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April/May 2013

WDVA Selects New Cemetery Director



The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is proud to announce the selection of Rudy Lopez as the Veterans Cemetery Director for the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery.

Rudy is a 30-year veteran of the United States Air Force, holding various positions in the medical field including the Air Force Pharmacy Career Field Manager. His assignments included numerous bases stateside as well as overseas in Turkey and Germany. He deployed and served as the 332d Expeditionary Medical Group Superintendent, Joint Base Balad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2007, and served as the interim 15 Airlift Wing Command Chief, Hickam AFB Hawaii in 2009.

Most recently Lopez served as the 92d Air Refueling Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant from 2010-2013, responsible for advising the wing commander on the health, morale and welfare of 2,800 assigned personnel. He oversaw the training, worldwide deployability and professional development of 2,200 enlisted Airmen supporting worldwide air refueling operations. During his tenure the installation's Airmen have supported homeland defense, Operations Enduring Freedom, Unified Protector, the Horn of Africa and US drug interdiction efforts in South America. The wing has also responded to multiple humanitarian and disaster relief operations in Haiti, Japan and our own east coast following Hurricane Sandy, as well as providing refueling capabilities to support the safety of athletes and guests for the 2010 Winter Olympics. Additionally he was responsible for providing base operating support to over 9,000 Active Duty, Air National Guard, Army Guard and Reserve personnel and their families and to the region's 16,000 retirees.

As the Veterans Cemetery Director, Rudy will be responsible for planning, coordinating, and directing the administration and operation of the State Veterans cemetery.

Rudy and his wife both originate from El Paso, Texas, and have one son. The family will be making Spokane, Washington their new home.

The 2007 State Legislature approved the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery budget and House Bill 1292, authorizing WDVA to establish the cemetery, which celebrated its 2nd anniversary of operation May 2012.

For additional information on the Eastern Washington Veterans Cemetery, visit http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern_wa_vet_cemetery.html

Women in the Military ~ Honoring the Past...Driving into the Future
Are you registered? (See Page 9)

Join women veterans from all corners of Washington State, and from other parts of the U.S.A., as they gather for the Women's Veterans Conference, an annual one-day event, on June 29, 2013.



A Note from the Director

Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos (Alfie)

alfie@dva.wa.gov

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

On March 29th, Governor Inslee signed HB 1319, which establishes March 30 of every year as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day” in Washington State.

The Governor’s conference room overflowed with enthusiastic supporters from across the state, including Yakima Warriors in ceremonial dress. HB 1319 was brought forward by Gil Calac (pictured right with Governor Jay Inslee) and members of the Yakama Warriors Association, who honored veterans through native song and dance at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial later that morning. (pictures on page 3)



Commemorative Partner

Following the bill signing, I was so very proud to assist Governor



Inslee in

announcing that Washington State is a Commemorative Partner with the Department of Defense 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration to Honor Vietnam Veterans.

The Commemorative Partner Program is designed for federal, state and local communities, veterans’ organizations and other nongovernmental organizations to honor and thank Vietnam Veterans and their families.

To become a Commemorative Partner, go to www.VietnamWar50th.com and sign up online. After receiving your starter kit, be sure and let WDVA know about any events you hold to Thank and Honor our Vietnam Veterans so we can post them on our Public Events page. Send flyers, invitations and details to communications@dva.wa.gov !

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Do you know a Vietnam Veteran with diabetes or cancer?

Please call **1 (800) 562-2308**

We want to help Veterans, or their widows get benefits they may not even know about.

KM3004S

I can not stress enough the important role Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day and the 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration to Honor Vietnam Veterans will play to help future generations understand the service and sacrifice Vietnam War Veterans made on behalf of their state and country.

Creating greater awareness of the thanks and gratitude Washingtonians hold for our Vietnam Veterans may also help to encourage Vietnam and other veterans to come forward and seek out the benefits they so richly deserve from their service to our country.

It’s never too late to get connected to your veterans benefits, and we have a network of partners ready to help.

March 29, 2013



Washington State
Vietnam War Veterans Memorial
Olympia, WA





Legislative Update as of April 24, 2013:

The 2013 Legislative Session will draw to a close on Sunday, April 28th. Below is a list of the Veteran or Military bills that have been passed and sent to the Governor’s Office. Additional bills that are still being considered by the Legislature are listed on the [WDVA Legislative Updates website](#).

Bill #	Title and Summary	Sponsor
HB 1109 Del to Gov	Higher education registration/veterans – Requires institutions of higher education that offer an early course registration period for any segment of the student population, to offer early registration to students who are eligible veterans or National Guard members.	Hansen
SHB 1192 Del to Gov	Regarding license fees for veterans with disabilities – Allows non-state resident veterans with disabilities to purchase hunting licenses and combination fishing licenses at the same price paid by nondisabled Washington residents.	Short
HB 1319 Gov Signed	Recognizing a welcome home Vietnam veterans day – Recognizes March 30 as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day and requires that the National League of Families’ POW/MIA flag be flown by public entities on that date.	Johnson
ESHB 1432 Del to Gov	County property tax levies – Allows the county legislative authority to increase or reduce the Veteran’s Assistance and county mental health property tax levies in the same proportion as the regular county property tax levy.	Stanford
SHB 1537 Del to Gov	Veteran’s preference – Authorizes veterans to claim a preference in public employment upon receipt of separation orders.	O’Ban
SHB 1806 Gov Signed	Veterans’ assistance – Allows a county’s veterans’ assistance program to provide services to service members who received a general discharge under honorable conditions or a medical discharge.	Hansen
SB 5161 Del to Gov	Gold star license plates – The list of individuals that are eligible to receive a Gold Star license plate is expanded to include a widow or widower, a biological or adopted child, an adoptive parent, a stepparent, and a foster parent or other adult that is legally responsible for the member of the armed forces.	Braun
SB 5343 Del to Gov	Higher education students / military – Requires institutions of higher education to provide make-up classes, exams, or other make-up events to National Guard members or other military reservists called to active duty or training for 30 days or less without prejudice to the final course grade or evaluation.	Bailey

- Del to Gov means the bill has been passed by both the Senate and House and is awaiting action by the Governor
- Gov Signed means the bill has been signed into law by the Governor. Unless a bill has an emergency clause, the new law will take effect 90 days after the Legislative Session ends.

Two New Scholarships for Veterans Created by GAVE



The Green Alliance for Veteran Education (GAVE) is proud to announce the creation of two new scholarships for veterans and their family members: the *Mike Gregoire Family Achievement Award* and the *Ken Jacobsen Lifetime of Public Service Award*.

These scholarships were created to provide financial incentive for veterans and their family members pursuing a college degree and to honor the legacy of two of Washington State's finest. Both Mike Gregoire and Ken Jacobsen served in the military and spent their entire careers advocating for veterans rights and benefits; enriching the lives of many as a result.

For more information about GAVE and these scholarships, or to find out how you can contribute, please visit GAVE's website: www.vetsgave.org/scholarships-and-grants.

GAVE is a recognized 501(c)3, non-profit organization. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Governor's Leadership Academy

The Governor's Leadership Academy is a unique internship program for college and graduate students to gain a hands-on learning experience in the Governor's office. <http://www.governor.wa.gov/office/jobopenings.aspx>

The Inslee Administration is looking for innovative, forward-thinking individuals who are committed to public service and who want to develop their leadership and public policy skills in a dynamic environment.

How to Apply

To be considered, you must apply at www.careers.wa.gov.

Application review begins immediately and will continue on an ongoing basis until an adequate pool of candidates is established.

- The internship is unpaid but reimbursements for travel may be available on a case by case basis.
- Interns must be available for at least 10 hours a week for 12 weeks – minimum.
- College course credit may be applicable, depending on school program. We will work with your individual academic institution in obtaining college course credit for academic internships.

Location

The program is based in Olympia, WA or Washington DC.

For more information about this position, please contact Unjin Lee at (360) 902.4111 or by email unjin.lee@gov.wa.gov.



The Eagles Walk the Talk

By Peter G. Schmidt, Psy. D. Project Director
Veterans Training Support Center
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Many colleges and universities in Washington State tout being “veteran friendly” and have become Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses through the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs. With diminishing financial resources, space being at a premium, and competing agendas and interests between departments and programs, enacting a veteran-related best practice can be difficult to do.

Not so for the Eastern Washington University Eagles!

President Rodolfo Arévalo, along with university leadership and community supporters, recently “walked the talk” by opening a Veteran Resource Center (VRC). This huge 2,000 squarefoot facility boasts a computer lab, kitchen area, lounge, workshop and conference space, and offices. Student veterans receive quality support and oversight from program director, M. David Millet, Lt. Colonel (Retired), and other personnel (certifying official, recruiter/advisor, graduate assistants, faculty liaisons and Heather Bahme, dedicated and committed WDVA, Vet-Corps Representative).

Over 500 student veterans are enrolled at Eastern and the university expects an annual 10% increase of those seeking degrees and using GI educational benefits. Cultures of military and higher education can be a formidable challenge and barrier for service members and veterans. One major promising best practice employed by a few higher education institutions to facilitate readjustment and recommended in *Serving Those Who Serve*, published by the American Council on Education, is to provide space where veterans can gather to study and support each other.

Eastern understands the importance of providing a forum where veterans can come together and experience team, community and mentorship.

<http://access.ewu.edu/veterans-services.xml>

If you are an alumni of a higher education institution please feel free to pass along this best practice. It might be of interest to inquire how your alma mater is serving its population of student veterans and their family members.

Healthcare for Iraq/Afghan Veterans

Iraq and Afghanistan veterans discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, may be eligible for five years of medical care.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is trying to reach out to eligible veterans who served “in a theater of combat operations” to let them know that they may be eligible for complete health care coverage for five years post service.

To determine eligibility, visit the Veterans Health Administration website at:

http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/eligibility_check.asp.

The VHA website provides comprehensive health benefits and includes a link to their fully developed *Veterans Health Benefits Guide*.

For more information, visit www.va.gov or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), 8 a.m.-8 p.m. EST.



Position Announcement

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs proudly invites applicants to apply for a 10 month position of AmeriCorps national service with the Washington State Vet Corps program the service year will begin **September 1st, 2013**.

AmeriCorps “engages more than 80,000 men and women in intensive service each year to help communities tackle pressing problems while mobilizing millions of volunteers.” Most Vet Corps sites will be at community colleges, technical colleges and four year colleges, with several sites located on or near military installations. For more information on AmeriCorps State and National, visit www.americorps.gov.

The role of the Vet Corps member at any site is to assist veterans towards their goals, utilizing local referral and resources, peer contact with the veteran or veterans, and creation of a veteran community and culture at the site. The Vet Corps member will also be tasked with organizing service projects once a quarter. This is a new “mission” for a veteran interested in helping other veterans find their own personal “mission,” as well as assisting them towards a career or life path. For more information, visit <http://www.dva.wa.gov/vetcorps.html>.

Veterans, spouses and dependents will be eligible for these positions; present and past students at the colleges are preferred. A high school diploma is required, with preference given to some college. The ability to recruit volunteers is a desirable skill set along with good communication skills, both written and verbal. This is a full-time 40 hours per week position (with some flexibility) for a total of 1,700 hours of national service at the end of 10 months. The volunteer stipend is \$1,210 a month, and there will be a \$5,550 education benefit awarded to members upon completion of the required hours.

Apply at the link below:

<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?id=48890&fromSearch=true>

For more information feel free to contact

Sarah Andrews at: s.andrews@washingtonvetcorps.org, (206) 992-9424.

Casey Larkin at: caseyl@dva.wa.gov, (360) 725-2158

Jason Alves at: Jasona@dva.wa.gov, (360)725-2224

Updated 3/21/2013

Veteran service organizations receive 108 refurbished laptops to help veterans find homes, health care and employment

by Jennifer Reynolds, Dept. of Enterprise Services

Enterprise Services Surplus Operations and the state Department of Veterans Affairs are partnering with the Federal Surplus Personal Property Program to make 108 laptops available to six veteran service organizations under the FOR VETS Act of 2010. American Legion's Bill Powell and WDVA's Steve Gill are pictured right loading laptops to be used to help veterans find jobs, receive vocational support and training, and apply for disability and medical benefits.



The organizations receiving surplus materials are:

- Vietnam Veterans of America
- The American Legion
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- African American Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Association
- National Association for Black Veterans
- Unfinished Mission

In the fall of 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the “FOR VETS Act of 2010,” authorizing the transfer of federal surplus property to a state agency for distribution through donation within the state to approved veteran service organizations. The program allows veterans to connect with crucial resources they may need to find housing, medical care and employment.

WDVA Wounded Warrior Battalion Employees Making Transitioning Soldiers A Priority

WDVA Director Alfie Alvarado-Ramos and Assistant Director Mary Forbes recently had the opportunity to drop by the JBLM Soldier and Family Assistance Center to personally congratulate Malcolm, Scott, Steve, Raphael and Inkyung for serving 1,574 transitioning soldiers at Joint Base Lewis McChord in just two months.



“They have gone above and beyond to bridge the gap and provide ACAP State Benefit Briefings and Benefits Classes at the Wounded Warrior Battalion and Soldier and Family Assistance Center,” said Alfie.

Malcolm and Scott work with the Wounded Warrior Battalion and Steve, Raphael, and Inkyung are all VetCorps Members located at JBLM.

Thank you for your exemplary service to this agency and to the veterans we serve!

From Left to Right: Inkyung Walker, Steve Killian, Malcolm Leach, Jackie Seabrook-SFAC Director, Mary Forbes, Scott Bloom, Raphael Rodriguez, Lourdes (Alfie) Alvarado-Ramos

Women Veterans Reaching Out to Women Veterans at Purdy and Mission Creek



Sharon Kirkpatrick, a woman veteran and active veterans advocate, understands how important it is to plan for success. That's why she has dedicated time each month since March 2012 to help women in prison plan for their release.

While teaching Interaction Transition classes at Purdy, Sharon Kirkpatrick asked the women about their employment experiences.

"Out of a class of 20 women, three reported their only employment had been in the military," said Kirkpatrick, president of the Washington Women Veterans Advisory Committee. "That's when it dawned on me – there were women veterans in Purdy."

Kirkpatrick was inspired to do more to help these women veterans and began working with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and the Washington Corrections Center for Women.

With the help of these agencies a small group of women veterans were identified at both Purdy and Mission Creek. Kirkpatrick quickly established a monthly visit with the women at both facilities, along with partners from other outreach agencies, including Pioneer Human Services' Julie Lord and VA VISN 20's Diana Rogers.

Working as a team, they have been identifying how they can better help incarcerated women veterans connect to veteran resources more easily.

Thanks to the outreach from Kirkpatrick and the Incarcerated Women Veterans Project, five women veterans have been directly served upon release and are receiving benefits including housing and health care.

An interesting note: A recent story about a peer-mentoring group at the Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women highlighted inmate Rosemary Pargoud as she led a session under the prison's Women's Legacy program. Pargoud is an honorably discharged Army veteran, and is also involved in the veterans group at Mission Creek.

<http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/2013/mar/05/prison-program-offers-skills-to-cope-in-and-out/#axzz2K2tycw00>

2013 Women Veteran Summit - Saturday June 29



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

<http://www.dva.wa.gov/2013womenveterans.html>

Are you registered?

Join women veterans from all corners of Washington State, and from other parts of the U.S.A., as they gather for the Women's Veterans Conference, an annual one-day event, on June 29, 2013.

Greater Tacoma Trade and Convention Center
1500 Broadway
Tacoma, WA 98402



The chips were flying, the cards were turning and the residents were all astir with the gaming excitement of Reno Day!



Chilson Hall was magically transformed into a gaming Mecca for the anticipated annual Reno Day event with the assistance of independent volunteers, the Tacoma Hogs Harley Davidson Group, VFW Auxiliary and staff.

The Tacoma Hogs ran the games and provided a Tacoma Hogs Prize Table filled with fabulous T-shirts and hats.

Residents also cashed in their chips at a filled-to-the-brim prize table manned by independent volunteers and staff.



Tasty fare was prepared by D & G's Kitchen and the VFW Auxiliary. The VFW Auxiliary and volunteers served the hungry resident gamers the delectable refreshments.



The energy was high and Chilson Hall was alive with the laughter, hoots and hollers of residents during Reno Day at the Washington Soldiers Home, thanks to our wonderful volunteers and staff!





It Was **More** than just a Children's Easter EGG Hunt!



This year's Easter egg hunt at the Washington Veterans Home was a HUGE success!



We were joined by the Washington Army and Air National Guard families and it was great having so many here to enjoy the beautiful day.

The children were here for an egg hunt, but there was much more to do.

There was egg dying, face painting, a bounce house, hot dog lunch and bubble gum art sculptures. There was also Happy Easter card making, and before the end of the day the kids who made cards for our veterans went to the dining rooms to personally deliver them.

A special thanks to Washington National Guard Joint Services Support, and Washington Air and Army National Guard youth for making this year's event spectacular!

The volunteers who helped are truly the reason this was an outstanding event. The Distribution Depot Puget Sound provided the food and sent volunteers and the South Kitsap Navy ROTC hid the eggs and ran the stations. They were AMAZING!



**Are you an
Honorably Discharged Veteran?**

**The Spokane Area Veterans Honor Guard
is looking for you!**



Contact Jack Davis

509-499-7483 or jdavisir58@gmail.com

or

**Come to the VFW Post 51 - 300 W. Mission
Ave., Spokane WA**

at 7:00 pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month

**Do you like to
drive?**

**Do you have a desire to
help others get to their
appointments?**



**The Walla Walla VA is
looking for volunteers to
be part of their driving
team for the local Walla
Walla area with DAV.**

**Give Connie Morse
a call at 509-525-5200,
x26740.**

**Thanks for helping our
Veterans get the care
they need!**

**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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