



## Georgia Department of Veterans Service

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

January 2026

### EXCELLENCE IN ACTION: JOYCELYN JONES SELECTED AS GDVS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



The sacrifices veterans and their families made for our country is what inspires VSO and GDVS Employee of the Year Joycelyn Jones to enthusiastically help Georgia veterans.

“To be selected for this award is such an honor and I’m truly grateful to know that I am making the department proud,” said Jones.

Jones says she is most passionate about fighting homelessness for veterans in her community and advocating for human rights and mental health.

She began working with GDVS in 2019 and currently manages the GDVS Moultrie office. Her commitment to excellence has shown in commendation letters sent to the GDVS and a feature in the Moultrie Scene to spread awareness for veteran benefits.

She is currently working to raise awareness of veteran homelessness in Colquitt and Mitchell counties and hopes to better connect them with benefits and resources in the area.

Jones is well known in her community and cultivates relationships with local partners to reach out to veterans and their families when they need help most. She works closely with funeral homes and hospice workers to make sure families know help is available.

When Jones is not serving veterans, she enjoys traveling and spending time with her family. She is also pursuing of Masters of Public Administration, currently with a 4.0 GPA.

Her advice to new and future VSOs?

“Always take the time to get to know your veterans. Most veterans want to be heard, always be honest and go the extra mile. It will go a long way with your veterans.”

### RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING SERVICE: EDDIE FONTAINE SELECTED AS GDVS EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER



Eddie Fontaine, manager of the GDVS office in Blairsville, wants Georgia veterans and families to know their needs are what drives him to continue serving.

His passion to help veterans is one of the many reasons Fontaine was chosen for GDVS Employee of the Quarter.

“This job isn’t easy, but you will find reward in helping people during their dark days,” said Fontaine.

After over 10 years of assisting veterans and their families, Fontaine has made a positive impact on the lives of many veteran and families in North Georgia.

Fontaine is also passionate about making the process of obtaining those benefits easier. He created a survey which quickly identifies specific issues veterans need help with to make their visits impactful and provides additional resources for their needs beyond veterans benefits.

When not helping veterans and their families, Fontaine finds joy in cooking, watching nostalgic television programs, and travelling.

His advice to new and future VSOs?

“Don’t be afraid to think outside of the box to find solutions. Try to do the best you can with what you have and don’t hold expectations of others beyond their means.”



## SHINING A LIGHT ON SERVICE: NOMINATE AN OUTSTANDING WOMAN VETERAN

The application to nominate one of Georgia women veterans as the state’s Woman Veteran of the Year is open!

The Woman Veteran of the Year Award honors women veterans across Georgia who separated from military service and continue to make a lasting impact on veterans and their families, caregivers, or youth.

These individuals have made significant contributions both within the state and nationwide. Examples of areas of impact include entrepreneurship, legal assistance, research, mental health and wellness, advocacy, and preventing domestic violence.

Interested in nominating yourself or a woman veteran you know? The application is available on the GDVS website at <https://veterans.georgia.gov/georgia-woman-veteran-year-nominee-applications>.

Applications are due by February 23, 2026.

## HONORING HEROES WITH HOLIDAY JOY

Residents of the Georgia War Veterans Homes (GWVH) enjoyed festive celebrations with staff and local veteran service organizations during December.

Residents of the Wood Building at GWVH-Milledgeville were invited to join a holiday party in the building’s solarium.

Hosted by staff members, the party celebrated the festive season with music, games, and special holiday treats—like a nutritionally balanced and festive green juice punch.

While the holiday season can be a lonely time for many veterans, residents of the GWVH are supported and celebrated by their dedicated care teams.



## WHERE VETERANS CONNECT:

### INSIDE FORWARD RABUN’S VET TO VET CAFE

On the second Tuesday of every month, a special cafe opens at the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia for veterans to gather and share stories while enjoying warm coffee and a generous breakfast cooked by local supporters.

Sponsored by Forward Rabun, the cafe seeks to connect former military service members with essential resources.

One of the key features? Guest speakers who address topics tailored for veterans and their family members. Former guests include GDVS Veteran Service Officers and students from local schools interested in learning to know more about those who served their country in the uniform of the United States. Veterans from all eras of war and peace participate in the cafe.

The cafe grew from Forward Rabun’s Annual Veterans Appreciation Dinner held in November. As interest and support in the annual dinner grew, the group decided to start monthly Vet to Vet gatherings to better support their community.

For more information on upcoming speakers or to learn how to get involved, community members can contact Forward Rabun at 706-782-4812, or reach out to the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia at 706-782-0780.