GDVS Services

The mission of the Department of Veterans Service is to serve Georgia's 752,000-plus veterans and their families in all matters pertaining to veterans benefits.

As part of this mission, GDVS offers a wide range of superb services and programs, including excellent veterans benefits assistance [1]; devoted appeals support [2]; skilled nursing home care [3]; compassionate cemetery committal [4] services; and rewarding veterans education [5], on-the-job training, and apprenticeship training program management.

GDVS representatives strive to ensure Georgia's veterans receive all of the federal and state benefits to which they are entitled.

Appeals Support

The GDVS Appeals Division [2] assists veterans and their families who choose to dispute the disposition of their claims for veterans benefits. Additionally, the division provides support service for claims filed at GDVS Veterans Field Service Offices [1].

GDVS Appeals Officers can assist a veteran at a personal hearing before the local VA Hearing Officer or before the Travel Section of the Board of Veterans Appeals from Washington, D.C. and the Discharge Review Boards from the Department of Defense Military Service Departments (when convened in Atlanta).

The Appeals Division is located in the same building as the Atlanta VA Regional Office [6] at 1700 Clairmont Road, Decatur, GA 30033.

Please call ahead before visiting, as this office is open on an appointment-only basis.

Contact: 404-929-5345

Education & Training

By law, the GDVS is designated as the State Approving Agency (SAA), responsible for approving and supervising all institutions and establishments in Georgia that offer education and training under the provisions of the Veterans Educational Assistance Program [7] (GI Bill).

Within the GDVS, the SAA function is performed by the Veterans Education & Training Division [5].

This division is responsible for ensuring that approved institutions and establishments meet and maintain acceptable standards so that eligible persons who attend may receive educational assistance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

These programs must have SAA approval before veterans and other eligible persons may receive educational benefits (GI Bill) from VA under the authority of Title 38, U.S. Code and Chapter 1606 Title 10.

Federal and state laws require stringent regulatory compliance of all institutions and establishments approved for veterans attendance. The responsibilities of approval, annual inspections, and ensuring corrective action when necessary, constitute a vital function of the Georgia SAA.

The SAA has the function of ensuring educational institutions and establishments meet and maintain acceptable standards so eligible persons who attend may receive educational assistance from VA. This includes all public and private schools and all establishments offering apprenticeship and other on-the-job training.

The satisfactory performance of these duties requires SAA personnel to have extensive knowledge in education administration and a full understanding of the laws and regulations that govern and control the Veterans Educational Assistance Program.

For further information concerning approved universities, colleges, technical and trade schools; flight schools; correspondence schools; apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs, contact the SAA staff.

Contact: 404-656-2306 or saaga@vs.state.ga.us [8].

Apprenticeship Programs

Apprenticeship training is similar to OJT, but includes theoretical instruction as well as practical training. While learning a trade as an "apprentice," the veteran is taught by a skilled worker, a "journeyman." Once approved, the veteran receives VA education benefits while working full-time and earning wages.

Apprenticeship programs differ from OJT in that they are normally two or more years in length. They require a minimum of 144 hours of related classroom instruction per year. The employer, local technical

college, union, or the Federal Bureau of Apprenticeship Training [9] usually provides classroom instruction.

The SAA approves non-registered programs. Both the Federal Bureau of Apprenticeship Training and the SAA approve registered apprenticeship programs. Some examples of approved programs are carpenter, electrician, brick mason, and plumber.

The full list of approved on-the-job training programs is maintained by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and is available online through VA's WEAMS institution search tool [10].

On-the-Job Training Programs

On-the-Job (OJT) programs may be approved for a wide variety of entry-level jobs. Once approved, a veteran participates in the OJT program while working under the employer's supervision. The veteran receives monthly VA education benefits in addition to regular salary.

In order to apply, a veteran must be employed full-time with an employer who can provide training in a bona fide trade or skill in which the veteran is not already qualified.

The full list of approved on-the-job training programs is maintained by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and is available online through VA's WEAMS institution search tool [10].

Public Information

The GDVS Public Information Division supports the department's internal and external communications and outreach missions, with the ultimate goal of keeping Georgia's veterans and their families informed of important news and events.

The division maintains veterans.georgia.gov [11], which is home to the department's official news feed [12] and calendar of events [13] as well as the most up-to-date version of this ebook, directories, and information about the other divisions of the GDVS.

The division continuously updates Georgians about important veterans news via social media. Stay informed by joining the GDVS communities on Facebook [14] and Twitter [15].

The division produces informational materials such as this book, brochures, cards, calendars, and other items.

Contact: 404-656-5933 or gavetsvc@vs.state.ga.us [16].

State War Veterans Homes

There are two skilled nursing care homes for eligible war veterans located in Georgia. One is in Augusta [17] and the other is in Milledgeville [18].

The primary mission of these homes is to provide high quality skilled nursing care to veterans while seeking to improve their quality of life and overall health.

Eligibility criteria:

The veteran must be a current Georgia resident and meet one of the following conditions:

- Resided in Georgia two years immediately preceding the date of application
- Resided in Georgia five or more of the past 15 years

The veteran must have served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces during one of the following wartime periods:

  - World War II: December 7, 1941 - December 31, 1946
  - Korea: June 27, 1950 - January 31, 1955
  - Cold War: January 31, 1955 - July 1, 1964
  - Vietnam: July 1, 1964 - May 7, 1975
  - Persian Gulf: August 2, 1990 - present

- The veteran must have a discharge under other than dishonorable conditions.
- The veteran must be approved as eligible for skilled nursing care by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- The veteran must be free of contagious infectious disease and behavioral and psychiatric problems.
- The veteran must not need to be sustained by line-operated mechanical means.

To apply for admission, contact the Admissions Office [3] of one of the homes or any GDVS Veterans Field Service Office [1].

A nominal daily fee is charged. Eligible veterans may apply for the federal Aid & Attendance benefit [19] to help offset this fee. For veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or higher or whose admission is due to a service-connected condition, the daily fee is paid in full by VA.

Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home - Augusta

The Georgia War Veterans Home in Augusta [20] is a 192-bed skilled nursing care facility located adjacent to the campus of Augusta University [21], across from the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center. It is operated under an interagency agreement between the GDVS and Augusta University.

Dedicated in 1969, the home was the first of its kind built with federal financial grant assistance. It is one of a select group of such institutions accredited by The Joint Commission [22].

Along with the provision of skilled nursing care, the home serves as a teaching facility to acquaint medical, dental, pharmacy, and allied health students with the medical conditions and diseases of the aged. This provides students with practical experience and helps them gain expertise in treating the disabled and the elderly.

Additionally, the home contains a GDVS Veterans Field Service Office [1] to assist veterans in the area.

Contact the Admissions Office [23] at 706-721-2405 for more information on how to apply.

Georgia War Veterans Home - Milledgeville

The Georgia War Veterans Home [18] is a 550-bed skilled nursing care facility comprised of four buildings located on approximately 17 acres.

The home provides skilled nursing care and specialty care for Alzheimer's residents.

The home is operated through an agreement with United Veteran Services of Georgia, an affiliate of UHS-Pruitt Corporation [24].

Additionally, the home contains a GDVS Veterans Field Service Office [1] to assist veterans in the area.

Contact the Admissions Office [25] at 478-445-4295 for more information on how to apply.

State Veterans Memorial Cemeteries

The Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemeteries [4], established for the interment of faithful and honorable military veterans, are shrines recognizing all Georgia veterans.

There are two Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemeteries, located in Glennville [26] and Milledgeville [27], open for interment of qualified veterans and dependents.

Each cemetery includes a welcome center, a chapel, in-ground interment areas, and columbariums connected by paved roadways and walkways in beautiful landscaped settings. Gravesite locators are available for the convenience of visitors.

Eligible for interment:

- Veterans with a discharge other than dishonorable
- Members of the Reserves or National Guard who were eligible for retirement pay at the time of death (or who would have been entitled to retirement pay at age 60)
- Members of the U.S. armed forces killed in the line of duty while on active duty or active duty for training
- Members of the U.S. armed forces who otherwise died on active duty
- Certain other veterans as defined in federal law
- Spouses, unmarried dependents under the age of 21, and eligible life-long dependents of any of the above

Proper paperwork is required to determine eligibility. The veteran's name; rank; serial, social security and VA claim numbers; date of birth and date of death must be provided to cemetery personnel. A copy of the veteran's DD Form 214 or other proof of service is required. A copy of the marriage certificate is required for the spouse to be buried with the veteran.

Standard upright, granite headstones are used to mark the burial sites of casketed and cremated remains. Small granite covers are used to mark the niches of cremated remains placed in columbariums.

Plots, vaults, niches, and markers are provided at no charge. Use of the committal chapel for interment services is also free. The family is responsible for all other expenses.

The vaults provided are concrete-lined and double-depth for the veteran and spouse or dependent. (If the veteran selects interment for cremated remains, the spouse or dependent must also select interment for cremated remains.)

The GDVS pledges to honor the dignity and memory of each person. Cemetery staff will make the interment as compassionate and comfortable as possible, ensuring the committal service and any other requests are handled respectfully. They will assist family and friends in every way possible during their time of sorrow.

Business hours are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Interment hours are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Visiting hours are from 8 a.m. to dusk daily, including weekends.

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery - Glennville [26]

8819 U.S. Highway 301, Glennville, GA 30427

912-654-5398

Georgia Veterans Memorial Cemetery - Milledgeville [27]

2617 Vinson Highway, Milledgeville, GA 31061

478-445-3363

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