

WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**VETERANS  
AFFAIRS**



*"Serving Those Who Served"*

**August 2025**



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## **Greetings from your WDVA Director: David Puente**

Each year, the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) requests nominations for the Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards. In my time with the agency, the number of nominations and incredible stories behind them has grown significantly. If you're reading this newsletter, you are or know a Veterans advocate serving Veterans and families in our state. They put in long hours and receive little

recognition and serve in every nook and cranny of our state! Whether they are service officers, volunteers, Tribal Veterans program leaders, National Guard members, or community advocates, they show up every single day to serve those who've served. Their work ranges from guiding veterans through benefits, offering comfort to grieving families, organizing events that bring communities together, or spending time with veterans in Veteran Homes. What they have in common is the life changing impact they have in our communities.

I encourage you to spend a few minutes to nominate that Veterans hero that comes to mind as you read this article. The [Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards](#) are presented by the Governor's [Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee \(VAAC\)](#) and provide the change to shine a light on their extraordinary efforts. Awardees will be honored during the Auburn Veterans Day Parade and celebrated at a special luncheon.



#### **Award Categories**

- **Superior Award** – Honoring exceptional achievements that truly stand out
- **Distinguished Service Award** – Recognizing meaningful, lasting contributions
- **Team Award** – Celebrating the power of collective dedication

Submit a nomination by **September 30, 2025**, Share the story of someone whose service deserves to be seen. [Nominate here.](#)

To learn more or explore past honorees, visit the [Veterans Hall of Fame](#).

Let's make sure these everyday heroes don't go unnoticed. Your nomination could be the moment their quiet dedication gets the recognition it truly deserves.

Submit your nomination today and help us honor those who make service their legacy.

**Learn More:** [Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards - Now Accepting Nominations | WDVA](#)



[Nominate Outstanding Service to Veterans Award -Shellie Willis - Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee](#)

**VIDEO -** [Nominate Outstanding Service to Veterans Award -Shellie Willis - Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee](#)

## WDVA News and Current Events



### WDVA Strengthens Partnership with Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) was honored to join the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation for a meaningful event celebrating the accreditation of several Tribal Veteran Service Officers and the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement. This agreement formalizes WDVA's commitment to providing ongoing

training, quality assurance veterans' disability claims, and support to the Colville Tribes Veterans Program.

The event featured powerful remarks from Tribal leaders, including Chairman Jarred-Michael Erickson (**still need to confirm**), Veterans Committee representative Councilman Dustin Best, Councilman Kyle Etchison, Veterans Program Manager Vincent McDonald, and veterans from different eras. Their words underscored the importance of collaboration and community in serving those who have served.

We're proud to deepen our relationship with the Colville Tribes Veterans Program and encourage local Veterans and their families to learn more about their impactful work at <https://www.colvilletribes.com/veterans>

For more photos, visit: [WDVA Strengthens Partnership with Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation | Flickr](#)

## Recap of the recent VAAC Townhall and Women Veterans Forum in Omak



Preparations for the July VAAC Town Hall held in Omak provided opportunities for WDVA leaders to meet with local Veteran leaders in the WorkSource Office in Omak, the County VSO Office in Tonasket, and the Okanogan Community Action Council.

The Town Hall itself offered a wealth of information and knowledge from local Veteran service providers as well as providers from the Veterans Benefits Administration Offices in Seattle and Spokane!

To view the Town Hall meeting minutes, presentations and video visit: [Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee \(VAAC\) | WDVA](#)

For more photos, visit: [WDVA Strengthens Partnership with Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation | Flickr](#)



### Honoring the Unclaimed: A Final Salute

On August 7, the [Washington State Veterans Cemetery](#) held a solemn Unclaimed Remains Ceremony, providing long-overdue recognition and a dignified resting place for 50 individuals who served our nation. Among them were Veterans from the Civil War through the Vietnam War: 21

Army, 5 Navy, 1 Marine and 23 service member spouses.

*Though unclaimed by family, they were embraced by their military community. Brothers and sisters in arms stood in tribute, ensuring these heroes were not forgotten. All we can say is, thank you.* - Caption and Photo credit: Niki Sibley

For more photos of the ceremony visit: [Honoring the Unclaimed: A Final Salute](#)

### Act Now! Get your 988 Emblem and Support Veterans in the Fight against Suicide

Heroes should never suffer in silence. Every day, Veterans face invisible battles. You can help make sure they know they're not alone.

By adding a [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline emblem](#) to your Washington license plate, you're sending a powerful message: *There is hope.*

Stand with our Veterans. Start the conversation. Drive change.

Visit: [Suicide Prevention Emblem | WDVA](#) or scan the QR code in the image to take action today.

July 16 marked the third anniversary of the nationwide launch of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, a pivotal step toward accessible mental health support. In recognition of this milestone, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) has released new resources urging policymakers to strengthen and expand crisis response systems across the country.

Their message is clear: while 988 has opened doors, sustained investment is essential to ensure every call for help is met with compassionate, effective care.

**Read more:** [Three Years of 988: Awareness Grows, Support Needed](#) | [NAMI](#)

**HEROES SHOULD NEVER SUFFER IN SILENCE**

Support Veterans in the fight against suicide by adding a 988 emblem to your license plate!

**988 LIFELINE | THERE IS HOPE!**

**Act now.**  
Scan to support our Veterans.

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[www.dva.wa.gov/SuicidePreventionEmblem](http://www.dva.wa.gov/SuicidePreventionEmblem)

**Did you know?**

Most VA healthcare is fully covered for Veterans with service-connected disability ratings of **50% or higher?**

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF **VETERANS AFFAIRS** "Serving Those Who Served"

### Did You Know?

Most VA healthcare is fully covered for Veterans with service-connected disability ratings of **50% or higher?**

To learn more visit: [Your Health Care Costs](#) | [Veterans Affairs](#)

## Check out what's happening at our Veterans Homes

[Washington Veterans Home](#)



Our Residents and staff welcomed [Olympic Vintage AUTO CLUB](#) for a car show! The threat of rain and some actual sprinkles did result in a smaller crowd, but the cars here were beautiful as always, and our Residents had a great time reminiscing about some of their old cars.

Everyone picked their favorite, and just to keep it exciting, staff may have encouraged the car owners to rev up the engines to see how loud they could get! Thank you, Olympic Auto Club, for sharing your vehicles with our Veterans.



### Washington Soldiers Home in Orting

Washington Soldiers Home came alive with laughter, camaraderie, and the thrill of the catch as our Resident Veterans enjoyed a peaceful morning of fishing alongside their fellow Residents, dedicated staff, and incredible volunteers.

From tugging lines to tales by the water, each moment was a memory made, and we're grateful to everyone who made it happen!

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing volunteers for generously sharing their time and spirit. Your kindness continues to enrich the lives of those who have served.



### Walla Walla Veterans Home

Ahoy, matey! The WWVH Rehab team proved that physical therapy and occupational therapy can be a good time during Pirate Day festivities.

a spirited sail toss.

Residents joined in high-seas fun with activities like the "Dead Men Tell No Tales" shootout, fencing challenges, and

With laughter echoing through the gym, it was clear - rehab can be both healing and exhilarating!



## Spokane Veterans Home

The clogging dancers stopped by Spokane Veterans Home and brought the house down! The ladies danced, told jokes, and got our Veterans moving to some old-time tunes.

Seeing our Residents smile, clap, and even tap along was truly heartwarming. These joyful experiences lift spirits and

create lasting memories.

## WDVA Job Opportunities

Take a look at our [available opportunities](#) with WDVA!



## Events & Observances Calendar

[Click Here to View Upcoming Events](#)

## Calendar

< > today

August 2025

month week day list

[Submit an event for posting consideration.](#)

Submissions accepted will be added within 2 business days if your submission meets the criteria.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		17:30 Forward2Gether Peer Group -	10:00 VERG Monthly Meeting August 2025 -	10:00 Skagit County Suicide Prevention Workshop for veterans, their loved ones, and all who care about those who served - 18:00 Upcoming Virtual Workshop: How to Sell to the State of Washington -	17:00 VERG Networking Event - Veteran Employment Resource Group -	14:00 Music for the Cause -
17	18		19	20	21	22
			08:00 8th Annual Serving Those Who Served Conference   "Veterans First: Focusing on our Mission of Serving Those Who Served" - 09:00 The Complete Federal Resume - 09:00 LinkedIn Profiles & Job Search w/ Professional Headshots -			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		11:30 The Wall That Heals - Spokane - 16:30 Hot August Night Event - WSH -	13:00 VA New Patient Orientation -			
31						
The Wall That Heals - Spokane -				09:00 The Wall That Heals - Ellensburg -		

[Submit an Event](#)

## Program Spotlights

### Washington State Gold Star License Plates

Washington State Armed Forces License Plates

Have you or are your serving in the U.S. military, or are you a family member of someone who is?

Apply now for a special license plate recognizing your or your loved one's service branch!



**Email:** [License.Plates@dva.wa.gov](mailto:License.Plates@dva.wa.gov) or visit: [Armed Forces License Plates | WDVA](#)

## Washington Celebrates National Hire-A-Vet Day

[YesVets](#) is a program that recognizes employers who hire veterans. It started in 2016. Since then, more than 2,300 employers have signed up, hiring over 7,900 veterans.

On July 24, Washington State hosted the National Hire-A-Vet Day Job & Resource Fair in Tacoma, connecting veterans, military families, and DoD employees with over 60 employers and support organizations. Attendees received resume help, interview tips, and access to job opportunities.

By signing up for YesVets, you will receive:

- Decals (some shown on this page) to display at your business or add to your website, business cards and other materials.
- Invitations and priority registration to YesVets job fairs.
- A chance to win the Hire-A-Vet Employer of the Year award.
- Recognition as a preferred employer for veterans.

Powered by [YesVets](#), [WorkSource](#), and [Washington State SHRM](#), the event highlighted statewide efforts to support Veteran employment.

Read More: [Washington answers National Hire-A-Vet Day call | Employment Security Department](#)



## Additional Events

[International Overdose Awareness Day](#)



## **Standing Together: Honoring Veterans on International Overdose Awareness Day**

On August 31, the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) joins the global community in honoring International Overdose Awareness Day a time to remember lives lost, support those still fighting, and take action to protect our Veteran community.

For many Veterans, the struggle continues long after service ends. Trauma, chronic pain, and mental health challenges can lead to substance use and overdose, impacting families, communities, and care systems. No Veteran should face this crisis alone.

This day calls us to extend the same loyalty and compassion that defines military service to those battling substance use. By listening, sharing, and mobilizing, we move from awareness to action, demanding better care, stronger support, and lasting change.

### **How You Can Help:**

- Wear purple to raise awareness
- Share a story to reduce stigma
- Attend or host a local event
- Reach out to a Veteran in need

Together, we turn remembrance into resilience. Let's stand united, for our Veterans, our families, and a future free from overdose.

**Resource:** [DOH Launches Tool to Help Washingtonians Find Free Naloxone](#)

**Come connect with Your WDVA at the [International Overdose Awareness Day Event](#) | on Aug. 27 at the Hal Holmes Community Center**

For more information visit: [International Overdose Awareness Day: 31 August](#)



# HOT AUGUST NIGHT

## CAR SHOW, LIVE MUSIC, MILITARY VEHICLES AND MORE

**Washington Soldiers Home in Orting  
4:30 pm – 7:30 pm, Tuesday, August 26, 2025**

**Join us for fun, food & community! The Washington Soldiers Home (WSH)  
welcomes our community to join us for Hot August Night.**

🚗 Car & Motorcycle Clubs 🚚 Military Vehicles 🎵 Live Music 🏆 Volunteer &  
Car Show Awards 🍔 Food Trucks 📄 Info Tables: Admissions, Benefits & Jobs  
*Bring chairs & blankets and connect with Residents & enjoy the WSH campus!*



**Please register with the QR code  
Questions? [TerryN@dva.wa.gov](mailto:TerryN@dva.wa.gov)**



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