Watson
Treasurer: Tommy Treadway

Upcoming events:

- Aug 22 – 28, 2025, The American Legion National Convention 725 S. Harbour Island Blvd., Tampa FL 33602.

Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women

Georgia Military Women continues to be very busy! We continue our on-line sharing of information and small local meetups. We have been getting more requests for our outreach team to come out and talk about women veterans. Our group continues to grow as we support the VA, military, and community groups in reaching more and more women veterans. Part of what we do is to try to educate women veterans about female related health issues and the resources available through the VA. We usually have representatives at the Atlanta, Augusta, and Dublin women health fairs. Most recently we were part of the Augusta Women Veterans Town Hall and broadcast that live on FACEBOOK. At the end of July, we will be supporting a Women's Day supporting the Dublin VA at the Perry Clinic focusing on menopause. In the Atlanta area we try to educate on many topics. For example, there are about 250 ladies in some stage of active pregnancy and about the same number enrolled in post-natal support for 12 months following delivery. Many women do not know how extensive these programs are and that they are eligible to sign up for care. If you need a resource for women veterans, we can usually find it for you. Always happy to support the sisterhood of women who have served. Happy Summer!

Ms. Carolyn Cagle, Georgia American Goldstar Mothers

The Department of Georgia would like to thank Deputy Commissioner Kerry Dyer and his wife Sarita for joining us on June 29, 2025, to celebrate and honor the Fallen Heroes of Georgia at the Annual Georgia Aquarium Sleep-Over and Family Day on June 28/29, 2025.

Deputy Dyer spoke to us about our Fallen's service and loyalty to America and reminded us that our Sons and Daughters would never be forgotten. He thanked us for our service to Veterans, Active-Duty Military and Goldstar Families as we continue to carry on the legacy of our Fallen.

We had 54 Goldstar Families attend the Sleep-Over on June 28 and 200 register and attend Family Day on June 29, 2025. The Home Depot Foundation has graciously awarded the Georgia Aquarium a

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continuing grant to sponsor our Goldstar Families for this event since 2021. The 2025 event was the ninth Georgia Aquarium Family Day Event. To date the Department of Georgia American Goldstar Mothers have vetted, sponsored, and honored over 1,000 Goldstar Families.

Acworth Bass Pro and Cabela's have graciously awarded us two grants of \$3,000.00 and \$2,500.00 the past two years to supply backpacks and sleeping bags to those who attend the Sleep-Over. We are so appreciative of their support.

Thank you so much Deputy Commissioner Dyer for your attendance and the support of Commissioner Ross and the Department of Veterans Affairs in Georgia. Please let us know if we can be of service to your Department and the State of Georgia.

Commissioner Patricia Ross

On Wednesday, May 21, 2025, Commissioner Ross gave the opening address at the Governor's Memorial Day Ceremony at the State Capitol. She then attended the meeting of the Veterans Service Board.

On Thursday, May 22, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the May meeting of the State Workforce Development Board. She then had a meeting with Benjamin Flynn from Delaware to discuss the Unite Us platform. She later attended a meeting with Transit X to discuss their Circular City and Podway projects.

On Friday, May 23, 2025, Commissioner Ross visited Hero Agriculture in Calhoun, an organization that uses farming to help veterans find hope, heal, and build purposeful lives to combat veteran suicide. She later met with Kerry Dyer, Mark Meeks and Mark Demers to discuss the Unite Us contract.

On Monday, May 26, 2025, Commissioner Ross was the keynote speaker at the Big Canoe Memorial Day Ceremony.

On Tuesday, May 27, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the weekly meeting of the Suicide Mortality Review Committee. She then held a Director's Meeting. She also met with Todd Anduze, the Chair to the Americas Small Business Development Center Veterans and Military Spouse Interest Group to discuss collaborating.

On Wednesday, May 28, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the meeting of the Unite Us Advisory Board.

On Thursday, May 29, 2025, Commissioner Ross was a featured speaker at the School Counselor Summer Regional Counseling Workshop in Warner Robins.

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On Friday, May 30, 2025, Commissioner Ross held a Team Building Workshop for her leadership team in Milledgeville. She also had a meeting with OPB and Russell Feagin to discuss funding for the Homes.

On Monday, June 2 through Thursday, June 5, Commissioner Ross attended the department's Annual Training in Warner Robins.

On Thursday, June 5, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the monthly meeting of the Veterans Service Foundation Board.

On Friday, June 6, 2025, Commissioner Ross was a guest speaker at the VFW State Conference in Macon and at the DAV State Conference in Macon.

On Monday, June 9, 2025, Commissioner Ross toured a property in Milledgeville as a potential site for a transitional housing and therapeutic program along with members of Georgia Tech's faculty.

On Monday June 9, 2025, through Wednesday, June 11, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Let's Connect Summit for suicide prevention in Savannah.

On Thursday, June 12, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Returning Veterans Task Force Meeting. She also was a featured speaker at Women Veterans Appreciation Day at the State Capitol. She later had a meeting with FindHelp regarding the services they offer. She ended her day with the Suicide Mortality Review Quarterly Call.

On Friday, June 13, 2025, Commissioner Ross had a discussion with representatives from South Carolina regarding Unite Us. She then met with Michael Parks to discuss the Bunker Labs and Warrior Alliance Event at Truist Park on July 13. She later met with Carrie Steele regarding the Unite Us protest and then with Mark Demers regarding Bridge My Return. Later in the afternoon, she met with Drew McIntyre of Qualtrics.

On Monday, June 16, 2025, Commissioner Ross met with Mark Demers and Kaitlin Little to go over the Strategic Plan. She then held a Director's Meeting. She also welcomed the Korean Veterans delegation and the new Consul General to the Central Office. The Commissioner joined the Paralyzed Veterans of American and Veterans Service Board Member Shawn Hanley at the Capitol for a meeting with Gov. Kemp. She and her team later met with HereNow Help to discuss rolling out their program in Georgia.

On Tuesday, June 17, 2025, Commissioner Ross was guest panelist at the Military Entrepreneurship Forum sponsored by Fiserv at the Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs. She was also a featured speaker at the Unite Us One Continuum conference.

On Wednesday, June 18, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) Meeting with school liaison officers from most military installations in the state,

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the Department of Education, and the Garrison commander at FT Stewart. She also met with Qualtrics to review a proposal for their product.

Thursday, June 19 was a State Holiday.

On Friday, June 20, 2025, Commissioner Ross met with Max Hilsman, the board chair of the Warrior Alliance, about strengthening the partnership. She later met with Ross Dickman, CEO of Hire Heroes USA.

On Saturday, June 21, 2025, Commissioner Ross was a guest speaker at the AMVETS State Convention in Warner Robins along with representatives from the Veterans Benefits Administration and Directors of the Atlanta and Dublin VA Medical Centers.

On Monday, June 23 through Wednesday, June 25, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the NASDVA Southeast District Meeting in Nashville, TN, where among many guest speakers, the group virtually met with SecVA.

On Monday, June 30, 2025, Commissioner Ross held a Director's Meeting. She then joined Cajun Comeau from the VA and Kim Scofi from United Military Care to discuss the next We Care Veterans Fair.

On Tuesday, July 1, 2025, Commissioner Ross met with Kerry Dyer, Shelly-Ann Simpson and Ken Childre to discuss staffing needs in the North Region. She then attended the weekly meeting of the Suicide Mortality Review Committee. Afterward, she joined Shelly-Ann Simpson, Veda Brooks and Calandra Ferguson for an after-action review of the Suicide Prevention Summit.

On Wednesday, July 2, 2025, Commissioner Ross met with Mike Mizell, who requested advice on ways to serve veterans in need. She then met with HMR Veteran Services Inc. to discuss Veterans Homes' operational trends. She later met with Indigov, a service platform that works with veteran service departments across the country to track cases, interactions with agencies, and all communication.

On Thursday, July 3, 2025, Commissioner Ross joined a call to discuss the Rome, Georgia We Care Veterans Fair progress. She also spoke to Dr. Georgia Frederick from Georgia Southern about issues with VR&E.

Friday, July 4 was a State Holiday.

On Monday, July 7, 2025, Commissioner Ross held a director's meeting. She then met with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to discuss their partnership with GDVS and support to an upcoming webinar on mortgage assistance. She later attended a Fox Grant Update meeting.

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On Tuesday, July 8, 2025, Commissioner Ross spoke with Mayor Couvillon from Gainesville. She also attended the weekly meeting of the Suicide Mortality Review Committee. Afterward she attended a meeting, along with Kerry Dyer, to discuss the 2026 National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) meeting in Savannah. She also had a meeting to discuss the Emory Veterans Program grant for PTSD research.

On Wednesday, July 9, 2025, Commissioner Ross and her team attended a demo of the VETPRO program, a software program designed specifically for Veteran Service Offices for filing and tracking claims.

On Thursday, July 10, 2025, Commissioner Ross and her team made selections for this year's Leadership Institute. She also attended a We Care Veterans Fair in progress review for the Rome event. She then attended the Admin Meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans and the Suicide Mortality Review Committee meetings.

On Friday, July 11, 2025, Commissioner Ross and Kerry Dyer attended a meeting to discuss the NASDVA Conference in 2026. Later she met with the Field Ops and Training team to discuss the VetPro software.

On Monday, July 14 through Thursday, July 17, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the 2025 Annual National Veteran Resources Community Network Convening in Colorado, which consisted of the VA and community experts coming together to share practices, research, and resources on topics such as suicide prevention, homelessness, and transition.

On Tuesday, July 15, 2025, Commissioner Ross updated the NASDVA Northeast District on issues discussed in the Southeast District meeting.

On Thursday, July 17, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the We Care Veterans Fair in progress review for the Rome event.

On Friday, July 18, 2025, Commissioner Ross hosted members of CareSource, a managed care organization that operates in Georgia, to learn more about their program.

On Saturday, July 19 through Sunday, July 20, 2025, Commissioner Ross was the moderator for a legislative panel on veteran initiatives at the Southern Legislative Conference in Birmingham, Alabama.

On Monday, July 21, 2025, Commissioner Ross held a director's meeting. She also met with Alvin Sheats to discuss grant funding for a veteran's rehabilitation facility. She later attended the Fox Grant Update Meeting.

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On Tuesday, July 22, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the second Suicide Mortality Review. She then hosted Senator Kenya Wicks in the GDVS offices. She also attended the quarterly meeting with the Carl Vinson (Dublin) VAMC Director.

On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, Commissioner Ross travelled to Milledgeville for the cemetery's recognition by the National Cemetery Administration. On Thursday, July 24, 2025, Commissioner Ross was in Glennville for the same reason. Both cemeteries received the Operational Excellence Award from the National Cemetery Administration. Georgia was the only state to have all its cemeteries recognized.

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

GENERAL

- The first week of June (2-6) Annual Training was held in Warner Robins at the Central Georgia Technical Campus on Cohen Walker Drive. Despite a change in leadership a month before training, the event was a success thanks in part to the training division and the other employees who assisted us.
- June 9-11, I attended the 3rd annual Let's Connect Summit that was held in Savannah (see Ms. Ferguson's report).
- On June 12, I participated in the Quarterly Returning Veterans Task Force meeting and then attended the Women Veterans Legislative Day held at the Capitol.
- On Sunday June 25, I attended a remembrance ceremony honoring the 75th Commemoration of the Korean War with Deputy Commissioner Dyer.
- On Wednesday July 9, I, along with senior leadership and members of the training team participated in a demo of VetPro. We are excited for an opportunity to play with their system and see if having them as a partner would be beneficial.
- On July 10, I participated in the monthly Veterans Roundtable at Northeast Goodwill. It is an opportunity to connect and provide services to veterans who may not be familiar with our agency, or who are familiar and need some assistance.
- **DD 214's and Welcome Home Letters: 135** Welcome Home Letters were mailed out in June 2025.

Projected Positions:

- 2 Openings in Appeals
- 1 Opening in Canton

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- 2 Openings in Atlanta VAMC
- 1 Opening in Athens
- 1 Opening in Brunswick
- 1 Opening in Bainbridge

Mr. Steven Fay, Director of Training Division

- Annual Training 2025 was conducted in Warner Robins at the Central Georgia Technical College from 2 June 2025 to 6 June 2025. An After-Action Review was conducted on 18 June 2025 with the Executive Director and Trainers from the Training Division. Subsequently, a survey was conducted among all participants of Annual Training. Currently the results are available, and the consensus is a success with limited issues that will be addressed.
- Glenn Massey and Charles Isaac attended the NVLSP and North Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs training in Winston-Salem, North Carolina from 23-27 June 2025.
- In the North Region, Steven Fay will conduct new hire training in Lawrenceville, GA. This training will be from July 7-11, 2025. Glenn Massey will be conducting new hire training at the Regional Office for the new hire at the VAMC. In the South Region, Charles Isaac will be conducting new hire training at Dublin VAMC while Sandra Bennett will conduct new hire training in Bainbridge, GA. This training introduces new VSOs to the accredited training processes and procedures to assist veterans and claimants. The Absorb Learning Portal is also introduced. The portal has classes and quizzes to help navigate the vast subjects of filing VA claims.
- Steven Fay will meet with Ms. Shelly-Ann Simpson on next year's (AT 2026) site location. Peachtree City has come up as a potential training site.
- The Training Division has a total of \$180,654.12 in retro payments for claims for the month of June 2025.

Upcoming Events:

- Warrior Alliance P.A.C.T event supporting South Georgia in Savannah, Georgia on 1 August 2025.
- Continued ongoing support to the Regional Directors and Veteran Field Service Offices
- Continuation of performing duties as VSO's
- Provide new hire training in North and South Georgia
- Annual Training Planning 2026

Mr. Edwin Berry, Director of Appeals Division

- The total number of hearings conducted by the Appeals Division for **May 2025** was **77**.

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- As of **May 31, 2025**, the Isakson VA Regional Office processed benefits as follows for GDVS and the Service Organizations represented by GDVS during the month of May 2025:

Types of Claims	Number of Awards	Benefits paid
Compensation	110,904	\$266,140,884
DIC	4,551	\$8,007,711
Survivor Pension	629	\$621,923
<u>Veteran Pension</u>	<u>1,252</u>	<u>\$1,464,976</u>
Grand Total	117,336	\$276,235,495

YTD through 05/31/2025 Total Compensation, Pension and other benefits paid: **\$1,361,406,156** for the veterans that we represent who receive VA Compensation or Pension benefits.

- The total number of hearings conducted by the Appeals Division for **June 2025** was **53**.
- As of **June 30, 2025**, the Isakson VA Regional Office processed benefits as follows for GDVS and the Service Organizations represented by GDVS during the month of June 2025:

Types of Claims	Number of Awards	Benefits paid
Compensation	111,195	\$268,107,627
DIC	4,578	\$8,061,590
Survivor Pension	631	\$628,867
<u>Veteran Pension</u>	<u>1,239</u>	<u>\$1,455,261</u>
Grand Total	117,643	\$278,253,345

YTD through 06/30/2025 Total Compensation, Pension and other benefits paid: **\$1,639,659,501** for the veterans that we represent who receive VA Compensation or Pension benefits.

Mr. Kenneth Childre, Director Veterans Benefits North Region

Retro Awards:

(May) \$2,828,112.47

(Jun) \$2,626,210.04

Director Site Visits/Inspections: 3

Community Involvement:

5/14/25-Augusta Veterans Expo. 685 Veterans through the door, 57 Comms and 51 Claims filed by GDVS Personnel.

Augusta WVH: John McKenzie, Winslow Hill, Mary Moore, Shaahidah Johnson; Grovetown: David Flanagan; Waynesboro: Joseph Hurndon; Augusta VAMC: Alicia Stephens and Donnie Rench

5/20/25-Barry Hunter (Rome)-Attended the Goodwill of North Georgia Hiring Event in Rome. 59 people in attendance. Barry made 6 Veteran contacts with 3 appointments scheduled.

5/22/25-Will Smith (Lafayette)-Attended the Chattanooga VA Clinic's Town Hall Event held at the American Legion Post in Rossville, GA. 45 Veterans in attendance. Bill saw 7 Veterans and filed 4 claims.

5/28/2025 - Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Spoke at a Blue Star Family Lunch in Alto, GA.

5/29/25-Eddie Fontaine and Christine Collins (Blairsville)-Attended American Legion Claims Clinic in Blairsville. 60 people attended. Eddie and Christine saw 18 Veterans and filed 10 claims.

6/2/25-6/6/25-GDVS ANNUAL TRAINING

6/10/25-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville) Attended the Ride22 event at Frazer Harley Davidson this morning. Helping spread awareness of Veteran Suicide in support of Strive organization.

North Area Gains/Losses:

Atlanta Balcony-Dawn Donaldson-Resigned 5/15/25

Atlanta Balcony-Vanessa Wilson-Transferred from Atlanta VAMC 5/16/25

Lawrenceville-Robin Harris-Resigned 5/27/25

Athens-Jeffrey Coots-Resigned 5/30/25

Jasper-Kyle Hungarter-Transferred from Marietta 6/9/25

Marietta-Fred Young-Transferred from Ft. McPherson 6/9/25

Lafayette-Bill Smith moved to new office location at Northwest Georgia Technical College, Rock Spring, GA 6/30/2025

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Average Visits Per VFSO							
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO							
Region:			North				
Month:			May-25				
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:	52	5,685	21	270.71	2,328	110.86
Number of Offices:		31	Average Visits/Office:		183.39	Average Claims/Office: 75.0967742	

*Total monthly office visits include: 2,216 In-person and 3,469 phone calls/emails.

Average Visits Per VFSO							
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO							
Region:			North				
Month:			June-25				
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:	50	5,685	21	270.71	2,328	110.86
Number of Offices:		31	Average Visits/Office:		183.39	Average Claims/Office: 75.0967742	

*Total monthly office visits include: 1,615 In-person and 2,959 phone calls/emails.

Ms. Sherri Whitfield, Director Veterans Benefits South Region

- The Department conducted annual training June 3-6, 2025.
- On June 12th, Sherri Whitfield gave a benefits briefing at the American Legion Post 30 in Albany, GA. An overview of GDVS statistics was presented and a briefing on VA and State benefits were

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discussed as well. A resource table was displayed, and there were 30-40 veterans/survivors in attendance.

- On June 27th and 30th, interviews were conducted for the Veteran Field Service Officer 1 position in Dublin. Ms. Briana Green was selected and reported to work on July 16th.
- On July 17th, the Columbus office VSOs participated in the Stand Down for Homeless and Underserved Veterans Resource event covering the Columbus and Phoenix City area. Veterans had access to resources such as housing, healthcare screenings, clothing and hygiene items, legal assistance, employment assistance, substance abuse treatment referrals and VA benefits claims.
- Since the last board meeting, South region offices reported total lump sum payments of \$627,223.55, with the highest single payment of \$101,429.64, reported from the Albany office.
- South Georgia Region Veterans Population: 239,553.

Ms. Veda Brooks, Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC)

- June 2, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Let's Connect Planning Meeting.
- June 4, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in Annual Training held in Warner Robins.
- June 5-6, 2025, Ms. Brooks organized, packed, and loaded supplies into vehicles in preparation for the Summit in Savannah, GA.
- June 8-12, 2025, Ms. Brooks co-facilitated the Summit, provided backstage support, and oversaw all activities within the youth track. She also ensured that breakout rooms were properly equipped with functioning technology and actively monitored the vendor room to support smooth operations throughout the event.
- June 14, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the S.H.E. Factor Women Veteran's Expo & Summit at the Hope Banquet Hall.
- June 16, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the NASWVC Executive Board Meeting.
- June 18 and 19, 2025, Ms. Brooks hosted a virtual Bonding Workshop, with Chelzy Desvigne, Work Source Georgia.
- July 1, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Veteran's Coalition Foundation Inc.
- July 2, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in CVVAMC Outreach Committee meeting.

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- July 7, 2025, Ms. Brooks spoke at the American Legion Post in Warner Robins, she was well received and was invited back to speak to another group that meets on Saturday and there was a request for what to do before the veteran passes class and DIC.
- July 8, 2025, Ms. Brooks conducted two site visits for upcoming women veteran events.
- July 11, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Clayton County Women Event Planning.

Current committees:

- Violence Prevention Task Force
- VA/SAMHSA Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Georgia Team
- The Birdwell Foundation Board Member
- Coweta County Race, Equity, and Justice Committee Unite Georgia Community Advisory Committee
- Operation Ogletree Committee

Ms. Calandra Fergerson, Suicide Prevention and Outreach Coordinator

- June 5, 2025, Ms. Fergerson presented Beyond Benefits at GDVS Annual Training.
- June 7, 2025, Ms. Fergerson attended the VFW Joint Session Meeting in Macon, GA.
- June 8-12, 2025, Ms. Fergerson hosted the 2025 Let's Connect Summit in Savannah, GA.
- June 17, 2025, Ms. Fergerson conducted the monthly Governor's Challenge TF Meeting.
- June 17, 24, 2025, Ms. Fergerson attended the weekly Suicide Mortality Review Committee meeting.
- July 10, 2025, Ms. Fergerson presented "Identifying the Signs" @ Medical Facility n Newnan.

Ms. Raven Holstick, Transition and Employment Coordinator

- June 6, 2025 –Transition and Employment Coordinator organized a Leadership Institute Social at annual training to honor previous graduates and celebrate their continued contributions to our department. The event also served as an opportunity to provide information and encourage current employees to apply for the upcoming Leadership Institute cohort. It was a successful evening of connection, recognition, and professional growth.

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- June 12, 2025 – Transition and Employment Coordinator attended the Women Veterans Day Ceremony at the Georgia State Capitol to honor the service and sacrifices of women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The event was a powerful tribute that highlighted the contributions of women veterans.
- June 17, 2025 – Transition and Employment Coordinator attended the Military Entrepreneurship Forum, a dynamic event focused on empowering military-connected entrepreneurs. The forum featured insightful sessions on small business trends, procurement strategies, access to capital, and leveraging AI. It was also a valuable chance to network with over 150 entrepreneurs, industry leaders, and resource providers dedicated to supporting veteran-owned businesses.
- June 27, 2025 – Transition and Employment Coordinator attended American Legion Conference and had the privilege of speaking about my role as the Transition and Employment Coordinator for the Georgia Department of Veterans Service.
- July 2, 2025 - Transition and Employment Coordinator visited Trinity House to assist four recently incarcerated veterans with their re-entry and employment needs. This initiative will continue as a monthly

Upcoming events:

- Women Veteran Leadership Cohort
- “Staying Motivated during the job search” event Atlanta VA
- SAA Conference and Fort Gillem Event

Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Homelessness Coordinator

- June 17: participated in UniteUs continuum where I learned about navigating resources through the state and networking with other agencies for housing, clothing and significant resources related to sustainability.
- Was able to assist a veteran with receiving a down payment through UniteUs for critical repairs to her home.
- June 15-Purchased 500 new hygiene packets for future events.
- Held a meeting with Tunnel2Towers regarding their new property so that it can be used as a housing resource to collaborate on future partnerships.
- June 21-Met with 3 private landlords regarding rental properties that they want to rent out to veterans.

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- June 26 provided food boxes to a veteran in need and provided future resources.

Upcoming Events:

- July 17th will be going to Phoenix city Al. To participate in their stand down

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, to apply proper coding, accountability, organization of purchase orders, and on-time payments.
- 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.
- The entire team worked on close out procedures to ensure everything was accounted for.
- Mark Demers and Kerry Dyer completed the Sole Source request for Unite Us for FY 2026 on April 25, 2025, it was approved by DOAS and is now being advertised for 15 days. The sole source was protested by Find help. A meeting was set up between GDVS and Find help on June 12, 2025. The protest was denied by DOAS on June 18, 2025. Find help filed an appeal on June 23, 2025, with a request for a hearing, which was scheduled by DOAS for July 30, 2025.
- Camala Ball uploaded the FY 2026 budget into TeamWorks.
- Kirsten Dennis provided FY 2025 procurement snapshot: processed 60 quotes, 100 purchase orders and 200 invoices totaling \$4,197,991.62. All procurement close-out functions have been completed.
- Mark Demers attended the CFO Quarterly meeting on June 5, 2025. Meetings in the future will shift to monthly starting in August 2025.
- Kirsten Dennis and Mark Demers attended the quarterly DOAS Procurement Huddle on June 25, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the Fiscal Management Council Meeting on June 26, 2025.

GA@Work/NextGen Updates

- Mark Demers attended the NextGen Change Network Meeting on May 27, 2025, and June 24, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the NCN half-time report meeting on June 13, 2025, and July 11, 2025.

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- Mark Demers attended the NextGen Enterprise User Acceptance Testing Kickoff on June 4, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the UAT session on June 23, 2025, and completed the UAT testing for P-Card on June 27, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the SCORM Compatibility and Training delivery for GA@Work on June 27, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the NextGen review for EIB award errors on July 7, 2025- completed corrections and completed on the same day.
- Mark Demers attended the Open FDM Mapping meeting with NextGen team regarding project and grant adjustments in GA@Work on July 7, 2025.
- The entire team worked on multiple suspense's associated with GA@Work over the course of the month.
- The entire team completed the GA@Work Basic Navigation Training.

Budget/Travel:

- Camala Ball continued daily monitoring of general ledgers, purchase orders, and budget projection updates. She prepared amendments to record revenue collections in PBCS.
- Camala Ball prepared twice weekly budget reviews leading up to close-out.
- Camala Ball worked with SAO to review and true-up the budget by funding source to ensure the budget year closed with all funding sources in budgetary compliance.
- Mark Demers gave a presentation on Concur at Annual Training on June 5, 2025, to simplify all AT travel vouchers being filed the next day.
- Mark Demers attached the SPD #25-04: Revised Contract Amendment and Extension and Approval Authority webinar on July 2, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the NASACT webinar- GASB Review 2025 on July 3, 2025.
- Kaitlin Little drafted multiple budget enhancement requests for staffing requests, legal counsel request sub-acute therapy unit, CPI, and Unite-Us.

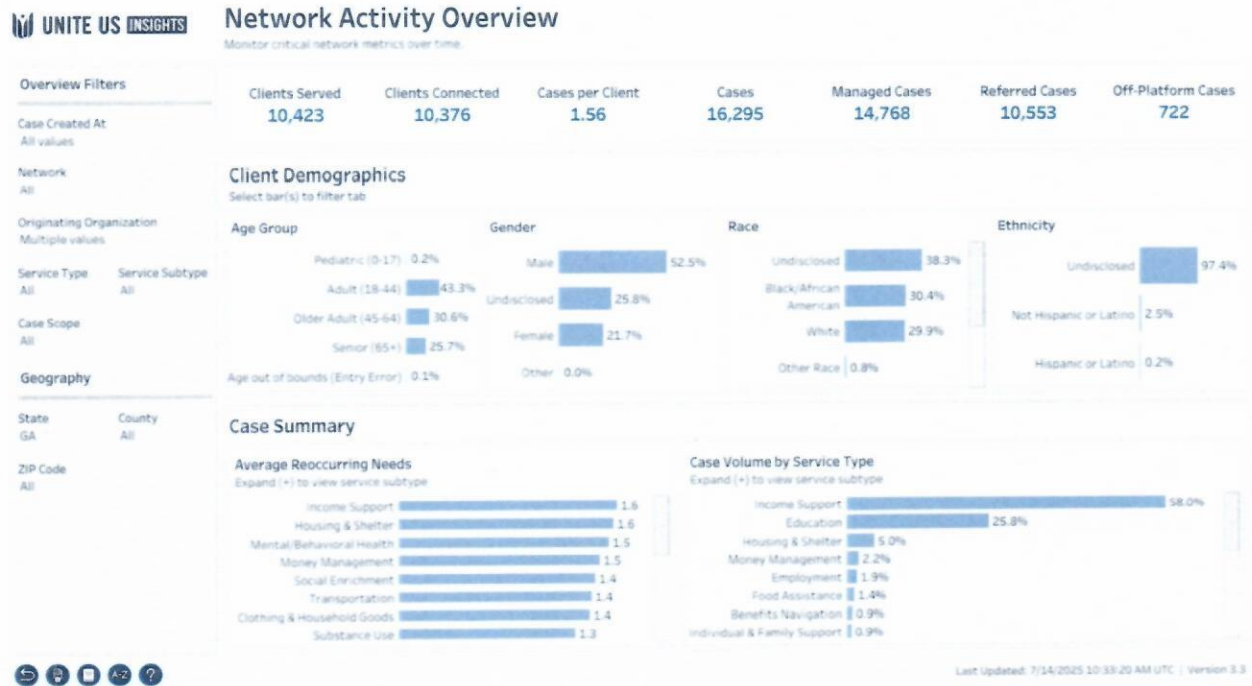
Strategic Plan/Legislation:

- Kaitlin Little updated the strategic plan (environmental scan, critical issues identification, objectives and action plans, and new objectives) to include reviewing draft and changes and proofreading. The finished product was submitted to OPB on June 26, 2025.
- Kaitlin Little began a review of all last year's legislative change templates.

Grant Program:

- SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program- (\$722,747 year 3)
 - We submitted draw#6 for year 3 for \$24,394.28 on June 30, 2025, 2025.
 - SSG Fox Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity for FY 2026 was posted on May 8, 2025, with the application due to the VA on July 18, 2025.
 - Mark Demers attended the Fox Grant National Operations call on July 15, 2025.
 - Irene Mackson attended the Fox Grant Summit in Savannah, GA on June 8-11, 2025.
- Unite-Us Grant- (American Rescue Plan-Negative Impact Grant)- (\$20,047,782.70 total)
 - Grant extended for a partial year 4. Carrying over \$1,729,196.19 to partial year 4 until expended. Year 4 agreement signed on February 10, 2025, with OPB Grant Management. The remainder of the 4th year will be funded via State Appropriated funds which was approved on March 6, 2025. We are awaiting the results of the sole source request in order to proceed- the hearing is on July 30, 2025.
 - Data ingestion and secure data transfer for the platform and social connector are moving forward. As of July 14, 2025, we have 281,128 veterans in the system. The last SFTP data transfer was on July 14, 2025. Next will be August 2025.
 - We received the advance payment request for the entire year on September 16, 2024, for \$6,088,640.28. We paid invoices from this advance until June 30, 2025, when we submitted a payment request to the grant portal for \$20,178.09 (this is our last reimbursement for the fiscal year).
 - Since the Public Resource Directory has gone live on March 22, 2024, there have been 3,077 site visits, 2,018 visitors with 519 distinct programs viewed. There were 429 AR submissions in 2024 with a 91% case resolution rate. In 2025 there have been 222 AR submissions in the first two quarters alone with an 89% case resolution rate.
 - Campaign 9 began April 4 and will run through late May 2025 and will also focus on food insecurity. We are awaiting the results in the next Quarterly Review
 - Campaign 10 theme is Summer is for kids. Which will focus on food insecurity of children of veterans during summer months when school free lunches are scarce. This campaign was paused due to the sole source protest.
 - The Quarterly Report for the 4th quarter was submitted via Survey Monkey on July 1, 2025. We are awaiting the upcoming audit schedule from RSM auditors for FY 2025.
 - Irene Mackson attended the Unite Us One Continuum Georgia event on June 17, 2025.
 - Below is an activity snapshot from Unite Us Insights:

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- Veterans Mental Health Services Program Grant (HB 414)-
 - AFY2024- The grant was awarded to two vendors: \$1,000,000
 - Aspire (Cohen Veterans Network) for \$776,132
 - Emory Healthcare for \$212,500
 - The final quarterly report for this year is due on July 31, 2025. The grant year will close on that date as well.
 - 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 first quarterly report will be due on October 31, 2025.
- VA Suicide Mortality Review Cooperative Agreement - (\$502,124.68)
 - We submitted draw #7 for \$85,893.73 on June 2, 2025, draw #8 for \$29,985.69 on June 30, 2025, and draw #9 for \$73,458.25 on July 2, 2025.
 - The Suicide Mortality Grant subcontractors are KSU, DPHDD and Dr. Lynn Tison.
 - The third quarterly report was submitted to the VA in July 2025. Next is due in October 2025.

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- Mark Demers attended the SMRC bimonthly check-in with the VA on June 10, 2025, and we were notified that the Suicide Mortality Review Cooperative Agreement will not continue into a second year (due to budget cuts by the current administration).

Events/Other:

- Leadership Institute candidates for FY 2026 were selected and notified on July 10, 2025. There were 13 candidates selected this year: Camala Ball, Sandra Bennett, Melissa Ingle, Kristi Jones, Jamaal Lemon, Frank Mays, Latoya McCallum, Tequila McCoy, Kareem Reddick, Tanya Rogers, William Smith, Roderica Stewart, and Jarelle Thompson.
- Irene Mackson and Raven Holstick are going to be the Leadership Institute Ambassadors for the FY 2026 class beginning in August 2025.
- Mark Demers attended Leadership Offsite teambuilding at the Georgia War Veterans Home in Milledgeville on May 30, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended meeting with Department of Community Affair to discuss a possible partnership on July 7, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended meeting with Emory to discuss framework/process for \$1,000,000 in pass thru funds from the Georgia Senate on July 8, 2025. Awaiting response from OPB for clarity on payment schedule.
- Mark Demers attended the VETPRO demonstration on July 9, 2025.

Mr. Russell Feagin, Executive Director, Health & Memorials Division, GDVS

State Veterans Homes

State Veterans Homes Census (Through July 4, 2025) +

Current Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	96	115	211
Service Connected *	32	45	77
Total Patients	128	160	288
Last Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	94	113	207
Service Connected *	30	42	72
Total Patients	124	155	279

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- * One hundred percent of the cost of these services is paid by the VA. No state funds are involved.
- + The numbers reported to the VSB are the total numbers from May 10, 2025, through July 4, 2025.

Governor Kemp signed the State Appropriations Bill. This bill included additional funding for rising medical costs as well as enough to fund an additional forty beds.

Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home

Normal operations continue.

Georgia War Veterans Home

A dedication ceremony of the Transitional Support Unit has been scheduled for September 2, 2025, at 10:00am. Governor Kemp will be the dedication speaker.

Normal operations continue.

State Veterans Cemeteries

Burial Statistics (through July 4, 2025)+

State Veterans Cemetery	Cumulative Last Month	Cumulative Current Month	Increase
Glennville	2,751	2,784	33
Milledgeville	5,817	5,883	66
Total	8,568	8,667	99

+ The report to the VSB is the total numbers from May 10, 2025 through July 4, 2025.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Glennville

Cemetery expansion projects continue with an expected completion in the summer of this year.

The cemetery has been approved for the NCA Organizational Excellence Award. The presentation date will be July 24, 2025, at 11:00am.

Cemetery operations continue as normal.

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Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Milledgeville

The cemetery expansion project adding additional in-ground interment space continues with an expected completion in the summer of this year.

The cemetery has been approved for the NCA Organizational Excellence Award. The presentation date will be July 23, 2025, at 1:00pm.

Cemetery operations continue as normal.

Mr. Kerry Dyer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Operations Officer

On Thursday, May 22, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Leslie Davie, State Properties Leasing Specialist, conducted a site visit at North Georgia Technical College for a potential office space for the Demorest Field Office. Later that day he contacted Mark Meeks, DOAS Procurement Manager, to discuss the UniteUs Sole Source Posting.

On Friday, May 23, 2025, Kerry Dyer spoke with Clark Wong, State Properties Land Manager regarding the deed for the abandoned road intersecting the Glennville Cemetery. He also processed 1 resignation packet for the Athens Field Office. Later that day he posted the Cemetery Tech 1 vacancy for the Milledgeville Cemetery.

On Tuesday, May 27, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also processed 1 resignation packet for the Lawrenceville Field Office. Later that day he processed 2 Office Manager promotion packets for the Atlanta Balcony and Atlanta Tech Field Offices.

On Wednesday, May 28, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Jerry Lahr, Will Wilson and Mark Demers conducted the Annual Training pack out. He also attended the DOAS monthly Procurement Huddle. Later that day he processed 1 transfer packet for the Marietta Field Office.

On Thursday, May 29, 2025, Kerry Dyer contacted Annalise Morning, Communication Specialist, Office of Governor Kemp to discuss the process for a Letter of Accommodation. He also contacted Scott Duncan, President/CEO of CFC furniture group to discuss additional office chairs. Later that day he spoke with Peter McCormack, Allan Vigil Ford Fleet Department Manager regarding the Shelving for the IT Van.

On Friday, May 30, 2025, Kerry Dyer, along with Commissioner Ross and all her Direct Reports attended the Strategic Planning exercise in Milledgeville. He also attended the Five Dysfunctions of a Team Leadership training.

On Monday, June 2- Tuesday June 3, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended FY25 Annual Training at Warner Robins.

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On Wednesday, June 4, 2025, Kerry Dyer posted the Athens and Decatur Field Office vacancies externally. He also submitted a Space Action Form for the lease renegotiation for the Griffin Office to State Properties. Later that day contacted GBA and Capitol Police to discuss the damage Georgia Military Hall of Fame Plaque located in the Capitol.

On Thursday, June 5, 2025, Kerry Dyer externally posted the vacancy for the Lawrenceville and Dublin Field Office. He submitted the Transit Shelving Unit Purchase Order to Peter McCormack, Allan Vigil Ford. Later that day contacted Laura Brossard, Executive Assistant at Find Help, to discuss the time and place for the UniteUs Protest discussion.

On Friday, June 6, 2025, Kerry Dyer externally posted the Fort McPherson Field Office vacancy. He also contacted DOAS, Worker's Compensation Department regarding the posting of the WC-P3 and WC P1 forms in the Field Offices. Later that day he submitted a request for 3 Governors' Accommodation Certificates for Mark, Jerry and William.

On Monday, June 9, 2025, Kerry Dyer traveled to the Savannah Convention Center to drop off supplies in support of the Let's Connect Summit.

On Tuesday, June 10, 2025, Kerry Dyer submitted a request to renew the contract for the Employee Assistance Program. He also contacted Verizon Business Account to order a HotSpot Device for VETD. Later that day he spoke with Leslie Davis, State Property Leasing Specialist, regarding the lease renewal for the Rome Field Office.

On Wednesday, June 11, 2025, Kerry Dyer met with Frank Smith, Executive Director of State Properties, Clark Wong, Land Manager for State Properties and Michael Couch, Rural Public Affairs of Georgia Representative to discuss land to build Homeless Shelters. He also attended the NextGen NCN Halftime report. Later that day along with William Wilson, they traveled to Allan Vigil Ford to have the shelving unit installed.

On Thursday, June 12, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Commissioner Ross, ShellyAnn Simpson, Raven Holstick, Charlotte May and Jarrell Thompson attended the Quarterly Returning Veterans Task Force meeting. He also spoke with Leslie Davis, State Properties Leasing Specialist, regarding the relocation of the Lafayette Field Office to GA Northwestern Technical College on July 1, 2025. Later that day he processed 2 new hire packets.

On Friday, June 13, 2025, Kerry Dyer contacted GBA to discuss an updated quote for the Ceiling, Lights and HVAC replacement for the 9th floor Suite. He also spoke with Carrie Steele, DOAS, Agency Sourcing Director regarding the UniteUs Sole Source Protest. Later that day he contacted John Booker, GBA Support Specialist Parking & Access Service Manager, to discuss the updated GBA Parking & Access parking permits.

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On Monday, June 16, 2025. Kerry Dyer attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also spoke to Eddie Fontaine, Office Manager, Blairsville Field Office regarding the VA website incorrectly listing the GDVS employees. Later that day he added GA Northwestern Tech College to the Building, Land and Lease Inventory of Property system.

On Tuesday, June 17, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Commissioner Ross, Raven Holstick and Jarrell Thompson attended the UniteUs One Continuum Conference in Atlanta GA.

On Monday, June 23, 2025, Kerry Dyer processed 2 Suicide Preventions Specialist Packets. He also contacted Leslie Davis, State Properties Leasing Specialist, to discuss a Field Office in Bainbridge. Later that day he emailed Linda Lavendar, Milledgeville Cemetery Director 9 resumes for the Cemetery Tech 1 vacancy.

On Tuesday, June 24, 2025, Kerry Dyer spoke to Melissa Mckenzie, Gold Star Family Member supervisor regarding the guest speaking event on Sunday, June 29, 2025. He also submitted a Facilities Inspection Sheet to State Property for the Waycross Field Office. Later that day he attended the NextGen Network Change meeting.

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the NextGen Projects Costing & Billing meeting. He also attended the NextGen Procedure Huddle along with Mark Demers. Later that day he processed 1 termination packet.

On Thursday, June 26, 2025, Kerry Dyer processed 1 new hire packet. He also contacted Rutledge Davis, Zebulon VAMC facility Manager regarding an additional Office for a VSO. Later that day he updated the Department Alpha Roster and distributed it to the Senior Leadership.

On Friday, June 27, 2025, Kerry Dyer was the guest speaker at the Annual American Legion Conference in Duluth, GA.

On Sunday, June 29, 2025, Kerry Dyer was the guest speaker at the Annual Gold Star Family Conference at the Georgia Aquarium.

On Monday, June 30, 2025, Kerry attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also posted the Bainbridge Field Office vacancy externally. Later that day he processed one resignation packet.

On Tuesday, July 1, 2025, Kerry Dyer contacted Lisa Ross, Account Manager, Commercial, Personal, Life and Health Insurance to discuss the invoice for the Director & Officer Insurance for the Foundation Board.

On Wednesday, July 2, 2025, Kerry Dyer processed the renewal lease for the Griffin Field Office. He also spoke to Mark Meeks, DOAS procurement manager, about the timeline for the War Home RFP. Later that day he contacted Jim Harris to discuss the VetPro demonstration on July 9th.

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On Monday, July 7, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also attended the GA Dept of Community Affairs and Dept of Vet Services Partnership meeting along with Commissioner Ross and Mark Demers. Later that day he spoke with Bill Smith, Lafayette Office Manager, about the telephone issues and outdoor signage.

On Tuesday, July 8, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the VSMR meeting along with Commissioner Ross and Mark Demers. He also spoke with John Booker, GBA parking permit supervisor about the employee panic buttons. Later that day along with Commissioner Ross met with Stephanie Muehler, Visit Savannah Destination Service Manager about gifts and indoor/outdoor adventures for the FY26 NASDVA conference.

On Wednesday, July 9, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Commissioner Ross, Training Team and Senior Leadership attended the VetPro demonstration. He also spoke to Ken Childre about the renovation of the Rome Field Office. Later that day he processed 1 termination packet.

On Thursday, July 10, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the FY26 Leadership Institute Selection Board. He also contacted Alexandra Stewart, DOAS Category Manager, to discuss the UAT Testing for NextGen. Later that day he processed 1 Suicide Prevention Specialist packet.

On Saturday, July 12, 2025, Kerry Dyer was the guest speaker at the Community Bible Church Military Veterans Resource Day along with Mr. Pete Peterson.

On Monday, July 14, 2025, Kerry Dyer processed 85 Annual Performance Management Forms for FY25. He also posted the Athen Field Office vacancy externally and internally.

On Tuesday, July 15, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Mark Demers attended a meeting with CareSource Military & Veterans at the Capitol. He also attended the NextGen NCN Agency Readiness monthly meeting. Later that day he contacted Carrie Steele, DOAS Director of Agency Sourcing to discuss the email received from Nicole Kuprovska, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz law firm pertaining to the UniteUs protest.

Below are the Personnel Actions Kerry Dyer and Shareka Monday-Robinson processed from May 16, 2025 – July 16, 2025.

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Location	Position	Status	Name	Date
Lawrenceville	VFSO 1	New Hire	DeMarquez Mallard	07/01/2025
Atlanta VAMC	VFSO 1	New Hire	Jamel Harvey	07/01/2025
Brunswick CBOC	Office Manager	Resigned	Elizabeth May	07/01/2025
Milledgeville	Cemetery Tech 1	Terminated	Wesley Drawhorn	07/02/2025
Canton	VFSO 2	Terminated	Melissa Chastain	07/14/2025
Dublin VAMC	VFSO 1	New Hire	Brian Greene	07/16/2025

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 2,228 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	513
Approved Training Establishments	1,715
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
VA Education Beneficiaries for February 2025	20,289
VA Education Beneficiaries for January 2025	17,775

* Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, Education Division, WEAMS, Salesforce, RCS 20-0259-260, 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>.
 - a. The May edition of the department newsletter commemorated Memorial Day ceremonies across the state, including at the Georgia State Capitol and at the department’s veteran memorial cemeteries. The newsletter also included information on updates to VA’s community care program, a Virtual Health Resource Center operating out of the Dublin VAMC, the GDVS’s new office at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, and an expansion to the state’s military retirement income tax exemption.
 - b. The June edition provided an update for Georgia’s veterans and their families, caretakers, and survivors on the department’s continued dedication to training and retaining highly qualified VSOs through our annual training efforts. The newsletter also featured updates on a new LPN licensing program being piloted at Central Georgia Technical College, a highlight on Rome office manager Barry Hunter, Cartersville office manager Steven Hungarter’s outreach to local youth, Women Veterans Appreciation Day, and a recognition of several GDVS staff members who received a commendation for their work in honoring veterans at state ceremonies.
2. Attended the Governor’s Memorial Day Ceremony on Wednesday, May 21, 2025.
3. Attended an offsite leadership development workshop on Friday, May 30, 2025.
4. Attended the department’s annual training from Monday, June 2, through Friday, June 6, 2025. Following training, the division assisted the Training team in conducting a post-event survey.
5. Attended a meeting of the Returning Veterans Task Force on Thursday, June 12, 2025.
6. Veterans Mental Health Services Program Grant – coordinated with Commissioner Ross and CDO Demers to release the FY26 grant application and notification of funding opportunity on July 1, 2025. The application is active and open for proposals until 4:30 p.m. July 31, 2025. All applications will be reviewed and grant awardees announced at a later date.
7. GDVS Serving Northwest Georgia Veterans in New Location – a news release announcing the relocation of the GDVS LaFayette office was distributed on July 1, 2025. The announcement included the new location and renaming of the office to Rock Springs - Georgia Northwestern Technical College to better reflect its new geographical location.

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8. 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. Careers and Employment – continued to share information from organizations and partners hosting career readiness events across the state for veterans and their families.
 - b. Educational benefits – as veterans and families prepare to for the new school year, EAC is sharing information on GI Bill® benefits and program changes.
 - c. Suicide Prevention and Awareness – share information on varied resources for veterans or families in crisis.
 - i. Substance Abuse Town Hall – upcoming event with DBHDD in Upson County.
 - d. Veterans Mental Health Grant Program applications – EAC has set scheduled reminders to spread awareness of the application deadline and ensure applicants are informed of the program’s availability.
 - e. Veterans Resource Fair – shared information on an upcoming event with the Warrior Alliance on August 1 in Augusta.



Veteran Benefits & Resource Expo
Friday - August 1, 2025
9 am - 2 pm

Savannah State University
Student Union Building
3219 College Street
Savannah, GA 31404

The Warrior Alliance welcomes all Veterans and their family members to this special event, where attendees will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with representatives to file PACT Act claims and get assistance from VA and Veteran Service Organization resources.

Thank you to our partners



Free Resources and Free Food



REGISTER

OLD BUSINESS:

The Board has decided to postpone approval of the language for the Veterans home application.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Ross announced that the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Transitional Support Unit will be September 2. The Governor and First Lady will be in attendance.

Commissioner Ross announced that the Suicide Mortality Review Committee grant funding will not be renewed.

Ms. Whitfield announced an upcoming event in Savannah on August 1. The VA will join us in reaching out to veterans.

Ms. Whitfield announced an upcoming event in Columbus on September 12 to assist veterans.

Mr. Childre announced an upcoming We Care Fair in Rome on August 19.

Mr. Childre announced an upcoming event for the Atlanta Senior Care Network on August 21.

Mr. Demers announced that the new go live date for NextGen project, a program being used by the State of Georgia for its operations is April 1, 2026.

Congratulations to Belinda Boldoe for being named the VFW National VSO of the Year.

Mr. Loncher announced that the Columbus City Council is suggesting legislation that will criminalize homelessness. The Plummer Home is partnering with others to oppose this and offer solutions.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Paslawski made a motion to, in accordance with House Bill 53, to permit the Georgia Department of Veterans Service to charge the current VA plot allowance for in ground burials and \$500 for cremations at our state cemeteries. Mr. Paslawski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Swan proposed that the Board adopt a certificate of appreciation to use in honoring veterans throughout the state on behalf of the Board. We do already have a certificate from the department

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and Board and Ms. Hammond agreed to send examples of past COA's to the Board members. Discussion will be continued at the next meeting on the process of getting these certificates completed.

The next Board meeting was scheduled for August 20 at 12:30pm. It will be a combination virtual and in-person meeting, set up at the GDVS.

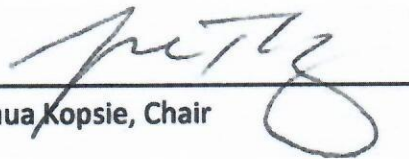
The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:19 p.m.

SIGNED:

ATTEST:



Steve Mendez, Secretary


Joshua Kopsie, Chair