



Georgia Department of Veterans Service

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

July 2025

A SALUTE TO EXCELLENCE: STATE VETERAN CEMETERIES EARN NATIONAL DISTINCTION

Georgia’s Veteran Memorial Cemeteries in Glennville and Milledgeville received national recognition for their outstanding care for the legacies of those who served our country. Georgia is the only state to have all state veteran memorial cemeteries receive Operational Excellence Awards in the same review period.

On July 23 and 24, 2025, James Earp, director of VA’s National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Grants Program, presented cemetery staff with Operational Excellence Awards at public ceremonies.

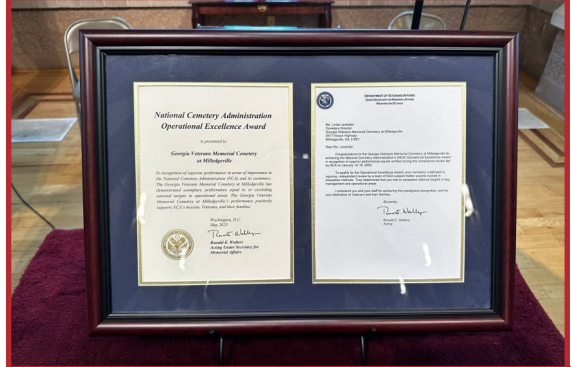
“We proudly recognize the exceptional dedication of our staff, whose unwavering commitment to excellence upholds the standards set forth by the National Cemetery Administration,” said Dr. Patricia Ross, Georgia Commissioner of Veterans Service.

“Through their compassionate service and meticulous attention to detail, they ensure that each burial is conducted with honor, dignity, and respect. Every veteran deserves to be remembered with respect, and we are privileged to uphold that promise.”

The NCA presents Operational Excellence Awards to state veteran cemeteries that meet or exceed national standards during their triennial review. During the thorough review process, cemeteries are examined and rated for how well they follow key management and operational standards. This includes interment operations, grounds and equipment maintenance, and headstone alignment. The ceremonies were both held at the cemetery’s committal shelter.

Director Earp also toured the cemetery’s expansion projects during his visit.

GVMC–Milledgeville, now expanding into phase 4B, serves as the final resting place for 5,890 veterans and their family members. GVMC– Glennville is currently undergoing its first expansion and is home to 2,788 interred veterans and their loved ones.



SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE: BILL SMITH SELECTED AS GDVS EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

The GDVS recently selected William "Bill" Smith as the department's employee of the quarter.

Since 2019, Smith has helped veterans and their families, caretakers, and survivors in northwest Georgia.

He currently serves as the office manager of the recently relocated GDVS Rock Springs office, located on the campus of Georgia Northwestern Technical College.

Smith is known for his kindness and willingness to go the extra mile to ensure veterans and their families receive the care and attention they need. Veterans know he is always ready to listen and pursue their claims, while explaining the process and keeping them informed of progress along the way.

When he is not serving veterans in North Georgia, Smith and his wife of 29 years participate in dog sporting events. A Chattanooga, Tennessee native, Smith retired from the Army as Sergeant First class after serving 23 years on active duty.

His advice to new and future VSOs?

"Be a good listener to help you see what the veteran's problem is or what issues they are having, which will help you guide them through the veterans claims process," said Smith.



RESPECTING YOUR LEGACY: HOW TO CORRECT MILITARY RECORDS

Do you think the military made a mistake in your records? There is a process to correct your records to properly reflect your service.

You can request a review and correction of your administrative information, decorations and awards, performance evaluation, disabilities, your separation and discharges, and more.

Starting the process begins with submitting a DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record, along with sufficient evidence to your Service Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records.

Both the Army and Air Force offer online application portals and the Navy accepts applications via email.

DUTY, SACRIFICE, LEGACY: CPL. ANTHONY KONZE LAID TO REST AFTER 75 YEARS MISSING IN ACTION



After 75 years, the remains of Korean War veteran U.S. Army Corporal Anthony Konze were laid to rest with full military honors at the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton on July 18, 2025.

The oldest of 8 children, Konze was born in 1930 and enlisted in the U.S. Army on October 5, 1949.

He was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, and 2nd Infantry Division during the Korean War.

Konze was reported missing near Changyon, South Korea, in September 1950.

His remains were discovered in 1951 near Sin'gi-ri, South Korea, along with two other soldiers. In 1954, his remains were returned to American authorities as part of a United Nations Command exchange of fallen service personnel.

Konze was interred as an unknown at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii.

His remains were disinterred in 2021 and officially identified on December 18, 2024, after the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency performed extensive scientific analysis.

Konze is survived by three sisters and one niece. His name is inscribed on the Korean War Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

TOP HONORS: GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY RECOGNIZED FOR VETERAN PROGRAMS

Georgia State University (GSU) was recently announced as one of the top colleges offering exceptional support for veterans and military students.

GSU received a 4 Star Employer award from VETS Indexes for their efforts to increase morale and retention of veteran employees. They provide support, networking, and career development opportunities for those who served, as well as their families.

The University offers Military Outreach Centers on each of their six campuses to connect veterans and their families with supportive services and camaraderie with their fellow military and veteran students.