



# TEXAS STATE VETERANS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

## SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

May 9, 2025

**The Honorable Dawn Buckingham, M.D.**

Chairwoman

**The Honorable Laura Koerner**  
Chairwoman  
Texas Veterans Commission  
U.S. Navy Veteran

**Kevin Barber**  
Member  
Texas Veterans Commission  
U.S. Army Veteran

**LTC (Ret.) Kitty Meyers**  
Citizen Member  
U.S. Air Force Veteran

**James Rothfelder**  
Member  
Texas Veterans Land Board

**Admiral (Ret.) Jud Scott**  
Member  
Texas Veterans Land Board  
U.S. Navy Veteran

**Dawn Buckingham, M.D.**  
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Texas State Veterans Cemetery Committee  
Texas Veterans Land Board

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## TEXAS STATE VETERANS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

### **NOTICE OF SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**

The Texas State Veterans Cemetery Committee will conduct a special called meeting on May 9, 2025, at 1:30 P.M. to be held in person at Stephen F. Austin Building, 1700 N. Congress Ave., Room 940A by video conference call, in accordance with the Texas Government Code §551 (Open Meetings Act). The Chairwoman of the Texas State Veterans Cemetery Committee, or her designate, shall preside over the meeting and be physically present at the location listed below. Access to the meeting by members of the public will be published in advance in the Texas Register in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. A webcast link to access the meeting will be posted on the Texas General Land Office's website the morning of the meeting. Any member of the public who wishes to address the Texas State Veterans Cemetery Committee on a matter within the authority of the committee must do so at the location listed above and should indicate so at the start of the meeting or during any public comment period.

### **AGENDA**

1. Call to order and quorum established.
2. Approval of minutes from the meeting of June 25, 2024.
3. Citizen communication (Two Minutes each. No deliberations with the Committee. The Committee may respond only with factual statements, recitation of existing policy, and requests for an item to be placed on a future agenda.)
4. Chair and Committee Member Opening Comments.
5. Consideration and possible action to designate a plot of land in Northeast Texas as the location of the sixth Texas State Veterans Cemetery contingent upon the donation of the land.
6. Chair and Committee Member Closing Comments.
7. Adjournment.

*An unscheduled Closed Executive Session may be called to discuss any item on this posted agenda provided it is within one of the permitted categories under Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.*

*The above agenda schedule represents an estimate of the order for the indicated items and is subject to change at any time. All agenda items are subject to final action by the Committee. Separate agenda items may be combined and discussed together at the discretion of the Chair. Any final action, decision, or vote on a matter deliberated in closed Executive Session shall be made in an open meeting pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code. Certain information may be presented to and by the Committee, under the headings of "Citizen Communications", and "Chair and Committee Member Comments" however, by law, the Committee shall not discuss, deliberate, or vote upon such matters except that a statement of specific factual information, a recitation of existing policy, and deliberations concerning the placing of the subject on a subsequent agenda may take place.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony W. Dale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**ANTHONY W. DALE**

Executive Secretary  
Texas Veterans Land Board  
U.S. Army Veteran



TEXAS STATE VETERANS CEMETERY COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
Tuesday, June 25, 2024, 10:00 A.M.  
1700 Congress Avenue, Room 170, Austin, TX 78701

1. Opening
  - a. Chairwoman Dawn Buckingham M.D., called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.
  - b. The Chair declared a quorum present.

Members present were:

Chairwoman Dawn Buckingham, M.D.  
Committee Member Laura Koerner  
Committee Member Kathryn “Kitty” Meyers  
Committee Member James Rothfelder  
Committee Member Judson Scott

Also present:

Veterans Land Board Executive Secretary Tony Dale  
Veterans Land Board Assistant Executive Secretary Darren Fitz Gerald  
General Land Office General Counsel Jeff Gordon
  - c. Invocation was led by Chaplain Rabbi Cantor Marie Betcher.
  - d. The Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. and Texas flags.
2. Approval of the minutes from the regular Board meeting of October 28, 2021. Approved with no objections.
3. Citizen Communications. No members of the public testified during citizen communications.
4. Chair and Board Member Opening Comments. General comments were made by Committee Members.
5. Overview on statutory authority of the Committee. A general discussion was conducted amongst the committee members and others in attendance. No action required; therefore, no action was taken by the committee.
6. Consideration and possible action on guidelines related to the location and size of veteran cemeteries and eligibility for burial in veteran cemeteries. Motion was made by Ms. Meyers and seconded by Mr. Scott, to approve, according to staff recommendations. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Consideration and possible action to designate 100 acres in Lubbock as the location of the fifth Texas State Veterans Cemetery. Ms. Koerner and seconded by Mr. Scott, to approve, according to staff recommendations. The motion carried unanimously.
8. Chair and Committee Member Closing Comments.
9. Adjournment. 10:25 A.M.

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Dale  
Veterans Land Board Executive Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn Buckingham, M.D.  
Chairwoman

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## TEXAS STATE VETERANS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

**Date:** May 9, 2025

**To:** Dawn Buckingham, M.D., Chairwoman  
Members of the Texas State Veterans Cemetery Committee

**From:** Dr. John Kelley, Director Texas State Veterans Cemeteries, Texas Veterans Land Board

**Subject:** Agenda item 5 – Consideration and possible action to designate a plot of land in Northeast Texas as the location of the sixth Texas State Veterans Cemetery contingent upon the donation of the land.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends the Committee approve a 64-acre tract of land near Hallsville, Texas as the location of the sixth Texas State Veterans Cemetery contingent upon a donation of land.

### **Background**

National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Directive 3001 provides a strategic goal of reasonable access to a National or VA grant-funded State Veterans cemetery to 95% of the nation's veterans. Reasonable access is defined by the NCA as living within 75 miles of a cemetery. The trigger to justify construction of a national cemetery is if there are 80,000 or more unserved Veteran population living more than 75 miles from a state or national cemetery. Data provided by NCA, as shown in the tables on page 2 of this memo, indicates that there no need, nationwide for a national cemetery as the largest unserved Veteran population is 50,000 in the vicinity of Grayling, Michigan. As such, the NCA will not authorize construction of any new national cemeteries.

The largest unserved Veteran population in Texas is in the Longview area at 32,207. The NCA plan could support two cemeteries in the vicinity of Tyler and New Boston. VLB analysis revealed that one State Veteran Cemetery in the vicinity of Longview would serve the Veterans of northeast Texas. VLB advocated for this and NCA added Longview to the chart as a future potential location.

Rank	Cemetery	FY 24 Vet Pop
1	GRAYLING, MI	50,283
2	UTICA, NY	45,811
3	TOLEDO, OH	42,048
4	HUNTSVILLE, AL	41,270
5	SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA	40,832
6	PROSSER, WA	40,377
7	ERIE, PA	37,528
8	PANAMA CITY, FL	35,647
9	BELLINGHAM, WA	32,599
10	LONGVIEW, TX	32,207
10	NEW BOSTON, TX	31,592
10	TYLER, TX	30,731
11	NAPLES, FL	29,639
12	HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA	27,521
13	EVANSVILLE, IN	27,421
14	ELBA, AL	25,950
15	WENATCHEE, WA	21,980
16	SCRANTON, PA	21,770
17	LUBBOCK, TX	21,214
18	AMARILLO, TX	20,235
19	YUMA, AZ	19,746
20	MIDLAND, TX	18,574

Rank	Cemetery	FY 24 Vet Pop
21	BEND, OR	17,959
22	LANCASTER, OH	15,750
23	WATERLOO, IA	15,239
24	DECATUR, AL	14,322
25	BEAUMONT, TX	13,542
26	AZTEK, NM	13,435
27	SOUIX CITY, IA	13,214
28	GRAND ISLE, NE	12,262
29	MARQUETTE, MI	12,590
30	FAIRBANKS, AK	12,448
31	KALISPELL, MT	11,649
32	REDWAY, CA	11,374
33	SHAWNEE, OK	10,228
34	LANCASTER, WI	10,043
35	BURLINGTON, ND	8,705
36	TIFTON, GA	8,581
37	BOZEMAN, MT	8,560
38	CLOVIS, NM	7,983
39	BEMIDJI, MN	7,678
40	LAREDO, TX	7,215
41	DEL RIO, TX	6,143

Source: National Cemetery Administration using US Census data

On June 25, 2024, the Committee, pursuant to the Texas Natural Resources Code, §164.005(f), adopted guidelines for site selection of future Texas State Veterans Cemeteries. The rules specify that the “Committee reserves the authority to select the location of seven Cemeteries across the state.”

Under state law, Texas Natural Resources Code, §164.005 (h), the Veterans Land Board is prohibited from using funds to purchase land for the purpose of building or expanding State Veterans Cemeteries. As such, the Veterans Land Board is reliant on donations of land.

A private citizen approached the VLB and is offering to donate a 64-acre tract of land near Hallsville, Texas for the sixth Texas State Veterans Cemetery. The proposed donation is sufficient in size to meet NCA requirements and for comparison the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery in Corpus Christi is 54 acres.

The potential land donation meets the Committee’s guidelines. The guidelines state in part that, “the VLB shall determine if any potential donation of land is in the best interest of the Texas State Veterans Cemetery Program.” Staff’s assessment is that this site meets all Committee Guidelines and all VLB requirements. The site also meets NCA guidelines regarding drainage, access, and environmental and historic impacts.

Committee Guidelines	Proposed Cemetery 6
Potential eligibility of the location and size to receive federal grants from the National Cemetery Administration (NCA).	Meets VA-grant funding eligibility.
Any relevant guidance provided by the NCA.	Sufficient to operate as an active cemetery accepting interments for a minimum of 20 years. It is in an area that is not serviced by an existing state or national cemetery. It has a sufficient number of unserved Veterans in the area. Provides a 75-mile service area. Closest cemeteries are Dallas National at 120 miles and the Northwest Louisiana State Veterans Cemetery.
Environmental considerations.	Phase 1 environmental study, requested and funded by VLB, completed in FY25. No findings that would prevent cemetery development.
Zoning designations.	No concerns.
The ability of the VLB to fund maintenance and operations and perpetual care based upon projected expenses and available funds.	VLB has projected expenses related to adding a sixth cemetery. The site development is dependent on VA grant funding.
Community support.	Local area citizens have presented 4,500+ petition signature in support of the site. Local Veteran Service Organizations, to include, but not limited to, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion are in support.



**Location Information**

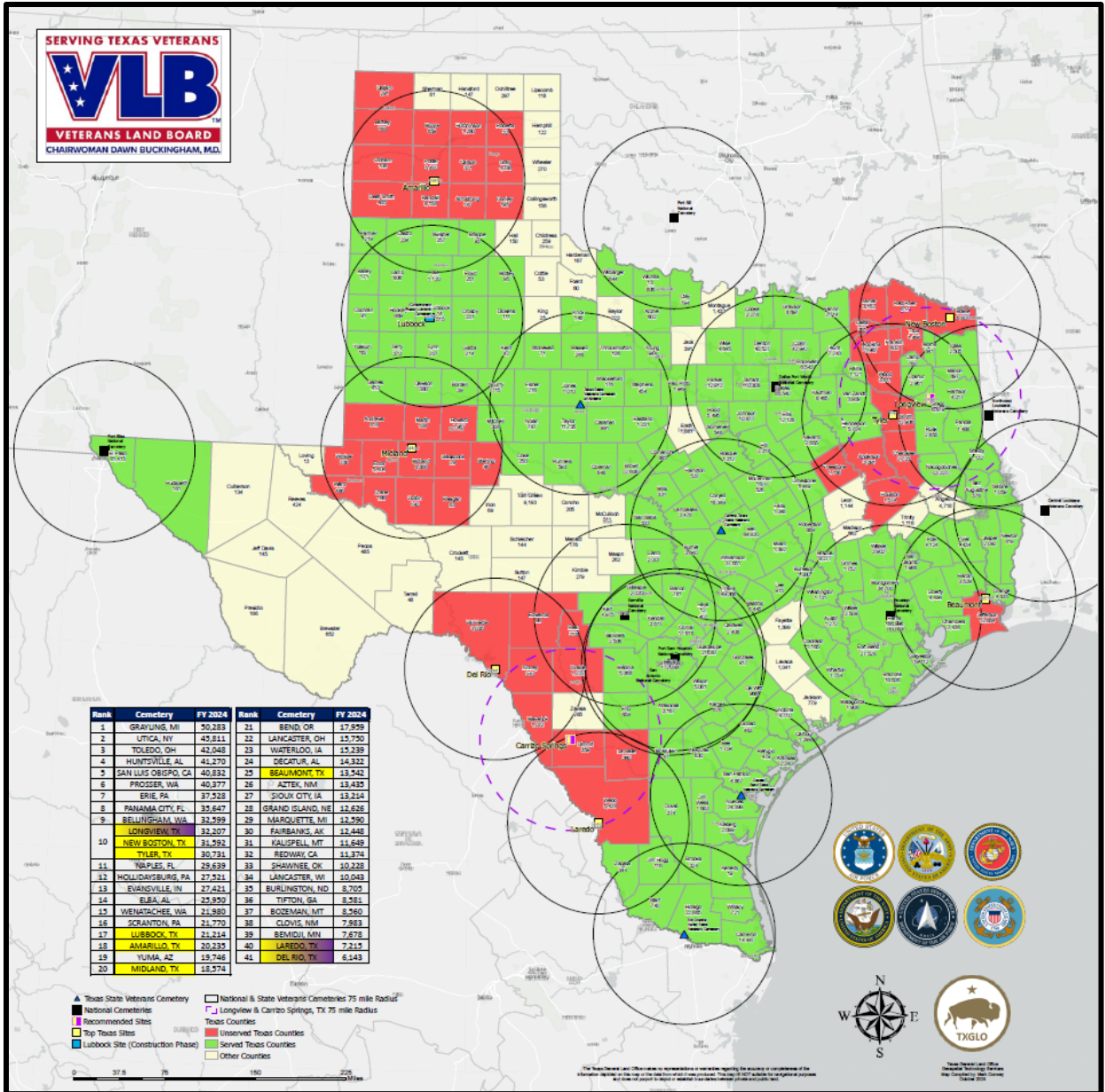
The 64-acre tract is in northeast Texas in Hallsville, approximately 12 miles southeast of Longview. Map 1 indicates the location of Hallsville in relation to the Dallas metro area. Map 2 shows the local area.



*Map 1: Hallsville in relation to Dallas/Fort Worth Metro Area*

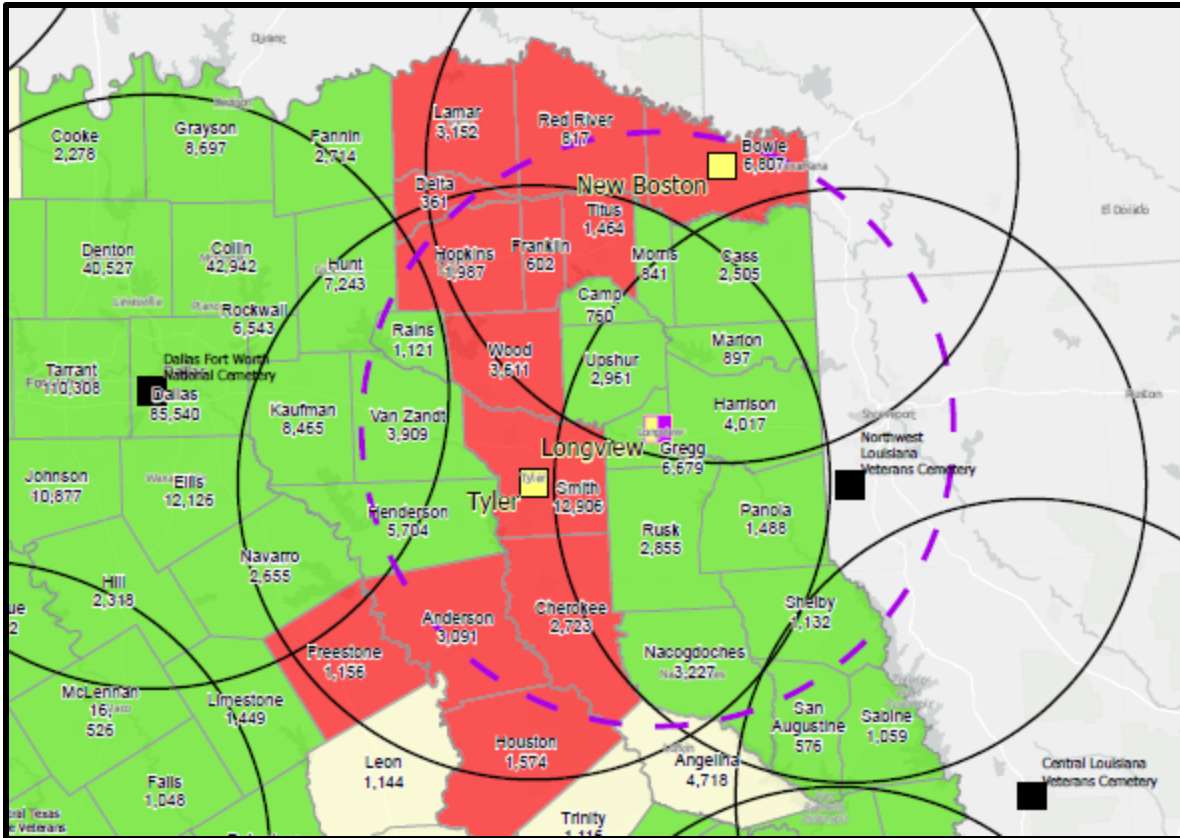


*Map 2: Area detail map.*



Map 3: Texas map showing 75 miles radius around each national and state veterans cemetery. Green indicates "served" veterans. Red indicated veterans that are not served by an existing national or state veterans cemetery.





Map 4: Detail showing Hallsville Area with 75 miles radius around each national and state veterans cemetery. Green indicates "served" veterans. Red indicated veterans that are not served by an existing national or state veterans cemetery.



64 Acre – Blankenship Survey, Abstract 71

**Donor – Ms. Debra Christian**

Ms. Debra Christian contacted the Texas State Veterans Cemetery program over two years ago with the expressed desire to seek the establishment of a Texas State Veterans Cemetery in east Texas. Upon learning that the land would have to be donated according to state law, Ms. Christian offered two properties for consideration. After reconnaissance was conducted on the properties, Ms. Christian offered a 64-acre tract and began the process of clearing the title and partition of the L.B. Blankenship Survey, Abstract 71. She has borne all legal fees at her own expense.

Ms. Christian's family is replete with Veterans and with service to the nation. She is involved with a number of Veteran support programs and projects. She currently uses some of her land to provide trailers for homeless Veterans and she works with women Veterans to assist them with education as they transition from the military to civilian society. She hosts numerous Veterans events including the Korean War Veterans Association in Tyler and various veteran fundraisers.

Until now, prior land donations for cemeteries have come from local governments and the U.S. Army. If approved by the Committee, this would mark the first time in Texas State Veterans Cemeteries history that a private citizen is donating land to honor our Veterans and their families.

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## TEXAS STATE VETERANS CEMETERY COMMITTEE



### **Dawn Buckingham, M.D.**

Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office  
Chairwoman of the Texas Veterans Land Board  
Chairwoman of the Texas State Veterans Cemetery Committee

Commissioner Buckingham’s family were among the first settlers to Texas seven generations ago, and that tough, independent, pioneer spirit is deeply rooted in her personality. True to her Texas roots, her commitment to service began early, serving as a volunteer firefighter, and attending the Texas A&M Fire School. She is also an avid hunter, outdoorswoman, and steward of the land. She made history in 2016 as the first woman elected to the Texas State Senate from Travis County and she made history again in 2022 when elected as this state’s first female Land Commissioner.

Dawn came from humble roots—growing up on a ranch near the Texas coast and then moved to Central Texas. She has never settled for less than her dreams. Wanting to attend college, but without the money to do so, Dawn lived at home, working two jobs to pay her own way through college at the University of Texas at Austin. With endurance of spirit, she graduated Magna Cum Laude and debt-free. It was during college that she met the love of her life and husband of 31 years, Ed Buckingham. Dawn and Ed both received their medical degrees from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, and they have two children. Her commitment to service and recognition for her work has allowed her to hold leadership positions in local, state, and national medical organizations.

Dawn embodies the American Dream. Through hard work, a “never-quit” attitude, and perseverance, she has risen above her circumstances. Becoming a self-made small business owner employing Texans, serving others in her profession and as an elected official, she has always given back to her community.

As your Land Commissioner, Dr. Dawn Buckingham brings a lifetime of experience to the office. She is totally committed to helping Texans after a disaster, supporting Texas energy, ensuring that every child in Texas receives a high-quality public education, and securing the border to keep our communities safe.

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## TEXAS STATE VETERANS CEMETERY COMMITTEE



**Kevin Barber**  
Secretary  
Texas Veterans Commission

Kevin Barber of Houston is the founder of Veteran Energy, LLC, 95 Bravo Resources, and the Power to Give Back Program, an initiative created to provide resources to military veterans and their families. Leveraging his background in energy trading and risk management, Mr. Barber has spent over 25 years in energy commodity trading and banking while holding positions with increasing responsibility at Duke Energy, Integrys Energy (Wisconsin Public Service), Southwest Energy, Silvergate Bank, Panhandle Eastern Trading Company, and Associated Natural Gas.

Over the years he has served on multiple philanthropic boards of directors for veteran services organizations in Texas. He is a recipient of The Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Humanitarian Award. Barber served in the US Army's 1st Military Police Company of the 1st Infantry Division as a Military Police K-9 patrol dog handler. Barber received a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany and an Associate degree in Criminal Justice from SUNY-Adirondack. He resides in Houston with his wife and two daughters.

Kevin Barber is also the recipient of The American Legion National 2014 Winner of the Year for Small Employer of Veterans. The American Legion Texas 2014 Winner of the Year for Small Employer of Veterans. Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Small Business National Employer of the Year recipient. Texas Veterans Commission Small Business Employer of the Year recipient. Rice University's Veterans in Business Association and Entrepreneurs Organization Veteran 2015 Entrepreneur of the Year Finalist. Recipient of Leadership Houston's Leadership in Action Award. Mr. Barber has been recognized by the Houston Business Journals 2014/2015 Who's Who in Energy for Houston, Dallas, Pittsburgh, San Antonio, Columbus, and St. Louis. Winner of the Better Business Bureau's (BBB) Distinction Award for Excellence. Commemorative Partner with the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration's 50th Anniversary Initiative. Mental Health of America for Excellence in Veterans Assistance Award.

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## TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE



### **Jennifer Jones**

Chief Clerk  
Texas General Land Office

Jennifer Jones has more than 30 years of experience in Texas state government. Jennifer joined General Land Office (GLO) in February 2023, and she currently serves as Chief Clerk & Deputy Land Commissioner. Prior to joining the GLO, Jennifer worked at the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission for nearly 30 years where she started as an Executive Assistant and worked her way up to becoming Sunset's first female Executive Director. During her time at the Sunset Commission, Jennifer worked closely with Texas Land Commissioner Buckingham who served both as a public member and a Texas Senate appointee to the Sunset Commission. Jennifer is a native Texan. She was born in San Antonio and grew up in Austin. She graduated with a BA in English from the University of Texas at Austin and received a Master of Public Administration degree from Texas State University.

The Texas General Land Office, established in 1836, is the oldest state agency in Texas, responsible for managing state-owned lands and mineral rights, overseeing disaster recovery funding, veterans' programs, and the preservation of Texas history, including management of the Alamo. The Chief Clerk is a constitutionally mandated position appointed by the Commissioner of the General Land Office. The primary duties of the Chief Clerk include acting as the chief executive officer for the GLO, managing daily agency operations, and overseeing critical administrative functions. She represents the Commissioner in an official capacity on boards during the absence of the Commissioner.

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**Laura Koerner**  
Chairwoman  
Texas Veterans Commission

Laura Koerner of Fair Oaks Ranch is a project manager, engineer, and Councilwoman for the City of Fair Oaks Ranch.

She served in the United States Navy as a Surface Warfare (Nuclear) Officer onboard USS MAHAN (DDG 72) and USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65), earning 2 Navy Commendation Medals and a Navy Achievement Medal.

She is a Blue & Gold Officer with the Admissions Department of the United States Naval Academy and a member of the Project Management Institute, United States Naval Academy Alumni Association, and the Navy Officer Spouses Club of Greater San Antonio.

Koerner received a Bachelor of Science in systems engineering from the United States Naval Academy and a Master of Science in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and was qualified as a Nuclear Propulsion Plant Operator at the Naval Nuclear Power School.



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**Lt. Col. Kitty Meyers, USAF (Ret.)**  
Citizen Member  
President, MOAA Alamo Chapter

Kitty graduated from the University of Maryland-College Park, and served 23 ½ years with tours in New Hampshire, Germany, and Arizona. She was called up for Operation Desert Storm with the assignment of mortuary officer. Her final reserve assignment was as an individual mobilization augmentee (IMA) to the Chief of Air Force Mortuary Affairs at Randolph AFB, Texas.

Kitty retired in 2014 from a career in human resources, where she held executive-level positions in hospitality, government, health care, and nonprofit businesses. Her professional career also includes restaurant management. She has a Master of Arts in Human Resources from Webster University. Her eclectic career also includes adjunct faculty positions at local colleges and universities. Her retirement career has focused on volunteering in a variety of initiatives, organizations, and government agencies focusing on transitioning military and spouses to civilian employment.

Kitty is a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) with the Human Resources Certification Institute and a Senior Certified Professional with the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM-SCP). Her community involvement includes several board and committee positions to include chambers of commerce and professional organizations.

Kitty is president of the Alamo Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), one of the largest chapters in MOAA. She is active in the San Antonio community and Texas, advocating for the military community. She is a member of the Texas Veterans Commission's Veteran Services Advisory Committee and MOAA's Texas Council of Chapters. With her focus on transitioning, she is a member of the San Antonio Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone (MSEEZ) and the JBSA Transition Alliance, and an adviser to the San Antonio Military Spouse Professional Network (MSPN).

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**James Rothfelder**  
Member  
Texas Veterans Land Board

James Rothfelder is a proud New Braunfelser and native Texan. Mr. Rothfelder earned a Bachelor of Arts from The University of Kansas and a master's in finance and management from the University of Illinois.

Mr. Rothfelder works with his family-owned business building custom homes across the great state of Texas. He is honored to be a member and contributor to several of community driven organizations including The Rotary Club of New Braunfels, New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, The Texas Elks Association, The New Braunfels Jaycees, The New Braunfels Noon Lions Club, The Greater New Braunfels Economic Development Foundation, The 100 Club of Comal County, The Coastal Conservation Association, The National Association of Realtors, Texas Realtors, The National Association of Home Builders, The Texas Association of Home Builders, The Greater New Braunfels Home Builders Association, The Salvation Army, The Comal County Education Foundation, The Comal County Conservation Alliance, The New Braunfels Circle Arts Theatre, The Hill Country Alliance, The New Braunfels Astronomy Club, The Humane Society of the New Braunfels Area, Friends of the New Braunfels Public Library & New Braunfels Conservation Association.

Mr. Rothfelder is an honored member of the Board of Directors of CASA of Central Texas, the Comal County Conservation Alliance, and appointed by Governor Abbott, to the Veterans Land Board for the State of Texas.

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**Admiral Judson Scott, U.S. Navy (Ret.)**  
Member  
Texas Veterans Land Board

Judson Scott of Bee Cave is a retired attorney, judge, and rear admiral. He was appointed as a Federal Administrative Law Judge, ruling on cases for the Social Security Administration in their San Francisco, California hearing office. Prior to that, he was a civil litigation attorney in private practice.

He served in the U.S. Navy on active duty with the Submarine Force, then in the Navy Reserve. During his time as a drilling Navy reservist, he had four commands before he was selected as Rear Admiral. His flag assignments include being selected as Deputy Commander of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet Submarine Force and concurrent duties as Director of the Submarine Reserve before he retired.

He is a past chair of the National Conference of the Administrative Law Judiciary for the American Bar Association, which represents the state and federal administrative adjudicators across the country, and a past elected board member of the Cliffs at Princeville resort on Kauai. Previously, he was a member of the State Bar of California and President of the Alameda County Bar Association.

He is the National Judge Advocate General of the Naval Order of the United States and an active member of the Texas chapter for Mission Readiness – Council for a Strong America. Scott received a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of California at Santa Barbara and a Juris Doctor degree Cum Laude from the University of Santa Clara School of Law.

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