



The Informer



From Our Chair:

By: Jennifer McDaniel, Dept. of Veteran Affairs, US Army, Administrative Assistant, USA Veteran

Public Service Recognition Week & Memorial Day

Greetings fellow veterans and supporters! Another month gone by. It is May already. This month I hope you will join the VERG at Public Service Recognition week as we and lots of other State agencies and organizations will host booths at the Capital Plaza acknowledging the great work our fellow State and public employees have accomplished throughout the year. Hope you will come see us.



Memorial Day will be upon us at the end of the month and I hope you will take a few moments to stop and reflect on your fellow service members that have been lost. Remember the sacrifices that have been made in order to preserve the freedoms that we have and hold so dear. Take some time to visit the many memorials we have on our beautiful capitol campus and know the real stories and personal struggles that made them a reality. Read on in our newsletter for a great article from Patrick Suttan on the meaning of Memorial Day.

I want to take this opportunity to give a big thank you to all of our VERG members for the great work they have done, and continue to do serving their fellow veterans. We continue to assist our transitioning military brothers and sisters into new careers, and help alleviate some of the burden that can be associated with the shift in culture back to civilian life. We all know how important it is to have someone on point to lead the way and the VERG has proven so useful in this role over the past few years.



Photo by Remember

Please read on for more information on upcoming events and happenings for veterans and families.

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Memorial Day

By Patrick Suttan, Human Resources Consultant, Department of Revenue (DOR), US Army Veteran

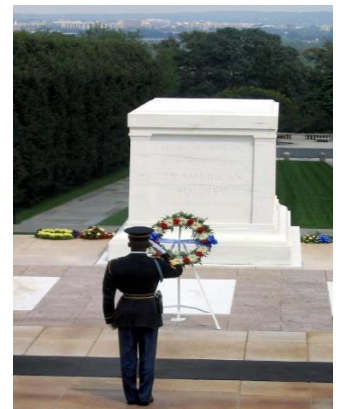


With Memorial Day just around the corner, it is once again, time to reflect on its true meaning. From its inception in 1868, Memorial Day, has served to honor those who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. This day is celebrated worldwide through parades, ceremonies, or visiting a fallen hero's gravesite. Some even travel to monuments and historical battlefields around the world to pay their respects or just remember.

As a child, my priorities were elsewhere. I remember Memorial Day as an opportunity to excuse myself from the rigors of student life and extending the weekend. For me, it wasn't until high school that I realized the last Monday in May meant so much more than an excused absence from school. You see, I come from a long line of military veterans and at family gatherings, conversations swing back to those service connected stories we've heard a few times. Some you want to hear again and again, while others are better left unsaid. If I remember right, at a family gathering during my sophomore year, I overheard a heartfelt story my Father shared with my Uncle about an event in Vietnam. This story brought a personal perspective to all those who gave the ultimate sacrifice and solidified the reasons we honor them. It wasn't long after, that I joined the U.S. Army and proudly served for 20 years.

I've had the privilege of visiting different war memorials in and around Washington D.C. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Vietnam War Memorial, or any other veteran commemoratives radiate a sense of honor that only visiting can express. Today's technology has made that journey so much easier. With social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, we have bridged the gap to distant friends and family while indirectly increasing awareness to things easily forgotten like Memorial Day. Just the other day, I watched the video posted on Facebook of the fallen Special Forces Soldier Shawn Thomas returning home. I considered this a privilege and honor to share that moment with his family and fellow Soldiers. Regardless of the method you choose to honor our nation's heroes, do it with confidence that each Soldier, Sailor, Marine, Airman, and Guardsmen will always be honored for defending our nation and its principles.

One last thing, by no means can we single out one loss from another, we can only celebrate their lives and what they have done for us and this country. So to all who read this, I challenge you to revisit the National Moment of Remembrance, set by President Clinton in 2000. On May 29th 2017 at 3:00 p.m., pause from your busy day and pay tribute to those who have died in Defense of this nation, and may you never forget the true meaning of Memorial Day.





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Upcoming Events

Seattle Muster Across America	5/5/17	1230-2000	Seattle	http://www.dva.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Muster_invite_agenda_3.pdf
Veterans Resource Fair (Oak Harbor American Legion)	5/6/17	1000-1400	Bremerton	http://www.dva.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2017%20PDF%200.jpg
Public Service Recognition Week Event	5/10/17	1100-1300	Olympia Capital Plaza	https://www.sos.wa.gov//psrw/
Veterans Resource Fair	5/13/17	0900-1500	Tacoma Dome	http://theveteransresourcefair.us/index.html
Filipino WWII Veterans Congressional Gold Medal Memorial Tribute Fundraiser Dinner	5/13/17	1730-2200	Renton Pavilion Event Center	http://www.dva.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SAVETHEDATE%20flyer%20May%2013%20doc.pdf
Vietnam War Commemoration and Welcome Home Event	5/17/17	1300	Spokane	http://www.dva.wa.gov/sites/default/files/A%20Vietnam%20War%20Commemoration%20-%202016%20May%202017.jpg
Beyond the Bubble Bath. Women Survivors of Trauma Symposium	5/19/17	0845-1645	Bellevue	http://oars4vets.org/retreat-women-survivors-trauma/
Veteran and Wounded Warrior Hiring & Support Summit	5/23/17 5/24/17	1000-1600	Double Tree at Seattle Airport	http://www.navsea.navy.mil/CareerOpportunities/JoinOurTeam/WoundedWarrior.aspx
American Veterans Hiring Event	5/24/17	1000-1400	Tacoma	http://www.dva.wa.gov/sites/default/files/American%20Veterans%20Hiring%20Event%202017.jpg
Vietnam Traveling Wall	5/24/17 5/30/17	1400-1700	Pasco	http://www.visittri-cities.com/events/2017/05/25/vietnam-traveling-wall/
Kitsap Veteran Homelessness Symposium	5/25/17	0830-1530	Bremerton	http://www.klitsapgov.com/hs/housing/Veteransinitiative.htm



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Veterans Spotlight

By: Richard Hannah. IT Manager, Office of Infrastructure Services, Enterprise Technology, US ARMY Veteran



Richard Hannah started his Army career by enlisting in October of 1993. He served 11 years as a Cable Systems Installer/Maintainer, providing tactical and strategic cable infrastructure installations across the globe. During this time he became a manager of the Basic Splicing School located in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, responsible for training Outside Plant and Inside Plant commercial copper and fiber optic cable installation, termination and splicing to cable installation technicians in the Army.

In December, 2004 he became a Senior Leader (Sergeant First Class/E7) as a Telecommunications Operations Chief, responsible for service delivery of tactical secure and non-secure voice and data network design and implementation supporting mission command of Soldiers in training and on the battlefield.

In April of 2014, he was promoted to Master Sergeant/E8 and was placed in I Corps G6 at Joint Base Lewis McCord (JBLM), Washington and was responsible for the planning, implementation, and operational functionality of one non-secure and three secure unified communication networks covering 7 countries throughout the Pacific Rim.

After three years with I Corps, four combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, 23 years with the US Army, wife obtaining employment with the Thurston County School district, oldest son joining the US Army to pursue his own career, and youngest son attending the University of Washington-Tacoma, he decided that it was time to hang up the uniform and transition into the civilian workplace, making Washington State his permanent home.

He was bound and determined to continue serving the people and felt that a Washington State position would give him that satisfaction. With the help of many Veteran organizations, JBLM Soldier for Life program, and friends and acquaintances already employed by the State, he set out on his quest for a State position. The experience gained throughout the many years of serving as a leader in the Army's telecommunications field fed his strength in the IT Management and Project Management fields. This was the baseline goal as he began the journey for a State IT position.

After several months of tedious job fairs, applications, networking events and interviews, his persistence finally paid off by being offered job an IT Manager for the Infrastructure and Cable Services and Telephony sections within the Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Infrastructure Services Division.



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Attorney General Ferguson's military pro bono legislation passes Legislature Ferguson, Kilduff, O'Ban succeed in establishing Office of Military and Veteran Legal Assistance in Attorney General's Office

OLYMPIA - Attorney General Bob Ferguson's proposal to establish a clearinghouse to connect current and former service members in Washington state to pro bono legal service providers passed the Senate today in an overwhelming, bipartisan 95-0 vote. House Bill 1055 is sponsored by Rep. Christine Kilduff, D—University Place. Sen. Steve O'Ban, R—Pierce County, is the prime sponsor of its companion, Senate Bill 5021.

"The men and women who serve in our military sometimes face unique legal challenges, and need specialized help in resolving them," Ferguson said. "This legislation creates a framework to connect service members with the qualified legal assistance they need and deserve."

The legislation creates an Office of Military and Veteran Legal Assistance in the Attorney General's Office, serving as a one-stop shop for legal assistance and pro bono services provided by community organizations and private attorneys.

Ferguson's proposal was patterned after a successful model in Nevada that helped address more than 200 legal matters in its first year.

The legislation allows the Attorney General to actively recruit and train volunteer attorneys to participate in pro bono programs that offer targeted services to military service members and veterans.

Both sponsors represent the 28th District, which includes Joint Base Lewis-McChord and surrounding communities. "From deployment to retirement, military families can face a range of legal challenges," Kilduff said. "A soldier deploying to another continent can't easily fight a legal battle on the home front from halfway around the world nor can a limited-income retiree applying for VA benefits. By connecting military families with free legal services we help fill an existing gap in our civil legal needs system and honor the extraordinary sacrifices they make for our country every day."

"Our military families don't make a lot of money but serve to protect us all," O'Ban said. "These free legal services for them can be a huge benefit for families and a big reduction in stress."

The legislation had broad support from the Department of Defense and the Washington Veteran Bar Association.

"The Department of Defense appreciates the actions taken by the Washington State Attorney General, Bob Ferguson, and members of the state legislature, most especially Representative Christine Kilduff and Senator Steve O'Ban, in improving service member and family access to pro bono legal assistance," said Mark San Souci, Northwest Regional State Liaison for the U.S. Department of Defense.

"We are really thrilled with the passage of this legislation," said John Tymczyszyn, Legislative Director of the Washington State Veterans Bar Association. "The attorneys, judges and law students of the Washington State Veterans Bar Association stand with the Attorney General and are ready to volunteer our time and expertise to make this legislation a reality."

Standing up for Washington's veterans and military families is a priority for Ferguson. Since taking office in 2013, he has released a legal resource guide to help educate veterans and military service members about their rights, requested legislation to improve their legal protections, and cracked down on unfair and deceptive schemes targeting veterans and military families.



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Tools & Resources

[Veterans Choice Health Care](#): VA health care includes regular checkups with your primary care doctor and access to specialists, such as cardiologists, gynecologists, and mental health providers. You can also get home health care and geriatric care, as well as medical equipment, prosthetics, and prescriptions.

[Connection Veterans to the Health Care they need in Washington](#): Bridging the gap between Health Care and Health Policy.

[WA Pathways to Employment \(Veterans Pages\)](#): Each year thousands of disabled military personnel return to the civilian labor force seeking rewarding and meaningful work. The resources in these pages can help you in your job search and your transition to civilian life.

[Working for Washington State](#) – Check out state employment opportunities and sign up for daily job postings sent to your email inbox.



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Do you have ideas or information to disseminate? Send your information with a Communications Request to the Communications Team and we will take action!

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