



**Georgia Department
of Veterans Service**

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

March 2026

LEADING BEYOND THE UNIFORM: TRACEY LLOYD SELECTED AS GEORGIA’S 2026 WOMAN VETERAN OF THE YEAR

On March 13, 2026, the Georgia Department of Veterans Service hosted the Georgia Woman Veteran of the Year luncheon, honoring women whose commitment to serving their communities has continued long after their military careers.

Tracey Lloyd was announced as the 2026 Georgia Woman Veteran of the Year.

“My selection reflects the strength, resilience, and leadership of the women veterans I am privileged to stand with every day,” said Lloyd.

A combat veteran and West Point graduate, Lloyd has carried her commitment to service well beyond active duty. She champions direct mental health support, shapes statewide strategy, forges cross-sector partnerships, mentors emerging leaders, and safeguards the legacy of sacrifice.

“My commitment has always been rooted in service. My parents and the Army taught me that leadership is not about position, but about responsibility, courage, and putting people first,” said Lloyd.

Her unwavering dedication led to the creation of The Warrior Alliance Women Veterans Think Tank and Signature Series, which brings together leaders from corporate, healthcare, government, education, and military-affiliated sectors to co-design a coordinated statewide blueprint for improving support systems for women veterans. She played a key role in shaping both the structure and direction of this blueprint, ensuring that the lived experiences of women veterans remained at its core.

Lloyd also serves as the Executive Director of The Emily J.T. Perez Foundation. Established in

2007, the Foundation honors the legacy of 2nd Lt. Emily Perez, a fellow West Point graduate and the first black female officer to lose her life in combat.

“We are continuing to grow programs that advance Emily’s legacy through direct impact. Our Resilience Bootcamp supports women veterans in their mental wellness and personal growth journeys, while Camp Emily’s Way helps middle and high school girls build confidence, leadership skills, and exposure to STEM in a nurturing and empowering environment,” said Lloyd.

This year marks 20 years since 2nd Lt. Perez was killed in action, and Lloyd looks forward to honoring her sacrifice by building programs, partnerships, and solutions that create lasting impact for women veterans and the next generation of leaders.

“Your service matters, your story matters, and your leadership is still needed. Do not underestimate the value of what you carry from your military experience. There is purpose after service, and there is real power in continuing to lead in new ways,” said Lloyd.



WHERE SERVICE MEETS IMPACT: HONORING VEDIA BARNETT

A non-profit leader with over 30 years of experience in program management, Vedia Barnett was selected to receive the Veteran Impact Award as part of the Georgia Woman Veteran of the Year celebration on March 13, 2026.

“Being selected is not just about me—it’s about visibility. It’s about making sure women veterans, especially those of us who have not always been seen or heard, are acknowledged for both our service and our continued impact in our communities,” said Vedia Barnett.

Barnett founded The Vet Space to help women veterans find spaces that were intentional, affirming, and inclusive of lived experiences. In addition to her outstanding service through the years, Barnett showed remarkable resilience by receiving a Master’s degree while recovering from a stroke.

Her impact has been profound as she has worked tirelessly to expand equitable access to outdoor spaces for veterans, recognizing that nature is not a luxury—it is medicine. She has led campaigns and policy initiatives supporting veterans’ equitable access to outdoor spaces, and raised over \$700,000 to support program development, operations, and community initiatives.

“We have to continue creating spaces, telling our stories, and advocating in ways that ensure our sister veterans are not only seen, but truly heard. Because when women veterans are supported, entire communities are strengthened,” said Barnett.



GDVS SPOTLIGHT: BUSINESS SUPPORT ANALYST KAITLIN LITTLE

It is the motivation for public service that led Georgia Department of Veterans Service Business Support Analyst Kaitlin Little to use her skills to help support Georgia’s veterans and their families.

She received a Bachelor’s in political science and a Master’s in Public Administration from Georgia State University. Before joining the GDVS, Little worked for the Georgia State Senate’s Budget and Evaluation Office.

Little has played a crucial role in a variety of tasks since joining the agency. She helps develop the department’s strategic plan, convert Fox Grant program data, supports the department’s legislative proposals, and tracks pending legislation impacting military servicemembers and veterans.

“I feel lucky to be able to do my part in this organization to serve veterans and their families,” said Little.

A New Jersey native, Little now calls Atlanta home after living here for over 20 years. On her off days, she enjoys throwing pottery and playing games with her niece and nephew.



VETERANS HONORED AT ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

On March 12, 2026, women veterans throughout the state of Georgia were celebrated and honored for their service and accomplishments at the Annual Women’s Legislative Breakfast.

10 veterans, including GDVS Business Support Analyst Irene Mackson, were honored at the event with a ceremonial copy of Senate Resolution 719 from State Senator Tonya Anderson and State Representative Sandra Scott.

Mackson was recognized for her accomplishments during 21 years of service in the Air Force, in addition to her continued service to Georgia’s veterans and their families.

“it is a serious obligation to serve our country. Women who serve know they are courageous leaders and role models for other young ladies,” said Mackson

The annual event is sponsored by Georgia State Senator Tonya Anderson and Representative Sandra Scott.

