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2025 April Veteran Voices - WA Dept of Veterans Affairs

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WDVA Veteran Voices

April 2025

In this edition:

- [WDVA News and Current Events](#)
- [Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Event Recap](#)
- [Check out what's happening at our Veterans Homes](#)
- [WDVA Job Opportunities](#)
- [Events and Observances Calendar](#)
- [Share your Memorial Day Events](#)
- [Program Spotlight](#)



Greetings from your WDVA Director: David Puente

On March 29th, we had the honor of welcoming Governor Bob Ferguson to the Spokane Veterans Home for his very first visit. This was a momentous occasion, as the governor gained a firsthand understanding of the exceptional care our team provides to resident veterans. He also learned more about the Spokane Veterans Home Replacement Project - a critical initiative as the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs works to secure funding for a new, state-of-the-art facility.

During his visit, Governor Ferguson expressed deep admiration for the dedication and compassion of our staff. Residents were thrilled to meet him, engaging in lively conversations and sharing their thoughts on government priorities. One resident, John, spoke passionately about the incredible service provided by our team, highlighting the personalized care that makes our home truly special.

The governor's tour, led by Administrator Mark Michaels, offered him a closer look at the unique bond shared between staff and residents, a bond built on trust, respect, and unwavering commitment. This visit was a powerful reminder of the impact we have on the lives of our veterans, and it reinforced the importance of continuing to invest in their care and well-being.

To read more about the governor's visit to Spokane Veterans Home click: [Governor Ferguson Visits Spokane Veterans](#)

Home Highlighting Future Replacement Plans | WDVA



WDVA News and Current Events

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Event Recap

Celebrating Service and Sacrifice: On March 29, your WDVA proudly hosted the annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day on the Capitol Campus. This heartfelt event honored the bravery and dedication of Vietnam Veterans, offering a warm welcome and gratitude from the community they served so selflessly. Welcome Home!

You can find photos and videos from the event on our Flickr site: [2025.03.29 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Event on Capitol Campus | Flickr](#)

A live stream of the event is also available on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/16HUKr2LVy/>



Coverage from the Yakama Warriors association Welcome Home Vietnam event:

'Talk with an open heart': Yakima event welcomes home Vietnam veterans and shares resources | Local | [yakimaherald.com](https://www.yakimaherald.com)

[Yakama Warriors Association honors Vietnam veterans during a ceremony](#)



April 2025 Progress Report: Proposed Tri-Cities State Veterans Cemetery for Local Veteran Community

In April 2025, the Tri-Cities Veterans Cemetery project took a promising step forward as \$500,000 for its pre-design phase was included in the governor's proposed Capital Budget, as well as Senate and House versions. This funding highlights the federal VA's identified need for a medium-sized cemetery in southeastern and central Washington.

With all versions of the budget currently aligning, there's optimism for its inclusion in the final Capital Budget.

The pre-design phase is crucial for studying potential parcels, evaluating water rights, land costs, and site improvements. Recent discussions with West Richland and Richland city leaders focused on two key parcels, each offering unique attributes and challenges, such as water availability and development requirements.

Site evaluation is underway, with criteria like population proximity, accessibility, utility availability, and soil quality guiding decisions. The legislative session concludes on April 27, and the team aims to share updates on funding finalization and initiate requests for proposals for pre-design work.

Read more: [April 2025 Update to Tri-Cities Veterans Community on the Proposed Tri-Cities State Veterans Cemetery | WDMA](#)


Questions or inquiries can be sent to CemeteryTri-Cities@dva.wa.gov

Definition of Veteran Legislation Expands Washington State Department of Licensing Benefits

LET US HELP YOU ACCESS YOUR STATE VETERANS BENEFITS

DEFINITION OF VETERAN

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



Visit www.dva.wa.gov/definition-veteran for more details on how this change benefits you.

- Any Veteran eligible for federal VA benefits, or any Veteran discharged solely due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression can access their earned state and county benefits.
- Veterans who were separated with less than honorable characterizations of service and are in receipt of VA monetary benefits qualifying discharge are eligible for state and county benefits.

Starting April 1, 2025, the [Washington State Department of Licensing \(DOL\)](#) expanded eligibility for veterans seeking driver license designations, special license plates, and veteran emblems. This change aligns with the updated definition of "Veteran" under House Bill 2014, in partnership with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

Key updates include recognizing veterans eligible for federal VA benefits and those discharged with less-than-honorable characterizations due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Veterans can add a designation to their license or ID online at no extra cost. Additionally, qualifying veterans and their families can access special plates and emblems, with proceeds supporting veterans' programs.

For more information, visit [Definition of Veteran | WDVA](#) or watch our [Definition of Veteran Video](#)

LGBTQ+ Veteran Allyship Workshops

Your WDVA LGBTQ+ Veterans Program is offering no-cost workshops as part of the LGBTQ+ Veteran Ally Program.

These workshops are interactive sessions that prepare Veteran service providers with information to better serve LGBTQ+ Veterans and their families.

Space is limited. Register today!

To learn more and register visit click the link below.

[LGBTQ+ Veteran Allyship Workshops](#)

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LGBTQ+ VETERANS PROGRAM

LGBTQ+ Veteran Allyship Workshops

YOUR Washington Department of Veterans Affairs is offering no-cost workshops as part of the LGBTQ+ Veteran Ally Program. The workshops are interactive sessions that prepare veteran service providers with information to better serve LGBTQ+ veterans and their family members.

Workshop Information

The Ally Program consists of 3 workshops:

1. The LGBTQ+ Veteran Experience and LGBTQ+ Military History
2. LGBTQ+ Program: Definition of Veterans and Correcting Errors or Inquiries
3. Inclusive Practices

Upon completing all 3 workshops, you will be recognized as an ally for LGBTQ+ veterans. Someone that is committed to observing inclusive practices and providing a safe space to serve LGBTQ+ veterans with dignity and respect. Your name/agency will be added to a resource list that veterans and other service providers can access on the WDVA.

Dates And Registration

Multiple dates are available in March, April, and May 2025

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/vevms-225972>

Space is limited. Register today!



For more information on how the state definition of "Veteran" has expanded state benefits to include any Veteran

already eligible for federal Department of Veterans Affairs monetary benefits, please visit our [Definition of a Veteran | WDVA](#) webpage.

Liberty Lake Launches 988 Lifeline Emblem Initiative for Crisis Support

The [City of Liberty Lake](#) is taking a proactive step in promoting mental health awareness and crisis support with their purchase of 75 license plate emblems featuring the 988 Lifeline - a vital resource for suicide prevention and crisis assistance.



Mayor Cris Kaminskas proudly placed the first emblem on a Liberty Lake Police Department vehicle, marking the beginning of this impactful initiative

Read more: [State veterans organization honors city for support of 988 Lifeline resource](#)

WDVA Transitional Housing Program (THP) Achieves Remarkable Success in Veterans Housing and Support Programs

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) [Transitional Housing Program \(THP\)](#) continues to surpass expectations, achieving outstanding results in its mission to help Veterans transition to permanent housing. Since Oct. 2024 (Federal Fiscal Year Quarter 1&2), THP has already housed 63 Veterans, and across all programs, negative exits remain impressively low at just 6.7%.



Read the complete article: [WDVA Transitional Housing Program \(THP\) Achieves Remarkable Success in Veterans Housing and Support Programs | WDVA](#)

Check out local news coverage:

<https://www.fox28spokane.com/washington-program-surpasses-goals-for-housing-veterans/>

https://www.khq.com/news/washington-program-surpasses-goals-for-housing-veterans/article_b73ae888-ad93-4539-890b-555c3a6fb5aa.html

Check out what's happening at our Veterans Homes

Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard

Residents of the Washington Veterans Home took center stage alongside foster dog Celtic and their cherished companion Meatball, shining brightly in a documentary featuring humane societies.

Stay tuned for sharing of the documentary once it becomes available.



Washington Soldiers Home in Orting

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the High Pointe Church volunteers who generously dedicated their time and effort to cleaning a section of headstones at the Washington Soldiers Home Cemetery. Their selfless service pays tribute to our heroes and beautifully embodies the spirit of community and compassion.



To view more photos, please visit: [2025.03.29 High Pointe Church Day of Service at Washington Soldiers Home | Flickr](#)

Walla Walla Veterans Home

Green milkshakes, fries, music, announcements, and an epic St. Patrick’s Day trivia night hosted by Brian “Lucky the Leprechaun” Evenson and his wife Amy!

Huge thanks to our WWVH Lucky Charms staff for planning this shamrockin’ night.



Spokane Veterans Home

Governor Bob Ferguson visited the Spokane Veterans Home, where he experienced the outstanding care delivered by our dedicated team. During his visit, he also explored the ambitious plans for a new veterans home, a project that comes at a pivotal time as the WDVA advances the Spokane Veterans Home Replacement Project.



Learn more and view photos from Gov. Ferguson's visit at: [Governor Ferguson Visits Spokane Veterans Home Highlighting Future Replacement Plans | WDVA](#)

WDVA Job Opportunities

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



Events & Observances Calendar

[Click Here to View Upcoming Events](#)

Calendar

<

>

today

April 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
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			15:30 JTM Construction Open House -	08:00 Bridging Partnerships Small Business Symposium -		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
			18:00 VA Women Veteran Focus Group -		09:00 Skagit County Stand Down -	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			10:00 April 23 VAAC Town Hall WNAAC Women Veterans Forum Island County -	08:00 Mastering LinkedIn & Building a Personal Brand -	12:00 Veteran Rites 12-Day Rite of Return Ceremony -	
			13:00 Patient Orientation Group Class -	09:00 Okanogan County Community Action Council VETERAN STAND DOWN -		10:00 Kitsap County Spring Stand Down -
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Veteran Rites 12-Day Rite of Return Ceremony -						
		08:00 Resume Workshop presented by Enbridge -		09:00 West End Veterans Stand Down -	10:00 VA Women Veteran Health Fair -	

Submit an Event

April 23 Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Town Hall & Women Veterans Advisory Committee Women Veterans Forum Island County

Join Us for Two Events!

Women Veterans Forum Hosted by the WVAC

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Women Veterans Forum

The Washington Women Veterans Advisory Committee (WVAC) is calling all women Veterans for a "She Served" forum. They want to listen and discuss the needs of Women Veterans in the region and how we can improve access to the benefits they have earned.

All are also invited to attend the VAAC Town Hall afterwards, please share any questions you may have with us at

womenveterans@dva.wa.gov

**Wednesday
Apr 23, 2025**

**AMERICAN LEGION
690 SE BARRINGTON DR.
OAK HARBOR, WA 98277**

Veterans Town Hall Hosted by the VAAC

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

VAAC Town Hall

Island County Veterans, your Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee wants to hear from you! Join us, along with community partners as we hear updates on:

- WDVA Services,
- PACT Act,
- County Veterans Program
- Suicide Prevention Program & more...

Share your questions with us at communications@dva.wa.gov

**TOWN HALL
ZOOM
LIVE STREAM**



**communications@dva.wa.gov
or www.dva.wa.gov**

WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS
AFFAIRS



"Serving Those Who Served"

Submit your Memorial Day Events



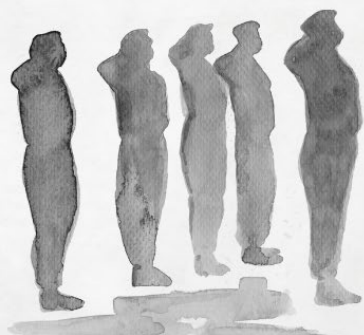
★ ★ ★
**MEMORIAL
DAY**
SHARE YOUR EVENTS
★ ★ ★
**E-MAIL EVENT INFORMATION
AND FLYERS TO
COMMUNICATIONS@DVA.WA.GOV**



MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER AND HONOR

11:00am
(Music begins at 10:30)
Monday, May 26, 2025
416 Sid Snyder, State Capitol
Building, Rotunda, Olympia, WA



To All Veterans:
*Thank you for your sacrifice and
service to the United States of America!*



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

Program Spotlight



<https://www.dva.wa.gov/counseling> **Counseling Services and Wellness Programs**

April is Counseling Awareness Month.

Counseling plays a vital role in supporting veterans and their families, offering tools to navigate challenges and improve mental health. The WDVA provides confidential counseling services tailored to Veterans' unique needs, including PTSD, brain injury & recovery, substance use, and more.

Learn how these services can make a difference at [Counseling Services and Wellness](#)

[Programs](#) | [WDVA](#) Let's spread awareness and encourage those in need to seek support!

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