

EVERY WREATH, A PROMISE: REMEMBERING VETERANS ACROSS GEORGIA

It was a breathtaking sight to behold as thousands of live fir wreaths were placed at the gravesites of Georgia’s departed heroes. Veterans, military service members, families, and friends gathered at Georgia’s Veterans Memorial Cemeteries to join the nation in the annual celebration of Wreaths Across America on Saturday, December 13, 2025.

In Milledgeville and Glennville, as well as in private cemeteries across the state, crowds gathered to remember the fallen, honor those who served, and teach the next generation the value of freedom.

Wreaths Across America reminds communities that freedom is preserved not only through the actions of the brave, but through the willingness of the living to honor and remember them. By pausing to reflect on their sacrifices, each hero’s story endures, inspiring future generations to appreciate the cost of liberty and the enduring strength of service.

Ceremonies were held at each veterans memorial cemetery before guests were invited to help place wreaths graveside.

Wreaths are sponsored by veterans, families, local organizations, and veteran service organizations throughout the year. The GDVS is grateful for their support.

To learn more about Wreaths Across America, visit <https://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/>.



YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HIGHER LEVEL REVIEWS

Did you know you can challenge VA decisions regarding your claim for disability compensation? A higher-level review is one of your options to ask VA to revisit your claim if you think there’s an error with their decision.

Higher-level reviews have a chance to result in a different rating decision and can be requested within 1 year of VA’s decision on your initial claim or Supplemental Claim. The countdown starts from the date on your decision letter.

If you have new evidence to submit or have a contested claim, there are other options to appeal a VA decision.

The [GDVS Appeals Division](#) is available to help at no charge with higher-level reviews, supplemental claims, and board appeals if you want to contest a claim decision. Contact the Appeals Division at 404-929-5345 or contact your [local GDVS VSO](#) for more information.

SEASON OF SERVICE: VETERANS VOLUNTEER IN BLAIRSVILLE

The Blairsville Police department recently hosted their 26th annual “Shop with a Cop” and took nearly 200 children and teens shopping for the holidays.

Local businesses, the Union County Family Connection, charitable organizations, and Union County Sheriff’s office helped to raise nearly \$60,000 for the children of Blairsville.

Veterans and VA clinic workers volunteered to help during the event, including GDVS Blairsville Veteran Service Officer Christine Collins.

State Representative Stan Gunter and his wife Rita, Union County Sheriff Shawn Dyer, and Blairsville Police Chief Michael Baxter were among the supporters in attendance and helped their community celebrate.



GET TO KNOW YOUR VSO: LAKESHA GREEN



Army veteran Lakesha Green is motivated to help Georgia veterans.

“As a veteran, continuing to serve is a natural extension of my military commitment,” said Green. She retired from the Army in 2024 as a Sergeant First Class.

Green currently works as VSO and office manager in the recently reopened and relocated GDVS Bainbridge office.

When she is not busy advocating for veterans, Green is involved in service-oriented work, and spending quality time with her family.

Her advice to new and future VSOs? “Remember your purpose. Be patient, stay informed, listen carefully and never underestimate the difference you can make in a veteran’s life.”

VETERAN HOMELESSNESS DECLINES IN 2025

In 2025, over 52,000 homeless veterans across the nation found permanent housing through VA homeless support programs.

According to VA, their nationwide initiative to end veteran homelessness has resulted in an increase of 4,011 homeless veterans housed compared to 2024.

In central Georgia, the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center in Dublin helped 260 veterans this year by providing resources to secure permanent homes.

At the Atlanta VA Health Care System, 745 veterans received housing, which is 157% of their planned goal for the fiscal year.