



Georgia Department of Veterans Service

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

September 2023

GDVS VSOS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

GDVS Veteran Service Officers are one of the greatest resources available for veterans and families.

This month, we’re highlighting the outstanding service of Americus office manager Melissa Ingle and Warner Robins office manager Mark Holmes.

A veteran who received excellent service from Ingle in the Americus office called our South Region Director to praise her cheerful and knowledgeable manner.

“She is simply the best,” said the veteran. Ingle is always able to answer questions and guide a claim to a satisfactory conclusion.

A veteran who visited our Warner Robins office shared his experience working with office manager Mark Holmes.

“He was thorough, stayed on task, all while remaining polite and pleasing. If I had known how painless this filing was going to be, I would have done this 8 years ago,” said the veteran.

To find your local GDVS office and start your claim, visit veterans.georgia.gov/field-offices.

GDVS HOSTS FIRST ANNUAL SSG FOX FORUM

“He was a big hearted hero,” said David Fox of his son, Army Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox, who died by suicide at the age of 25 in 2020.

Fox shared these memories during a recent forum at the Georgia State Capitol focused on suicide prevention awareness, outreach, and mental health resources for active-duty military service members, veterans, and their families.

SSG Fox’s parents opened the forum with fond recollections of SSG Fox’s life, his generosity, and his profound care for others while stressing the importance of seeking help if or when you are overwhelmed.

“We need a variety of services to identify and address issues earlier with different approaches that cater to each unique case. We’ve got to surround our heroes and pause or stop them before they make a choice that cannot be undone,” said Fox.

The forum was hosted by the Georgia Department of Veteran Services and GreenVeterans, and featured speakers from the Department of Defense’s Suicide Prevention Office, VHA’s Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Disabilities, and Kennesaw State University’s Center for the Advancement of Military and Emergency Services (AMES). Chairman of the State Board of Veterans Service and GreenVeterans CEO Shawn Hanley moderated the forum.

Congressmen Austin Scott and Sanford Bishop joined the conference virtually to share messages of support and the importance of providing resources for mental and behavioral health care.

Panelists presented data on suicidality in active-duty service members, veterans and statistics showing they are a distinct group in need of specialized care. The panel also covered current options for care and plans for new research and therapies.



GDVS CUTS THE RIBBON FOR NEW FACILITIES

The Georgia War Veterans Home in Milledgeville recently celebrated the grand opening of a new kitchen!



GDVS Commissioner Patricia Ross and Executive Director of Health and Memorials Russell Feagin joined representatives from STG International for a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 12.

Previously, meals were prepared at off-site at a nearby diner and shuttled over for delivery.

They will now be cooked on campus in the new full-production kitchen, only steps away from the home’s 150 veteran residents.

GDVS NAMES EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Join us in congratulating Steven Hungarter who has been named as the GDVS Employee of the Quarter for Q3 2023!

Hungarter started with the department in September 2017 and currently manages our Cartersville office. He is also a member of the inaugural class for the GDVS Leadership Institute.

Hungarter provides swift, thorough, and thoughtful information when asked for help with a claim. His status updates to veterans and their families ensure they feel confident throughout the entire claims process.

He was shocked and honored to receive the recognition. Hungarter is pleased to know his "chain of command holds me in such high regard."

GET TO KNOW YOUR VSO: ELIZABETH HUMBLE

For Elizabeth Humble, working for the Georgia Department of Veterans Service’s Dalton office is more than job—it’s a rewarding experience to have the opportunity to help a veteran, surviving spouse, or family member.



Humble just celebrated her 10th year with GDVS. Although she is not a veteran, she comes from generations of veterans who proudly served this nation. Her father was a navy veteran; her grandfather an army veteran; and she is the descendent of Revolutionary War soldier, Jacob Humble.

Born and raised in North Georgia, Humble says she is most passionate about doing the right thing and being a mom to her daughter, Olivia, who is in her 4th year at the University of Georgia.

Her advice to new and future VSOs? "Working with the public requires patience. Always provide courteous and professional service to everyone."

GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR ATHENS VETERANS

GDVS Commissioner Ross and the GDVS Athens team joined Jim 'N Nicks BBQ to celebrate the opening of a new Athens location.

As part of the ribbon-burning and opening ceremony, Jim 'N Nicks donated \$2,500 to the Georgia Veterans Service Foundation for use in supporting veterans in the Athens area.

The money will be granted to organizations, like Bigger Vision of Athens, to use in support of their mission to provide care to homeless veterans.



STATE QUEEN VISITS WAR HOMES

Residents at the Georgia War Veterans Homes were recently graced with "Georgia royalty" during a visit from Rebecca Berry-Joliff, Ms. Georgia Senior America 2023.



A veteran herself, she has been entertaining veterans at homes across the state with song and dance.

Berry-Joliff served on active duty for 10 years in the U.S. Marines and is the first veteran to win a major pageant.

Currently a volunteer for the Atlanta Veterans Administration, Berry-Joliff will be competing in the Miss America Senior Nationals pageant later this month.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov. 1** – [Veterans Small Business Week Celebration with SBA](#), Warner Robins VECTR Center, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- Nov. 4** – [Women Veterans Symposium](#), Saint Philip AME Church, Atlanta, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Nov. 4** – [United Military Care’s Veteran Appreciation Celebration](#), East Cobb Park, Marietta, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Nov. 5** – [Cherry Blossom Veterans Day Parade](#), Macon, 3 p.m.
- Nov. 6** – [State of Georgia’s Veterans Day Ceremony](#), Georgia State Capitol, North Wing, Atlanta, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.
- Nov. 9** – [Unite Us One Continuum Community](#), virtual, 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.
- Nov. 10** – [Veteran Legal Services Clinic](#), Marietta, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Nov. 11** – [Veterans Day Association Expo](#), Atlanta, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Nov. 11** – [42nd Annual Georgia Veterans Day Parade](#), Atlanta, 11 a.m.