



Georgia Department of Veterans Service

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

November 2022

GEORGIA CELEBRATES: VETERANS DAY 2022

Veterans Day honors and recognizes America’s veterans – their patriotism, their love of country, and their willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Whether they are wearing the uniform today or wore it decades ago, America’s veterans have never hesitated to answer a call to duty and defend the principles of freedom, justice, and liberty for all.

The true strength of America’s military has always been the spirit, valor, and resilience of the American veteran.

We must always remember to honor our veterans as President Jimmy Carter once said, “not only with special ceremonies... but also by committing ourselves anew to the task of ensuring that the freedoms they helped to preserve and the nation they fought to defend will be safe and secure for future generations.”

The Georgia Department of Veterans Service honors our veterans today and every day. We connect veterans with the essential benefits they have earned during their time in service, but we also help connect veterans to each other and their local communities.

Through [Unite Georgia](#), a new referral platform, the Georgia Department of Veterans Service will now be able to help veterans find social care and resources close to home through a robust network of community partners. Our goal is to blanket the state with connections to resources and provide veterans in Georgia with a rich landscape of opportunity.

It is our privilege to say “thank you” to our veterans, to let them know we are grateful and acknowledge their sacrifices and accomplishments.

You served us dutifully and faithfully.

Now it is our turn to serve you.



UNITE GEORGIA

The Georgia Department of Veterans Service and Unite Us, are partnering to help meet the unmet needs of Georgia’s veteran population through a coordinated care network called **Unite Georgia**.

The GDVS received an award of \$6.1 million through the Georgia State Fiscal Recovery Fund’s Negative Economic Impact grant program. The grants are aimed at addressing financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and are intended to assist in speeding the recovery of the employment, tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors, as well as other industries.

[Unite Georgia](#) is a coordinated care network that allows veterans and their families to connect directly to the resources they need in a matter of days, instead of weeks or months. Currently, there are more than 720 programs available in the statewide network, and that number continues to grow each day.

The Unite Us platform securely connects the veteran population to much-needed resources and services, such as assistance with veterans benefits, employment, education, and mental and behavioral health programs. The program enables the GDVS to pinpoint where veterans need help and implement improvements for future services through community partnerships.

“Unite Us makes it simpler for Georgia’s veterans and their families to find care wherever they are,” said **Georgia Department of Veterans Service Commissioner Patricia Ross**. “If you’re currently serving, recently separated from military service, or have been out for years, help is available through a robust network of community partners.”

[Unite Georgia](#) will initially be available through the 55 GDVS veterans field service offices located across the state. Following the launch, Unite Us will partner with the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and Georgia’s Workforce Boards to expand access to services.

GET TO KNOW YOUR VSO



“No claim is too small,” said St. Marys veteran service officer **Roger “Steve” Futch**.

Futch is passionate about “vets helping vets” and never giving up. Futch credits GDVS trainer Charles Isaac as the reason for his success as a veterans service officer. He learned to listen first, ask questions, and never get angry at “our fellow brothers and sisters in arms that come to us for advice.”

Born in Onion Country and raised in Brunswick, Futch says Greece was the best place he has traveled. It was his first over seas assignment. A Georgia Bulldog fan, Futch retired as a Technical Sergeant after serving 20 years in the Air Force.

Want to make an appointment at our St. Marys office? Contact Steve Futch at 912-510-3440 or via email at roger.futch@vs.state.ga.us.

LIFETIME NATIONAL PARK PASS FOR VETERANS

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Services and Gold Star Families can now obtain a free lifetime pass to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites, including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests.

In 2020, the National Park Service announced that veterans and Gold Star Families would receive free access to their 423 sites across the county. The Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks Act, passed in December 2021, authorized the continued free access to federal lands to veterans and Gold Star Families.

The new pass expands eligible locations, makes the free access permanent, and also compliments the free annual passes available to active duty military. For more information on what is covered and what ID you’ll need to verify your service, visit [NPS.gov](https://www.nps.gov).

