



JOHN E. LEE
Director
Washington State Department of
Veterans Affairs

John E. Lee, a Vietnam War veteran and retired Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army, was appointed director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs on November 1, 2005, by Governor Christine Gregoire.

As agency director, his responsibilities include advocacy and outreach for the state's more than 670,000 veterans and their families, as well as overseeing three veterans homes throughout the state.

A native of West Virginia, Lee entered the U.S. Army in 1968, and spent the next 21 years serving in the Army's Infantry. He served in the Republic of Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade and assignments with the 82nd Airborne Division, Drill Sergeant, Fort Jackson, SC, First Sergeant in the 3-60th Infantry (Berlin Brigade), and multiple assignments as Command Sergeant Major. He completed his Army career as the Command Sergeant Major of the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, retiring in 1990.

After completing his military service, Lee entered the public sector, joining WDVA as an administrative assistant. In 1994 he was appointed as the agency Deputy Director and has served with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs for more than 17 years.

John believes he has the best job in the world. His passion for identifying the needs of Washington State's veterans and finding solutions is his goal. He knows well enough, that one person cannot do it alone. He looks to his staff, other government entities, veteran service organizations and the community to partner in meeting the needs of those to whom we owe a debt for our freedoms.

In addition, he proudly fosters a workplace where people are respected and honored for their commitment and the results they produce in making the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs the success it has become.

Under his leadership, a number of initiatives have been adopted on a national level including the claims 'batting average', combined services transition assistance for recent returnees, and service officer training which earned him the prestigious federal VA Secretary's Diamond Award in 2008 for supporting the mission of the VA in honoring and supporting the debt due our nation's veterans.

Mr. Lee and his wife of over 40 years, Tammy, reside in Olympia. They have 2 adult sons, 3 grandsons, and one granddaughter.