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Feb/March 2013

Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos Appointed by Governor Jay Inslee to Serve as WDVA Director



Governor Jay Inslee appointed Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos, or Alfie as we know her, as the first woman to serve as director of Your Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Words cannot describe how honored I am to serve you as Director of this great agency," said Alvarado-Ramos. "Together we have worked to improve the lives of veterans and their families and my goal is to continue empowering you to make a difference for veterans each and every day."

Alfie Alvarado-Ramos joined WDVA in 1993 and was appointed Deputy Director in 2005. She has a unique understanding of the agency, having led the Veterans Services Division and each of the State Veterans Homes as Superintendent. Alfie served 22 years on active duty, retiring in August 1993 as Command Sergeant Major and Troop Command Sergeant Major of Madigan Army Medical Center in Fort Lewis, Washington. During her military career, she was the recipient of numerous awards and decorations to include the Legion of Merit, Order of Military Medical Merit, Expert Field Medical Badge and Meritorious Service Medals.

"Today is a great day for veterans and their families in Washington State," said retired WDVA Director John Lee. "Alfie is clearly the right person to provide a new vision and focus leading this agency into its next chapter of Serving Those Who Served."

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs serves as an advocate for our state's military veterans and their families, in recognition of their service and sacrifice to our country. WDVA operates three State Veterans Homes which provide long-term nursing care and offers a number of programs ranging from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Counseling to services for homeless veterans.



Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos being sworn in at her Senate confirmation hearing February 22, 2013 as Major General Bret D. Daugherty, The Adjutant General awaits his turn.

WDVA Vision

We honor our Veterans and their families by connecting them to the benefits they earned.



The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is proud to announce the appointment of **Gary Condra as Deputy Director**, replacing Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos, the agency's newly appointed director.

Condra, a 20 year veteran of the United States Army Medical Service Corps, joined WDVA in June 1998, as Associate Superintendent of the Washington Soldiers Home, Orting, Washington. His expertise led to becoming the Budget and Special Projects manager for WDVA, where he successfully led both the new facility construction at Retsil and the construction of the first State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake.

Prior to this newest appointment, Condra served as the WDVA Chief Financial Officer, responsible for accounting, budget, capital projects, compliance, emergency management and risk management.

"In his role as Chief Financial Officer Gary Condra has served as the voice of reason in some of our toughest times, earning respect for him and the agency from those in the financial and legislative arenas," said Alvarado-Ramos. "As my choice for deputy director, our agency is indeed lucky to have the right person for the job already among us."

Condra holds a Masters degree in Health Care Administration from Baylor University and a Bachelors degree from the University of Tennessee. He is a life member of the Military Officers Association of America and a member of the American Legion. He is married to Rebecca and has two adult children Christopher, 29 and Sara, 26.



The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is proud to announce the appointment of **Lael Hepworth as Superintendent** of the [Washington Soldiers Home in Orting](#).

Hepworth served nearly ten years in the Army National Guard as a field artillery cannoneer and as motor pool sergeant in a medical unit.

After receiving his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Computer Information Systems, Hepworth was employed with Boise Cascade as a senior development analyst. He continued his education with help from the GI Bill, receiving his master's degree in Business Administration/Healthcare Management.

Upon completion of his master's degree, he pursued a career in long-term nursing care as an administrator in Oregon, where he has spent the last seven years.

Hepworth's first job in high school as a dietary aid initially exposed him to the satisfaction of interacting with people in a long-term care setting. His time in the National Guard offered him many educational and leadership opportunities that continued to spark his passion to work in long-term care, where he continually hopes to make a difference.

Hepworth, his wife Jenny and their three children will be making their home in Orting and look forward to becoming a valuable part of the community.





The 2013 Legislative Session is underway and will run until April 28, 2013. So far, a number of bills have been introduced and are moving through the legislative process that will impact veterans and their families.

WDVA keeps a list of [State Legislation](#) on its website (www.dva.wa.gov click *About WDVA and Public Information*) and also sends out a [weekly email](#) with the status of bills that the agency is monitoring.

Below are summaries of nine of the 32 bills that are currently on the list:

Gold Star License Plates: HB 1132 and SB 5161

Allows Gold Star spouses to receive Washington's Gold Star License Plate.

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day: HB 1319

Declares March 30 of each year to be Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in Washington State. In addition to other holidays, public entities must display the POW/MIA flag on this day.

Veteran Owned Business: HB 1909 and SB 5834 (Governor request)

Asks public entities to do 5% of all purchasing and contracting with Veteran Owned Businesses certified by WDVA. Allows spouses to jointly own a business as long as the veteran is involved in day to day operations. Requires the veteran be a Washington State resident and the business be based in Washington State.

Veterans Innovations Program: SB 5273

Original Bill: Removes requirement for Washington's Lottery to run a special Veterans Raffle to fund the Veterans Innovations Program and directs \$300,000 of Lottery proceeds to the VIP. Also eliminates expiration date of the VIP.

Substitute Bill: Removes the requirement for Washington's Lottery to run a special Veterans Raffle, but does not direct any Lottery funds to the VIP. Eliminates expiration date of the VIP.

Veterans Homes: HB 5691

Allows WDVA to operate the Walla Walla Veterans Home and eliminates outdated statutory language.

Veterans Designation on Driver's License: SB 5775

Allows a person to apply to the Dept of Licensing to obtain a veteran designation on a driver's license or identocard.

B&O Tax Exemption for Hiring Veterans: SB 5812 (Governor request)

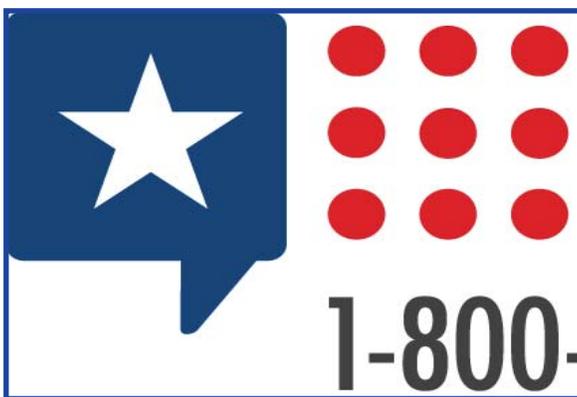
Establishes the hire our heroes tax credit program. Provides a B&O tax of up to \$3,000 to businesses hiring unemployed veterans.

For more information on these or other bills, visit www.leg.wa.gov or e-mail heidia@dva.wa.gov.



Sarah Andrews (l) and Brian Dale (center), with Washington Vet Corps, present a photograph to Gretchen Garth (r), to share with the Carhartt team, in thanks for the generous donation of jackets and caps to over 60 veterans involved locally with the organization. 21 Acres has supported the Vet Corps for several years through ecological and sustainable agricultural use on a half acre of the 21 Acres Farm. Veterans can also take advantage of educational opportunities within their Stewardship Certification program through scholarships made available from 21 Acres.

http://www.dva.wa.gov/vet_conservation_corps.html



**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

2013 Women Veterans Conference

Saturday, June 29, 2013

Greater Tacoma Trade and Convention Center



Women in the Military -
Honoring the Past...
Driving into the Future

This is a Save the Date only.
More information forthcoming.
You may also contact Barbara Logan at barb@dva.wa.gov
or 360-725-2227. Check our website for future updates at
www.dva.wa.gov or visit us on Facebook.

A Special Alert for Veteran Business Owners:

Exporting 101: An Introduction to Global Markets for the Small Business Owner

Learn the basics of exporting with international trade and business development experts from the Washington State Department of Commerce and the Veterans Business Outreach Center. This 90-minute session will cover the basics, help you shape your export game plan and highlight the small businesses that have already diversified and thrived in foreign markets.

- Research new markets and find customers overseas
- Access free state and federal assistance programs
- Apply for a grant up to \$5,000 to offset your export-related expenses
- Explore Canada and Mexico as gateway countries for the new exporter
- Compete with large corporations in today's global market.

Where:

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs
Second Floor Conference Room
1102 Quince St SE, Olympia, WA

When:

March 21, 2013
1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Register online at EventBrite.



“PAYING IT FORWARD” by honoring Veterans with Action

by Tommy Carson, WDVA

360-725-2228 TommyC@dva.wa.gov

Would you like to “Pay it Forward” and REALLY make a difference in the Veteran Community?



It is SO easy!

Just go to your local Licensing office and get Washington State Armed Forces License Plates for your vehicles.

As a veteran, that purchase demonstrates Pride in Service and Patriotism.

If you're a family member of someone who served in the Military, you are also eligible to make the purchase and show your pride.

The plates cost \$40 plus additional fees, and \$30 plus your regular registration fees when you renew.

Here's the best part : each time you purchase or renew your plates, \$28 goes to the Veterans Stewardship fund managed by WDVA and ***is tax deductible!***

This fund keeps the Washington State Veterans Cemetery running and also helps support Homeless Veteran programs and services. Talk about a win-win!

If specialty license plates are not your thing you can STILL “Pay it Forward” by making a tax deductible donation directly to the Veterans Stewardship fund. Just send your check to:

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Stewardship Fund
PO Box 41150
Olympia, WA 98504-1150

Veterans ensured our freedom by their actions so let's honor them by displaying our Armed Forces License Plates and honoring their service by “Paying It Forward”.

I am available to visit with your organization about how you can make a difference - just give me a call!

Community Impact Grants Program



Grants, up to \$5,000, are available to registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, public schools, or tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S. that are using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their community. Grants are given in the form of The Home Depot gift cards for the purchase of tools, materials, or services.

Our mission is to ensure that every veteran has a safe place to call home. As such priority will be placed on volunteer projects that fit the following criteria:

- Projects that serve veterans and their families, whether that's repairing homes or improving facilities
- Projects that involve veterans volunteering to help other veterans in the communities where they live.

<http://homedepotfoundation.org/page/applying-for-a-grant>

COMMEMORATIVE BUCK KNIFE CEREMONY



*Purple Heart Recipients of Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam, and Korea, will be presented with a special Buck Commemorative Knife in appreciation of their honorable military service to our country. *North Idaho and Eastern Washington*

Purple Heart recipients who were KIA or died of war wounds can have a family representative receive the buck knife.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13 AT 10:00 A.M.

POST FALLS AMERICAN LEGION, POST 143

POST FALLS, ID

Proof of award must be submitted to:

**Ross Jackman
211 S. Lincoln Ave
Sandpoint, ID 83864
Tel: 208-265-2738
lupitaandmike@aol.com**



POC for questions:
Graham Crutchfield, LTC,
USMC (Ret)
11492 N. Stinson Loop
Hayden, ID 83835
Tel: 208-762-0773

*The proof(DD214) must be submitted **ASAP**,
but no later than March 31, 2013.*

*Must be present at an awards ceremony to receive a knife.
Offer does not apply to anyone previously presented a knife.*



Information Provided as a public service and does not constitute an endorsement of
Buck Knives or The American Legion

Marketing Services
February 07, 2013

Honor Quilt Provides Loving Way to Acknowledge Veteran's Passing



WDVA has two dedicated employees at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting who have started a new tradition to honor our residents as they pass from this world.

Ileen Gallagher and Shannah Rongen in the Recreation Therapy Department took a message they heard at a training last year that talked about honoring the deceased and came up with the idea of an “Honor Quilt”.

They wanted the quilt made to represent all service groups, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. Their vision was to place the quilt on the bed of a passed Resident, after they have been transported, with all of the emblems visible and a rose placed on a particular location on the quilt.

Ileen and Shannah enlisted the talent of a wonderful volunteer at the home named Paula Smith, (pictured above with Honor Quilt). Paula took the project to heart and produced and donated the first “Honor Quilt”, which was recently used for the first time.

“It is our hope that eventually each Nurses Station will have a quilt,” said Ileen, “but for now we are in the training process to have the staff come to our office to ask for the “Honor Quilt”. We can’t thank Paula Smith enough for taking our vision and creating it.”

What a gracious and loving way to let everyone know a resident has passed!



The Gig Harbor Elks showed up as volunteers for their monthly session of Bingo with the Washington Veterans Home Residents, right on schedule. But, as a February surprise for all our veterans, they came loaded down with eight cases of new sweat pants and sweat shirts – a donation worth \$1,500.00! Superintendent Don Veverka was pleased to accept the very generous donation from our Gig Harbor Elks and we all share with him in conveying a big Thank You to this wonderful group of individuals!

Clark County Employers Making a Difference for Washington Veterans

Local employers in Clark County attended a panel discussion last week to hear about transitional difficulties some veterans may experience when returning home from active duty.

Partners in Careers (PIC) organized the event, with Senator Patty Murray as the guest speaker, and spokespersons from the federal and state VA joining Partners in Careers on the panel.

Mike Willbur, (pictured right with Senator Patty Murray) the Incarcerated Veterans Program Specialist for the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs in Clark County told the 35 employers in attendance:



“Recidivism for incarcerated Veterans in our County went from about 16% five years ago to under 4% today in part, because of the many employers in our County who have given our Vets extra consideration when made aware of their Veteran status.”



Jason LaCarney (pictured below with Senator Patty Murray and PIC’s Pam Brokaw), an intern working with Willbur, spoke about his first-hand experience with the difficulties he had after returning home. He spoke about how it was not only him in transition - but his family as well.

Willbur can be reached at (360) 241-3448 or email him at Mikew@dva.wa.gov

To learn more about the Incarcerated Veterans Programs at WDVA visit http://www.dva.wa.gov/incarcerated_project.html

Music filled the air as Residents of the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil enjoyed a special performance by the Sidney Glenn Elementary School orchestra. Students arrived dressed to impress and two different classes of students performed on their violins. Their selections of music were enjoyed by the residents as well as their chance to share time with youth from our community.



Thank you Sidney Glenn Elementary School!



The Washington Soldiers Home Valentine's Sweetheart Dinner was a night to remember! Residents and their guests were dressed to the nines for the evening, which added to the excitement of the Valentine's pictures. Volunteers served as hostess and waiters posh restaurant style. Residents and their guests were served gourmet fare from D & G's Snack Bar while enjoying the lovely piano music by Judy White. New Superintendent Lael Hepworth entertained us with a surprise performance of doing the splits (too fast to capture on film!) and rousing conversation. Oh, what a night!



More than just a Children's' Easter EGG hunt

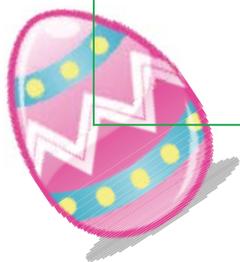
Easter Cards for Veterans

Date: March 30th, 2012

Times: 10 am to 2:00 pm

Place: Washington Veterans Home
Lower Activity room

Please Dress for
the weather The
egg hunt will be
outdoors



Free hot dog lunch

Eggs for all ages 2 -12

Crafts and Games

Face painting

Bounce house

Event Sponsored by:



Please call 360-895-4376 to rsvp by
March 20th.

11 41 Beach Drive East

Port Orchard, WA 98366



**Calling All
Washington
Veterans
and Families!**

Come learn about the benefits you EARNED while serving in the military and how the Community of Clark County serves Veterans and their Families!

Save the Date!

Thursday - March 14, 2013

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**Join The Governor's Veterans Affairs
Advisory Committee
for a**

**Veterans Town Hall
at the**

**40 et 8 Chateau
7607 NE 26th Ave**

Vancouver WA 98665

Questions? Call 1-800-562-0132 opt 1



"Serving Those Who Served"

Provided by Your Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)

Visit us at www.dva.wa.gov

*Mardi Gras at the
Washington Veterans Home!*



WDVA Veteran Voices
PO Box 41150
1102 Quince Street SE
Olympia, WA 98504-1150

1-800-562-0132 opt. 1
communications@dva.wa.gov

Veterans Voices is published every other month for Washington veterans and all interested in news affecting veterans and their families. View previous editions here:

<http://www.dva.wa.gov/publications.html>

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