

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



Patricia Ross,
Commissioner of
Veterans Service

May has been a whirlwind of events and June appears to be the same. On May 13-14, I joined some of my teammates from the north region, the training team, and the central office to participate in a veteran resource fair in Cobb County. We saw around 400 veterans over two days in our claims corner and more than 2,000 attended. It was great to get out into the community and everyone was very grateful for our VSOs on-site, providing excellent service.

We also had the honor of traveling to recognize Korean and Vietnam veteran Ms. Helen Pope with our Women Veterans Coordinator, Ms. Veda Brooks; the Director of Training, Ms. Ramona Roper; and the North Region Director, Ken Childre; along with Barbara Serrano and Jarrett Hunter from the Newnan Office.

We also said farewell to Bob Norman, J.D., who served both with our training team and appeals division. We wish him the best of luck!

June has us busy applying for a grant to help with suicide prevention, accepting a grant from the state to get the UniteUS case management and referral system, and rolling out a new time and labor system.

It's a busy time and I am so proud of the work our department does every day without missing a beat!



GDVS REMEMBERS OUR FALLEN HEROES

“As we honor all those who came before, those who paid that ultimate price, let us too remember those who follow in their footsteps and stand ready in service for the security of our freedom. May God bless our fallen service members, our current active-duty service members, their families, and the United States of America. May we all live a life worthy of their sacrifice.”

- Patricia Ross, GDVS Commissioner

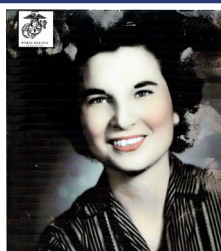
For the past two years, our annual public Memorial Day remembrance ceremonies at our Milledgeville and Glennville veteran cemeteries have been on hold due to the pandemic.

This year, family and friends were welcomed back to gather and pay tribute to the veterans and their families buried there.

After the remembrance ceremonies, both cemeteries welcomed guests to enjoy the grounds, studded with American flags at every headstone in remembrance of the courage, bravery, and sacrifice of Georgia's military service members and veterans.



A CELEBRATION OF SERVICE: HELEN POPE



The GDVS had the recent pleasure of meeting and honoring Ms. Helen Pope for her honorable service in both the Korean War and Vietnam War. Ms.

Pope served in the United States Marine Corps, attaining the rank of sergeant. She recently celebrated her 97th birthday and lives with her son.



GDVS MAKES A POSITIVE IMPACT AT THE WE CARE VETERANS RESOURCE FAIR

When he was reduced to a 40% disability rating after being at 100% for 5 years, Army veteran John Byrd didn't know what to do. "I felt lost and had nowhere to go," he said. Then he met and received hands-on assistance from GDVS veteran service officers at the recent *We Care Veteran Resource Fair* in Cobb County.

"They helped me put in an appeal, which makes it a lot easier. They were patient and very astute on what to do," he said.

Similar words of gratitude echoed through the Cobb County Civic Center during the two-day veteran resource fair on May 13 -14. The GDVS was among hundreds of professional organizations and agencies in attendance to give solutions to the veteran community.

The GDVS assisted nearly 400 veterans over the two day fair. Veterans of all ages, ranks, and branches of service, no matter where or when they served, came to find help with their questions.

GDVS Director of Professional Development and Training, Ramona Roper, said the event exceeded her expectations. "Some veterans came with paperwork, others came with family members, but most came on their own with nothing but a question, a concern, or a simple need for help. I am glad we could make connections and get them the benefits they have earned," she said.

"Being able to bring the claim process out to the public was the best part," said North Region Director Ken Childre. "For those veterans who either don't know we have offices or are too afraid to come into our offices, this gave them a chance to 'stumble into' our room and see what we are all about."

For many veterans, filing a claim was challenging because they may not have known what to do, thought it was too difficult, or that it was too late.

"Some veterans have been separated from service for quite some time and had no idea it was easy to get assistance filing claims," explained Assistant Director of Professional Development and Training, Steven Fay, who

spent time showing and helping veterans how to take the steps they need to make the process simple - steps Air Force veteran Joe Revit "blew off" when he left the military.

"When I left the service, I didn't do anything with the VA. I thought I would get to it later, but having this as a conduit makes it easy," he said.

GDVS Commissioner Patricia Ross gave a huge thanks to the GDVS training team, appeals division, and the North region veteran service officers who attended the fair. "It felt like a team coming together for the greater good of the veteran and military community."



COMING EVENTS

Women Veterans Conference

On June 25, the GDVS will host a conference for women veterans from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Terrace Room, located at the City Springs Conference Center in Sandy Springs City Hall.

Come prepared to learn more about the specialized medical care available to women veterans and new developments in women's healthcare coming soon to a VA medical center near you. Mental health and wellness seminars will also be available.

A FOND FAREWELL TO BOB NORMAN

Robert "Bob" Norman has truly enjoyed his seven and a half years with GDVS. To him, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve and provide outstanding service to Georgia's veterans and their families.

Bob served 11 and a half years as an Army transportation corps officer and later received a law degree from the University of Georgia. Before joining the GDVS, he worked in the IRS Office of Chief Counsel. He first joined the GDVS as an Appeals officer, before transferring to the training division.

As for the future, Bob looks forward to spending time with his wife and dog—but don't count him out yet. Later down the road, he plans to devote some time to volunteer service.