

PREPARED BY:
CHRISTA HAMMERS
SUPERINTENDENT



OCTOBER 2025

Monthly Report

Fiscal Year 2025

MEETING AGENDA

10-22-2025

- I. Call to Order & Salute to the Colors
- II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- III. Chaplain's Prayer
- IV. Roll Call of Officers
- V. Reading & Approval of Meeting Minutes
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Superintendent's Report
 - a. Office Activity - September
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - a. FY26 Meeting Dates/Holidays - Approved in NOV
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

09/24/2025

Call to Order & Salute to the Colors

President Andy Ruggerio called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates & Alternates Present

Mike Harden - AmLeg - Ottawa / Lance Sires - AmLeg - Marseilles / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Ron Sisco - AmLeg - Mendota / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / John Duback - AmVets - Ottawa / Harold Olsen - AmVets - Mendota / Paul Siembab - MarCorps Leg - Post 078 / Mike Mallie - MarCorps Leg - Post 078 / Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota

Officers Present

President – Andy Ruggerio
Vice President – Dennis Znaniecki
Guard – Elton Murphy
Chaplain – Ken Troyan

Employees Present

Christa Hammers – Superintendent
Lissa Olson - Assistant Superintendent
James Sturtevant- VSO
Emily Hackler- VSO
Kelli Rietgraf - Administrative Assistant - EXCUSED

Meeting MINUTES

Approval of August meeting minutes as presented:

Motion by Harold Olsen and seconded by Elton Murphy. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

NONE.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the Commission that Lissa and her went to Will county VAC - met with Grundy/Kendall/Kankakee and others to go over a mental health plan for Veterans in crisis. We are trying to build a program that each county can implement as a first response system for our Veterans that have mental health crisis.

Christa also discussed that during the month of September - it is Mental health awareness - although, mental health doesn't take a back seat once it is no longer September. She discussed that she found a free app called Objective Zero and went over the particulars.

Christa informed the Commission that Emily completed her social media classes and started to re-introduce the staff online. She is already getting more engagement and has started discussing a newsletter that would be done quarterly.

Christa then told the Commission that the IL AG office put together training for VAC staff and county boards regarding funding. This meeting happened on Sept 4th.

Christa then stated that her, Lissa and Emily were in Peoria from Sept 15-19 for State Association training. They learned more about what other VAC's are going through with their counties, clear communication techniques, CRDP/CRSC and even had a class with VLJ Teresa Raymond. It is always great training and we are happy to have one of our own - Lissa - on the training team.

Christa discussed that she had her quarterly meeting with the IVAC committee - she serves as the liaison between the State Association (IACVAC) and IVAC. She was able to discuss all the things that the state/our office is able to do for our Veterans and families.

Christa further discussed that Lissa and Emily will be attending Sen. Sue Rezin's resource fair - Oct 2nd at IVCC, we will also have staff at Streator YMCA for their Senior Expo on Oct 15th and Naplate Safety Day on Oct 4th, and the Peru YMCA Resource Fair on Nov 4th.

Meeting MINUTES CONTINUED

The VAC office will be closed for Columbus Day - October 13th.

Christa then reported that we have been able to assist Veterans and Families receive over \$8.5 Million in NEW benefits so far this year. Over \$595 Thousand where we were at this time last year.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Roscoe Mazur and seconded by Elton Murphy. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Lissa was asked by the Commission if the list of Honor Guards was made to be handed out. She was working on getting them all together and will be making the list and have it for next month.

New Business

None.

For the Good of the Commission

Harold stated that the next VAC meeting at the Veterans Home is Oct 3rd at 10:30. He also stated that they were putting a new roof on the nursing home and the West Wing was nearly complete.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Znaniacki and seconded by Roscoe Mazur.
Motion passed unanimously at 5:22pm.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER**Office Activity:**

The VAC staff attended Naplate Safety Day on October 4th. It was a great weather day, but with other area events - there was not a huge gathering. It was still nice to be out in the public eye and get to talk with a few people about what we do.

Kelli, Emily and James went to Abraham Lincoln Cemetery for the unknown soldier ceremony. They were able to tour a bit of the cemetery and honor those that didn't have services when laid to rest.

The office was closed Monday, Oct 13th for Columbus Day.

Lissa and Emily went to the Streator YMCA Senior resource fair on October 15th. They stated they had a well-attended event and they were able to reach a few new Veterans/Families.

Christa will be out of the office for a few weeks due to a pending surgery. If anyone needs anything - the staff is available and she will be able to be reached for questions they have.

The staff will have the tree up for the Veterans giving tree and tags will be available on November 3rd. We ask that all presents be unwrapped and back with the tags by December 5th.

The office has green lights available for those who need them. Operation Green Light is the week of November 4-11.

The office will be attending the Veterans Day parade in Utica on November 2. There will be a table and they will be walking/in a side by side as well.

The office will be closed November 11th for Veterans Day. Make sure you have your green lights!

Lissa will be attending the IACO (County Officials) training in Springfield November 17-19. She attends as part of our State Association.

The staff will be painting windows again at the LaSalle Veterans Home on Wednesday, November 26th. We will start at 9 AM that day.

The office will be closed November 27-28 for Thanksgiving.

Next meeting will be our last for the year - we will be approving the next years meeting dates, office closure dates and the superintendent evaluation for the governors report.

Our Office
EVENTS

Meeting MINUTES CONTINUED

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

CONTINUED:

Unfortunately our office had to part ways with one of our VSO's, our other staff members are currently overtaking the claims that are active and making sure our Veterans and Families are still being assisted during the transition. We don't have a official application up for the position yet - we are still waiting to see what happens with the Multi-County Legislation and want to get a few things in order before hiring. We are thinking after the first of the year for the application process to begin.

Sangamon County VAC had a decsion on their court case with their county. We were made aware that LaSalle County is going to push back on our budget. Christa, Andy, Mike and our VAC attourney - Josh Herman - were able to attend the VAC County Meeting on 10/20 to hopefully answer some of their questions and get the County to understand what the law states.

Office Claims/Program DATA

SEPTEMBER Office Activity

Office Visits	102	Intent to File	22
Phone	215	Intital Claims	41
Outstation	15	Appeals	19
Mendota	1	VA Healthcare	8
Streator	9	Pension/DIC	3
Marseilles	5	Other	188

The VAC tracks things like forms submitted, outreach clients and office visits. The “other” is things such as faxes, emails, mailings, other forms not listed etc. This is done to see where the bulk of our work and effort is done and to show that the claims processes often times take muliple forms to complete correctly.

SEPTEMBER OTHER OFFICE ACTIVITY

PTSD GROUP	33	WALK-INS:	58
Flutes	1	APPT MADE:	16
VHA	2	QUESTIONS:	42
		TOTAL:	94

The office is utilized by other entities to have services. Places such as Hines VA Healthcare, Flutes for Veterans, Peer-led PTSD groups and Senior Resource Meetings are just a few that use our spaces.

Currently we have brought in over **\$9 Million** in **NEW** benefits for our Veterans/Families. These numbers are NOT CUMULATIVE and start new each FY. We are over \$340 Thousand above where we were this time in FY24. We continue to see new clients daily and thank all our Veterans and Families for trusting us with their claims process.

SEPTEMBER Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2025 Amount	Monthly Amount
100%P&T	10/24/24	Dec-25	\$70,537.68	\$3,831.30
90%(SMC)	04/02/25	Dec-25	\$17,089.20	\$2,626.02
Dependent	08/31/25	Dec-25	\$3,438.00	\$128.00
SMC/Effective Date HLR	06/05/25	Dec-25	\$17,122.21	\$4,502.08
100%	08/13/24	Dec-25	\$94,926.33	\$3,967.36
70%	05/23/25	Dec-25	\$6,333.39	\$2,166.19
Dependent	09/02/25	Dec-25	\$2,840.60	\$1,523.93
dependent	3/6/2013	Dec-25	\$26,155.06	\$213.61
90%	10/3/2023	Dec-25	\$16,700.26	\$538.77
80%	7/28/2025	Dec-25	\$14,352.61	\$1,006.85
70%	7/27/2023	Dec-25	\$11,760.56	\$384.26
10%	7/10/2025	Dec-25	\$2,457.14	\$175.51
10%	5/13/2025	Dec-25	\$2,632.65	\$175.51
30%	3/3/2025	Dec-25	\$8,598.72	\$537.42
70%	10/28/2024	Dec-25	\$17,764.42	\$773.15
80%	5/22/2024	Dec-25	\$8,545.78	\$306.70
100% P&T	3/6/2025	Dec-25	\$55,028.52	\$3,057.14
60%	11/4/2024	Dec-25	\$30,186.26	\$1,680.93
dependent	9/22/2025	Dec-25	\$1,536.00	\$128.00
Dependent	8/29/2025	Dec-25	\$2,496.00	\$192.00
Dependent	8/29/2025	Dec-25	\$5,944.61	\$213.61
Dependent	9/4/2025	Dec-25	\$1,105.00	\$85.00
Dependent	2/28/2025	Dec-25	\$2,931.00	\$134.01
Burial	2/25/2025	Dec-25	\$1,956.00	\$0.00
MOD		Dec-25	\$346.95	\$346.95
90%	6/11/2025	Dec-25	\$33,853.83	\$2,665.96
10%	5/19/2025	Dec-25	\$2,632.65	\$175.51
60%	7/23/2025	Dec-25	\$22,852.44	\$1,395.93
Dependent	9/10/2025	Dec-25	\$1,626.00	\$74.00
	Total		\$483,749.87	\$33,005.70
	Year to Date Total		\$9,003,380.90	\$470,540.44