



Georgia Department of Veterans Service

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

July 2023

COMMISSIONER’S CORNER



Patricia Ross, Commissioner of Veterans Service

I’m excited to kick off the GDVS Leadership Institute in August.

Nine members of our amazing team will receive professional development and achieve a greater understanding of all aspects of the department, including our long-term strategic planning and the state budgeting process.

Instructors, both internal and external to the organization, will provide leadership training in areas such as public speaking, communication, problem solving, customer service, and navigating change.

This is the inaugural class and there will be opportunities every fall for a new cohort to grow both personally and professionally.

This institute is designed to not only foster the potential within our own ranks, but to also serve the veterans of Georgia better!

WE CARE FAIR RETURNS TO COBB COUNTY

The **We CARE Veterans Resource Fair** is back in Cobb County and will be held at the Cobb County Civic Center on **August 4-5, 2023**. There is no cost to attend!

The Georgia Department of Veterans Service joins dozens of other organizations at this one-stop, veteran-specific, solution-oriented event.

Veterans can meet with representatives from VA Health Care, the Veterans Benefits Administration, non-profit community groups, and GDVS Veterans Service and Appeals Officers in one easy trip.

Please bring a copy of your DD Form 214 or other discharge paperwork with you, if available, to ensure a quick verification of your service.

[Appointments are requested](#) for a free eye exam and legal assistance with a will, advanced health care directive, power of attorney, or notary public. Other legal matters may be discussed with professionals on-site at no charge.

Find more details and registration information at [https://www.wecarevetfair.com/!](https://www.wecarevetfair.com/)



STAFF SERGEANT FOX FORUM

Join us as we discuss current initiatives and challenges that still need to be addressed to prevent suicide in military service members, veterans, and their families.

*Panelists from HVAC and HASC are expected but not yet confirmed.

10:00 - 2:00
Georgia State Capitol, Room 341
October 5, 2023



SHAWN HANLEY
HOST & MODERATOR
CEO, GreenVeterans
Chairman, Georgia
Veterans Service Board



PATRICIA ROSS
FORUM PANELIST
Georgia Commissioner
of Veterans Service



MR. AND MRS. FOX
FORUM OPENING REMARKS
Parents of SSG Parker
Gordon Fox



AARON EAGAN
FORUM PANELIST
Director, Community-Based
Suicide Prevention
VHA Office of Mental Health
and Suicide Prevention



LIZ CLARK
FORUM PANELIST
Director,
Department of Defense
Suicide Prevention
Office

On Thursday, **October 5, 2023**, GreenVeterans and the GDVS will host a Staff Sergeant Fox Forum at the Georgia State Capitol building. The panel will explore how national efforts to prevent suicide in military service members, veterans, and their families have and continue to evolve, outstanding challenges still needing to be addressed, and potential solutions to prevent suicide.

SSG Parker Gordon Fox’s parents will welcome guests and share their son’s story and the impact the SSG Fox Grant Program is having on service members, veterans, and families across the nation. Representatives from the Department of Defense, the VHA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention will round out the panel.



GDVS STAFF PROVIDE OUTSTANDING CARE TO GEORGIA’S VETERAN COMMUNITY

GDVS Veterans Service Officers are, in many cases, the first point of contact for veterans seeking help. Our staff are known for their dedication, care, and attention to detail when helping with a claim or an appeal for veterans benefits.

Scott Yarbrough, who works in our Appeals Division, recently helped resolve an appeal for sleep apnea for a Peachtree City veteran. While serving 27 years in the special forces, the veteran had a parachute accident which resulted in 3 operations on their nasal structure.

VA denied the veteran’s initial claim for sleep apnea, but Yarbrough’s “very considerate and extremely patient” demeanor reassured them the appeal would be successful. Yarbrough’s attention to detail resulted in an appeal decision within 2 days in the veteran’s favor.

Jessica Hardin, who joined the GDVS in May 2023 in our Marietta office, was recently commended for her “professionalism and customer oriented service” while assisting a Vietnam War veteran with an intent to file for a PACT Act claim for Agent Orange exposure.

Unknown to Hardin, the veteran was a former employee of the GDVS! Her knowledge and compassionate care from “the time she greeted me at the front door until my visit was completed” was impressive to a twenty-year senior career employee of the department.

We are proud our Veterans Service and Appeals Officers provide high-quality care Georgia’s veterans deserve.

Find your local GDVS Field Office at <https://veterans.georgia.gov/field-offices> to start working on claim, increase, or appeal today!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

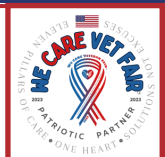


While there is no deadline to apply for PACT Act benefits, veterans and families

should submit a PACT Act application or an Intent to File **before August 9** to be eligible to receive benefits payments backdated to August 10, 2022.

GDVS Veterans Service Officers are ready to help! Find your local office at <https://veterans.georgia.gov/field-offices>.

The **We CARE Veterans Resource Fair** will be held for the first time in Dekalb County on Wednesday, **September 13, 2023.**



GDVS Veterans Service Officers will be available at the event to offer assistance with state and federal benefits, appeals status checks, and more.

The location is still being finalized, so check back soon for more details!

GEORGIA VETERANS BRING HOME THE GOLD!



Georgia Veterans took the National Veterans Wheelchair games by storm—winning Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals in a variety of sports!

Dubbed the “Magnificent Seven,” by the Dublin VA Medical Center, every single veteran athlete from the medical center received a medal. The winning categories include Bowling, Motorized Slalom, Motor Rally, Air Rifle and Power Soccer. Overall, Team Dublin received 17 Gold medals, 2 Silver, and 3 Bronze.

16 Veterans from the Augusta VA Medical Center also participated in the games and brought home Silver and Gold medals in slalom and handcycling.

Medaling in individual sports was not the only accomplishment Georgia veterans celebrated, they were also recognized for excelling in team sports.

Veterans Marco Bungert and Lisa Maddox showed displays of athleticism and sportsmanship during the games and were chosen to participate in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games All-Star Softball Team. The Wheelchair Softball World Series will take place in Chicago on August 3-5, 2023.

GEORGIA VETERAN NAMED AS MILITARYTIMES VETERAN OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Linsdsey Streeter on his recent selection as the MilitaryTimes Foundation’s Veteran of the Year!

Streeter served for 31 years in the U.S. Army and retired as a Command Sergeant Major. He currently serves as Georgia’s Ambassador to the United States Army Reserve, in addition to working as the Senior Vice President of Global Military Affairs at Bank of America.

He is also involved in his community through his late wife’s non-profit, Quad E, which provides healthcare screenings to underserved communities.