



Carl Vinson VA Medical Center, 1826 Veterans Blvd., Dublin, GA 31021



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 2, 2024

2nd annual PACT Act Summer VetFest held at Dublin VA

Dublin, Ga. — The Dublin VA Medical Center held its second annual PACT Act Summer VetFest to promote awareness of benefits available to veterans under the expansive new law and to give them an opportunity to file claims directly with the VA.

The event was coordinated by the Dublin VA's Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) and included information about the PACT Act, VA programs and services, and a Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) claims clinic where veterans could discuss and file claims with VBA staff. Food and entertainment were available, including a performance by country music sensation Rebecca Howell, a former contestant on the *Voice*. Other entertainment included a car show featuring the Warner Robins Veterans Corvette Club.

Howell performed audience requests and met with attendees after an interactive set with the audience that included a lot of humor mixed with her superb singing. She thanked veterans for their service and listened to their stories about their time in the military.

The car show included new and older vehicles as well as emergency vehicles from the Dublin Fire Department and Laurens County Sheriff's Office. First place winner was Bubba Paulk with his 1948 Chevrolet 3100. Second place went to Jeffery Wyckoff's 1955 Buick Century and third to Mark Padgett and his 1967 Chevrolet Super Sport. Lt. Steven Cady of the Carl Vinson VA Police Service took first in the Motorcycle Division with his 2003 Harley Davidson Softail.

CDCE chief Keith Griffin was pleased with the turnout and the number of veterans who met with VBA.

"We had nearly one hundred veterans meet with VBA staff and many of them filed their claims, and that's what it's all about. This new law provides expansive new benefits for our veterans suffering from toxic exposures, so we want them to take advantage of it. We're trying to convince them that the time to file is now, not later. By doing the paperwork now, they'll be ready if the worst happens," Griffin said.

Griffin said that the VA will continue to host PACT Act events around Middle and South Georgia to ensure that veterans and their families know about the benefits.

“We’re looking forward to one in Albany at American Legion Post 512 on July 11 and another at the Margaret Jones Public Library in Sylvester on July 25th,” Griffin said.

“We want to collaborate with the community to get these events as close to our veterans as we can.”

The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act is the most significant expansion of benefits and services for toxic exposed veterans in more than 30 years. The town hall meeting will provide information about the Act and Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) staff will be on-hand to conduct a claims clinic to directly enroll veterans to determine their eligibility, as well as address any other claims concerns veterans may have.

The PACT Act expanded VA benefits for millions of veterans, making more than 300 health conditions “presumptive” for service connection. This means that if an [eligible](#) veteran has one of these health conditions, VA automatically assumes that the condition was caused by the veteran’s service and provides compensation and care accordingly. VA encourages veterans and their survivors to apply for these benefits now at VA.gov/PACT. More information on eligibility for the special enrollment period can be found at VA.gov/PACT.

For more information about how the PACT Act is helping veterans and their survivors, visit VA’s [PACT Act Dashboard](#). To apply for care or benefits today, visit VA.gov/PACT or call 1-800-MYVA411.

For questions, additional information, or to volunteer to host an event, contact Keith Griffin at Keith.Griffin@va.gov. Interested persons are encouraged to follow the medical center on Facebook at “Dublin VA Medical Center” for additional information and updates.

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Photos:

- 1) VA interim director Scott Reesman discusses PACT Act with veterans at VetFest
- 2) Singing sensation Rebecca Howell entertains at PACT Act event
- 3) Veterans gather to speak with VBA reps
- 4) VA car show featured vehicles old and new
- 5) VetFest offered fun and information
- 6) Bubba Paulk won 1st place at VA car show

7) Warner Robins Veterans Corvette Club at VA car show

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