



Georgia Department of Veterans Service

Cultivating community connections
– empowering Georgia’s veterans
and their families to flourish.

January 2024

GDVVS 2023 AT A GLANCE



1,250+

Veterans began a
claim on-site at
an event



7,806

Referrals to
support services
via Unite Us



5,000+

SSG Fox Grant
Suicide Prevention
screenings
completed



678,000+

Veterans living in
Georgia



130,639

Veterans received help
via phone calls, emails,
and in office visits



41,453

Claims submitted for
veterans benefits



\$4.4 Billion

Monies received by Georgia
veterans and families



115

Employees serving
veterans in **55**
field offices



7,748

Veterans and spouses
interred in a Veterans
Memorial Cemetery



261

Veterans receiving
care at a War
Veterans Home



15
Veterans
Benefit
Enrollment
Events

Georgia Department of Veterans Service staff continue to work hard while serving Georgia’s veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

During 2023, our staff were part of bringing in over \$4.4 billion in compensation, pension, and additional veterans benefits directly to Georgians. These are tax-free dollars paid directly to you.

Our staff were directly involved in about 70% of the total claims submitted in Georgia during 2023.

During 2024, we will continue to serve you and your families with care and dedication. We are here to help you receive the benefits you have earned.

Find your local office and start working on your claim at [https://veterans.georgia.gov/field-offices!](https://veterans.georgia.gov/field-offices)



WOODEN SELECTED AS EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER



Employee of the quarter and VSO of the month, Carlas Wooden, has spent his entire adult life caring for veterans.

A native of Donalsonville, Wooden served 6 years in the United States Army as a medic and attained the rank of Sergeant.

“I started as a medic while on active duty, worked as a clinician for the VA for the next 20 years, and now I’m finally assisting veterans and their dependents with VA benefits,” said Wooden.

This passion has resulted in being recognized for exemplary service, and after only working with GDVS a little over a year.

Wooden says he just wants GA Veterans to “know I am dedicated and committed to ensuring that all veterans receive their entitlements fairly and timely.”

He currently works at the Carl Vinson Medical Center in Dublin, and adds a special thank you to GDVS Dublin office manager, Nicole Clark. “Nicole has been instrumental in providing unwavering mentorship, enabling me to perform my job efficiently and diligently,” said Wooden.

On his off days Wooden and his wife travel in their RV and camp at Georgia State parks.

His advice so new and future VSOs? “Make the veterans your number one priority. Know that your actions helping a veteran or their family obtain their benefits is the greatest feeling in the world.”

NOTES OF GRATITUDE

GDVS continues to receive accolades for the outstanding work our Veteran Service Officers provide to veterans and their families across the state.

Robert Jones, who works in our Ft. Stewart office, assisted a veteran who began their claim in Wyoming. Even though the process started out of state, Jones’s help “answered all of my questions and relieved a tremendous amount of stress,” said the veteran.

Sheri Shellman, who works in our Savannah office assisted a veteran over multiple years to resolve a complex claim—which even included a denial in 2022. “She made me feel all my time serving my county was worth it,” said the veteran.

“A hearty BRAVO ZULU for a job well done” was sent to **Scott Weaver**, who works in our St. Marys office. Weaver helped a retired Submariner Navy veteran work through a claim for hearing loss. The veteran is now well-equipped with hearing aids after a successful claim.

Mark Holmes, from our Warner Robins office in the VECTR Center, helped a veteran with a challenging claim. “Mark was very professional and reassuring. He helped me so much. He certainly knows his field,” said the veteran.

Vershawn Moses, also from our Warner Robins office, received accolades from 2 veterans. “Vershawn always takes the time to answer my questions and calls to keep me updated on the status of my claims,” said one of his happy veterans.

Sonja Martin and Tonjala Moton-Williams in the Macon office, “are the type of people that us mere mortals hope to encounter when we venture into the VA World,” reported a satisfied veteran.

Chris McKan, who works in our Ft. Moore office, helped a widow work through a claim for DIC benefits. “I would like to thank the Georgia Department of Veterans Service for having a more caring and understanding person help with my claim,” she said.

Thank you to our dedicated staff!

WINGS OF REMEMBRANCE: HONOR FLIGHTS BRING HOPE AND HEALING



Georgia’s veterans have an opportunity to fly free of charge and visit war memorials in Washington, D.C., thanks to Middle Georgia Honor Flight.

The tours include trips the World War II memorial, Korean War memorial, and Vietnam War memorial. They also provide for veterans who are terminally ill and wish to honor the fallen.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, sponsors, and volunteers, veterans have been able to experience these memorials that pay tribute to their service.

In a recent broadcast on Macon’s WMAZ–TV, Vietnam War veteran and Warner Robins native, Bill Carey, provided comments the closure this trip brought him. “It’s really important that these veterans do this to get the healing from the inside. It was being able to touch their names, it was the spot where I was healed,” said Carey.

There is still time to make reservations for the coming months—visit www.MiddleGAHonorFlight.org to register.

