

Monday, November 17, 2025 at 12:00 p.m.
Minutes of the Veterans Service Board Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia

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

Visitors Present: Mr. Kerry Dyer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Operations Officer, GDVS
Ms. Shelly-Ann Simpson, Executive Director, Field Operations & Appeals, GDVS
Mr. Mark Demers, Chief Development Officer, Chief Finance Officer, GDVS
Ms. Shelley Seinberg, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Amy Sillmon, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Tonjala Moton-Williams, GDVS, American Legion Service Officer
Ms. Carolyn Cagle, Georgia American Gold Star Mothers
Mr. Lou Zayas, Sr. Vice Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart
Mr. Joe Higgins, Veterans Service Foundation Board
Ms. Heather Stephens, Visitor
Unknown Visitor with phone number 678-640-1223
Mr. Carlton Deese, Executive Director GWVNH, Augusta, GA
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. Veda Brooks, Coordinator, Women & Minority Veterans, GDVS
Mr. William Wilson, Network Administrator, GDVS
Ms. Calandra Ferguson, Coordinator, Suicide Prevention & Outreach, GDVS
Ms. Raven Holstick, Transition and Employment Coordinator, GDVS
Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS
Ms. Monica Dorsey, Communications & Outreach Specialist, GDVS
Ms. Kaitlin Little, Business Support Analyst, GDVS
Ms. Julie Hammond, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, GDVS

On Monday, November 17, 2025, the Veterans Service Board meeting was held in person and by video/tele-conference.

Mr. Kopsie called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. Mr. Paslawski gave the invocation. Mr. Kopsie led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Mr. Peterson made a motion to approve the October 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, GDVS, VFW Service Officer

- The Department Service Officer participated in a **Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS)** virtual meeting with the VFW GA State Adjutant and State We Care Coordinator. The virtual meeting was held on October 17, 2025, at 6PM. We discussed:
 - Duties and Responsibilities
 - Volunteer Hours
 - Calendar Events
 - Budget
- The Department Service Officer attended a special briefing hosted by the National Veterans Legal Services (NVLSP) Partners. The topic was Implications of the Supreme Court Decision on **Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)**. The presentation was held on October 22, 2025, at 2PM.
- The Department Service Officer hosted the annual VFW Post Benefit Officer training session. The training was held on October 25, 2025, from 10AM to 2PM, at the VFW Post 6605, located at 1011 Corder Road, Warner Robins, GA 31088. The training itinerary:
 - GDVS Georgia State Approving Agency (SAA)
 - VFW Post Benefit Officer
 - Duties and Responsibility
 - GDVS Homeless Resources
 - GDVS Employment Resources
 - Housing
 - Supporting Georgia's Women Veterans
 - Effective Communication
 - Transition & Employment
 - Effective Communication
 - Mental Health
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Create a Resource Guide

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- 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 November 03, 2025, at 8AM. The GDVS Director of Training's training topic was Sexual Harassment.
- The Department Service Officer attended the GA Governor's Veteran's Day Proclamation Ceremony hosted by the GDVS Commissioner and Staff. The event was held on November 06, 2025, at 10AM at the State Capitol, located at Capitol Sq SW, Atlanta, GA 30334.
- The Department Service Officer attended the US Marine Corps 250th Birthday Celebration, hosted by the GDVS Board Members. The event was held on November 06, 2025, at 1PM at the State Capitol, located at Capitol Sq SW, Atlanta, GA 30334.
- The Department Service Officer hosted a VA Benefits presentation at the Hidden Valley Senior Citizen Center. The seminar was held on November 10, 2025, at 1PM at the Hidden Valley Senior Citizen Center, located at 600 Spraggins Memorial Pkwy, Stockbridge, GA 30281.
- The Department Service Officer attended the Veterans Appreciation Luncheon hosted by the Mayor of Stockbridge, GA. The event was held on November 11, 2025, from 11AM-2PM, at the Mere Manders Conference Center located at 111 Davis Road, Stockbridge, GA 30281

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

- October 19-24, 2025, DSO Symposium was held at 18665 Conference Center Dr, Leesburg, VA. DSO Tonjala Moton-Williams attended and completed the course successfully.
- November 5, 2025, 1:00 pm: The American Legion Department visited the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home, 2249 Vinson Highway, Milledgeville, Georgia 31062. The Commander and his delegation were given a brief presentation, Q&A, and tour by Russell Feagin and Dennis Mize.
- November 6, 2025, Hospital visit to Dublin VA Medical Center was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. Rescheduled for 2026.

Upcoming Events:

- November 13-14, 2025, Hospital visit to Montgomery Campus and Tuskegee Campus was cancelled due to government shutdown. Rescheduled for January 2026.
- November 13-16, 2025, Georgia Legion College will be held at 1523 Moody Street, Warner Robins, Georgia 30106.
- December 14-15, 2025, The Commander, and his delegation will visit Augusta VA Medical Center, 1 Freedom Way Uptown, Augusta, Georgia 30904 and Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home, 1101 15th Street, Augusta, Georgia 30901.

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Commissioner Patricia Ross

On Tuesday, October 14, 2025, Commissioner Ross met with Kathleen O'Loughlin (Women Veterans Program Manager for the VA) and Dr. Janya Pittman (Women's Health Medical Director for the VA). She then attended the Veterans Service Board meeting. She also met virtually with Jeff Bell, Chief Operating Officer of STG International.

On Wednesday, October 15, 2025, Commissioner Ross traveled to Savannah to make plans for the upcoming NASDVA Conference there in 2026.

On Thursday, October 16, 2025, Commissioner Ross served on a panel at the Veteran Support Listening Session in Savannah. She later had a meeting regarding the Marietta We Care Fair.

On Friday, October 17, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Leadership Institute session in Milledgeville, where participants toured the Home and Cemetery. She later had a call with Senator Kirkpatrick.

On Monday, October 20, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Georgia Military and Veteran Blueprint at the Shepherd Center as a follow up from the Military Influencer's Conference. She also attended the Unite Us bi-weekly meeting.

On Tuesday, October 21, 2025, Commissioner Ross worked at the We Care Fair in Cobb County. She also took part in the NASDVA Northeast District Meeting.

On Wednesday, October 22, 2025, Commissioner Ross met with the AJC for their upcoming articles on women veterans. She also joined the HereNOW Help Follow-up Meeting with the Outreach Team. She later joined the GDVS + Walker Sync meeting with the Outreach Team and then worked on slides for the Strategic Plan presentation needed for Mission 85.

On Thursday, October 23, 2025, Commissioner Ross joined Russell Feagin and Tonya Jarrett for a meeting about the Milledgeville Home.

On Monday, October 27, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the October Workforce Development Board meeting in Savannah and met with Visit Savannah in preparation for the August 2026 NASDVA conference.

On Tuesday, October 28, 2025, through Thursday, October 30, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Mission 85 Fall Conference in Greenville, SC along with her counterparts from SC and NC. The three states along with key partners, Upstate Warrior Solution, Veterans Bridge Home and the Warrior Alliance, aligned on common priorities and developed a coordinated path forward to enhance services for veterans across state lines.

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On Friday, October 31, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the GA@Work Presentation given by Mark Demers. She also attended a bi-weekly meeting with Jeff Bell, Chief Operating Officer of STG International.

On Saturday, November 1, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame ceremony in Columbus.

On Monday, November 3, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the VSO Coffee Break arranged by Sandra Bennett. She also held a Director's Meeting. Later in the day she attended the Unite Us bi-weekly meeting. Additionally, she spoke with 11Alive about DVS initiatives to help veterans: HereNOW Help and Unite Georgia.

On Tuesday, November 4, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Veteran Suicide Mortality Review meeting. She then joined the Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association in Dunwoody as their guest speaker.

On Wednesday, November 5, 2025, Commissioner Ross took part in the City of Atlanta Veterans Day activities.

On Thursday, November 6, 2025, Commissioner Ross was a featured speaker at the Governor's Veterans Day Proclamation Ceremony at the Capitol. She later provided remarks at the Celebration Ceremony for the Marine Corps 250th Birthday.

On Friday, November 7, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended and was the keynote speaker for the Chatham County Veterans Day Gala hosted by Joe Higgins, Chairman of the Veterans Service Foundation Board.

On Saturday, November 8, 2025, Commissioner Ross provided comments at the opening ceremony and was the 2025 Parade Grand Marshall for the 44th Annual Georgia Veterans Day Parade. She was also the featured speaker at the Freedom Ball, which took place at the Oceans Ballroom of the Georgia Aquarium.

On Sunday, November 9, 2025, Commissioner Ross took part in the USMC Birthday Celebration at Rally Point Grille in Woodstock.

On Tuesday, November 11, 2025, Commissioner Ross was in Milledgeville for their Veterans' Day ceremony and to meet with leadership from STGi.

On Wednesday, November 12, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the HereNOW Help App Training session. She also attended the GDVS + Walker Sync meeting with the Outreach Team. Later in the day, she attended the HereNOW Help follow-up meeting. She also met with a veteran client on their claim.

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On Thursday, November 13, 2025, Commissioner Ross was on the panel at the Eggs and Issues in Warner Robins discussing new initiatives for Georgia veterans. She then attended the Veterans Service Foundation Board Meeting. Later in the day she joined the HereNOW Help App Demo meeting.

On Friday, November 14, 2025, Commissioner Ross participated in the Veteran Experience Team meeting with the National Center for PTSD (VA). She then had her bi-weekly meeting with Jeff Bell, Chief Operating Officer of STG International.

On Saturday, November 15, 2025, Commissioner Ross gave a presentation at The American Legion Department of Georgia's Legion College (GLC) about the Department's role and responsibilities and how GDVS works around the State to help veterans.

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

GENERAL

- On Tuesday October 21st, the north and metro areas participated in the We Care Veterans Resource Fair sponsored by United Military Care and held at the Cobb Civic Center. With over 1,800 veterans and family members in attendance, GDVS registered 187 claimants, and 115 claims were filed.
- On Saturday November 1st, I participated in The Veterans Resource Fair and Vietnam War Pinning Ceremony held by Congresswoman Lucy McBath.
- On November 5th, the outreach team and the Atlanta Balcony Office participated in the City of Atlanta's Veterans Recognition Ceremony. We spoke with veterans and family members about benefits that they may be eligible for.
- On November 6th, I participated in the Governor's Veterans Day Proclamation signing and the celebration of the Marines 250th Birthday.
- On November 7th, I was the keynote speaker for the T.M.L. Women's Mental Health Program. I spoke about the importance of setting boundaries and prioritizing our mental health.
- On November 8th, I attended the Georgia Veterans Day Parade and Observance Ceremony and gave remarks at the night's Freedom ball.
- On November 13th, I attended the monthly Veterans Round Table held at the Decatur Goodwill Resource Center.
- **DD 214's and Welcome Home Letters: 175** Welcome Home Letters were mailed out in October 2025.

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Projected Positions:

- 3 Openings in Appeals
- 1 Opening in Valdosta
- 1 Opening in Warner Robins

Mr. Steven Fay, Director of Training Division

- Charles Isaac conducted trainer duties in Glennville, Hinesville and Savannah.
- Glenn Massey and Steven Fay conducted new hire training in Athens. 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.
- Steven Fay supported the Veterans Stand Down event hosted by Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in Athens at the VFW on the 22nd of October. Steven presented a department-wide State of Georgia Sexual Harassment Prevention Training on the 3rd of November during VSO coffee talk.
- Glenn Massey reports a retroactive payment of \$7,575.00. Glenn Supported the Cobb County We Care fair.
- Sandra Bennett reports a retroactive payment of \$8,621.71. Sandra also conducted the following: October 14th- VSO coffee talk. October 17th- Department Leadership Institute session 3, Milledgeville Cemetery and War Veterans Home. October 28th- Georgia women's coffee break. October 30th-VA coffee talk on Suicide Prevention.

Upcoming Events:

- D.R.O.P. class for November
- 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 **October 2025** was **68**. Due to the VA Regional Office shutdown, **a total of 33 hearings** were rescheduled for a later date or withdrawn.

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

Types of Claims	Number of Awards	Benefits paid
Compensation	Unavailable	Unavailable
DIC	Unavailable	Unavailable
Survivor Pension	Unavailable	Unavailable
<u>Veteran Pension</u>	Unavailable	Unavailable
<u>Grand Total</u>	Unavailable	Unavailable

YTD through 10/31/2025 Total Compensation, Pension and other benefits paid: Currently Unavailable for the veterans that we represent who receive VA Compensation or Pension benefits. The data will be updated later.

Mr. Kenneth Childre, Director Veterans Benefits North Region

Retro Awards: \$2,236,584.23

Director Site Visits/Inspections: 1

Community Involvement:

10/1/2025-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Attended We Honor Vets meeting through NGHS. 11 individuals briefed on GDVS Services

10/8/2025-Bill Smith (Rock Spring), Beth Humble (Dalton)-Attended Catoosa County Mini We CARE Fair-23 Veterans passed through with 11 claims being filed

10/8/2025-Alex RiveraJusino (Ft Eisenhower) and David Flanagan (Grovetown)-Attended Connect 2 Prevent event at Ft Gordon.

10/9/2025-Ken Childre (North Area Director)-Participated in Outer Circle Foundation event in Suwanee, GA. Afterwards, I briefed the participants on some of the services GDVS offers.

10/15/2025-Vanessa Wilson & Herman Hammonds (Atlanta Balcony)-Attended Tunnel 2 Towers Veterans Village event with about 15 Veterans in attendance.

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10/21/2025-Steven Hungarter & Kristi Jones (Cartersville), Kyle Hungarter (Jasper), Roderica Stewart (Decatur CBOC), Frank Mays (Cobb Clinic), Kareem Reddick (VECTR North), Fred Young & Shane Robinson (Marietta), Joe Baker, Jamel Harvey & Terance Traylor (Atlanta VAMC), Herman Hammonds & Vanessa Wilson (Atlanta Balcony), Randy Gray and Antonio Morris (Ft McPherson)-Attended Cobb County We CARE Fair. Over 1800 in attendance. 187 Registered with GDVS and 115 Claims were filed.

10/22/2025-Tanya Rogers & Rico Johnson (Gainesville), John Giddens (Demorest), Matt Williamson and Carie Lince (Athens), Mark Churning (Greensboro) and Pablo Cruz (Oakwood)-67 Veterans registered for benefits with 25 claims being filed. Recognized by Charlie Norwood VAMC with Certificate of Appreciation.

10/24/2025-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Attended networking meeting through Gainesville Chamber of Commerce. Briefed over 50 attendees on GDVS Services.

10/23/2025-Ken Childre (North Area Director)-Briefed 23 Veterans at the North Cobb Senior Center on the services provided by GDVS.

North Area Gains/Losses: 0

		Average Visits Per VFSO					
		Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO					
	Region:	North					
	Month:	October-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:	54	5,978	22	271.73	2,454	111.55
Number of Offices:	31		Average Visits/Office:	192.84	Average Claims/Office	79.16129	

*Total monthly office visits include: 2,215 In-person and 3,763 phone calls/emails.

Ms. Sherri Whitfield, Director Veterans Benefits South Region

- On November 6th, Ms. Jeanette Williams and Ms. LaSaundra Hester from the Ft. Benning and Columbus offices, respectively, participated in the Goodwill 2nd Annual Veterans Day Resource and Career Event. Attendees were provided with information on benefits and resources.

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- On November 6th, Mr. Seymour Parrish from the Waycross office participated in the Waycross Veterans Day Job and Resource Fair. Attendees were provided with information on benefits and resources.
- On November 10th, Ms. Susanna McCormick from the Glennville office participated in a veteran's day event at the VFW Post 8379. Attendees were provided with information on benefits and resources.
- On November 11th, Sherri Whitfield attended a veteran's day event at a senior living facility. Veteran residents, including a 99-year-old, were recognized for their service.
- Since the last board meeting, South region offices reported lump sum payments totaling \$1,413,608.43, with the Tifton office reporting the highest single retro award of \$258,165.49.
- South Georgia Region Veterans Population: 232,245.

Ms. Veda Brooks, Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC)

- October 15, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Intimate Partner Violence (IPVAP) at Dublin VA Outreach and Education Domestic Violence Program. Collaborating with Women's Health and MST programs.
- October 16, 2025, Ms. Brooks spoke at the Annual Virtual Luncheon in observance of Global Peer Support Day. Ms. Brooks participated in the Federal Fair Housing Laws 101 certification.
- October 17, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated and led the effort to restore and repair the exterior of the Ogletree Project.
- October 20, 2025, Ms. Brooks set up for We Care Event in Cobb County. Ms. Brooks participated in a Cobb County community meeting in Cobb County.
- October 21, 2025, Ms. Brooks and the Outreach Team participated in the Cobb We Care Event.
- October 22, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated and partnered with the Atlanta VA Women's Program to facilitate the Atlanta Women Veteran Meet-up.
- October 28, 2025, Ms. Brooks facilitated the Women Veterans Virtual Coffee Break. The guest speaker presented the needs of Women Veterans in the Rural Area. The virtual coffee break takes place on the 4th Thursday of each month from January to October from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. I look forward to seeing you in 2026. All are welcome to join.

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- October 30, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in Atlanta Women's Program Planning meeting.
- October 31, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated and facilitated a workday at the Ogletree home.
- November 3-4, 2025, Ms. Brooks attended Grant Writing Class.
- November 5, 2025, Ms. Brooks and the Outreach team participated in the City of Atlanta Veterans Program.
- November 6, 2025, Ms. Brooks and Fergie attended the GA Governor Veteran Proclamation signing.
- November 7, 2025, Ms. Brooks attended and participated in the 4th Annual Women's Veteran Thanksgiving Mental Health Brunch.
- November 8, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the GDVA Veterans Day Celebration and Freedom Ball, the theme was Contributions of Women in the Military.
- November 9, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in a Women's Veteran Day Service in Columbus GA.

Current committees:

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

Ms. Calandra Ferguson, Suicide Prevention and Outreach Coordinator

- October 15, 2025, Ms. Ferguson attended the Intimate Partner Violence Awareness Training.
- October 21, 2025, Ms. Ferguson conducted the monthly Governor's Challenge TF meeting.
- October 21, 2025, Ms. Ferguson attended the Cobb We Care Veterans Resource Event.
- October 22, 2025, Ms. Ferguson attended the Women Veteran Monthly Meeting @ Post 66.
- October 22, 2025, Ms. Ferguson attended an outreach event with the Military Women Sorority.

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- November 4, 2025, Ms. Ferguson attended training: Support after Suicide Loss: Postvention for SMVF.
- November 7, 2025, Women Veteran Mental Health Brunch: outreach event.

Ms. Raven Holstick, Transition and Employment Coordinator

- Met with Hire Heroes USA to discuss partnership opportunities for co-teaching during their Annual Leadership Training. The conversation focused on integrating GDVS insights into professional development sessions for transitioning service members and veteran job seekers.
- Participated in Veterans Day Program at Atlanta Metropolitan State College, where I represented the Georgia Department of Veterans Service. Engaged with students, faculty, and community members to promote state veteran benefits, education pathways, and leadership opportunities.
- Participated in the Quarterly Veteran Voice Advisory Committee (VVAC) Meeting with the Central Alabama Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHCS) on October 24, 2025. Contributed updates on GDVS outreach initiatives and discussed collaborative opportunities to enhance veteran engagement across Georgia and Alabama.

Upcoming events:

- “Staying Motivated during the job search” meeting with Tuskegee VA
- Women Veteran Advisory board (re-occurring)
- HereNOW Help
- Hire Heroes Training

Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Homelessness Coordinator

- October 15, 2025 - Participated in an outreach day at the New Tunnel 2 Towers property in Austell. They are offering 88 veterans single occupancy apartments.
- October 21, 2025 - I participated in the Cobb County We Care. I gave out 20 hygiene packets and worked with Community Partner Hope Atlanta to get an elderly veteran and her daughter off the streets.
- October 22, 2025 - Participated in Athens Standdown. I was able to give out 20 hygiene packets and collaborate with individuals.
- October 24, 2025 - I participated in the Military Sorority Convention where I provided an overview of the work that the Department does. We had 40 ladies to attend this event.

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- October 31, 2025 - I participated in the Macon standdown and gave out 20 blankets and 35 hygiene packets to homeless veterans. I also got a woman veteran housed through the local SSVF program.
- November 1, 2025 - I participated in a luncheon held in Macon and spoke to veterans and their spouses about the issues of homelessness facing Bibb County.
- I held 5 meetings with Landlords throughout Georgia that would like to collaborate to house veterans.
- Working with 15 veterans on current housing needs.

Upcoming Events:

- Will participate in a grant writing class on 11/13-11/14
- Will attend DCA housing conference on 11/17-11/20

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 10 purchase orders totaling \$1,771,389.68 as well as 17 invoices and 2 quotes.
- Kirsten Dennis created a new detailed supply ordering guide as well as new forms to ensure ordering procedures are clear.
- Kirsten Dennis has been active in the meetings regarding the GVWH-Milledgeville Request for Proposal (RFP) for the coming year.
- 37 of 38 end of year reports have been submitted to SAO thus far. The remainder will be completed once the forms open for submission. The last one is due in January.

GA@Work/NextGen Updates

- Camala Ball attended the NCN Agency Readiness Meeting on October 14, 2025.

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- Kirsten Dennis, Camala Ball, Irene Mackson, Kaitlin Little and Mark Demers attended the NextGen Half-Time Report meeting on November 7, 2025.
- Kirsten Dennis, Camala Ball, Irene Mackson, Kaitlin Little and Mark Demers attended the Team Georgia Learning meeting on October 22, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the Native with MFA/Mobile Configuration Working Session on October 22, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the GA@Work Grants Small Group Session on October 23, 2025
- Mark Demers attended the NextGen Change management meeting on October 21, 2025.
- Camala Ball participated in a multi-day UAT Training and Testing for Budget.
- Kaitlin Little and Mark Demers attended the GA@Work Grants Overview Workshop, Part 3 on October 20, 2025, and Part 4 on October 27, 2025.
- Kaitlin Little and Mark Demers attended a NextGen Project Team huddle on October 29, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the GA@Work Grants Reporting Review on November 3, 2025, and November 10, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the GA@Work Weekly Grants Workstream on October 14, 2025, October 21, 2025, October 28, 2025, and November 4, 2025.
- Camala Ball and Mark Demers attended the 1099 Process Meeting on November 13, 2025.
- Mark Demers presented the GA@Work Agency Outreach Presentation on October 31, 2025, to entire department.
- Mark Demers attended the GA@Work Monthly CFO meeting on October 31, 2025.
- The GO-Live date for GA@Work was pushed back to **July 1, 2025**.

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.

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- We conduct meetings monthly with program managers to discuss subprograms’ current budgets which include what is spent to date, and any upcoming spending and needs. This covers all funding sources. This has been a success thus far.
- Camala Ball met with program managers to discuss the budget.
- Kaitlin Little, Mark Demers and Camala Ball answered multiple follow-up budget inquiries from OPB and Senate analysts.
- Camala Ball, Mark Demers, and Kaitlin Little attended the SBEO AFY26/FY27 Budget Meeting with Caroline Hicks on October 24, 2025.
- Camala Ball, Kaitlin Little and Mark Demers attended meeting with OPB regarding the GA War Homes on November 4, 2025.

Camala Ball stated that as of November 10, 2025, we have expended 34.45% of the total FY 2026 budget allocated to GDVS. The breakdown is as follows:

Fund	Total Allotment	Expenditures	Remaining Balance	% Spent
State	\$ 34,894,739.00	\$ 11,186,868.39	\$ 23,707,870.61	32.06%
Federal	\$ 34,379,520.00	\$ 12,641,314.63	\$ 21,738,205.39	36.77%
Other	\$ 5,034,238.00	\$ 1,768,947.39	\$ 3,265,290.61	35.13%
Total Funds	\$ 74,308,497.00	\$ 25,597,130.41	\$ 48,711,336.59	34.45%

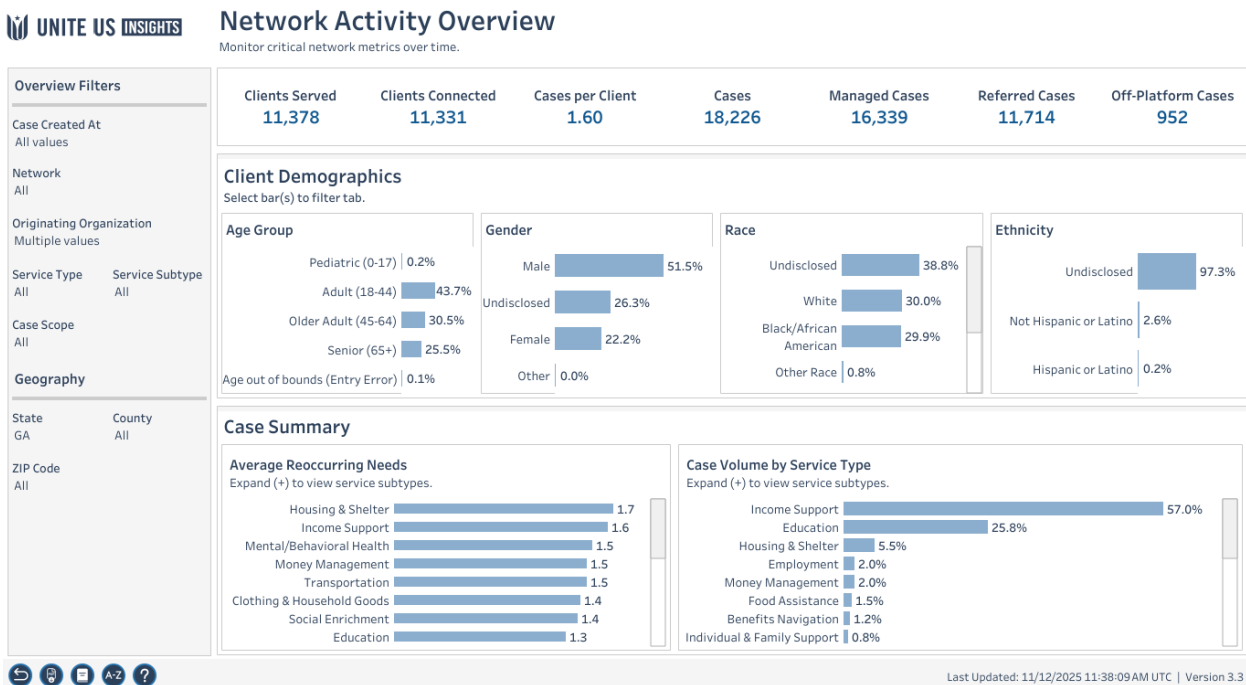
Strategic Plan/Legislation: None

Grant Program:

- SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program- (\$722,747 year 3)
 - We submitted draw#9 (final draw) for year 3 for \$182,455.46 on October 2, 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. We are awaiting the VA notification of awardees.
 - Year 3 End of Year Grantee Performance Report was submitted on October 22, 2025, the Federal Financial Report was submitted on October 23, 2025, and Financial Expenditures Report was submitted on October 27, 2025.
 - We have had multiple rounds of audit document submissions and clarifying information this month for the Fox Grant.
 - Mark Demers attended meeting with VA (Melissa Hall and Sandra Foley) on November 4, 2025.
 - All monies have been expended for Year 3, once the audit is complete, it will close officially.
 - VA SSG Fox in-person audit will occur on December 10, 2025.

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- **Unite-Us Grant-** (American Rescue Plan-Negative Impact Grant)- (\$20,047,782.70 total)
 - Grant extended for a partial year 4. All grant funds have been expended at this point.
 - Irene Mackson prepared the Unite Us Quarterly Report and it was submitted on October 1, 2025.
 - Irene Mackson added 3 new vendors to the Unite Us platform this reporting period.
 - Data ingestion and secure data transfer for the platform and social connector are moving forward. As of November 6, 2025, we have **283,587** veterans in the system.
 - Since the Public Resource Directory has gone live on March 22, 2024, there have been 6,393 site visits, 4,627 visitors with 828 distinct programs viewed. In 2025 there have been 591 AR submissions thus far with a 98% case resolution rate.
 - Campaign 11 began on November 7 and will be focused on loneliness (which is especially pertinent during the holidays). Awaiting Campaign 10 results.
 - The Quarterly Report for the 1st quarter was submitted via Survey Monkey on October 1, 2025. Next report will be due in January 2026 (this will be the final report for this grant).
 - We submitted all preliminary audit information to the portal, the audit kickoff started on September 8, 2025, and all Smartsheet documents were submitted on September 22, 2025. We are just waiting for the final report for the for Year 3.
 - The team attended the semi-monthly meeting with Unite-Us.
 - Kaitlin Little and Mark Demers attended the Unite Us Demo for Constituent Requests on October 30, 2025.
 - This grant will close on December 31, 2025.
 - Below is an activity snapshot from Unite Us Insights:



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- Veterans Mental Health Services Program Grant (HB 414)-
 - 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 was completed on October 17, 2025. Next quarterly report will be due in January 2026.
 - FY2026- \$1,000,000 (competitive grant)
 - The grant was awarded to the following:
 - Cohen Veterans Network (Centerstone) -\$806,578
 - The grant was reopened for applicants to bid on remaining balance, it will close on November 30, 2025.
- 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 will be due in January 2026.
- VA Suicide Mortality Review Cooperative Agreement - (\$502,124.68) –
 - We submitted draw #13 on November 4, 2025, for \$9,213.01. Remaining balance is \$6,479.29.
 - The FFR and FER will be completed once remaining balance is exhausted.
 - The Suicide Mortality Grant subcontractors are KSU, DPHDD and Dr. Lynn Tison.
 - Preliminary audit documentation was submitted to the VA as per the instructions on July 25, 2025. VA Audit Payroll and Expense samples were completed and sent on September 5, 2025. We are awaiting the results of the audit.
 - Mark Demers participated in all semi-monthly SMRC meetings.
 - The final report will be due in December 2025, exact date TBD.

Events/Other:

- Leadership Institute in person session was conducted in person on October 17, 2025, at the Georgia War Veterans Home and Cemetery in Milledgeville, GA. Next session will be conducted via Teams on November 21, 2025, subject: Difficult Distance, Difficult Decisions/Communication.
- Kirsten Dennis spoke at a Veterans Breakfast in Eatonton, GA sponsored by the NAACP on Saturday, November 8, 2025, which was well received. Attendees gave her kudos for the briefing.
- Mark Demers attended NVLSP Partners Special Briefing on Implications of the Supreme Court's Decision in Soto on CRSC on October 22, 2025.

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- Mark Demers, Camala Ball, Irene Mackson and Kaitlin Little attended the Veterans Day Ceremony and Marine Corp Birthday Ceremonies at the GA Capital on November 6, 2025.
- Irene Mackson attended Governors Challenge meeting on October 21, 2025.
- Kaitlin Little completed the Unite Us Platform Certificate Path on October 28, 2025, completed the Referral and Case Management Live Online Training on October 23, 2025, and the Harnessing Client Information Live Online Training on November 12, 2025.
- Irene Mackson and Kaitlin Little attended a Grant Writing Workshop held in Conyers, GA by Grant Writing USA on November 13-14, 2025.

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

State Veterans Homes

State Veterans Homes Census (Through November 7, 2025) +

Current Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	92	115	207
Service Connected *	33	55	88
Total Patients	125	170	207
Last Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	92	111	203
Service Connected *	37	54	91
Total Patients	129	165	294

+ The numbers reported to the VSB are the total numbers from Oct. 3, 2025, through Nov. 7, 2025.

Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home

Normal operations continue.

A Georgia Department of Community Health team started their annual audit on October 7th, 2025, and left October 9th, 2025. The report was deficiency free.

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A special luncheon by Morrison Healthcare with live music on Veterans Day.

Green Veterans will be providing a Thanksgiving luncheon on Wednesday, November 26th, 2025, for veterans and staff.

Georgia War Veterans Home

Normal operations continue.

A Georgia Department of Community Health team started their annual audit on October 7th, 2025, and left October 9th, 2025. The report was deficiency free.

A Joint Commission Survey was conducted on October 30th through October 31st, 2025. Joint Commission accreditation is the objective evaluation process that can help health care organizations measure, assess, and improve performance to provide safe, high-quality care for their patients. The results of the survey will be provided soon.

A Halloween party was held on October 31st at the GWVH for veterans, family members, and members of the community.

An event was held on November 7th, 2025, to recognize our veterans and to provide them a T-Shirt in honor of their service. The event was attended by fifty people.

A Veterans Day Ceremony was held on November 11th, 2025, at 11:00am. Terrence J. McKenrick, Major General, U.S. Army (Retired), President, Georgia Military College was the keynote speaker. More than 200 people attended the event.

Green Veterans will be providing a Thanksgiving luncheon on Wednesday, November 26th, 2025, for veterans and staff.

State Veterans Cemeteries

Burial Statistics (through November 7, 2025)+

State Veterans Cemetery	Cumulative Last Month	Cumulative Current Month	Increase
Glennville	2,849	2,867	18
Milledgeville	5,981	6,014	33
Total	8,830	8,881	51

+ The report to the VSB is the total numbers from Oct. 4, 2025, through Nov. 7, 2025.

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Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery – Glennville

The cemetery expansion project has been completed.

Cemetery operations continue as normal.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Milledgeville

The cemetery expansion project has been completed.

Cemetery operations continue as normal.

Mr. Kerry Dyer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Operations Officer

On Wednesday, October 15, 2025, Kerry Dyer posted the Veterans Education & Training Division (VETD), Compliance 1 Specialist vacancy internally & externally. He also contacted Lisa Gunthorp, DDS Chief Procurement Officer, to discuss their automated scheduling system. Later that day he contacted GBA to coordinate the date/time for the Annual Evacuation Drill Exercise.

On Thursday, October 16, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Leslie Davis, State Property Leasing Specialist conducted a site visit at Chatt Tech College for a potential office space for two VSOs. He also emailed 3 Cemetery Tech 1 resumes to Linda Lavendar, Milledgeville Cemetery Director. Later that day he contacted Ryan Petty, Access Corporation Manager, to discuss a quote for a shred project for VETD.

On Friday, October 17, 2025, Kerry Dyer processed 1 resignation packet and 1 retirement packet. He also emailed Lily Snyder, VETD Director, 12 resumes for her Compliance 1 Specialist vacancy. Later that day he attended the Claims Management System RFP meeting along with ShellyAnn Simpson, Mark Meeks and Barbara Burns, DOAS Procurement Managers.

On Monday, October 20, 2025, Kerry Dyer contacted Lisa Jenkins, President of Department of Georgia American Gold Star Mothers Organization to discuss benefits for a surviving spouse. He also spoke with COL (R) Rick White about the upcoming Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame Ceremony. Later that day he spoke with Ashley Dent, Constituent Services Specialist at the Atlanta Mayors Office to discuss the date/time to conduct the filming on the 9th floor suite in preparation for the City of Atlanta Employee Veterans Tribute.

On Tuesday, October 21, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Mark Meeks, Russell Feagin, Tonya Jarrett and Barbara Burns met virtually to discuss the War Home RFP. He also contacted Leslie Davis, State Property Leasing Specialist, regarding the Rome office lease renewal. Later that day he registered for the Annual Fleet Managers Conference that will take place in Forsythe Ga.

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On Wednesday, October 22, 2025, Kerry Dyer was a participant in the Veterans Leadership Lessons from the Frontline to the Boardroom panel hosted by HD Supply in Marietta Ga. He also attended Jim Barnaby, DOAS Deputy Commissioner retirement ceremony.

On Thursday, October 23, 2025, Kerry Dyer was the guest speaker at the No Wrong Door Listening Session at Gwinnett Tech College. He also took the Ford Explorer to Allan Vigil Ford for the semi-annual service.

On Friday, October 24, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with ShellyAnn Simpson met with Mark Meeks and Barbara Burns to discuss the Claims Management System RFP. He also dropped off the Chevy Highlander to W. T. Automotive for its semi-annual service. Later that day he contacted GBA to reschedule the Evacuation Drill Exercise.

On Monday, October 27, 2025, Kerry Dyer spoke with Eric Denny, Canon Copier Major Account Executive about setting the copier up so you can scan from the copier to your email. He also processed 1 resignation packet. Later that day he processed 1 new hire packet.

On Tuesday, October 28, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the Annual Fleet Managers Conference at Georgia Public Safety Training Center, Forsythe Ga.

On Wednesday, October 29, 2025, Kerry Dyer contacted Leslie Davis, State Property Leasing Specialist, to discuss the site visit at Atlanta Metro College. He also spoke with GBA about replacing the electrical panel in the hallway. Later that day along with Latoya McCullum he picked up the Chevy Highlander up from the service dealer.

On Thursday, October 30, 2025, Kerry Dyer met with Barbara Burns to discuss the Mandatory Scored Questions for the Claims Management RFP. He also spoke with Ashley Dent, Mayor Office Constituent Request Specialist regarding the flag display for the City of Atlanta Veterans Day Tribute.

On Friday, October 31, 2025, Kerry Dyer traveled to Columbus GA to assist in the setting up the tables and chairs for the Georgia Military Hall of Fame Ceremony.

On Saturday, November 1, Kerry Dyer along with Commissioner Ross and Veda Brooks attended the 2025 Hall of Fame Ceremony.

On Monday, November 3, Kerry Dyer attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also spoke with Jenelle Coleman regarding the Annual Immigration Reporting Requirements for 2025. Later that day he spoke to Mark Meeks, DOAS Procurement Manager, regarding the RFP for War Home.

On Tuesday, November 4, 2025, Kerry Dyer contacted Ashia Gallo, Gwinnett County, Speechwriter & Researcher to discuss the Veterans Day Ceremony on Tuesday, November 11, 2025. He also contacted

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Grega Hoyt, Director, Office of Hospital Operations, DBHDD regarding the Intergovernmental Agreement with Milledgeville War Home.

On Wednesday, November 5, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Commissioner Ross, Outreach Team and Jerry attended the City of Atlanta Veterans Day Celebration at Atlanta City Hall.

On Thursday, November 6, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the Annual Veterans Day Ceremony hosted by Governor Kemp and first Lady Kemp along with GDVS at the Capitol.

On Friday, November 7, Kerry Dyer was the guest speaker at the 43rd Annual Retiree Appreciation Day at Fort Benning, GA.

On Saturday, November 8, Kerry Dyer along with Commissioner Ross and ShellyAnn Simpson attended the Annual Georgia Veteran Association Day Parade and Freedom Ball.

On Monday, November 10, Kerry Dyer contacted Mark Meeks regarding the Question & Answer sheet for the Claims Management System vendors. He also contacted DOAS to discuss the Annual Agency Complaint Agency Reporting requirements for FY25. Later that day he submitted the monthly mileage report to DOAS, Fleet Management Division.

On Tuesday, November 11, Kerry Dyer was the guest speaker at the Annual Gwinnett County Veterans Day Ceremony.

On Wednesday, November 12, Kerry Dyer contacted GBA to get an updated list of State Policies. He also emailed Mark Meeks and Barbara Burns regarding a funding question from GTA for the Claims Management System RFP.

Below are the Personnel Actions Kerry Dyer and Shareka Monday-Robinson processed from October 15, 2025 – November 12, 2025.

Location	Position	Status	Name	Date
Warner Robins	VFSO 1	Resign	Michael Lawson	10/31/2025
Milledgeville	Cemetery Tech 1	New Hire	Keith Mercer	11/01/2025

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.

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- Approval of new veteran's On-The-Job training sites (OJT) continues to increase. As of this date the State Approving Agency (SAA) has granted approval to 2,231 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	516
Approved Training Establishments	1,717
VA Education Beneficiaries for October 2025 *CH 33 ONLY*	11,376
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
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>. The October edition of the department newsletter highlighted the major outreach events department staff attended and assisted veterans with one-on-one claims assistance – the annual We CARE Veterans Fair in Marietta and a homeless stand down in Athens. The newsletter also shared information on Wreaths Across America, tips on how to remain cybersecure and avoid fraud, resources available for veterans during the

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federal government shutdown, and a spotlight on the department's Employee of the Quarter for Q3 2025, Kristi Jones.

2. GDVS Hosts Veterans Stakeholder Roundtable – news release published on October 10, 2025. Commissioner Ross hosted a meeting with key veteran stakeholders from Veteran Service Organizations and Community Engagement Boards to align department goals with community partnerships.
3. Here NOW Help – attended a follow up meeting with the Here Now Help team to discuss further expansion to veterans on October 22, 2025. Additional meetings may follow to monitor rollout and utilization.
4. Veterans Day – attended the State of Georgia's annual Veterans Day ceremony on November 6, 2025. EAC provided assistance with promotion, flags, and photography for the event.
5. USMC 250th birthday – attended the State of Georgia's 250th USMC birthday celebration on November 6, 2025. EAC provided assistance with programs, promotion, and photography for the event.
6. 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. Resource fairs - shared information for veterans and family members seeking assistance finding new employment or additional support.
 - i. Augusta Veteran Caregiver Fair – shared information from VAMC Augusta with federal and community resources for caregivers.
 - ii. United Military Care – shared information on an upcoming Thanksgiving giveaway for veterans, active duty, Reservists, and National Guardsmen.

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OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business to discuss.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Ross announced that GDVS has officially been named as a recipient of the Fox Grant for the fourth year.

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Ms. Brooks announced Project Ogletree was completed on November 13. This project consisted of repairing the outside of a female veteran's home.

Mr. Childre announced that the Marietta Office has been re-located to Chattahoochee Tech. There are now three VSOs in that location.

Mr. Berry announced that he should have updated numbers from the VA since the federal government has now re-opened.

Mr. Zayas announced that Rockdale County will become a Purple Heart County on November 18.

Ms. Cagle announced that they lost their chaplain in October and that they are gearing up for an event in January at the Georgia Aquarium. More to follow.

NEW BUSINESS:

The next Board meeting was scheduled for December 17 at 12:30pm. It will be a combination virtual and in-person meeting, set up at the GDVS.

Mr. Paslawski made a motion for the Board to move into Executive Session. Mr. Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed. The Board moved into Executive Session at 12:15pm.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 1:02pm. Mr. Paslawski made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kopsie seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:04 p.m.

SIGNED:



Joshua Kopsie, Chair

ATTEST:



Steve Mendez, Secretary