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## 2023 May Veteran Voices Newsletter - WA Dept of Veterans Affairs

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WDVA Veteran Voices

May 2023

### A Message From the Director

#### Greetings from Your WDVA Director - David Puente



#### May is Public Service Recognition Week and Military Appreciation Month



During the month of May, I have the opportunity to thank all WDVA Team Members during our state's annual Public Service Recognition Week.

At WDVA we take our mission of Serving Those Who Served very seriously. Many of our team members are Veterans, spouses, or family members so we feel a personal connection to the people and communities we serve each day!

From our Veterans Services & Counseling and Wellness Programs to our Veterans Homes, Cemetery, and Administrative support functions, I am proud of the innovative programs we offer and the professional and compassionate team that delivers them.

Our WDVA Team adds value to public service, and I want to take the opportunity to share my appreciation to their commitment to serving Veterans and their Families!

May also marks Military Appreciation Month, and on behalf of the entire WDVA, we also want to appreciate and thank military public service by reminding them to connect with their earned benefits and the many available programs and services available through your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs. [For Veterans, Service Members, and their Families | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

[Watch Video: Public Service Recognition Week](#)



[Read More](#)

## May Events & Observances List

Here is a [current list](#) of upcoming events that your WDVA is tracking.

Please email us your events at [communications@dva.wa.gov](mailto:communications@dva.wa.gov) so we can get them added.

**May 10**

[PACT ACT Claims Clinic - Silverdale CBOC | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

**May 11**

[Military Spouse Roundtable at Joint Base Lewis-McChord | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

**May 15**

[LEARN Saves Lives for Veterans at North Seattle Community College \(2 CEs\) | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

**May 16**

[Calling all Women Veterans to join us at our "She Served" forum! | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

**May 17**

[WDVA Veterans Town Hall Meeting at Yakima VFW Post 379 | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

**May 23**

[2023 Seahawks Military Hiring and Resource Fair powered by Boeing | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](#)

**May 29**

**Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day Ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda | WDVA (wa.gov)**

**May 29**

**Washington Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day Event | WDVA**

**July 18-20**

**Veteran Service Officer Professional Development Conference | WDVA (wa.gov)**

**Aug 24/25**

**6th Annual Serving Those Who Served Conference - 'Engagement | Making Every Connection Matter' | WDVA (wa.gov)**

[Submit Your Event](#)



### Walla Walla Veterans Home

Happy 2023 Cinco de Mayo celebration from all of us at the Walla Walla Veterans Home!

Great food, music, laughter, and fantastic dancing all took place for our honored residents to celebrate Latine culture.

[#WeLoveOurCommunity](#)  
[#cincodemayo2023](#)

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### Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard

We would like to thank the [VFW Auxiliary Post 2669](#) and [Girls Scout Troop #41796](#) for their recent generous donation to our Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard. [#WeLoveOurCommunity](#)  
[#AuxiliariesInAction](#)

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## Washington Soldiers Home in Orting

Our Washington Soldiers Home honored residents expressed their creativity while participating in a ceramics class provided by The Mad Potter Creative Pottery Studio Outreach Program.

Residents picked out from the many choices race cars, trucks, signs, and bowls bisque ware to prep and paint and there were plenty of colors to choose from to make the items uniquely theirs! The ceramics program naturally facilitates comradery and a feeling of togetherness among the residents. The bisque ware is taken back to the pottery studio to be fired and returned as a finished work of art!

Funding for this program was made possible in part by the Washington State Arts Commission.

## Spokane Veterans Home

Recently our Spokane Veterans Home had special visitors from our regional VFW Commander come in and take a tour of the facility.

They were able to meet our honored veterans and discuss how donated funds are used throughout the year for different functions like cheesecake socials, special events for residents, everyday items for our veterans like reading glasses.

We are always honored to have them visit and meet new friends here at the Spokane Veterans Home. [#WeLoveOurCommunity](#)

[Read More](#)

## WDVA Hot Jobs - Incentives Available

### Available Opportunities:

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### ALL WDVA JOBS:

#### State of Washington Job Opportunities

**WDVA Senior Compliance Auditor, Management Analyst 5, Full-Time, Washington Veterans Home**

**WDVA Mental Health Practitioner, Full Time - Project,**

## Washington Veterans Home

**WDVA Grounds and Nursery Specialist 2, Full Time - Non-Permanent, Washington Veterans Home**

**WDVA Registered Nurse 2, On-Call, Walla Walla Veterans Home**

**WDVA Social Worker 3, Full Time - Permanent, Walla Walla Veterans Home**

**WDVA Nursing Assistant Certified, Full Time - Permanent, Days, Walla Walla Veterans Home**

**WDVA Food Service Worker, On-Call, Washington Soldiers Home**

**WDVA Cook 1, On-Call, Washington Soldiers Home**

**WDVA Licensed Practical Nurse 4, On-Call, Spokane Veterans Home**

**WDVA Nursing Assistant Lead, Full Time - Permanent, Spokane Veterans Home**

**WDVA Veterans Benefit Specialist 2, Full-Time Project, King County Veterans Services**

**WDVA Fiscal Analyst 2, Full Time - Permanent, Payroll, Olympia**

[Recruiters@dva.wa.gov](mailto:Recruiters@dva.wa.gov)

**WE'RE HIRING**

RNs | Drivers  
LPNs | Chefs  
CNAs | & More

*Make an impact and join a career in Serving Those Who Served!*

**APPLY NOW!**  
[Recruiters@dva.wa.gov](mailto:Recruiters@dva.wa.gov)

The advertisement features the WDVA logo, a list of job categories, a quote, and two photographs: one of a caregiver assisting a patient and another of three staff members smiling.

## WDVA Current Events

### House Bill 1009 Signed - Military Spouse Employment Act

“The legislature finds that the lives of military spouses are dominated by frequent deployments and relocations, and one-third of military families move each year. Many military families depend on two incomes, and military spouses tend to be better educated than the civilian population, with approximately 34 to 50 percent working in fields that require a professional license. The length of time to credential after a move is a significant employment barrier, with one study finding 20 percent of military spouses waited at least 10 months for a license after moving to a new state. This wait contributes to higher rates of unemployment or underemployment for military spouses when compared to their civilian counterparts.



[Learn More](#)

## WDVA Celebrates Newest NAC Training Program Graduates Continuing to Salute Our Graduates – Earning While They're Learning

WDVA took the question of What do we do when we don't have enough NAC applicants to fill vacancies? and found a solution: train our own! This new and creative approach to NAC recruitment means we'll have new NACs who are trained from the very beginning in the WDVA Way. The training is at no cost to the new NAC, and they are hired by WDVA as a NAR (Nursing Assistant Registered) where they spend time learning the basics while working on the floor with experienced WDVA NACs! We are already seeing the result with a newly trained team of NACs who are ready to pitch in and serve alongside are other WDVA staff members!



[Read More](#)

## PROCLAMATION - Military Spouse Appreciation Month 2023

WHEREAS, Washington state is home to more than 38,000 military spouses of active duty, National Guard, and reserve service members and an estimated 348,000 military spouses of veterans; and

WHEREAS, military spouses are recognized as the heart of our nation's military families, and their resiliency and resourcefulness are integral to the readiness of the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, military spouses encounter challenges related to their military lifestyle, including frequent moves, deployment of their service member, unemployment finding affordable and accessible childcare at each duty station, and separation from family; and



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## Stay Updated with the Digital Navigator Program



Digital Navigator Program "On The Move" - Connecting Veterans with Free Technology

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs  
386 subscribers

Analytics Edit video

0 Likes 0 Comments Share Download Save

Learn More: [Digital Navigator Program | WDVA \(wa.gov\)](https://www.wa.gov/digital-navigator-program)

## National News

### VA celebrates Older Americans Month

This May, VA recognizes Older Americans Month as we celebrate the meaningful contributions of older adults and raise awareness of services available to support older Veterans' unique needs, wants and preferences.

This year's theme, "Aging Unbound," honors the resilience, strength and contributions of older Veterans who are taking charge of their health to remain as active as possible.



### Common things everyone can consider:

- Planning: Think about what you will need and want in the future, from home and community-based services to community activities that interest you.
- Engagement: Remain involved and contribute to your community through work, volunteer or civic participation opportunities.
- Access: Make home improvements and modifications, use assistive technologies and customize supports to help you better age in place.
- Connection: Maintain social activities and relationships to combat social isolation and stay connected to your community.

[VA celebrates Older Americans Month - VA News](#)

## Compensation: New health assessment for transitioning service members

Active-duty service members who are transitioning out of the military and filing a VA claim for disability benefits shouldn't have to attend different, but similar, medical examinations conducted by DoD and VA. Historically, they have, and now that's about to change.



Service members are required to meet the Department of Defense's statutory and policy requirements for a Separation Health Assessment before they transition from active-duty service. And for good reason. These requirements are in place to ensure the service member's health care needs are addressed before separating. VA also requires a similar separation examination for those filing disability claims through the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program or the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES), to evaluate the claimed conditions and make a rating determination.

[Compensation: New health assessment for transitioning service members - VA News](#)

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## Veterans and survivors have filed more than 500,000 toxic exposure-related benefits claims under the PACT Act

VA announced that Veterans and their survivors have filed more than 500,000 claims for toxic exposure-related benefits under the [PACT Act](#) since President Biden signed it into law Aug. 10, 2022. To date, VA has awarded more than \$1 billion in earned benefits to Veterans and survivors who filed PACT Act-related claims.



In April, VA also processed its millionth disability compensation and pension claim during fiscal year 2023, putting VA on pace to process a record number of Veteran claims for the third year in a row. Thanks to aggressive hiring and modernization efforts, VA processed a record number of Veteran claims in 2021, exceeded that in 2022, and is on track to exceed it again in 2023. In total, VA has delivered more than \$65 billion in earned compensation benefits to Veterans during FY2023.

[Veterans and survivors have filed more than 500,000 toxic exposure-related benefits claims under the PACT Act \(va.gov\)](#)



## Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month was established in 1949 to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness in Americans' lives and to celebrate recovery from mental illness. For the past 20 years, the Substance



Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has recognized **Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM)** every May to increase awareness about the vital role mental health plays in our overall health and well-being.

Learn More: [Mental Health Awareness Month | SAMHSA](#)

## We Want to Hear from You About the New Format

Please take a few moments and provide us with feedback to make us better in 2023 at Serving Those Who Served for our email distribution.

Your feedback is instrumental in the continued improvement of your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs and will help to inform us on potential topics and subjects that we should include in the future.

Please email us at [communications@dva.wa.gov](mailto:communications@dva.wa.gov) with any feedback you may have.

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