

PREPARED BY: :
CHRISTA HAMMERS
SUPERINTENDENT



JULY 2025

Monthly Report

Fiscal Year 2025

MEETING AGENDA

7-23-2025

- 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 - June
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
 - a. Budget Overview
 - b. Bonus Vote
- X. For the Good of the Commission
- XI. Closing Prayer
- XII. Adjournment

Meeting MINUTES

06/25/2025

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 / Greg Stock - AmLeg - Marseilles / Roscoe Mazur - AmLeg - Oglesby / Ron Sisco - AmLeg - Mendota / Louis Sekula - AmLeg - LaSalle / Gary Graffis - AmVets - Ottawa / Harold Olsen - AmVets - Mendota / Phil Harth - AmVets - Mendota / Paul Siembab - MarCorpsLeg - Post 078 / Mike Mallie - MarCorpsLeg - Post 078 / Bill Luther - VFW - Ottawa / Tom Troutman - VFW - Mendota / Chuck Erb - VFW - Marseilles

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

Meeting MINUTES

Approval of May meeting minutes as presented:
Motion by Elton Murphy and seconded by Greg Stock. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Superintendent's Report

Christa told the Commission that she was working on the next fiscal year budget and it will be presented at next meeting for questions.

Christa also discussed that Lissa and Kelli attended a Caregiver Resource fair at Hines on June 11. They stated that it went really well, even with the heat - they had a fair amount of people that were even from our area stop by and talk with them.

Christa informed the Commission that Emily and James would be attending a OSF Vendor Fair on June 26 at the Bureau Co Metro Center.

Christa then told the Commission that we are working on getting more local Veteran stories to highlight our area heroes. Even if its just a small bit of information, a few photos - whatever you are comfortable with - please get in touch with us.

Christa then stated that the office would be attending the Pistol Shrimp Game on July 3rd and be helping with the Warriors and Guardians 5K on July 12th.

Christa discussed that National Training would be coming up the week of July 14. Lissa and James would be in-person in Louisville, KY and Christa would be attending virtually. Lissa would also be going a few days early because she is enrolled in CVA courses.

Christa further discussed that the office is getting more and more Veterans coming in with large amounts of debt issues and we have guidelines on what we can assist with. Please discuss with your posts the importance of getting help before things get out of hand and there is no one able to assist them.

Meeting MINUTES

Continued:

The VAC continues to see new clients and the amount of phone calls and walk ins is steady. The VAC has brought in over \$5.4 Million of NEW benefit payouts to Veterans and families through the end of December - over \$678 Thousand from where we were this time FY24.

Superintendent's report was motioned for approval by Harold Olsen and seconded by Mike Mallie. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

NONE.

New Business

Christa stated we needed to discuss the issue of location of our office for the future. Our lease is up July 2026 and we are going to get push back stating we should be housed in Ottawa.

Discussion ensued and it was agreed that posts/entities would be asked for letters of support for the VAC to stay in Peru as the location is best for many reasons.

Good of the Commission

Dennis stated that as discussed, the Pistol Shrimp game would be July 3rd and Veterans are asked to line up about 3:45pm on 1st and 3rd baselines to be recognized. There is a one man band playing about 2pm and the games starts at 4pm.

Ken Troyan stated his granddaughter is in Basic Training for the National Guard and is in her 3rd week at Fort Jackson. He asked that if anyone was willing/able to write her as mail is important for morale.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dennis Znaniecki and seconded by Phil Harth. Motion passed unanimously at 5:40pm.

JUNE**Office Activity:**

The office was able to upgrade our cellphones and add one for Kelli to use. We have not upgraded/updated our cellphones since we initially got them 7 years ago. Kelli is using hers in partnership with a text appointment reminder app. We now can remind clients of their appts same day/days out at a time and have them confirm via the text recieved. It has saved us on no-shows to appointments and Kelli having to call each client individually and wait for responses if a voicemail is able to be left.

Kelli only has a few more courses left to be able to get her notary license. This again will be something that our Veterans/Families can use as a benefit for them - free of charge.

Emily has a few more classes to complete for her social media studies. She is able to learn many new tactics for getting the audience engaged and therefore putting our office out there a bit more and allowing more people to know of our services.

National training was July 14-18. Lissa and James were in Louisville for the week and Christa completed the training online. Lissa took the CVA courses the weekend before and is looking to possibly test in Reno, NV next year.

We typically do Outreach in Mendota at the Chamber building, but Thurs Aug 7 - we will not be there due to the Sweet Corn Festival.

School is starting back up and if any Veteran is struggling to afford backpacks/basic needs for their students such as notebooks/pencils/crayons etc... please send them to us. We will have a limited supply of backpacks available for those in need.

The office is working with IVCC on putting together a scholarship with donated funds for Students that are Veterans/Children of Veterans. We are looking to do work with them as they have a sub-committee already set up for awarding the scholarships and deciding if we do one or two at a time. We also can do both semesters or just one. The application would be available online. They would verify Veteran status through our office.

Our Office
EVENTS

Office Claims DATA

JUNE Office Activity				
Office Visits	108		Intent to File	35
Phone	623		Intital Claims	32
Outstation	17		Appeals	29
Mendota	2		VA Healthcare	6
Streator	10		Pension/DIC	2
Marseilles	5		Other	195

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.

JUNE OTHER OFFICE ACTIVITY				
PTSD GROUP	36	WALK-INS:		75
Flutes for Vets	3	APPT MADE:		29
VHA	5	QUESTIONS:		46
		TOTAL:		119

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.

We had our first Veteran who used our computer lab find not one, but two different employment opportunities and they were grateful our office was available.

Office Claims DATA

JUNE Claims Summary				
Total Percentage	Month Submitted	Through	2025 Amount	Monthly Amount
80%	2/25/2025	Dec-25	\$ 40,474.58	\$ 2,214.89
80%	3/28/2025	Dec-25	\$ 28,687.42	\$ 2,158.89
DOC/backpay	10/24/2023	Dec-25	\$ 10,718.26	\$ -
70%	2/27/2025	Dec-25	\$ 10,502.25	\$ 700.15
60%	4/30/2025	Dec-25	\$ 4,450.46	\$ 317.89
100% P&T	4/28/2025	Dec-25	\$ 20,214.35	\$ 1,554.95
70%	7/24/2024	Dec-25	\$ 34,193.48	\$ 1,561.24
60%	6/13/2024	Dec-25	\$ 31,936.14	\$ 1,395.93
80%	5/28/2023	Dec-25	\$ 517.62	\$ -
100% P&T	2/26/2025	Dec-25	\$ 30,181.50	\$ 2,012.10
10%	1/13/2025	Dec-25	\$ 2,808.63	\$ 175.51
50%	7/27/2023	Dec-25	\$ 36,905.92	\$ 1,102.04
70%	5/6/2025	Dec-25	\$ 4,803.12	\$ 400.26
70% IU	8/14/2023	Dec-25	\$ 92,438.37	\$ 4,044.91
90%	4/3/2025	Dec-25	\$ 3,575.91	\$ 275.07
100% P&T	7/23/2024	Dec-25	\$ 69,920.80	\$ 3,831.30
20%	5/27/2025	Dec-25	\$ 6,449.04	\$ 537.42
50%	10/28/2024	Dec-25	\$ 24,011.69	\$ 1,393.04
80%	2/19/2024	Dec-25	\$ 32,749.17	\$ 2,350.95
30%	3/13/2025	Dec-25	\$ 8,061.30	\$ 537.42
80%	12/9/2024	Dec-25	\$ 38,245.50	\$ 2,340.89
IU	12/27/2023	Dec-25	\$ 49,215.04	\$ 2,012.10
Dependent	2/1/2013	Dec-25	\$ 18,194.95	\$ 296.00
60%	6/13/2024	Dec-25	\$ 26,183.55	\$ 1,523.93
60%	4/30/2024	Dec-25	\$ 34,693.95	\$ 1,395.93
90%	02/27/25	Dec-25	\$ 34,543.38	\$ 2,434.02
100% P&T	03/13/25	Dec-25	\$ 21,769.30	\$ 4,044.91
40%	11/12/24	Dec-25	\$ 14,353.92	\$ 774.16
Burial	07/16/24	Dec-25	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
Appeal	02/03/25	Dec-25	\$ 21,309.68	\$ -
Dependent	05/28/25	Dec-25	\$ 10,434.00	\$ 523.00
Dependent	12/16/24	Dec-25	\$ 3,056.20	\$ 1,704.00
Burial	06/03/25	Dec-25	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
40%	8/29/2024	Dec-25	\$ 14,633.97	\$ 774.16
100% P&T	1/2/2025	Dec-25	\$ 24,879.20	\$ 1,554.95
100P&T SMC	4/30/2025	Dec-25	\$ 61,117.30	\$ 4,638.12
20%	5/8/2025	Dec-25	\$ 4,334.84	\$ 346.95
100%	1/7/2025	Dec-25	\$ 4,125.20	\$ -
40%	9/3/2024	Dec-25	\$ 8,236.24	\$ 346.95
100% P&T	3/14/2025	Dec-25	\$ 22,141.42	\$ 1,581.53
Total			\$909,067.65	\$52,855.56
Year to Date Total			\$6,378,281.15	\$321,000.76

Currently we are over \$651 thousand over 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.