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September/October 2013

## MOPH Chapter 407 LLEWELLYN M. CHILSON Raises \$27,000 for Our Veterans



The Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 407 (Lakewood WA) continues in the tradition of providing support for wounded veterans. In the past, they have provided funds for homeless veterans, helped veterans living in various residences, volunteered at many facilities and today they continue supplementing existing state and federal programs for veterans and their families.

In June 2011 MOPH #407 sponsored a charity golf tournament at American Lake Veterans Golf Course and contributed \$17,000 dollars to WDVA to serve homeless veterans. In June 2013, they held a second golf tournament with a goal of increasing that pledge and were able to present a check for \$27,000 to WDVA Director Alfie Alvarado-Ramos, again to serve homeless veterans.

The mission of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is to foster an environment of goodwill and camaraderie among combat wounded veterans, promote patriotism, support necessary legislative initiatives, and most importantly, provide service to all veterans and their families.

In concert with their mission of providing service to all veterans, a MOPH Chapter 407 spokesperson said they look forward to continuing their support of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs mission to 'Serve Those Who Served'.



Above(l-r) Tony Couch, Ed Trobaugh, Bobby Humphrey, Jim Cordeiro, Director Alvarado-Ramos, Phil Hendrix, Francis Jeffery, Jim Sims, Dick Wallace, Bruce McKenty





# A Note from the Director

Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos (Alfie)

[alfie@dva.wa.gov](mailto:alfie@dva.wa.gov)

The Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) has travelled across Washington State in an effort to share information on benefits and services available to Washington Veterans as well as listen to what veterans' needs are in each community.

Unfortunately, participation from veterans, providers and community members has declined over the years often leaving committee members wondering whether the meetings were worthwhile. With a typical never-say-quit attitude, the seventeen veterans appointed by the Governor to serve on the VAAC decided to try replacing their traditional daytime board meetings with a new evening Town Hall format. The results speak for themselves!

In March, the Committee held its first VAAC Town Hall in Vancouver, WA and in September the committee held a town hall in Spokane. Veterans, veteran service providers and community members filled the meeting rooms to capacity leaving standing room only and affirming for VAAC members the need to continue their important dialogue with Washington's veterans!

During the September meeting, an election was held for the new VAAC Chair and Vice Chair. Outgoing Chair Kathy Hobbs was able to welcome incoming Chair Owen McCurdy and incoming Vice Chair Richard Marcylnes to their new roles. In addition, two new members were welcomed to the committee, Rob Lougee representing the Disabled American Veterans and Gary Lysne representing the Vietnam Veterans of America.

The next VAAC Town Hall is planned for December 2013. Please visit the WDVA Public Events website at [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov) for the exact date and location.



VAAC members were able to tour the Spokane Veterans Home and the State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake during their September visit to Spokane.



During the evening Town Hall, the audience heard from area providers on homeless veterans services, the Spokane Veterans Court and Spokane County Veterans Services just to name a few.



The VAAC also attended the Spokane Veterans Task Force luncheon and was able to hear from dozens of Spokane area providers serving veterans and their families.





# WDVA Veterans Cemetery

## Medical Lake, WA

Washington Department of Veterans Affairs' (WDVA) **Mission** of *Serving Those Who Served*, and **Vision** of *Connecting All Washington Veterans and their families to the benefits and services they've earned* provide the foundational direction for the State Veterans Cemetery. Strategically these are accomplished by honoring veterans and their families in their final resting place. The cemetery grounds and facilities are maintained in accordance with national veterans cemetery standards. The staff and volunteers ensure a respectful, professionally organized and reverent interment of our nation's heroes, and the perpetual upkeep of these hallowed grounds forever.

### **General Cemetery Information:**

- Constructed via an \$8 Million Federal Grant
- Supports 140,000 Area Veterans & eligible family **regardless of state residency**
- Dedicated May '10 – Began Interments Jun '10
- Final Resting place for over 1,600 veterans & family members to date
- **Pre-registration** establishes eligibility in advance. Preregistration forms available on-line or by visiting the cemetery
- Sale of **Armed Forces License Plates** help fund cemetery's annual operating costs
- Cemetery Supported by over 100 volunteers
- Donations are welcome, contact the cemetery for additional information

### **Cemetery Hours:**

- Visitation Hours: Daily 8am – Sunset
    - with Gravesite Locator access
  - Admin Office: 8am - 8:30 pm, M-F
  - Service Schedule: 9am – 3 pm, M-F
    - Veterans, Spouses, Dependent Children
- \* Refer to website for cemetery policies in keeping with National Shrine Standards

### **Contact Information**

**21702 West Espanola Road**  
**Medical Lake, WA 99022**  
 Ph: 509-299-6280 Fax 509-299-6286  
 Email: [cemetery@dva.wa.gov](mailto:cemetery@dva.wa.gov)  
 Website: [WWW.DVA.WA.GOV](http://WWW.DVA.WA.GOV)  
**Nat'l Veterans Cemetery Eligibility**  
[WWW.cem.va.gov](http://WWW.cem.va.gov)  
 WDVA Benefits Specialist: 800-562-2308



**Director: Rudy Lopez**





US Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki made a visit to the Seattle VA Regional Office in August and spoke to a group of Veteran Service Officers training on Fully Developed Claims and eBenefits.

Pictured with Secretary Shinseki is WDVA Veteran Benefit Specialist Venus Bailey, from the Olympia central office.

The Makah Tribe Council invited WDVA to their Senior event on Sept. 13 to assist their seniors, both Veterans and Surviving Spouses, to access their Federal VA Benefits. Pictured below is Veterans Benefits Specialist Lynda Reese (l) and WDVA Program Manager Steve Gill (r). VBS Andrea Talmadge was also in attendance.



During Military Appreciation Day on August 25, The Boeing Classic endeavored to honor our country and those who have fought to protect it in nearly all aspects of the day's events at TPC Snoqualmie Ridge.

In addition to receiving free admission and hospitality, military personnel played a vital role in several of the tournament's events and operations.

WDVA was proud to participate in The Patriots Outpost, a special event tent at the top of the 18<sup>th</sup> green hosted by the USO, by sharing benefits information to veterans and their families in attendance. Program Manager Dixon McReynolds greets a member of the day's Honor Guard.



**National POW/MIA Recognition Day** is the third Friday of September, and this year, as in years past, Darrell Pilat of VFW Post 1263 in Renton organized a remembrance ceremony at the Washington State POW/MIA Memorial on the Capitol in Olympia. For as many years, the Honor Guard from VFW Post 318 in Olympia presented the colors and the Post's Chaplain, 89 year-old R.D. Nordeen delivered the opening prayer and benediction.



Col Stephen Kent with the Washington Army National Guard at Camp Murray spoke about the importance of remembering not just the thousands of missing service members, but their loved ones as well.

Washington State had two Vietnam veterans brought home this year, leaving the State's total at 41 Vietnam Veterans not yet brought home. General Turner and Colonel Metternich, both

from the Washington Army National Guard, gave a brief, heartfelt

biography on each of the Fallen Heroes.

The recovered MIAs were Marine Pfc. Daniel A. Benedett of Seattle, whose crew was shot down off the coast of Cambodia in 1975, and Air Force Maj. Larry James Hanley of Walla Walla, who was shot down over Laos in 1969.



photo credit to Specialist Sam Ciaramitaro WAANG



photo credit to Richard Hazelmeyer

**The Spokane Veterans Home** would like to thank Richard and Linda Hazelmeyer for arranging the donation of a magnifying reader for the second floor library.

When the Hazelmeyers were asked by the estate of Roy R. Hanney to assist in finding a veteran for the reader to go to, they knew the perfect place where many veterans could benefit from the gift!



## EWU Eagles “Eagle Up” for their Community



Eastern Washington University brought a few new students out to the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake for a community service project called Eagle Up.

They were one of 7 work groups giving back to the community. Eastern is committed to supporting local and regional communities. Their students, faculty and staff engage in a variety of community outreach programs and initiatives which seek to promote a stronger, healthier, more vibrant community.

They helped Diane Postlewait, our volunteer gardener, prep the scattering garden for the fall and winter seasons.



*Thank you EWU Eagles!*

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## Missing In America Project Provides Welcome Home

The third annual *Missing in America Project* ceremony was held Sept. 19 at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake, honoring war heroes who were never identified or did not have family to claim their remains.

The remains of 42 veterans were buried in special urns made by a local craftsman Mike Ross, who said he selected wood with a natural purple tint to make each urn.

“It’s a great honor to be a part of fulfilling the commitment we’ve made to these veterans and properly welcome them home,” said Gary Condra, Deputy Director of the Washington Department of Veteran Affairs.

31 funeral homes and medical examiners across the state came together, as well as members of all branches of the military to bring these servicemembers to Medical Lake to be honored in their final resting place.

*Photos courtesy of AF Veteran Anthony Ennamorato.*



## Veterans Pod at Stafford Creek Correctional Facility Dedicates Flag Pole

WDVA recently participated in an event at the Stafford Creek Correctional Facility dedicating a flag pole in the new Veterans Pod of the facility.

You might wonder why WDVA or DOC for that matter would be interested in recognizing the military service of individuals who are now involved in the justice system.

There are a few reasons. First, while these veterans have been convicted of crimes which led to their incarceration, at one point in their lives, they swore an oath to protect and defend our nation even if that meant sacrificing their own life. Second, it is vitally important that any offender identify a connection or purpose which will help shape and guide their eventual release from custody to civilian life. And third, many veterans have eligibility for veterans benefits and services including education and training, medical care, mental health services and disability compensation or pension, which form a supportive network to help the veteran be successful in life. When a veteran is connected with veterans benefits, it also means that they are not using other state supported services, such as Medicaid, which allows those state resources to be used on other non-veterans.

Not all veterans are eligible to be a part of the Veterans Pod at Stafford Creek. They must be in a minimum custody classification within DOC, volunteer for the veteran pod, show a pattern of good prison conduct and agree to live by other program rules.



*During the flag pole dedication ceremony, WDVA's Assistant Director for Veterans Services Mary Forbes reminded each veteran of their sacrifice to our nation and asked them to let the American Flag be a reminder of their service each and every day.*

*The Veterans Pod at Stafford Creek was launched in May 2013 to engage the growing numbers of veterans incarcerated and improve reentry outcomes.*



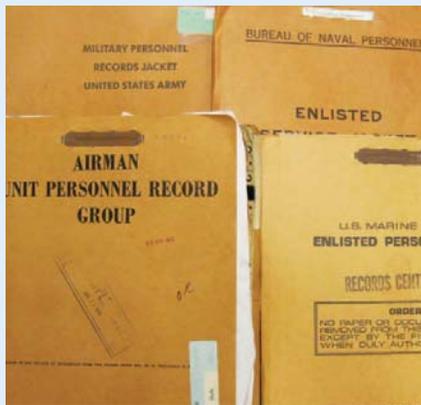
*The Washington State Department of Corrections currently has over 1,800 Veterans under supervision.*

*More than 61% have honorable discharges and over 94% of them will return to the community.*



# Obtaining Military Personnel Records

*Get your military service records and awards from the National Personnel Records Center.*



## Military Records

The documents in your military service record can help you successfully compete for a job, get a loan, or prove your eligibility for other benefits. The separation document (DD-214 or equivalent) is the most commonly requested item. It provides proof of military service and grants you access to important benefits and entitlements. Whether you need just one key document from your file or a copy of your entire service record, you can start your request with us right online.

## Medals and Other Awards

The medals and other awards you earned while serving your country are an important part of your military service record. If your medals are missing or damaged, you can apply for replacement of these medals online. In addition, our staff can help you determine whether you qualify for medals and other awards that were conferred after you were discharged from military service.



**Start the process by visiting [www.archives.gov/veterans](http://www.archives.gov/veterans)**

Learn more, read helpful FAQs, and enter your request online.

If you don't have computer access, you can also order your records by mail using Standard Form 180. This form is available at most Veterans Services Offices, or you can order it from us by mail.

**We have moved!**  
Please note our new address.

National Archives and Records Administration  
National Personnel Records Center (Military)  
1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63138-1002

*To safeguard the privacy of veterans' records, we require those who submit requests for records to certify their identity with an original signature. Because of this, we regret that we cannot accept requests for military service records by telephone.*

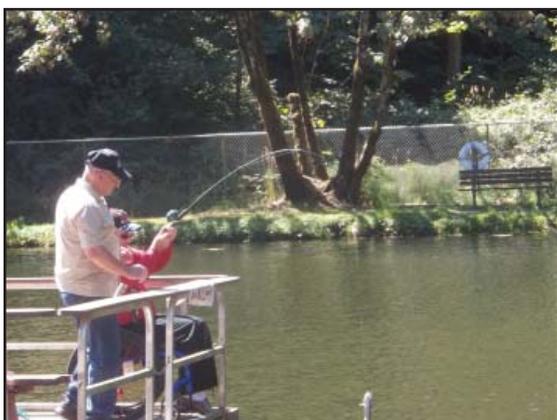


## *Hot August Nights*

Engines rumbled upon entry to the WA Soldiers Home as residents and guests reveled in the nostalgic beauty of the vintage and classic motorcycles and cars. The sock hop beat filled the early evening air. Residents and guests danced and reminisced over frosty ice cream all the autos and motorcycles that have been and are part of their lives. Thank you to all the Vintage Car and Motorcycle clubs, community partners, volunteers and staff for making Hot August Nights a success!



The fish are jumpin' and the bald eagles are soaring over the picturesque pond at the WA Soldiers Home. The pond is both a sanctuary for residents and an ideal place to fish for trout! Fishing is one of the residents' favorite past-times. One may find a resident and a guest reeling in The Big One while out on the floating dock. There are scheduled fishing events at the WA Soldiers Home from April until November. The Nursing Care Facility enjoys a catch and release fishing event monthly until September. Thank you to the community partners, volunteers and staff for the many contributions to the WA Soldiers Home Fishing Program.



## *Fishing at the WA Soldiers Home*





*Ridin',  
Rockin' and  
Livestockin'*



The Spokane Veterans Home residents enjoyed three days at this years' Spokane County Interstate Fair.

A couple of residents entered items in the fair and came away with Blue Ribbons and one Premier. Residents enjoyed a full day of activities and sights around the fair: animals, mutton busting, pig races, music, crafts, but it was unanimously decided the best part was FAIR FOOD!



The Residents at the Washington Veterans Home enjoyed listening to the talented youth members of the *Gig Harbor Youth Violinists* August 28. The students are between the ages of 7 and 17 and have worked all summer learning some fiddle songs to take a break from their usual classical music focus. One of our residents commented joyfully, "they are so talented!". We couldn't agree more and it was a such a wonderful treat to have them play for us.

Thank you!



59 years ago, on August 28, Kenneth and Katherine Gaustad were married, so it was only fitting that today they were able to celebrate this milestone with their family and friends at the Washington Veterans Home.

Kenneth, a native of Montana, served in the US Army during the Korean War and was stationed in Alaska. After his military service, he received his business degree and he and Katherine raised their 2 adopted children in California. Kenneth worked as an underwriter with an insurance company before retiring.

He has fond memories of having a yellow lab guide dog named Pamela, after he lost a portion of his eyesight in 1986, and being a part of his home town Presbyterian church choir, not only singing but building the risers where they stood to sing.

*Happy Anniversary Kenneth and Katherine!*



Wheels were turning and feet were pedaling during the Bikes For All Adaptive Cycling Event. Residents experienced the excitement of cycling either solo or with staff and volunteers on the beautiful WA Soldiers Home campus.



**The Outdoors For All Foundation** brought a large array of adaptive bikes along with their expertise

to give residents a thrilling cycling experience! Thank you to all of the staff and volunteers for your dedication and assistance with making this active and lifelong leisure pursuit possible for the residents at the WA Soldiers Home.

The **Elvis Presley Show** presented an amazing event for our Veterans at the Washington Veterans Home. There was clapping, singing along and a tear or two as the music performed touched everyone's heart.

The Elvis Presley Tour, performed by Frank T. is crossing the nation to bring joy to our veterans. Franko plans to visit at least one Veterans home in each of the 50 states and Retsil was lucky enough to be the stop for Washington State. The show wants to encourage other individuals to volunteer at veterans homes across the nation. Not only is the mission of the venture worth noting, the show was awesome. Staff and residents were delighted by the event.

For information about Elvis's - I mean Franko's - journey to visit our veterans so to his blogspot here <http://elvispresleyshowltd.blogspot.com/>



**Cub Scout Pack 4556** from Poulsbo made remote control underwater vehicles over the summer and wanted to share the project with the veterans at the Washington Veterans Home

In addition, the pack wanted to earn their disability awareness belt loops and pins and visiting the Veterans Home seemed like the perfect opportunity to do both.

In order to show off the underwater vehicles we needed a pool of water, and the bathtubs and sinks available weren't quite what was needed. Thanks to a little help from the South Kitsap fire department and some great volunteers, we got a pool and filled it, in preparation for the Scouts arrival.

The Scouts visit started with lunch and then a tour of the facilities. While touring, the boys were able to identify differences in the buildings that help veterans with disabilities get around better and easier.

Then the real fun began as residents came to the lower activity room to learn how the scouts built their underwater vehicles and the things they had to think about when constructing them. The residents had lots of questions for the boys and then the boys got to ask the residents, most of which centered around how the fancy wheel chairs worked!

Now it was time to test drive the underwater vehicles, AND the wheelchairs. Residents had the opportunity to watch the underwater vehicles in the pool, while Scouts got to try out and learn to maneuver two different types of wheelchairs.

By the end of the very fun-filled day, a wonderful group of youth from the community left with a better understanding of our Veteran population and our veterans were left with smiles all around.



A group of 10 volunteers from Lowe's are at Washington Veterans Home today donating time, labor and much needed plants and tools. Pictured are a few of the volunteers who brought 20 large colorful Rhododendrons that will be planted throughout campus. Additionally they will be honoring Veterans by cleaning up in the cemetery.

Thank you to Lowe's for remembering our veterans!

## THREE THINGS VETERANS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE NEW HEALTH CARE LAW:

1

VA wants all Veterans to receive health care that improves their health and well-being.

2

If you are enrolled in VA health care, you don't need to take additional steps to meet the health care law coverage standards. The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans' out-of-pocket costs.

3

If you are not enrolled in VA health care, you can apply at any time.



**VA HEALTH CARE** Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

SEND US INFORMATION ON YOUR VETERANS DAY EVENT SO WE CAN POST IT ON THE WDVA PUBLIC EVENTS PAGE!

E-mail [colleen@dva.wa.gov](mailto:colleen@dva.wa.gov) with your event information, including a point of contact.



Check out the photo albums posted on the WDVA Facebook page. Did you know you can see a photo album posted on Facebook even if you don't have a Facebook account? If you've been to a recent event that WDVA is taking photos, and you'd like to see the album, just email [communications@dva.wa.gov](mailto:communications@dva.wa.gov) and we'll send you the link to that album.

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<http://www.dva.wa.gov/publications.html>

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