



"Serving Those Who Served"

VETERAN VOICES

Table of Contents

July 2017

Message from the Director **Page 2**

**Walla Walla Veterans Home
Welcomes New Residents/
Soldiers Home Fathers Day
Fishing/ Spokane's Summer** **Page 3/4**

**Serving Those Who Served
Conference/WDVA Receives
\$921,250 for AmeriCorps** **Page 5/6**

**SafeCo Hiring Our Heroes Hiring
Event/ Seahawks 12Tour Visits
Walla Walla** **Page 7/8**

**Nominate: Outstanding Service
to Veterans Awards/
Veteran Networking Event** **Page 9/10**

**Grand Opening: Building 9
Women Veterans Wing/
Contact Us** **Page 11/12**

WDVA Receives \$921,250 for AmeriCorps

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs announced in June that it has received \$921,250 in AmeriCorps funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency for volunteering and service programs, and Serve Washington, the state's commission on service and volunteerism.

Of the \$921,250 federal investment, \$630,500 will support 50 AmeriCorps members serving in the Washington Vet Corps program. Most of the 50 AmeriCorps members are veterans themselves and will act as peer mentors or navigators to veterans and military families at colleges and with community partner sites across Washington. During the program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for outreach to 9,000 veterans and or family members on and off campus, connecting 400 individuals to services and benefits, as well as training for 1,500 faculty, staff, administrators and community stakeholder on veterans' cultural competency to increase success in veterans' transition from military service. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 2,000 volunteers that will be engaged in service to support and raise awareness of veterans' issues.

"We are excited to receive funding for the 2017-18 service year to support our Vet Corps program," said Lourdes "Alfie" Alvarado-Ramos director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. "Vet Corps members serve a vital role on higher education campuses and communities across our state helping to ensure veterans and their families are successful in their higher education pursuits. We also rely on our Vet Corps to help connect veterans and families to their earned benefits and refer them to local resources such as health and mental health care." *(Continued on Page 6)*

WDVA Hot Jobs:

[Director of Nursing Services Orting](#)

[Licensed Nursing Home Administrator/
Superintendent Orting](#)

[Attending Physician/Medical Director Orting](#)

[Nursing Assistant Residential Living \(WWWVH\)](#)

[Registered Nurse 2 \(WWWVH\)](#)

[Registered Nurse 3 Resident Care Manager WWWVH](#)

[Registered Nurse 3-Staff Development Coordina-
tor/Investigations](#)

More Info: recruiters@dva.wa.gov

"Serving Those Who Served"

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



Funding for New Programs Approved!

I'm incredibly happy to announce that our Legislature passed and the Governor signed the 2017-2019 budget for *your* Washington Department of Veterans Affairs! While we, like all agencies took some cuts to our budget, we also were given the authority (and very importantly the funding) to start 2 new programs to serve veterans in our communities and in our State Government workforce.

Senate Bill 5849 is entitled 'addressing the need for veterans' services'. In the first part of the bill, the Office of Financial Management is tasked with developing a recruitment program for veterans that provides credit for knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities. OFM is already working with WDVA and several other agencies as they develop the program and also connect with existing public and private military recruitment programs. Ultimately, the goal is to develop a system to provide veterans with experience credit for state job classes with similar military jobs, and identify better ways to utilize veterans' experiences.

In part two of the bill, WDVA is asked to develop a Peer Mentorship program including providing training and support to peer mentors across the state to focus on behavioral health and outreach. We plan to build upon the current success and lessons learned in the Vet Corps Program, which operates on college campuses throughout the state. The new peer mentor program will allow veterans to volunteer in their own communities to better connect veterans and their families to their earned benefits. WDVA will emphasize the importance of properly training and equipping the mentors with not only educational resources and materials, but also community based resources who they can rely on to help veterans who may need additional support or counseling services.

The second measure that was passed and funded is House Bill 1802, 'increasing the access of veterans, military service members, and military spouses to shared leave in state employment'. This bill requires WDVA to set up a Veterans' In-State Service Shared Leave Pool so that veterans and National Guard and Reserve members can use the leave pool to attend medical appointments or treatments for service connected injury or disability if they don't have sick or vacation leave available. It also allows a spouse to use shared leave from this pool if he or she needs to transport their veteran or National Guard / Reserve husband or wife to appointments.

I am excited to get to work on these two new programs and look forward to sharing more about them later! You can see a list of all veteran related bills on our website at: <http://www.dva.wa.gov/about-wdva/legislative-updates>



Walla Walla Veterans Home Welcomes New Residents



WALLA WALLA, Wash. – The new veterans home in Walla Walla is now welcoming its first few residents. It opened earlier this year. Action News met with two World War II Veterans to learn about their life and their new home.

"You join the navy to protect your country, that's the way I looked at it, and that's the way I still look at it," WWII Navy Veteran Alphonse "Al" Benitez said.

Al was born in Tucson, Ariz. and grew up in Hanford, Calif. His mother and father were both from Mexico, and raised their children in the United States. During World War II, Al proudly joined the Navy at 17 years old. "I was going to get drafted," he explained. "But I didn't want to get drafted, I wanted to join."

His mother signed the form for consent. At 90 years old, Al is still as passionate about his service as he was as a teenager. He fought hard for our stars and stripes.

"That's our flag, that's what we fought for," he said. No matter how many years have passed, Al said his memories of war are not far from his heart.

"It just tears me up. I can't talk about it. I lost good friends, and the way some people are that mistreat what we fought for—it hurts here," Benitez said as he touched his heart.

Al keeps with him a special souvenir, from the deck of the USS Missouri on Sept. 2, 1945, the day the most devastating war in human history was over. "This is the flag they took off from the ship to put a clean one on, they were going to burn it, and I asked for it and I brought it home," he explained of the flag sitting at his side.



Al was at the crow's nest of the Missouri when he received the flag.

Fellow World War II Army Veteran, Cooper Brown, also remembers the dangers of war days.

"He said there's a 50/50 chance of being alive where you're goin'," Brown said of his time at war. Cooper escaped death twice; once leaving Pearl Harbor a week before the infamous attack.

"One of the kids had a radio, and at about midnight it woke us all up, it said they bombed Pearl Harbor," Cooper said. "And that hit us like a clap of thunder."

He survived a second time, being aboard the only ship in his convoy to survive while bombed at sea. "There were eight or nine boats in the convoy and they sank every one of them, but the one I was on," he said. "I think mother's prayers had something to do with it."



Both men said they're lucky to be alive today and to live to see the fruits of their work. Al and Cooper were given a warm honorary welcome from staff upon move in at the Walla Walla Veterans home, along with cake to celebrate Cooper's 99th birthday. The men say they're happy to be in good hands.

"Couldn't ask for anything better, couldn't ask," Al said.

[Story via KEPR](#) / [Photos via Walla Walla Union-Bulletin](#)

Spokane Veterans Home Residents Enjoy Summer Activities



As summer rolls in, we are busy at the Spokane Veterans Home. This past month we enjoyed a fantastic Father's Day with the VFW and the Combat Veterans Association assisting with our BBQ and serving Veterans. At our Father's Day Celebrations, we had great food, music, enjoyed looking at beautiful motorcycles, and even had one of our residents try one on.

Veterans also went fishing at Deer Lake and the residents enjoyed getting on pontoon boats with the help of the West Shore Association to enjoy a picnic.

The last week of June, we enjoyed a picnic and great food at Manito Park with the Spokane Rotary and local Air Force service members. We recently started a bowling league and are having a lot of fun with our residents as the Marines are beating the Army in friendly competition.



We hope everyone has a great summer and remember to send us an email at communications@dva.wa.gov to inquire about our calendar for some great events coming up in the next couple of months.



2017 Washington Soldiers Home Fathers Day Fishing & Gardening



What better way to celebrate dad (and grandpa) than by fishing and gardening in the rain! Residents at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting enjoyed a rainy day of fishing and gardening for a Father's Day celebration on June 27th. We would like to thank the many volunteers that made this year's event possible.



School Choir and Irrigation Festival Royalty Visit Port Orchard



The residents and staff at Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard enjoyed a concert by a local home school choir this past June. The choir started visiting the Veterans Home three years ago and it's been very exciting to see how much improvement this group has made over the years.

On Saturday, June 25th, the Irrigation Festival Royalty visited the residents for coffee hour. They took pictures with the residents, sang songs and visited throughout the morning. Irrigation Festival Royalty drove down from Sequim to participate in the Fathoms of Fun Parade and visit with our Veterans.



Overall, the visit was amazing and everyone really enjoyed the performance!

Registration Open: Serving Those Who Served Conference

Veterans Resource Providers Conference

-Establish a greater collaboration within the Veteran Service Community on both sides of WA State

Your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs is hosting the second "Serving Those Who Served Conference" at the Wenatchee Convention Center on July 26 and July 27.

The purpose of the conference is to enhance collaboration and connection of all those who work with veterans and their families.

"Participants are able to attend a wide variety of workshops taught by professionals in a number of fields, and as a result they return to their place of work with an even greater capacity to serve veterans and their families," said Schmidt.

Professional development will be provided in areas that impact the lives of our veterans and their families: Benefits, Education, Employment, Financial, Housing and Mental Health with two additional topics on Military Culture and Justice-Involved Veterans.

The conference will promote the opportunity to make new and unique connections, and collaboration with others from across the state.

Forging new connections and creating opportunities for future collaborations is a theme for the upcoming conference for good reason.

"These connections to each other strengthen the fabric of support and resources that are available," said Schmidt.

Information is power and the more empowered we become the more empowered our veterans become through the services provided to them.

Register Now at: <https://servingthosewhoserved.eventbrite.com>

BREAKOUT SESSIONS TO INCLUDE:

Justice Involved Veterans

WDVA Programs

VA Healthcare/VA Choice

Life Cycle of a VA Disability Claim

Suicide Prevention/Suicide Safety

VA Education Benefits / Vet Corps

Cemetery & Burial Benefits

PTSD & Traumatic Brain Injury

Vocational Rehabilitation

County Specific Topics - Best Practices/Creating Regional Strategic Partnerships

Helping Vets Succeed in the Workplace and YesVets

Service Animals

Veteran Homelessness & Housing Programs

WDVA Receives \$921,250 for AmeriCorps



(Continued from front page) “The unique model of the Washington Vet Corps program enables AmeriCorps members, most of whom are veterans, to serve our country again through national service,” said Serve Washington Executive Director Debbie Schuffenhauer. “While serving their fellow veterans, AmeriCorps members’ also improve their own employment prospects, educational opportunities, and personal wellness.” The remaining funds will provide up to \$290,750 in education scholarships for the AmeriCorps members funded by this grant to help pay for college, vocational training, or pay back student loans.

The Washington Vet Corps is currently recruiting for AmeriCorps members to begin service this fall. AmeriCorps members typically receive a modest living stipend and a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, or scholarship, upon completion of their service. Those interested in serving can learn more by visiting www.my.americorps.gov, then search for Vet Corps.

Beginning this fall, AmeriCorps members serving through the Washington Vet Corps will join the more than 80,000 AmeriCorps members serving across the country in 21,600 locations. These members help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers for the organizations they serve.

Since the program’s inception in 1994, more than 1 million men and women have served in AmeriCorps, providing more than 1.4 billion hours of service and have earned more than \$3.3 billion in education scholarships to pay for college or pay back student loans, more than \$1 billion of which has been used to pay back student loans debt.

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs serves those who served by helping connect veterans and their family members to the benefits and services they earned through their military service. For more information, visit <http://www.dva.wa.gov/>.

VA Secretary Formalizes Expansion of Emergency Mental Health Care to Former Service Members With Other-Than-Honorable Discharges

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released finalized plans that lay the framework for providing emergency mental health coverage to former service members with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges.

This is the first time a VA Secretary has implemented an initiative specifically focused on this group of former service members who are in mental health distress.

“Suicide prevention is my top clinical priority,” said Secretary Shulkin, also a physician. “We want these former service members to know there is someplace they can turn if they are facing a mental health emergency — whether it means urgent care at a VA emergency department, a Vet Center or through the Veterans Crisis Line.”

Effective July 5, all Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical centers will be prepared to offer emergency stabilization care for former service members who present at the facility with an emergent mental health need. Under this initiative, former service members with an OTH administrative discharge may receive care for their mental health emergency for an initial period of up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential or outpatient care.

During this time, VHA and the Veterans Benefits Administration will work together to determine if the mental health condition is a result of a service-related injury, making the service member eligible for ongoing coverage for that condition.

Veterans in crisis should call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 (press 1), or text 838255.

Hiring Our Heroes Career Event Returns to Safeco Field



Transitioning from the military back to the civilian world is not only an exciting time for our service men and women, but possibly a bit frightening.

What career field will I work in next? Financially, will I meet my family's needs? How do I even go about finding a job in today's market? On June 27th, many of those questions were answered at Safeco Field during the Hiring our Heroes hiring event.

Veterans, service members and their families had the opportunity to meet and network with over 80 businesses.

However, it didn't just start there. On June 26th, a day before the hiring event, service members began their transitional journey on JBLM by participating in workshops covering resume building, job searching techniques, and even strategy for hiring expos.

During the actual hiring event, the service members met with some of the biggest names in hiring such as Microsoft, Amazon, FedEx and many others. This gave the opportunity to have a face-to-face with numerous employers, and for many will result in a job offer.

Along with looking for their next career, service members and veteran attendees were also able to receive a complimentary pair of tickets to watch the Mariners take on the Philadelphia Phillies.

Washington State is home to all five branches of military. With over 8,000 service members making their way back into the civilian world each year, events like the Hiring Our Heroes hiring event are important to aid our heroes in becoming successful in their next career steps. National, local, and global brands also benefit greatly, as they are able to add America's proven best to their teams.

Your Washington Department of Veterans Affairs' Recruiting Team was onsite to inform transitioning service members and their families on the many career opportunities available at careers.wa.gov

For more information on Hiring Our Heroes' upcoming events to include the JBLM Transition Summit in September, please visit <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes>

Celebrating Korean and American Veterans of the Korean War



Pictured Here: On June 24th, we celebrated with Korean and American veterans of the Korean War. Called the forgotten war... it is not forgotten, especially for the Korean people and our veterans who served in that war. A fantastic day in our Capitol campus! – *WDVA Director, Alfie Alvarado*

Seahawks 12Tour Visits Walla Walla



On Saturday, June 17th, the Seahawks organization came to Walla Walla to visit with the veterans living at the Saint Michael's Haven Veterans Housing, Walla Walla VA Medical Center and Walla Walla Veterans Home residents.. The team partnered with Safeway to donate a truck full of food, as well as giving time for autographs, and a barbecue.

George Fant and Germain Ifedi, who are tackles for the team, as well as the Sea Gals, and Blitz the Seahawk all shook hands with, and thanked the dozens of veterans at the event, and everyone from the players, to the fans, felt true team spirit of the day.

"You feel it," Ifedi told KNDU, "You legitimately feel it. You do a lot for the community, but this is something that really makes your heart feel good." The meet-and-greet was part of the 12 Tour, a trip the organization makes around the Pacific Northwest, with stops that include Yakima and the Tri-Cities. However, this was one of the few stops where more than a few people were able to meet with the team. ([NBC Right Now](#))



Nominate Now: Outstanding Service to Vets Awards



2016 Outstanding Service to Veterans Award Winners

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR 2017 OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO VETERANS AWARDS

The Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee is accepting nominations for the 2017 Washington State Outstanding Awards for Service to Veterans.

These awards presented by the Governors Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, are open to all who serve veterans in Washington State and nominations may be submitted by any person, organization or institution.

Nominations are due by September 17, 2017 and the winners will be honored in the 52nd Auburn Veterans Day

Parade, followed by a special luncheon after the parade.

There are three Nomination Categories to choose from:

Superior Award – This award is the Committee's highest honor and is given to recognize clearly superior accomplishments, achievements and outstanding performance.

Distinguished Service Award – This award is used to recognize significant accomplishments and special contributions.

Team Award – This award is designed to recognize significant accomplishments of a team or group of individuals. This may be for their contributions on a special project, special contribution and outstanding performance.

NOMINATE: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSee4uzYqueDn-FliNkhr8dvfsa4g6Q-SuhkjS6ikZD7zC6Cyg/viewform>

NOMINATE OUTSTANDING WOMAN VETERAN: <http://dva.wa.gov/women/women-veterans-summit>

-Womens Veterans Conference to be held on September 16, 2017

For more information, contact Liza Narciso at 360-725-2157 or at lisan@dva.wa.gov

Annual Korean War Armistice Wreathlaying Ceremony

You are cordially invited to the Annual Wreathlaying Ceremony as we Commemorate the Korean War Armistice 64th Anniversary on July 22, 2017 at 11:00am at the Korean War Veterans Memorial on the Capitol Campus.

The public is encouraged to attend as we Honor Washington State's Korean War Veterans and their families. During the ceremony, the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Seattle will present the Ambassador for Peace Medal to Barbara Nichols (Nichols Served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam).

Barbara Nichols enrolled in the Cadet Nurse Corps in 1945. She was called for active duty assignments in 1948. Nichols was assigned to the 3rd Field Hospital during the Korean War and saw Active Duty service during the 1960's Vietnam years. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Minnesota in the 1960's. She has had several assignments at Walter Reed, Madigan and even in Wurtzburg, Germany. Barbara quickly rose through the ranks and she retired from the Army Nurse Corps in 1969 as a Lt.

For more information, please contact JenniferM@dva.wa.gov

American Lake Veteran Networking Event

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19 | 11AM - 2PM

VETERAN NETWORKING & HIRING EVENT



AMERICAN LAKE
CONFERENCE CENTER
LEWIS NORTH JBLM

JOB SEEKERS RECEIVE:

- Access to multi-state employers
- Networking opportunities with government & private sector employers
- **ON THE SPOT Resume & LinkedIn Review**
- Access to Goodwill Veteran Services for resume building, training, job navigation & retention resources

EMPLOYERS RECEIVE:

- Access to a prepared, trained, professional and ready to work Veteran community

RSVP

Job Seekers:
<http://bit.ly/2rjpx9w>
Exhibitors:
<http://bit.ly/2qoleMz>

PLUS: Connect to Paid Logistics and Transportation Apprenticeships with the US Department of Labor.

Partners:



JBLM military access

WA State Residents must have a valid
ENHANCED WA STATE DRIVER'S LICENSE or **US PASSPORT**
Valid Insurance Card
Valid Vehicle Registration
www.lewis-mcchord.army.mil/des/le_visitor.htm

Sponsored by:

FASTPORT



The Operation GoodJobs program has the founding support of the Walmart Foundation, through Goodwill Industries International.

/OperationGoodJobs @OpGoodJobs goodwillwa.org
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Goodwill
Olympics & Rainier Region

Grand Opening: Building 9 Women Veterans Wing

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE
GRAND OPENING OF
BUILDING 9 WOMEN
VETERANS WING**

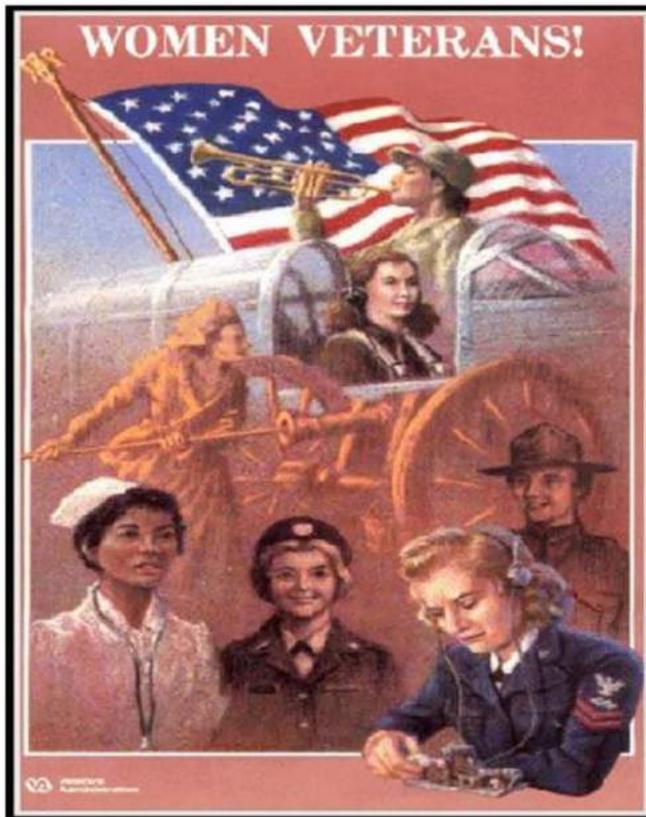
DATE: JULY 12, 2017

TIME: 1:00 PM

LOCATION: BUILDING 9 FOR VETERANS

**1141 BEACH DR. E.
PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366**

POC: DENNISB@DVA.WA.GOV



There was a
need

A need for
women
veterans to feel
safe & secure...

So we made it
happen.

Light refreshments
will be served.

"It's All About Us"
2017 Women Veterans Summit

September 16, 2017
Lynnwood Convention Center
3711 196th St. SW, Lynnwood, WA

REGISTER: www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-women-veterans-summit-tickets-33634142626

POC: LisaN@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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View previous editions here:
<http://www.dva.wa.gov/about-wdva/brochures-and-newsletters>

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