



Georgia Department of Veterans Service

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

July 2024

EMPOWERING WOMEN VETERANS: V-WISE SEEKS APPLICANTS

For more than 10 years, Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE) has been the country’s premier entrepreneurship training program for female veteran and military spouse business owners.

Hosted by the D’Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), V-WISE combines online and in-person training with a full year of support and mentorship services which helps entrepreneurs find their passion through actionable strategies for new venture creation.

The program has over 3,800 graduates to date with 81% of graduates still in business.

The next V-WISE program begins online September 16 with three days of in-person training October 11 - October 13 in Salt Lake City.

Apply today – space is limited for this program!
<https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/programs/entrepreneurship/start-up/v-wise/>

A LONG AWAITED HOMECOMING: LUTHER “BUCK” BAGLEY ACCOUNTED FOR



After almost 80 years of waiting, WWII Army Private First Class Luther “Buck” Bagley is finally headed home to reunite with his family— including his 80-year-old son and 99-year-old wife.

A Fitzgerald native, Bagley was drafted in 1942 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and shortly after his wedding.

Bagley soon reported for training and was later stationed at Fort Meade before being deployed overseas to an undisclosed location.

Bagley was sent to Burma as part of the reinforcements for the top-secret 5307th Composite United Provisional, better known as Merrill’s Marauders and one of the first units to engage the Japanese in ground combat in WWII.

He fought valiantly, but was killed in action on July 25, 1944 during the Siege of Myitkyina. His remains were not accounted for during or after the war.

In 1947, the American Graves Registration Service recovered unknown remains in the vicinity of Myitkyina. They were later interred in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the Punchbowl.

Bagley stayed alive in the memories of his family and community. He was inducted as part of the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame in 2023 for valor and has memorial stones emblazoned with his name in Savannah and Fort Moore.

The remains were disinterred in 2021 and sent to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Laboratory. After years of examination and using DNA from his son and a female cousin, the remains were positively identified as Army Private First Class Luther Bagley on May 7, 2024.

Bagley will be buried in Fitzgerald, Georgia on August 10, the same day the Merrill’s Marauders was dissolved in 1944.



HOW TO AVOID DBQ FRAUD SCAMS

Due to the rise of Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) scams, VA wants to ensure veterans—including those who choose to have their private health care provider complete a DBQ—are appropriately equipped with the information they need to submit DBQs successfully.

VA wants veterans to be aware of individuals and companies marketing the service of completing DBQs.

Don’t be fooled by companies advertising they have a special relationship with medical professionals and can guarantee the veteran a benefits award.

When a veteran uses for-profit DBQ companies, the fees may be costly.

A DBQ is a streamlined medical examination form designed to collect medical evidence relevant to a claim for benefits. DBQs allow veterans to submit medical evidence from their health care provider to support their claims for disability benefits.

Veterans are entitled to a no-cost disability examination by VA if an examination is deemed necessary to decide the claim for benefits.

VA will not pay or reimburse any expenses or costs incurred in the process of completing and/or submitting DBQs completed by the veteran’s health care provider. If veterans choose to submit a DBQ from their non-VA treatment provider, VA may determine an additional disability examination may still be necessary to decide a benefits claim.

Find more tips on what to consider before asking a medical professional complete a DBQ for you at: <https://news.va.gov/132811/how-to-avoid-dbq-fraud-scams/>

GET TO KNOW YOUR VSO: MIGUEL RIVERA



“A dedicated worker willing to help people who are not thoroughly familiar with the

system... his attention to detail in making sure the correct paperwork is filled out is excellent... we need more employees like him...” – these are just a few of the many compliments the Georgia Department of Veterans Service receives about the outstanding work of GDVS Savannah Office Manager, Miguel Rivera.

Born in Puerto Rico, Rivera settled in Georgia and joined the GDVS family in 2019. He spent 13 years in uniform serving as a Staff Sergeant in the United States Army.

It is no wonder the most important thing he wants Georgia veterans to know about him is he’s here to guide you during the claim process, answer all your questions, and take care of your family.

Rivera is also bilingual. He lends his talent for languages to better assist veterans in English and Spanish across the state.

When he is not assisting Georgia’s veterans, Rivera enjoys playing the guitar and spending time with his family.

His advice to new and future VSOs?

“Treat every veteran and their family as if it was your own.”

WINGS ACROSS AMERICA: ROBINS AIRMEN PRESERVE HISTORIC AIRCRAFT

The Museum of Aviation in Warner Robins will soon add a Douglas C-47 Skytrain to their collection thanks to the preservation efforts of a detachment from Robins Air Force Base.



The Skytrain, bearing tail number 43-15200, has a history of courageous service and took part in three airborne operations in World War II.

First dropping soldiers during the Normandy assault as part of Operation Overlord, she later played a crucial role in the airborne resupply Bastogne, and took again to the skies during Operation Varsity, the largest single-day airborne invasion into Germany.

After active duty, the C-47 was displayed at Kulis Air National Guard Base in Anchorage and was relocated to Wasilla in the early 1980s.

This new home will help preserve the C-47 for many generations to come.

GEORGIA PIEDMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE GAINS NEW STEM GRANT

Thanks to a million-dollar grant provided by the NSF Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies (ExLENT), veterans in Georgia have the opportunity to receive training in mechatronics.

The grant, known as MILE (Mechatronics Immersive Learning Experience), allows veterans at Georgia Piedmont Technical College to switch career paths to a field that merges mechanics, electronics, and computer science.

The training, education and career readiness will be managed primarily through the college’s economic development division where six cohorts of 10 students each will be enrolled in the 16-week long program, during which time they’ll be paid \$24/hour for their training.

Georgia will need skilled mechatronics experts for the state’s growing automobile manufacturing industry. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the wage for electro-mechanical and mechatronics technologists and technicians in Georgia is about \$80,000 per year.

For more information, please visit www.gptc.edu.