

Tuesday, October 14, 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. Pete Peterson, Member
Ms. Takosha Swan, Member
Ms. Patricia Ross, Commissioner

Visitors Present: Mr. Kerry Dyer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Operations Officer, GDVS
Mr. Russell Feagin, Executive Director, Health & Memorials Division, GDVS
Ms. Shelley Seinberg, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Amy Sillmon, Assistant Attorney General, Attorney General's Office
Ms. Belinda Boldoe, VFW Service Officer, Appeals Division, GDVS
Ms. Amy Stevens, Georgia Military Women and Vetlanta
Mr. Don Layne, VECTR Chief Operating Officer
Mr. Joe Higgins, Veterans Service Foundation Board
Ms. Vivian Greentree, Veterans Service Foundation Board
Mr. Chuck Roberts, Veterans Service Foundation Board
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
Mr. Jerry Lahr, Network Administrator, GDVS
Ms. Calandra Ferguson, Coordinator, Suicide Prevention & Outreach, GDVS
Ms. Raven Holstick, Transition and Employment Coordinator, GDVS
Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Homeless Coordinator, GDVS
Ms. Camala Ball, Budget Analyst, GDVS
Ms. Kaitlin Little, Business Support Analyst, GDVS
Mr. Neil Slay, Veterans Education & Training, GDVS
Ms. Julie Hammond, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, GDVS

On Tuesday, October 14, 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. Ms. Thompson gave the invocation. Mr. Peterson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

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

The following reports were submitted for the Board meeting:

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

- October 6-9, 2025, The National Fall Convention is being held at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel, 31 West Ohio St, Indianapolis, IN.
- October 19-24, 2025, DSO Symposium is being held at 18665 Conference Ctr Dr, Leesburg, Virginia 20176.

Upcoming Events:

- November 5, 2025, at 1300, American Legion Department Commander and his delegation will visit Georgia War Veteran Nursing Home, 2249 Vinson Highway, Milledgeville, GA 31062. They will be given a brief presentation concerning operations and plans and a tour of the facility.
- November 6, 2025, at 0900, American Legion Department Commander and his delegation will visit Dublin VA Medical Center, 1826 Veterans Blvd, Dublin, GA 31021. They will be given a brief presentation concerning operations and plans and a tour of the facility.
- November 13-14, 2025, at 1300, American Legion Department Commander and his delegation will visit Montgomery and Tuskegee Campus, 215 Perry Hill Rd, Montgomery, AL 36109. They will be given a brief presentation concerning operations and plans and a tour of the facility.
- November 13-16, 2025, Georgia Legion College will be held at Warner Robins Post 594, 1523 Moody Street, Warner Robins, GA 30106.

Commissioner Patricia Ross

On Wednesday, September 24, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Veterans Service Board meeting. She also attended the DVS Agency Legislation Meeting with the Governor's Office.

On Thursday, September 25, 2025, Commissioner Ross spoke at the Veteran Support Listening Session at Chattahoochee Technical College's VECTR Center. Participants were members of local veterans' groups, the Technical College System of Georgia, and military installation partners.

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On Monday, September 29, 2025, Commissioner Ross held a Director's meeting. She then met with Halima Ahmadi-Montecalvo to discuss her role on the Unite Us One Continuum Panel in New York. She also joined the HereNOW Help Launch follow-up meeting with her team and the Fox Grant Update meeting.

On Tuesday, September 30, 2025, Commissioner Ross spoke at the Veteran Support Listening Session in Valdosta. Key takeaways from this group were a one-stop-shop (VECTR Center), connections prior to separation/retirement and a consolidated list of resources (Unite Us).

On Wednesday, October 1, 2025, Commissioner Ross and her team met with the Georgia Technology Association to discuss a central scheduling system for the Field to use in booking appointments. She then met with Calandra Ferguson and Veda Brooks to discuss upcoming events for suicide prevention.

On Thursday, October 2, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Veterans Service Foundation Board meeting. She also completed her drop class and filed two supplemental claims. She also connected with the Department of Juvenile Justice on proposed legislation.

On Friday, October 3, 2025, Commissioner Ross served on a panel at the Lagrange-Troup Chamber of Commerce to discuss the VECTR Center being built in Columbus and the potential for one in Savannah.

On Monday, October 6, 2025, Commissioner Ross held a Director's meeting.

On Tuesday, October 7, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Unite Us/GVDS Quarterly Strategic Check-in hosted at GDVS. She also met with representatives from Sen. Ossoff's office to discuss potential future congressionally directed submissions and possible federal grant funding.

On Wednesday, October 8, 2025, Commissioner Ross hosted various veterans service organizations to discuss working together on priorities to include legislation.

On Thursday, October 9, 2025, Commissioner Ross attended the Unite Us One Continuum in New York, where she served as a panelist.

Monday, October 13, 2025, was a State Holiday.

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

- On Wednesday, October 8th, I, along with the North Area Director and the Dalton and Rock Spring offices, participated in the Catoosa County We Care Veterans Resource Fair sponsored by United Military Care and held at Tri-Med Family Care in Ringgold.

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- On Thursday, October 9th, I participated in the monthly Veterans Round Table held at the Decatur Goodwill Resource Center

GENERAL

- **DD 214's and Welcome Home Letters: 421** Welcome Home Letters were mailed out in September 2025.

Projected Positions:

- 2 Openings in Appeals
- 1 Opening in Valdosta

Mr. Steven Fay, Director of Training Division

- Charles Isaac conducted retraining at the Savannah Service Office.
- Glenn Massey conducted new hire training in Canton. Glenn also reports a retro of \$16,785.99. Glenn Massey and Steven Fay conducted VA systems training in Augusta to include the GWVNH, VAMC Charlie Norwood and Grovetown. New hire training introduces new VSOs to the accredited training processes and procedures to assist veterans and claimants. Refresher training is required to train and evaluate the proficiency of VA systems after issuance of their PIV card. The Absorb Learning Portal is also introduced. The portal has classes and quizzes to help navigate the vast subjects of filing VA claims.
- Sandra Bennett reports a retro of \$29,376.74. Sandra also conducted the following: 15 September 2025 – VSO Coffee Talk Launch, 17 September 2025 - Social Security Webinar, 19 September 2025 - Leadership Training - Session 2 Strategic Planning, 29 September 2025 - VSO Coffee Talk – DIC, 2 October 2025 - Magnolia Manor Nursing Home - Veteran Claim Assistance, 3 October 2025 - Warrior Outreach, Fortson GA. Meeting in Phenix City, AL. Veteran Briefing and Claims Assistance.

Upcoming Events:

- We Care Fair- Cobb County October 21
- 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 **September 2025** was **96**.

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- As of **September 30, 2025**, the Isakson VA Regional Office processed benefits as follows for GDVS and the Service Organizations represented by GDVS during the month of September 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 09/30/2025 Total Compensation, Pension and other benefits paid: Currently Unavailable for the veterans that we represent who receive VA Compensation or Pension benefits.

Mr. Berry added that they are not allowed into their building during the shutdown but are doing all hearings remotely.

Mr. Kenneth Childre, Director Veterans Benefits North Region

Retro Awards: \$2,666,986.21

Of Note: \$324,856.42 DIC Payment to Surviving Spouse Campbell back to 2004.

Director Site Visits/Inspections: 2

Community Involvement:

- 9/6/2025-Frank Mays (Cobb Multispecialty Clinic), Kareem Reddick (VECTR North), Shane Robinson (Marietta), Terance Traylor, Jamel Harvey and Herman Hammonds (Atlanta VAMC)-Participated in Dobbins We CARE event. Talked with 17 Veterans and filed 7 claims.
- 9/8/2025-Danny Moreno (Zebulon)-Gave a benefits presentation at American Legion Post 105. Assisted 12 veterans with their claims. Submitted 2 POAs and scheduled 6 appointments.
- 9/12/25-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Attended Senior Fair at Lumpkin County Senior Center. Spoke to over 20 veterans and spouses regarding benefits.

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- 9/13/25-Christina Williams (Gwinnett Tech)-Participated in the "Be the One" 5k in support of Suicide Prevention and Awareness. Spoke with a few veterans about resources available to them.
- 9/17/25-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Attended We Honor Veterans informational meeting with NE Georgia Health. Began coordinating more events within the community to support the elderly veterans in ALFs and nursing homes.
- 9/17/25-Christina Williams (Gwinnett Tech)-Participated in Walk-n-Roll in Decatur. Provided suicide prevention resources for Veterans and their family members and connected them with their local GDVS office for additional claim assistance.
- 9/20/25-Christina Williams (Gwinnett Tech)-Attended Wellness event in Americus, GA. Provided suicide prevention resources to Veterans and their family members.
- 9/24/25-Tanya Rogers (Gainesville)-Attended United Way Trauma Symposium. Fostered relationships with local organizations and identified a better way to target veterans in the area who are in need as well as veteran employees.

North Area Gains/Losses:

- Atlanta VAMC-Herman Hammonds-Transferred to Balcony Office-9/9/25
- Atlanta VAMC-Mikell Bankston-New Hire-9/16/25
- Athens-Carie Lince-New Hire-9/16/25
- Ft McPherson-Antonio Morris-New Hire-9/2/25

Average Visits Per VFSO							
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO							
Region:		North					
Month:		September-25					
A	B	C	D	E	D / E	G	G / E
Office Name	Veterans' Field Service Officer (VFSO) Last Name	#	Total Monthly Office Visits	Work Days In Month	Average Office Visits Per Day	Total Claims Submitted To VA Monthly	Average Claims Submitted By VFSOS To VA Daily
		54	5,687	21	270.81	2,440	116.19
Number of Offices:		31	Average Visits/Office:		183.45	Average Claims/Office: 78.7096774	

*Total monthly office visits include: 2,183 In-person and 3,504 phone calls/emails.

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Ms. Sherri Whitfield, Director Veterans Benefits South Region

- On October 8th and 9th, Mr. Dennis Boothe in our Hinesville office attended a veteran outreach event at the FCI Federal Prison in Jesup, GA. He, along with the VA Social Worker, provided benefit counseling to inmates.
- On October 31, our Macon office will participate in the Stand Down for Homeless event. They will be assisting with claims support. The event will be held at the Daybreak Center for the Homeless.
- Since the last board meeting, South region offices reported total lump sum payments of \$865,219.12, with the Columbus office reporting the highest single retro award of \$108,131.84.
- South Georgia Region Veterans Population: 239,553.

Average Visits Per VFSO
Average Claims Submitted to VA Per VFSO

Region: SOUTH

Month: SEPTEMBER-2025

# of Offices	# of VFSOs	Total Monthly Office Visits	Workdays in Month	Average Office Visits Per Day	Total Claims Submitted to VA Monthly	Average Claims Submitted by VFSO to VA Daily
26	42	1459	21	69.48	1,287	61.29
Average Visits/Office			Average Claims/Office			56.12
Average Visits/Office			Average Claims/Office			49.50

Ms. Veda Brooks, Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC)

- September 6-11, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the NASWVC Annual Training.
- September 12, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Columbus We Care Event.
- September 15, 2025, Ms. Brooks traveled to Warner Robins to see veterans at the American Legion Post.
- September 17, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Arcadia VA Clinic Walk and Roll. Ms. Brooks engaged in the Ogletree project to prepare this Woman Veteran’s home for needed repair. Ms. Brooks participated in the Atlanta Woman Veteran’s Townhall.

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- September 18, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Returning Veteran Task Force Meeting.
- September 20, 2025, Ms. Brooks and Christina Williams participated in the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated Rho Sigma Omegas Chapter Health Fair in Americus, GA.
- September 23, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Georgia Women Virtual Coffee Break.
- September 24, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Walk and Roll held on Fort Stewart.
- September 26-27, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Ogletree home repair.
- October 1, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the CVVAMC Outreach Committee meeting. Ms. Brooks met with the Warrior Alliance at the Gathering Spot in Atlanta Georgia.
- October 2, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Fox Grant Casework Discussion.
- October 7, 2025, Ms. Brooks participated in the Arcadia Women’s Program info and Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

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 Ferguson, Suicide Prevention and Outreach Coordinator

- September 16, 2025, Ms. Ferguson Hosted the Monthly Governor’s Challenge TF Meeting.
- September 18, 2025, Ms. Ferguson attended the monthly Return Veteran Task Force Meeting.
- September 20, 2025, Ms. Ferguson and her SP Team attend the Fairburn Health Fair.
- September 24, 2025, Ms. Ferguson met with the Governor’s Challenge Lead from Alabama.

Ms. Ferguson added the following to her report: Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) are symptoms that show up in late Fall and go through winter, and you may feel yourself feeling listless, sad, down, not

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wanting to engage with others, wanting to stay inside, and not staying active. She encouraged everyone to stay engaged with others and do self-care during this time. Get outside, if only for a few minutes.

Ms. Raven Holstick, Transition and Employment Coordinator

- October 8, 2025 - Transition and Employment Coordinator engaged with over 100 behavioral health and community providers virtually to strengthen collaboration between GDVS and DBHDD. These discussions focused on connecting veterans to supportive employment, housing, and recovery resources. The outreach effort helped identify new referral pathways and partnership opportunities to enhance veteran reintegration and behavioral health outcomes statewide.
- October 8, 2025 - Transition and Employment Coordinator Represented the Georgia Department of Veterans Service at the Atlanta Hawks Job Fair to promote veteran hiring initiatives and connect transitioning service members with regional employers. Engaged with dozens of companies and veteran job seekers to share GDVS employment resources and strengthen partnerships supporting veteran workforce readiness across Georgia.
- October 15, 2025, GDVS Transition and Employment Coordinator, I partnered with the Atlanta VA to host a *“Staying Motivated During the Job Search”* event focused on empowering veterans navigating career transitions. The session provided practical tools for maintaining resilience, leveraging veteran resources, and sustaining motivation throughout the employment process.

Ms. Holstick added to her report the following: A veteran named Ms. Covington was on the news recently. She was dealing with a situation where her identity had been stolen. This affected the benefits she receives from the VA. We found out about the situation on Thursday morning and had it resolved by Thursday afternoon. She began receiving her benefits again and it was backdated to March. Mr. Peterson mentioned that this has been happening to other veterans. Ms. Holstick said that we are discussing how to get the word out so that veterans are aware of this scam.

Upcoming events:

- “Staying Motivated during the job search” event Atlanta VA October 15
- Visit to the Federal Prison
- Women Veteran Advisory board
- We Care Marietta
- DBHDD follow up brief

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Ms. Jarelle Thompson, Homelessness Coordinator

- September 30, 2025 – I met with a prospective landlord Ms. Roberts out of Albany that would like to rent out rooms to veterans. She also has housing for families.
- October 2, 2025- I met with a prospective Landlord Ms. Onwuama out of Cobb that would like to rent rooms to veterans.
- October 2, 2025- I participated in the Foundation Board meeting as CEO, and we strategically planned around raising funds for their initiative of homelessness. I was able to present a trifold that would be used for marketing for donations towards this initiative.
- October 6, 2025- I met with a prospective landlord that has housing in Milledgeville and would like to rent to veterans.
- Working with 8 veterans on current housing needs.

Ms. Thompson added to her report that she assisted a veteran who had been traveling and battling cancer. She fell behind on her rent. We were able to locate a community partner that assisted her by writing a check for \$5,200 for her rent.

Upcoming Events:

- Athens Standdown- 9/22
- Military Sorority Convention- 9/24
- Macon Standdown- 10/31
- Macon Luncheon to discuss homelessness- 11/1

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 7 purchase orders totaling \$16,828.02 as well as 9 invoices and 6 quotes.
- Kirsten Dennis created a new detailed supply ordering guide as well as new forms to ensure ordering procedures are clear.

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- Kirsten Dennis has been active in the meetings regarding the GVWH-Milledgeville Request for Proposal (RFP) for the coming year.
- Irene Mackson and Mark Demers completed the annual P-Card Self-Assessment and certification on October 1, 2025.
- 36 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 two are due in December and January.

GA@Work/NextGen Updates

- Mark Demers attended the CFO meeting related to GA@Work on September 25, 2025.
- Camala Ball and Mark Demers attended the FDM Crosswalk meeting on September 26, 2025.
- Mark Demers attended the GA@Work Grants Overview Workshop, Part 2 on October 6, 2025.
- The GO-Live date for GA@Work was pushed back to April 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.
- 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.
- Kaitlin Little and Mark Demers attended follow up meeting with OPB on September 19, 2025.

Camala Ball stated that as of October 8, 2025, we have expended 29.97% of the total FY 2026 budget allocated to GDVS. The breakdown is as follows:

Fund	Total Allotment	Expenditures	Remaining Balance	% Spent
State	\$ 33,144,535.00	\$ 6,773,160.00	\$ 26,371,375.00	20.44%
Federal	\$ 24,210,246.00	\$ 9,906,245.00	\$ 14,304,001.00	40.92%
Other	\$ 3,465,491.00	\$ 1,550,422.00	\$ 1,915,069.00	44.74%
Total Funds	\$ 60,820,272.00	\$ 18,229,827.00	\$ 42,590,445.00	29.97%

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Strategic Plan/Legislation:

- Kaitlin Little attended the Senate Study Committee on Improving Family Caregiver Services on September 17, 2025.

- Kaitlin Little attended legislative meeting at the Capital on September 24, 2025.

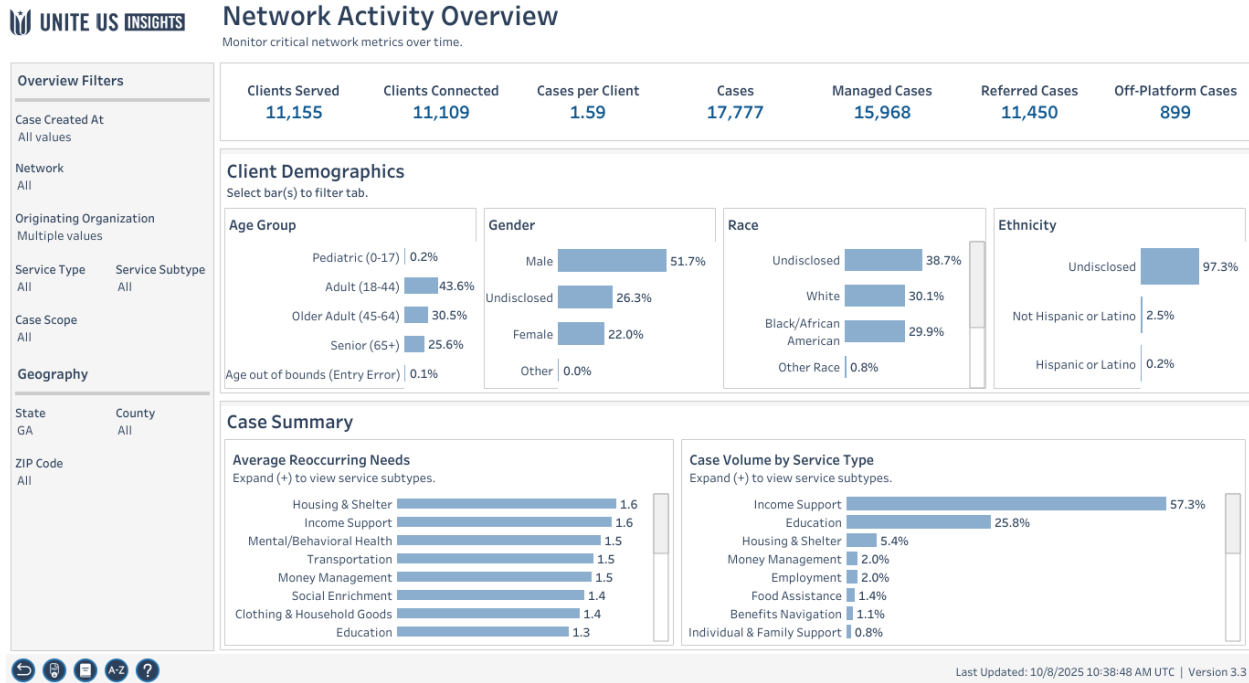
Grant Program:

- 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. Since the federal government shut down prior to announcement, we will have to wait until it opens again.
 - Kaitlin Little assisted with Preliminary Documentation and general ledger clarification for the auditors.
 - Mark Demers attended the SSG Fox Audit Meeting on October 8, 2025, with Auditor Meggen Kimball.
 - SSG Fox Grant Audit Additional Preliminary Documentation is due to the VA on October 7, 2025. Additional documents will be requested by auditors on October 22, 2025.
 - Year 3 End of Year Grantee Performance Report will be due on October 22, 2025, with the Federal Financial Report and Financial Expenditures Report following shortly after.
 - 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.

- 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.
 - We have expended \$1,159,450 of the \$1,729,196.19 thus far this FY.
 - Data ingestion and secure data transfer for the platform and social connector are moving forward. As of September 5, 2025, we have 283,133 veterans in the system.
 - Since the Public Resource Directory has gone live on March 22, 2024, there have been 6,365 site visits, 4,603 visitors with 826 distinct programs viewed. In 2025 there have been 467 AR submissions thus far with a 98% case resolution rate.
 - Campaign 10 campaign began on September 12, 2025, which will focus on food insecurity and school focused themes- the campaign will end in early November 2025.
 - Campaign 11 will begin on November 7 and will be focused on loneliness (which is especially pertinent during the holidays).
 - 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.

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- This grant will close on December 31, 2025.
- Below is an activity snapshot from Unite Us Insights:



- 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 will be due on October 17, 2025.
- FY2026- \$1,000,000 (competitive grant)
 - The grant opened for applicants on July 1, 2025, and it closed on July 31, 2025. Only 1 applicant qualified. We will be re-advertising in October 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.

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- VA Suicide Mortality Review Cooperative Agreement - (\$502,124.68) –
 - We submitted draw #12 on September 30, 2025, for \$103,452.79.
 - We requested a program change and extension to expend the remaining funds, which was approved. All remaining funds should be expended by December 2025.
 - 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.
 - The final report will be due in December 2025, exact date TBD.

Events/Other:

- Leadership Institute in person session was conducted via Teams on September 19, 2025, subject: Strategic Planning. Next session will be conducted in person on October 17, 2025, at the Georgia War Veterans Home and Cemetery in Milledgeville, GA.
- Mark Demers attended a meeting with the Georgia Data Analytics Center (GDAC) regarding our data fields and what type of reporting we would like on October 1, 2025.
- Kaitlin Little and Irene Mackson reviewed applications for Certificates of Appreciation award by the Commissioner.

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

State Veterans Homes

State Veterans Homes Census (Through October 3, 2025) +

Current Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	92	111	203
Service Connected *	37	54	91
Total Patients	129	165	294
Last Month	Augusta	Milledgeville	Total
Regular Patients	90	112	202
Service Connected *	36	51	87
Total Patients	129	163	289

+ The numbers reported to the VSB are the total numbers from Sept. 13, 2025, through Oct. 3, 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. They will provide a written report on the findings.

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. They will provide a written report on the findings.

State Veterans Cemeteries

Burial Statistics (through October 3, 2025)+

State Veterans Cemetery	Cumulative Last Month	Cumulative Current Month	Increase
Glennville	2,827	2,849	22
Milledgeville	5,954	5,981	27
Total	8,781	8,830	49

+ The report to the VSB is the total numbers from Sept. 13, 2025, through Oct. 3, 2025.

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.

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Mr. Kerry Dyer, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Operations Officer

On Thursday, September 25, 2025, Kerry Dyer processed 1 resignation packet. He also posted the Cemetery Tech 1 vacancy externally. Later that day he spoke with Scott Duncan, CEO/President of Carrollton furniture regarding the delivery date for a trophy case.

On Friday, September 26, 2025, Kerry Dyer contacted Sherri Kindlmann and Chase Brain, Co-Chairs for the Veterans Associate Resource Group regarding a speaking engagement. He also met virtually with Mark Meeks, DOAS Procurement Manager, to discuss the Claims Management System RFP. Later that day he contacted Jazzmin Randall, DOAS Fleet Management Director, to discuss the legal language for the vehicles at War Home.

On Monday, September 29, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also contacted David Flanagan, Grovetown Office Manager, to discuss the office relocation. Later that day he spoke with John Scocos, NASDVA, Executive Director, about the site visit in Savannah.

On Tuesday, September 30, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Mark Meeks, Russell Feagin, Tonya Jarret and Jenelle Coleman met virtually to discuss the War Home RFP. He also attended the 2025 Medal of Honor Celebration breakfast at the Atlanta History Center. Later that day he contacted Lisa Gunthorp, Department Drivers Service (DDS) Chief Procurement Officer to discuss the Lobby Management System used by DDS.

On Wednesday, October 1, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Commissioner Ross, ShellyAnn Simpson, Mark Demers, and William Wilson met virtually with Subramanian Muniasamy and Anand Balasubramanian, State Chief Technology Officers to discuss an automated scheduling system for the field offices. He also contacted Michael Payne, Director of Veterans Services Chattahoochee Tech College to discuss office space for two VSOs.

On Thursday, October 2, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Ken Childre traveled to Augusta to assist David Flanagan, Grovetown Office Manager vacate his field office.

On Friday, October 3, 2025, Kerry Dyer was on Annual Leave.

On Monday, October 6, 2025, Kerry Dyer attended the weekly Directors meeting. He also spoke with Leslie Davis, State Property Leasing Specialist, regarding the relocation of the Marietta field office. Later that day he processed 1 new hire packet.

On Tuesday, October 7, 2025, Kerry Dyer contacted retired COL Rick White to discuss the sequence of events for the Georgia Military Hall of Fame Ceremony. He also along with Mark Meeks, Russell Feagin and Tonya Jarrett attended the weekly War Home RFP meeting. Later that day he spoke with John Booker, GBA Support Specialist, regarding the replacement of Julie Hammond Panic Button.

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On Wednesday October 8, 2025, Kerry Dyer along with Commissioner Ross attended the Uniting Voices for Veterans Summit that took place in the Pete Wheeler Conference Room. Later that day he attended the dinner with the acting Consul General of the Republic of Korea, General Kim Daehwan.

On Thursday, October 9, 2025, Kerry Dyer traveled to South Georgia Technical College located in Americus GA to participate in the No Wrong Door Listening Session along with Robert Keown, Executive Director, Military Affairs, Office of Technical Education.

Below are the Personnel Actions Kerry Dyer and Shareka Monday-Robinson processed from September 25, 2025 – October 10, 2025.

Location	Position	Status	Name	Date
Valdosta	VFSO 1	Resign	Denoris Lane	09/25/25

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 2,233 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 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

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VA Education Beneficiaries for March 2025	21,867
VA Education Beneficiaries for February 2025	20,289

* 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 September edition of the department newsletter commemorated the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the Transitional Support Unit at the Georgia War Veterans Home in Milledgeville. The newsletter also recognized the hard work of the Suicide Prevention team as they spread across the state during Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, celebrated the first We CARE Veterans Fair in Columbus and the GDVS staff who helped over 100 veterans file or check on claims for benefits, and invited Georgians to join the HereNOW Help app for mental health services for free.
2. USMC 250th birthday – coordinated with Commissioner Ross and Homeless Coordinator JT Thompson to develop additional materials for the upcoming celebration, including an invitation for the public to attend the state’s ceremony on November 6. Additionally, the division helped create an invitation for the November 9 celebration in Woodstock.
3. Returning Veterans Task Force – attended the third quarter meeting of the RVTF. This quarter’s meeting focused on justice involved veterans and how state services are serving them during and post incarceration.
4. Veterans Service Foundation – coordinated with Commissioner Ross and Homeless Coordinator JT Thompson to develop a trifold brochure focused on the challenges for homeless and housing unstable veterans. The trifold can also be used by the Foundation for fundraising to support their mission of assisting veterans experiencing housing instability.
5. Unite Us Quarterly Business Review – met with Unite Us account representatives on October 7, 2025, with Commissioner Ross and CDO Demers to review platform utilization and plan for future usage.
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.

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- a. Careers and Employment – continued to share information from organizations and partners hosting career readiness events across the state for veterans and their families.
 - i. Shared information on an opportunity available at the Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Milledgeville.

- b. Resource fairs - shared information on the upcoming annual Cobb County fair, as well as a smaller event in Catoosa County on October 8, 2025.
 - i. Shared information on a legal clinic hosted by the Warrior Alliance in Augusta on October 3, 2025. Veterans are increasingly seeking legal assistance or advice. The department will share information from trusted resources to meet this need.

- c. Shared information on the resources still available to veterans and their families during a government shutdown. In case of a prolonged closure, the department will share additional resources and guidance for veterans in need of assistance.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business to discuss.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Ross highlighted the Here Now Help app, a mental and behavioral health app that is available 24/7 to veterans free of charge. She asked that everyone help us push the app out to veterans. Ms. May added that the state specific code to access the app is 241442.

The Cobb County We Care Fair will be on October 21 at the Cobb County Civic Center. We will have 20 VSO's assisting veterans with claims.

Mr. Feagin announced a Veteran's Day Ceremony on Nov. 11 in Milledgeville. The keynote speaker will be the new President of the Georgia Military College, Major General Terrence J. McKenrick.

NEW BUSINESS:

The next Board meeting was scheduled for November 17 at 12:00pm. It will be a combination virtual and in-person meeting, set up at the GDVS.

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Mr. Hanley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Paslawski seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:10 p.m.

SIGNED:



Joshua Kopsie, Chair

ATTEST:



Steve Mendez, Secretary