

WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF

**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**



"Serving Those Who Served"

WDVA Veteran Voices

February 2025

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

At the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, we are proud to recognize individuals who exemplify the values of honor, respect, and gratitude toward our Veterans. Recently, we had the privilege of honoring a young man whose actions have left a lasting mark on all who know his story—Kellen Bradley, a 14-year-old student from Orting High School. Kellen's thoughtful and selfless act of kindness towards a

Veteran is a powerful reminder of the impact that one person's respect can have in preserving the legacy of those who have served.

While visiting his grandfather in Puyallup, Kellen came across an estate sale where he found a shadow box containing a burial flag in the rain among items marked "free." Recognizing the importance of preserving the legacy of the deceased veteran, Kellen decided to bring the shadow box containing the flag to the nearby Washington Soldiers Home in Orting.

"I took it because I felt like the (estate sale owner) shouldn't have to throw that away," said Kellen during an interview captured honoring his selfless act. "It was a soldier that had fought for us in the Navy, and I felt like it was the least that I could have done for him. I really like to support those who have supported us and have been through everything for us."

The shadow box belonged to a Navy Veteran and Kellen's respectful act has ensured that the Veteran's memory is honored and preserved properly.

Read the full story [HERE](#)



Additional Media Content:

View photos from the recognition ceremony: [2025.01.30 Washington Department of Veterans Affairs Recognizes Orting High School Student for Honoring Veteran | Flickr](#)

Full video interview from Kellen Bradley: <https://youtu.be/WNsXZBfLHrQ>

Full video interview from OHS Principal Cliff Fries: <https://youtu.be/8ewgovz4WtA>

Full video interview from Superintendent Ed Hatzenbeler: <https://youtu.be/pX5uPLqYVqw>

Full video ceremony: <https://youtu.be/o6fh3k7c7U8>

WDVA News and Current Events



Washington Department of Veterans Affairs Appoints New Suicide Prevention Program Manager

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is proud to announce the appointment of Nicole Vreeland as the new Suicide Prevention Program Manager. With a deep commitment to supporting Washington's Veterans and families, Vreeland will lead initiatives aimed at enhancing mental health services, increasing awareness, and reducing suicide rates among the Veteran community.

In her new role, Nicole will oversee WDVA's comprehensive suicide prevention efforts, focusing on implementing effective strategies, providing resources, and collaborating with community partners and develop reports and updates to the legislature to ensure Veterans and their families receive the critical support they need. Additionally, she will lead the [Washington State Governor's Challenge | WDVA](#).

Nicole Vreeland has 17 years of experience in state government service with over 20 years in the field of mental health and community healthcare, and a passion for improving the lives of Veterans and their families. Her role will involve coordinating programs, providing outreach, and ensuring access to a range of mental health and crisis services, all aimed at preventing suicide and fostering long-term well-being for Veterans and family members.

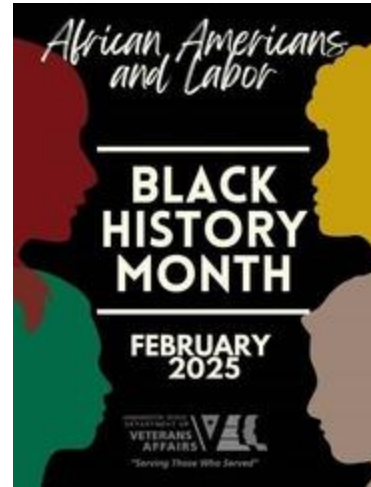
To learn more about the Suicide Prevention and Support Programs visit: [Suicide Prevention and Support | WDVA](#)

A Black History Month Message from Deputy Director Solomon Gilbert

This Black History Month, we're celebrating the powerful contributions of African Americans in shaping labor movements and fighting for workers' rights. African Americans have played a key role in challenging inequality and creating change in the workforce. Their resilience and activism have transformed industries and continue to inspire generations.

We invite you to watch this video to learn more about the impact of African Americans in labor movements and honor their legacy in the fight for justice and equality. Tune in, reflect, and share the message!

Click [HERE](#) to watch the video.



Don't Miss the WVAC Quarterly Lunch & Learn with MaxineJane Frazier

Join us for an exciting and insightful Quarterly Lunch & Learn hosted by the Women Veterans Advisory Committee (WVAC)

We are thrilled to welcome MaxineJane Frazier, U.S. Air Force Veteran and Author, for a captivating session on:

Pint-Sized Stories in a Flash

Date: February 26, 2025 **Time:** 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Access the virtual meeting here: [WVAC Lunch and Learn](#)

For any questions, please reach out to us at womenveterans@dva.wa.gov

To learn more about the Women Veterans Advisory Committee visit: [WDVA Women Veterans Advisory Committee](#)

Tobacco Cessation Program

Let us help with your journey toward better health.

Check out the links below for more information and for the upcoming Great American Spit Out on **February 20th!**

Great American Spit Out - <https://youtu.be/WFwzK4mh20I>

Program Spotlight video - <https://youtu.be/ZztNkvm1Bw>

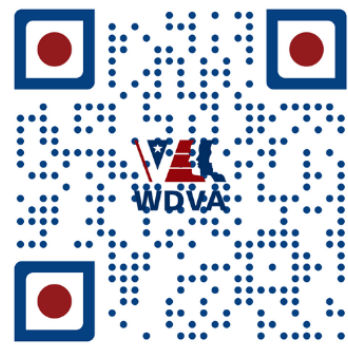
To learn more about our Tobacco Cessation Program visit: [Veteran Commercial Tobacco Cessation | WDVA](#)



Did you know you can request WDVA brochures?

DID YOU KNOW ?

YOU CAN SUBMIT A REQUEST FOR
WDVA BROCHURES?



Help us spread the word! 🗣️ Share our programs and services with others, and let's connect more Veterans and families with their earned benefits and resources.

Need brochures? Check out our list: [WDVA Brochures](#)

To submit a request for WDVA materials please follow this link or click on the QR code above: [Request WDVA Brochures](#)

Check out what's happening at our Veterans Homes



Washington Veterans Home

The Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard had the honor of hosting the South Kitsap Artists for a heartwarming art show!

Our honored residents were delighted by the diverse range of artistic talents and mediums on display. We want to extend a huge thank you to the eight incredible artists who shared their creativity and passion with our veterans.

Here's to celebrating art, community, and the spirit of giving!

Washington Soldiers Home

Your WDVA Director and Deputy Director recently visited the Washington Soldiers Home and Transitional Housing Program (THP) in Orting to engage with staff, discuss ideas, and address questions regarding the budget and hiring pauses.



During their visit, they toured the recent THP renovations, observed a Change Agility management training session, and expressed their gratitude to the staff for their commitment to serving those who served.



Walla Walla Veterans Home

103-year-old WWII Veteran Herald Reid, a resident of the Walla Walla Veterans Home, recently shared his heroic story with Dixie Ferguson.

His remarkable journey will be preserved in the Library of Congress as part of the Veterans History Project, honoring his legacy for future generations.

Spokane Veterans Home

The Spokane Symphony recently visited the Spokane Veterans Home and brought music, joy, and fun to the residents.



Everyone had an amazing time and can't wait for their next performance!

[WDVA Job Opportunities](#)

Hot Jobs - Incentives Available

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



Events & Observances Calendar

[Click Here to View Upcoming Events](#)

Calendar

< > today February 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
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	1

09:00 Heroes Cafe - Shoreline -
17:00 Forward2Gether Veteran and Military Families Brain Injury Peer Group -
11:00 Naval Base Kitsap Skultnodge -
11:00 Volunteer fair at NSB Bangor -
14:00 Veteran Resume Workshop (Tri-Cities) -
13:00 Veteran Orientation - Patient Orientation Group Class -
10:00 Stookum Community Resource and Services Fair -
09:00 VERG Monthly Meeting February 2025 -

[Submit an Event](#)

Program Spotlight



Suicide Prevention and Support

The WDVA Suicide Prevention Program is dedicated to fostering connection, building self-efficacy, and instilling hope.

Washington State offers a wealth of resources for Service Members, Veterans, and their families, and our goal is to strengthen and expand this network to provide genuine support, guidance, and compassion for those in need. Together, we can make a difference.

To learn more visit: [WDVA Suicide Prevention and Support](#)

See below for additional information and program resources.

Help us Spread the Word



Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program

The Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program enables the WDVA to provide resources toward community-based suicide prevention efforts to meet the needs of eligible Veterans and their Families through outreach, peer support, suicide prevention services, and connection to VA and community resources.

To learn more visit: [SSG Fox Community-based Suicide Prevention](#)

LEARN Saves Lives Suicide Prevention Training

Our LEARN Saves Lives training will help you better connect with those potentially dealing with suicide.

Connection is key to suicide prevention. Reach out, check in, and show that you care. Your support could be the lifeline someone needs. [#CrisisLifeline](#)





Purchase a Suicide Prevention License Plate "Lifeline Emblem"

Become an ally in the fight against suicide by purchasing a suicide prevention license plate emblem for only \$18.

For more information and to purchase an emblem, visit <https://www.dva.wa.gov/suicidepreventionemblem>