



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

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 13, 2026

LPN Mama Caldron Ricks, long-time Dublin VA nurse, retires after 50 years

Caldron Ricks, affectionately known as “Mama Cal” by colleagues, said the nickname stuck because of her caring nature.

“Nursing fit me. I love taking care of people and I guess folks see that,” Ricks said.

As a child, Ricks often passed the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center, then known to local folks as “the Old Soldiers’ Home.” She said she never expected to work there.

Ricks started her Dublin VA career in 1976 and never left, recently completing a 50-year career. “I just felt the calling and decided that was where I need to be,” Ricks said.

Her first assignment was on the orthopedic ward, caring for patients in traction, then moved to surgical and medical units. Her responsibilities eventually included traveling with patients to clinics in Decatur, Georgia, alongside a small group of coworkers.

Ricks noted the family atmosphere was one of the most attractive aspects for her.

“From the start everyone treated me like family and that’s how I treated them. It just felt good to feel so right at home,” Ricks said.

Veterans still remember her care.

“A lot of them stop by to remind me that I cared for them. It really feels good,” she said. Ricks said she doesn’t recall all their names but will never forget their faces.

During her tenure, Ricks witnessed major changes in health care, including the introduction of new technologies and shifts in patient care documentation.

“I didn’t come in with computers. I came with pen and pencil. We had to write down everything we knew about the patient, put it in a box and get it out the next day,” she said.

The VA Dublin campus grew from a handful of buildings and about 500 employees to more than 2,400.

Now retiring, Ricks said she hopes to continue serving others.

“I want to work with young people. Teach them how to read, help them learn to write. I’ve helped the older people, now I want to help some of the young people,” she said.

Ricks was recently honored with a plaque recognizing her five decades of service to veterans and was featured in the VA's national *VA Insider* newsletter.

VA director Chandra Miller described Ricks as a shining example of what nursing should be.

"We will deeply miss Mama Cal. As a fellow career nurse, I am profoundly inspired by her unwavering dedication to our veterans and the exemplary leadership she has shown to our staff. Mama Cal embodies the qualities every nurse strives for—compassion, commitment, and integrity. Though her presence is irreplaceable, her legacy will endure, and she will forever remain a cherished member of our Dublin VA team," Miller said.

"It went fast but I loved every minute. I definitely found the place I needed to be," she said.

###

Photo credit: Allison Burnett

Photos:

- 1) Ricks faithfully served veterans for 50 years at Dublin VA

Media Contact:

Dr. Frank G. Jordan, Jr., FACHE
Communications Director
1826 Veterans Blvd., Dublin, GA 31021
478-272-1210 ext. 74404 or Frank.Jordan2@va.gov