

WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF

**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**



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"Serving Those Who Served"

VETERAN VOICES

Table of Contents

Winter 2015

| | |
|---|------------|
| Message from the Director | Page 1/2 |
| Orting Gift Shop/ Navy Pilot Honored | Page 3/4 |
| Wreaths Across America/WDVA Service Awards | Page 5/6 |
| Veterans Day Tributes/ Auburn Vets Parade | Page 7/8 |
| Retsil Project Complete/ Retsil Gift Shop Open | Page 9/10 |
| Service Dogs Event/ Contact Us | Page 11/12 |

WDVA Hot JOBS:

[RN3-Evening Shift Supervisor](#)

[Program Specialist 4 \(0002\)](#)

[Program Specialist 4](#)

[Medical Director \(0074\)](#)

[Medical Director \(3052\)](#)

[Physician 3 \(PT or FT\) \(3052\)](#)

More Info: solomong@dva.wa.gov

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"Serving Those That Served"

A Message from the Director Lourdes "Alfie" E. Alvarado-Ramos Alfie@dva.wa.gov



As we near the end of 2015, I can't help but reflect on some of the monumental achievements that we, as Washington's Veterans Community, have accomplished together.

- Our Military Transition Council, whose work has led to 8 apprenticeship programs, over 600 job placements, and an annual transition summit which averaged 250 on-the-spot job offers, won the VA Pillars of Excellence Award for Innovation;
- The VetCorps Program received a 2nd grant award of \$600,000 allowing 50 VetCorps Navigators to coach veterans as they transition to education;
- WDVA established a TBI Program Coordinator position to provide education, peer to peer mentoring and connect veterans to available resources;
- Washington State's homeless providers placed 2,670 homeless veterans in sustainable housing;
- The Veterans Conservation Corps established the Veterans Farm at Orting and began offering classes to veterans and community members;
- We conducted a Tribal Veterans Representative Summit to share information and resources with tribal veterans representatives and veterans themselves;
- And we broke ground on our 4th State Veterans Home in Walla Walla, which will be completed in late Fall of 2016.

As you all know, this is just a drop in the bucket, *and* all of this happened on top of the *regular* work that we do every day! Our State Veterans Homes continue to provide outstanding and compassionate care and service, our Veterans Cemetery honors veterans and helps families through trying times, our Veterans Services and Behavioral Health Divisions connect veterans and their families to their earned benefits, and our Administrative Services team makes sure the agency is operating efficiently!

I am so thankful for the opportunity to continue serving Veterans and their Families at the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. Our outstanding partnerships are known nationwide and we are looked to as a model for programs, services and innovative ways to ensure veterans get the support they need in the way they need it. I wish you a very Merry Holiday Season and look forward to continuing our work together in the New Year!

Happy 100th Birthday Margaret Clark

Happy 100th Birthday to Margaret Clark at the Retsil Veterans Home!!!

On December 8th, the residents and staff at the Washington Veterans Home in #Retsil celebrated a very special lady, Margaret Clark. Today was Maggie's 100th birthday!!!

She was born December 8, 1915 in Juneau, AK and grew up on Vashon Island. Four generations of her family came together to celebrate the monumental occasion. WDVA Director, Alfie Alvarado-Ramos was present to welcome all that were invited and to wish Maggie a Happy 100th Birthday!

During the day's entertainment, Maggie received a couple of sweet serenades from an entertainer and Retsil home residents. As the party continued, Maggie grew a little tired and utilized the help of her very eager great-great-grandchildren to help open presents.

Happy 100th Birthday Maggie from WDVA!!



"Serving Those That Served"

Orting Gift Shop



A HUGE THANKS to the members of the American Legion "Doughboy Memorial" Post 138 for providing the countless gifts for our Veteran residents to shop through. Money is raised by the American Legion throughout the year with events such as coffee stops, rummage sales, cash donations and even making Remembrance Poppys.

The residents were full of joy, thanks in part, to their military escorts (4th Battalion, 23d Infantry Tomahawks 2-2 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, Joint Base Lewis-McChord) that were present to help push them, as well as assisting them with shopping.

Once all the gifts were selected, volunteers wrapped them and mailed them to resident's families, all at no cost to our residents. *Check out the event slideshow on our YouTube channel. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oS56uG3N_Wo*



"Serving Those That Served"

Navy Pilot Honored at Veterans Cemetery

Andy Norberg was just a few months old when his father, a Navy Reserve pilot, disappeared and was presumed dead.

"Some of the things that I knew, when I grew up, it was all hearsay information," Norberg said from his shop in Greenacres last week.

The Nov. 29, 1945, crash somewhere near Mount St. Helens claimed the lives of four men aboard during a brutally cold, windy and snowy winter that killed dozens across the United States.

The storm that disoriented the crew of the Ventura-2 transport plane carrying Lt. Carl E. Norberg, 23, was so intense the winds damaged Navy freighters moored at Puget Sound more than 200 miles away, according to newspaper reports. Eight feet of snow impeded rescue efforts for weeks, and Norberg's remains were never found.

On the 70th anniversary of his father's disappearance, Andy Norberg is working for the recognition his dad deserves, and to answer lingering questions he never asked his family.

"We didn't talk about this stuff very often," said Norberg, 70. "This was a family tragedy that nobody ever said anything about."

Norberg hopes to change that. He's gone through a yearlong process of verifying records, including signed letters of condolence from President Harry S. Truman and H.B. Atkinson, a U.S. Naval Reserve commander. On Monday, Lt. Norberg will receive a memorial with full military honors at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery.

A plaque will be placed honoring Lt. Norberg in an area set aside for service members whose remains have been scattered elsewhere, said Rudy Lopez, the director of the cemetery.

"Andy was 6 months old when he lost his dad," Lopez said. "Really, when he came to me, all he really had was a story."

Andy Norberg credits Lopez for helping him document the stories he heard about his dad from relatives, family & friends.

"Without Rudy, none of this would have happened," Norberg said.

One survivor of the crash, Lt. Warren Lawson, hiked three days to safety in nearby Cougar, Washington. The Oregonian newspaper printed an image of Lawson, resting on an elbow in a hospital bed and plying with his fingers the parachute that twice saved his life, on the front page Dec. 4, 1945. In an interview, Lawson said he slept under the cloth of the parachute to escape the bitter cold the first night following the crash.

"I knew we were in trouble when one engine cut out as we were letting down through the overcast trying to get back into Portland airbase," Lawson told the Oregonian.

The plane, a bomber and transport aircraft manufactured by Lockheed during the war, left Whidbey Island headed for Red Bluff, California. It landed in Portland and took off around noon. The plane crashed about an hour later, after the pilot lost course in the thick clouds and ice that covered the wings, according to Lawson's account. [Article via The Spokesman-Review](#)



Wreaths Across America

Senator Honeyford's Wreaths Across America in the Capitol



Retsil Wreaths Across America Ceremony



Medical Lake Wreaths Across America Ceremony



Walla Walla Wreaths Across America Ceremony



"Serving Those That Served"

WDVA "Outstanding Service to Veterans"



Several Washington residents were honored during the Auburn Veterans Parade with Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards for their contributions to Washington State's veterans and their families during the past year.

The WDVA awards - co-sponsored by the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) - recognize individuals who devote time and energy to improving the lives of Washington's veterans.

The awards were presented at a special luncheon in Auburn, following the awardees participation in the City's 50th Annual Veterans Day Parade.

Donna Lowery – A Vietnam Veteran, Donna recently co-authored the book "Women Vietnam Veterans – Our Untold Stories", which chronicles various stories from women Veterans that served in country during the Vietnam War. Donna frequently volunteers in the community at events such as Veteran Stand Downs and even volunteers once a week at a homeless shelter in Olympia. Donna is also one of the founding members of the Washington Women Veterans Advisory Committee (WWVAC).

Sharon Kirkpatrick – Retired Chief Petty Officer Sharon Kirkpatrick currently is the chair of the Washington State Women Veterans Advisory Committee (WWVAC). Sharon also regularly volunteers assisting incarcerated Veterans at the Women's Correctional Facilities in Purdy and Monroe, the first Incarcerated Veterans Assistance Program in the country. Sharon has made invaluable impacts in the community to better connect incarcerated Veterans with their Federal and State Benefits.

Senator Christine Rolfes – As a member of the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs, Senator Rolfes co-sponsored a bill that authorizes the siblings of deceased U.S. Armed Forces members (those that pass away while in service or as a result of service) the right to apply for a Gold Star license plate. Senator Rolfes also co-sponsored Veteran friendly bills that 1) require school districts to report data on students from military families 2) Allow National Guard members to sleep in state armories during drill weekends 3) Streamline the definition of a "Veteran" to expedite the release of County Assistance Relief Funds for Veterans.



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Representative Dick Muri – Lieutenant Colonel Dick Muri, USAF Ret. knows, firsthand, what challenges Veterans face when returning home from deployments. As a member of the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs, Representative Muri consistently works to ensure Veterans and military personnel have a smooth transition to civilian life. In the past year, Representative Muri sponsored bills to help students and military families, provide B&O tax credits to employers who hire veterans and co-sponsored bills to support military spouses in higher education and expand eligibility to Gold Star license plates.

Mark Oravsky – Army Veteran, Mark Oravsky, served during Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom. While also serving with The Mission Continues, Mark was instrumental in forging the unique partnership between Grub and Growing Veterans. Through this partnership, Mark was able to build upon his success story of engaging Veterans in agriculture, permaculture and service related projects at the Victory Farm in Olympia.



Kristine Reeves – Before joining the Department of Commerce, Kristine Reeves first served as the South Sound Regional Director & Statewide Veterans Constituency Coordinator for U.S. Senator Patty Murray. Under Senator Murray, Kristine was instrumental in facilitating a Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Field Hearing in Washington State. Kristine was a key facilitator for the past two Servicemember for Life Transition Summits (the Nation's largest military job fair). Kristine also sits on the board of the Washington State Military Transition Council (WSMTC) – a council that works to provide a seamless transition to civilian life for outgoing service members.

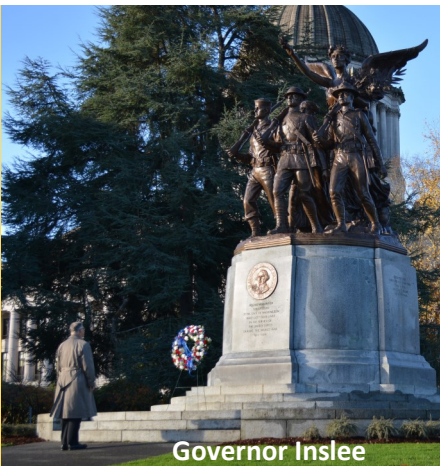
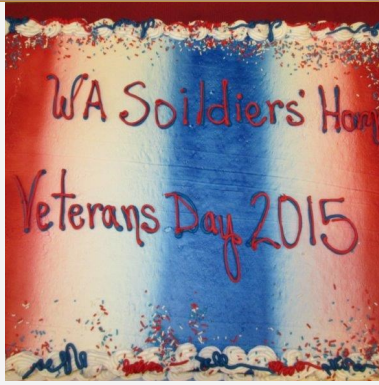
Jason Alves – As the Manager of the Veterans Conservation Corps Program within the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, Jason has been instrumental in connecting conservation efforts to our Washington Soldiers Home at Orting. Jason and his team were successful in securing thousands of dollars in grant funding from the Home Depot which allowed several hundred volunteers, from Expedia, the Mission Continues, Home Depot and many other organizations, to lay the groundwork for the Veterans Farm at Orting.

Eliseo "Joe" Dumlao – Along with being an Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran, Joe Dumlao is also a readjustment counselor for the Spokane Vets Center. Joe doesn't just provide counseling for Veterans at the Spokane Vets Center, he also travels to rural areas in eastern Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Montana with his mobile Vet Center Truck. This provides critical services to Veterans in smaller regions. Joe is known to "always answer the call" and assist a fellow Veteran no matter where they are located or what assistance they may require.



"Serving Those That Served"

Veterans Day Tributes Across Washington State



Governor Inslee



"Serving Those That Served"

Veterans Day Tributes Across Washington State



Photos from this year's 50th Annual Auburn Veterans Parade & 2015 WDVA Service Awards Luncheon

"Serving Those That Served"

Veterans Day Project at Retsil Complete



November 25th marked the completion of the last portion for our Retsil Veterans Day project donated by Patriots Construction in Gig Harbor. The project started mid-October and is now completed!

The Patriots Construction team reconfigured the front steps of the chapel to make it safer for our Veterans. Reconfiguring the front steps took a lot of work, and thankfully all of the labor, material and supplies for the project were donated.

The team didn't just stop after reconfiguring the front steps...they also moved a stained glass window in an office space, being under-utilized, to the front wall of the sanctuary in our chapel.

We must admit that the natural light shining through the beautiful craftsmanship of the stained glass is breathtaking.

An enormous THANK YOU goes out to all those that donated their time, labor and materials to help complete this project!!!



"Serving Those That Served"

Retsil Gift Shop Open for Veterans

The American Legion has been hard at work making sure residents at the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil can bring some holiday cheer to their family members this Christmas. Throughout the year, American Legion members gather new gift items so that residents can shop for Christmas.

The American Legion volunteers first help residents pick out the perfect gift, then wrap the gifts in Christmas paper (including postage) and lastly mail the packages to their loved ones for them. **THERE IS NO COST/EXPENSE TO THE VETERAN RESIDENTS!!!**

It is impossible to thank the American Legion for the countless joyous smiles provided each year through the generosity of this program...we'll try anyway. **THANK YOU!!!**



Free Permaculture Classes Held For Vets

These Permaculture Design Courses held are intended to train participants in comprehensive ecological systems design, agricultural production, sustainable energy & green technologies.

The goal is to educate Veterans on how to increase the yield of the small acreage farm or garden, while reducing the impact to the local community and environment.

Systems design and permaculture classes at the Veterans Farm in Orting have integrated specific classes around PTSD, Eco-Therapy, WDVA services and even Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Veterans are not only learning techniques and systems to be successful farmer/gardeners, but also valuable trainings on transitional issues and how WDVA can support them.



"Serving Those That Served"

Service for Service: Washington Goes to the Dogs



This 3rd annual event, held this year at the Emerald Queen Casino, was an informative way to educate and explain the differences between Service, Emotional Support, Companion & Therapy Dogs.

A truly heartwarming day of awareness, education and inspiration.



Seattle Stand Down Event

5TH ANNUAL SEATTLE STAND DOWN

Veteran Led, Community Driven

DAY 1

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17TH
REGISTRATION: 7:00 AM
SERVICES: 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

DAY 2

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18TH
REGISTRATION: 7:00 AM
SERVICES: 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

- ★ Food: Breakfast and Lunch
- ★ Employment: Workshops
- ★ Housing Assistance
- ★ Legal Services / Resources
- ★ VA Benefits
- ★ Gear and Clothing
- ★ Medical / Dental
- ★ Behavioral Health
- ★ Haircuts / Showers / Foot care
- ★ Women-Specific Services

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Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheSeattleStandDown



SEATTLE CENTRAL COLLEGE
One of the Seattle Colleges



Through peer to peer social support and mentoring, a Veteran finds the same camaraderie once thought lost. Veterans were not alone in their time of service, and should not have to be alone now.

The Seattle Stand Down is committed to assisting military veterans and their families in every aspect of their transition from military to civilian life; whether they just became a veteran or have been one for a long time.

The Seattle Stand Down provides a place where veterans can have "one stop" access to various community and Veterans Affairs (federal, state and county) social services, focusing primarily on those Veterans and families that are either homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Keeping with the spirit of "Never Leave a Fallen Comrade Behind", the all volunteer and veteran leadership team is determined to do just that. In the fight to end veteran homelessness, the veteran leaders of the Seattle Stand Down are determined to "give a hand up, not a hand out" and to bring every veteran in the Seattle area that is homeless or at-risk of homelessness safely "home". Send your upcoming event flyer to us at communications@dva.wa.gov

"Serving Those That Served"

State Benefits

- Free Recording of Discharges
- Employment Preference/Assistance
- Educational Benefits/Assistance
- Reemployment & Layoff Rights
- Military Retirement Credit
- Special Veteran License Plates
- Reduced Fishing/Hunting License Fees
- State & National Park Passes
- Reduced Public Transportation Fees
- Medical Benefits for Dependents & Survivors
- Burial Benefits
- Death Pension
- Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Home Loan Guarantees*
- Veterans Assistance Fund

WASHINGTON STATE
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"Serving Those Who Served"

WDVA Contracted VSO's

- African-American PTSD Group
- American Legion
- American Veterans
- Military Order of Purple Heart
- Nat'l Assoc. for Black Veterans
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Vietnam Veterans of America

State Programs

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Counseling
- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project
- Veterans Estate Management Program
- State Veterans Homes (1-877-838-7787)

Call Toll Free: 1-800-562-2308 www.dva.wa.gov

Keep informed about upcoming Veteran events by checking
our Calendar/Public Events Page often
<http://www.dva.wa.gov/calendar>

Have an event of interest to Veterans you want others to
know about?
Send fliers and information to
communications@dva.wa.gov

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