

2026 April Veteran Voices - WA Dept of Veterans Affairs

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Greetings from your WDVA Director: David Puento Jr.

As events unfold around the world, people across Washington hold a wide range of views and feelings. And those perspectives matter.

At the same time, it's important to remember the people who serve in our military – and the families who stand beside them – are real people living in our communities. Here in Washington, they are our neighbors, our coworkers, our classmates, and our friends.

More than 160,000 active-duty service members, members of the National Guard and Reserves, and their families call Washington home. They are part of the fabric of our communities. Our service members volunteer to serve. They raise their right hand and commit to something larger than themselves – knowing it will require sacrifice, separation, and uncertainty as they protect, defend, and support our freedoms and the Constitution.

We also know, from our nation's past and from the experiences of many Veterans, when service members return home without strong support, the effects can be long-lasting, impacting individuals, families, and where we live. This understanding shapes the way Washington shows up today: with a commitment to connection, care, and community.

Supporting service members, Veterans and military families is not a political act. It does not require agreement with any specific situation happening in the world. It is a recognition that we are all connected and a commitment to ensuring those who serve - and those who support them - are not navigating the challenges of military life alone.

As citizens of Washington State, we can hold different views while still standing together in support of our neighbors who serve. I encourage you to support our service members and their families as they support our nation and local communities.

Your Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs offers resources for Veterans, service members, their families, and the community that supports them. For more information, visit <https://www.dva.wa.gov/>.

WDVA News and Current Events

WDVA announces preferred site for Tri-Cities Veterans Cemetery

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e.g. name@example.com

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Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) recently announced the preferred site for our State Veterans Cemetery, Tri-Cities project. The agency selected a parcel in the City of Richland, in the Horn Rapids area off State Route 240. This 140-acre parcel was reserved by the City in August 2025 for a no-cost public purpose transfer to WDVA to build a State Veterans Cemetery.

"This announcement is the culmination of the support received from the Tri-Cities Veterans community," said WDVA Director David Puente, Jr. "It is inspiring to see Veterans coming together championing this project alongside their elected officials from all levels of government. I look forward to our work together as this dream becomes a reality."

For more information or questions, please contact WDVA at:

- Email: CemeteryTri-Cities@dva.wa.gov,
- Sign up for e-newsletter [email updates](#)
- Keep track of progress at [Future Tri-Cities Cemetery | WDVA](#)

State Veterans Cemetery, Tri-Cities in the news:

- [WDVA holds town hall on state veterans cemetery coming to Richland | News | nbcrightnow.com](#)
- [New veterans cemetery planned in Richland](#)
- [Plans advance for Tri-Cities veterans cemetery in Richland | Tri-City Herald](#)
- [Richland Site selected for possible State Veterans Cemetery | News | nbcrightnow.com](#)
- [New State Veterans Cemetery planned for Richland | News | nbcrightnow.com](#)
- [Veterans' cemetery in Tri-Cities moves closer to reality with first design plan | News | applevalleynewsnow.com](#)
- [PHOTOS: Tri-Cities Cemetery Town Hall March 2026 | Flickr](#)



WDVA Awards \$20,000 to Veteran-Focused outdoor program

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has announced [Outdoors for Our Heroes](#) as the recipient of a Suicide Prevention Community-Based Grant, awarding the organization \$20,000 to expand its Veteran-focused suicide prevention efforts.

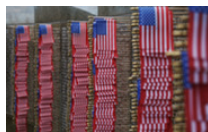


Funds raised from [Suicide Prevention License Plate Emblems](#) can be used to expand WDVA's peer program, peer support programs, and additional suicide prevention services, including community-based grants.

For WDVA, the grant represents more than financial support.

The announcement comes amid ongoing concern over Veteran suicide rates. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in its latest [2025 Suicide Prevention Report](#), nearly 18 Veterans die by suicide each day nationwide. In Washington State, there has been an increase in Veteran suicide deaths in 2025 compared to the previous year, with heightened risk among rural Veterans, those aged 55 and older, and recently separated Service Members.

Read more: [Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs Awards \\$20,000 to Veteran-Focused Outdoor Program | WDVA](#)



2026 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day event held

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs hosted a warm and heartfelt Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony in the Columbia Room on the Capitol Campus in Olympia. Held on March 30, 2026, the indoor gathering brought together Vietnam Veterans, their spouses, fellow Veterans, and community members to honor those who served during the Vietnam War.

During the ceremony, several Vietnam Veterans and family members shared personal reflections, creating meaningful moments of connection and remembrance. Commemorative Pins were presented to Vietnam Veterans and their spouses, with many proudly wearing pins they had previously received. The event served as a sincere expression of gratitude and a long-overdue welcome home for the men and women who served.

In addition to the Capitol Campus ceremony, a companion Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day event was held at the Sarg Hubbard Community Center. That gathering also brought Veterans, families, and supporters together to honor Vietnam-era service. Attendees shared stories, reconnected with fellow Veterans, and received Commemorative Pins in recognition of their service and sacrifice. The Sarg Hubbard event echoed the same spirit of appreciation and community, ensuring that Vietnam Veterans across the region felt seen, valued, and welcomed home.

Photos:

- [2026.03.30 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans in Olympia | Flickr](#)
- [2026.3.28 Yakima Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event | Flickr](#)

Media Links:

- [Yakima Warriors welcome home Vietnam, other veterans at Sarg Hubbard park ceremony | Local | yakimaherald.com](#)
- [Yakima community honors Vietnam veterans at Sarg Hubbard Park](#)

YesVets program celebrates milestones and marks nearly 10,000 Veterans hired

Celebrating 10 years of recognizing employers who say, "Yes", to hiring Veterans. WDVA was honored to celebrate the 10-Year YesVets Anniversary at the Capitol, marking a decade of statewide commitment to hiring and supporting Veterans in the workforce.



The celebration highlighted the powerful partnership between WDVA, the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESDwa), the Washington State Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the Department of Commerce, the State Military Transition Council, and chambers of commerce statewide. Together, these partners helped build a grassroots, unfunded campaign that grew into one of Washington's most successful Veteran employment initiatives.

Director David Puente Jr. reflected on the program's impact, noting that more than 2,500 employers have participated in YesVets and nearly 10,000 Veterans have been hired. "That is close to 10,000 lives changed—10,000 families strengthened with increased economic support," he said. "When employers say 'yes' to a Veteran, they're not just filling a position—they're investing in someone who will strengthen their organization from day one."

The event honored employers who have championed Veteran hiring and reaffirmed a shared commitment to the next decade of YesVets. The milestone gathering underscored that supporting Veterans—through employment, resources, and community—remains essential to building strong workplaces and a stronger Washington.

Read more: [YesVets 10 Year Anniversary Celebration - TWV](#)



April is the Month of the Military Child

This is a time to recognize and honor the resilience, strength, and sacrifices of the children who support our service members.

These young heroes are a vital part of the military community, showing courage, adaptability, and strength as they grow up alongside service and sacrifice. Their contributions often go unseen, but their impact is deeply felt across our communities.

This month, and every month, we proudly salute military children and thank them for the important role they play in supporting their families and strengthening our communities.

More resources: [2026 Month of the Military Child Toolkit | Military OneSource](#)

Check out what's happening at our Veterans Homes

Easter at the Spokane Veterans Home

The Easter Bunny made a special appearance at the Spokane Veterans Home, bringing smiles, laughter, and plenty of holiday cheer. Our veterans enjoyed taking photos, receiving thoughtful cards, and hunting for bright Easter eggs filled with surprises.

The visit sparked wonderful conversations and lighthearted moments, creating a festive atmosphere that lifted everyone's spirits. It was a joyful celebration and a meaningful reminder of the community that surrounds and supports our veterans.



Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard

St Patrick's Day 2026- Residents of Washington Veterans Home celebrated Ireland's patron saint with a grand ceili.

The Marine Corps Security Force Battalion, Bangor (MCSFBn) assisted with more than 20 volunteers to visit, serve and celebrate with our residents.

There may not have been green beer, but we did have carefully poured Guinness and cocktails to enjoy. With background seasonal music for enjoyment, everyone learned a little bit more about Ireland through themed trivia Q & A. Two MSFBn volunteers tag teamed taking turns the reading of the trivia, which kept everyone engaged! No leprechauns were seen and the fabled pot of gold remains elusive.



Walla Walla Veterans Home

On March 13th, K9 Veterans Day, we were treated to a very special visit from Deputy Ashley Daschofsky (also known as "Dutch") and his recently retired police dog, Murphy, from the [Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office](#). Staff and residents

agreed that this was one of the most well-attended and engaging programs we've had to date at WWVH.

Before bringing Murphy inside to meet everyone, Daschofsky shared the background, training, skill sets, and some fascinating stories about the lives and careers of these incredible dogs. Our Veterans were full of thoughtful questions that kept the conversation engaging and interesting for all. These incredible and unique German Shepherds are 'a breed of their own'. Like nothing we've seen before. They are brought to the US from Germany to serve as police dogs and in other profoundly heroic roles. Murphy's courage, powerful presence, and the beautiful lifelong relationship between him and Deputy Daschofsky inspired us.

Daschofsky is a Veteran of the [U.S. Marine Corps](#), which made his and Murphy's visit all the more meaningful for our group. Thank you, Deputy Daschofsky and Murphy. It was an honor hosting you here at the Walla Walla Veterans Home.

Washington Soldiers Home in Orting

Washington Soldiers Home residents enjoyed an exciting visit from [Cascade Christian Schools](#) 7th & 8th Graders. Students and teachers honored the Veterans and families while expressing appreciation for their service with their many contributions during their fun-filled visit!



Residents, students and teachers engaged in stimulating conversations and spirited competition with all exercising their creativity during rousing games of KerPlunk, poker, checkers, trivia and building blocks.

The residents received a handmade banner for posting and greeting cards in appreciation for their service, and appreciated the students' assistance with their purchased items upon their return from a shopping outing.

The students' and teachers' generosity continued as they went the extra mile in reorganizing shelves of jigsaw puzzles in the activity room.

Thank you to Cascade Christian School students and teachers for the memorable intergenerational visit showing honor and appreciation for WA Soldiers Home Veterans & families! [View more photos](#)



Transitional Housing Program

Dan Bujok from the VFW Off Roaders Group stopped by the Building 10 Transitional Housing Program with a heartwarming Easter surprise, delivering a generous donation of festive treats for our residents.

We're grateful for the kindness and community spirit that made this holiday a little brighter.

April 2026

WDVA Job Opportunities

APPLY HERE: [View all available career opportunities with WDVA](#)

Veteran Conservation Corps Current Internship Openings

The [Veterans Conservation Corps \(VCC\)](#) program offers Washington State Veterans a powerful opportunity to heal, grow, and give back through hands-on environmental work. Whether you're looking for a new way to serve your community, want to develop skills in conservation or agriculture, or just want to connect with nature, VCC provides meaningful connection and pathways to purpose and well-being.

Grays Harbor Conservation District (Elma)

- [Prairie Habitat Restoration Internship](#)

Lewis Conservation District (Chehalis)

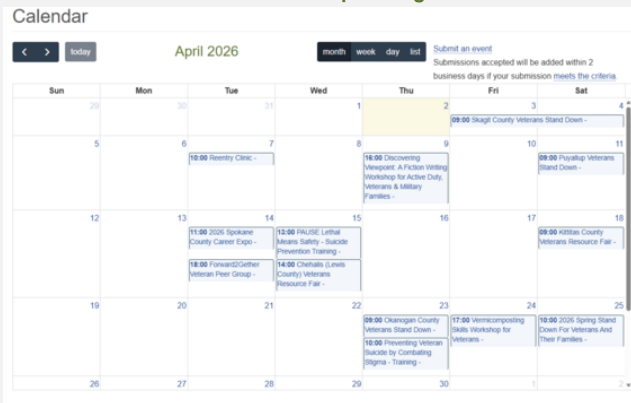
- [Prairie Habitat Restoration Internship](#)

Thurston Conservation District (Tumwater)

- [Prairie Habitat Restoration Internship](#)

Events & Observances Calendar

[Click here to view upcoming events](#)



To submit an event, please email communications@dva.wa.gov

Veterans Training Support Center - Upcoming workshops

Brain Injury & Recovery	Mindfulness Tools for Veterans & Families: Bridging the Gaps	4/9/2026	11:00am-12:00pm
Suicide Prevention	PAUSE Lethal Means Safety	4/15/2026	1:00pm-2:30pm
Suicide Prevention	Combating Stigma	4/23/2026	10:00am-11:30am
Counseling	Trauma Informed Care	4/17/2026	9:00am-4pm
Veteran Conservation Corps	Vermicomposting Skills Workshop	4/24/2026	5:00pm-7:00pm
Counseling	Using Behavioral Activation to Treat PTSD	4/24/2026	9:00am-4:00pm
Suicide Prevention	LEARN Saves Lives	4/27/2026	1:00pm-2:30pm

Suicide Prevention	Veteran Tobacco and Nicotine Use	4/28/2026	12:00pm-1:30pm
Suicide Prevention	Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk	5/07/2026	9:00am-4:00pm

WDVA Program Videos



Check out the following Program Videos:

- [Definition Of A Veteran - PSA - Washington Department of Veterans Affairs](#)
- [WDVA Gold Star License Plate program](#)

Program Spotlight

WDVA Transition Warrior Program

Transitioning service members...have you filed your Disability Claim yet? Time is ticking.....

You must file your Pre-Discharge (BDD) claim between 180-90 days before you separate.

Our VA-accredited team is here to help you access the benefits you've earned, from claims assistance to healthcare enrollment.

WDVA's Transitioning Warrior Program is dedicated to guiding service members, Veterans, and their families through every step of the benefits process on Joint Base Lewis-McChord and throughout surrounding communities.

Whether you're navigating your transition from military to civilian life or seeking support as a Veteran, our team is here to help you access the resources you've earned

ALL TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS
 About to Separate or Retire from Service?
 Contact Us Now to Get Started on your Pre-Discharge VA Disability Claim.

VA Accredited Claims Assistance:
 Disability Claims, Federal & State Veterans Benefits, Earned Benefits and More!

Have YOU Filed Yet???
 Time is Ticking...
 *You MUST File Your Pre-Discharge Claim between 90-180 days before Separation

SCAN TO CONTACT US

CONTACT US TODAY
 SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

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