

Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee		The Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) is a 17-member committee representing federally recognized Veterans Service Organizations that are appointed by the Governor. The VAAC operates with the motto of “ <b>No Veteran Forgotten</b> ”, and serves in an advisory capacity to the Governor and the Director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs on matters pertaining to the veterans and their families in Washington state
Women Veterans Advisory Committee		The mission of the Women Veterans Advisory Committee is to advocate and assist Washington's women veterans to ensure they have equitable access to federal and state veterans' services and benefits earned through their honorable service to our country.
<b>Award Title</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Description</b>
2022 Superior Service Award	T.J. Morgan	TJ has been involved with the Marine Corps League since 2003. He has dedicated the last 19 years to promoting and providing relief for veterans in Washington State and the entire country. He has held leadership elected offices from the local and state level and now is the National Jr. Vice Commandant for the Marine Corps League. He is projected to be the National Commandant in 2025. He travels all over the state and country, investing his time to promote to preserve traditions of the United States Marine Corps. He has received many awards including the Chapel of Four Chaplains Bronze Medallion, Marine of the Year for local, state and Division levels and the highest MCL award the Citizen Gold Medal.
2022 Superior Service Award	Cheri Knox	Cheri is a proud Army Veteran, wonderful mother, and grandmother of a deployed Airman. She is the Department of Washington's VSO of the Year for 2022. Her team of VSOs skillfully assisted more than 300 claimants including members of the Guard, Reserve, Active Duty, Veterans, and surviving spouses in receiving disability compensation, pension, or spouses' benefits for conditions related to Agent Orange, burn pit exposure, burial, and atomic claims totaling an astounding \$34 million. This substantial boost of income for Veterans and their families came during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a needed financial boost during tumultuous times and injecting financial life to the area's economy. During the pandemic, Cheri didn't close her doors to clients, instead she opted for innovation and determination. Her resolve connected her with 300+ clients via telephone and various mediums (mail, fax, email, and drop-off) to review and sign documents. She continues to counsel clients on claim issues, using written letters, fax, email, virtual meetings, and phone. When Cheri isn't advocating for Veterans, she donates her energy and money to a multitude of charities, including collecting food for struggling families, Christmas toys for children, and kid's school supplies. Cheri is involved in the Adopt a Unit program, proving care packages to the deployed Airman of the 5th Logistics Readiness Squadron, Minot AFB, ND.
2022 Distinguished Service Award	Nino Gray	Nino is in his fourth season managing the Seattle Seahawks military engagement programs. He served in the U.S. Army Infantry for 7 years before receiving an honorable discharge after suffering an injury. Following his military service, Nino worked for the

		<p>Wounded Warrior Project and TriWest Healthcare Alliance. In both organizations he served veterans facing PTSD issues, bringing hope to hundreds. He has carried that same dedication into his role with the Seahawks. Nino represents the best in terms of the WDVA's commitment to veterans, and their families. He has built &amp; maintained relationships with local military bases, creating opportunities for military personnel to engage with the team through various unique experiences. His research into Veteran Service Organizations led to him founding a partnership named "Task Force 12". These 12 organizations assist veterans with finding employment, food, homes, service dogs, and counseling. By connecting these organizations, they are more efficient in accomplishing their goals of reestablishing the sense of a shared mission that many veterans yearn for after military service. Nino has led efforts with the Seahawks and Task Force 12 for supply drops, playground builds, job fairs and mental health summits. Nino worked to facilitate over \$500,000 in grants for these nonprofits. He arranged for our 2021 Salute to Service game to feature 100+ women service members and veterans. He is an active member of the local chapter of "Merging Veterans &amp; Players" (MVP) which unites NFL alumni and veteran service members. By introducing MVP to the community, their dialogue is empowering the lives of military service personnel and athletes. Nino is a soldier who nearly lost his life when his Stryker was destroyed by a 400 lb. IED. He suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury, and severe leg injuries. That experience along with his resilience and imagination have made Nino the perfect individual to lead the Seahawks military programs.</p>
<p>2022 Distinguished Service Award</p>	<p>Amy Tiemeyer</p>	<p>Amy, a Veteran herself, has been an advocate and volunteer in the JBLM community on and off post for more than 15 years. She is currently the WA State President for the Association of the United States Army (AUSA). She also currently works for the Travis Manion Foundation Manager, Pacific Northwest Region and serves on the Executive Board for Operation Ward 57, both nonprofits serving the military community. She describes herself as a volunteeraholic and it's the truth! She gives every waking moment back to her community! In support of the JBLM community she has made herself available to help units find support and coordination for things such as organizational days, holiday parties and building relationships. She is a past President of the Air Force Association on McChord field and was a part of creating the first Airmen Appreciation Day, and building better relationships with each unit on McChord, camp Murray and the Airmen attached to the Lewis side of JBLM. She is the Past Honorary Commander, 62d Comptroller Squadron, and served on the Navy League of Tacoma executive council. She has been a part of the USO Northwest, American Warrior Initiative and many other local nonprofits. She is truly a blessing to our community and deserves to be recognized for her service to others.</p>

2022 Team Award	NW Veterans Resource Center	<p>Team members are Levi Douglas, Christopher Osuna-Pertchert and Holly Rowan known as the Resource Center in Clallam County. When visiting this center, you are greeted with smiles, kindness, and respect. This team is the epitome of Veteran Services! Each person on the team goes above and beyond, on and off the clock for their community, Veterans and their families. There has not been an event in the County where they were not present! They truly model empathy and connection in the Veteran community. They consistently lead by example and continuously show up for Veterans, often working on the weekends. They host a food and clothing bank on-site and focus on making the appearance as close to a real store shopping experience as possible, a truly amazing sight to see! Their team has created and developed one of the most dynamic county resource books for Veterans I have ever seen. Their shared lived experiences as Veterans themselves are incredibly powerful. I am forever thankful to have met these amazing individuals.</p>
2022 Team Award	American Lake Golf Course Volunteers	<p>The golf course is operated by 236 volunteers comprised of veterans, families and community members. The volunteers perform a wide variety of task such as: management of the course, grounds keeping and maintenance, checking in guest and assist in scheduling events. The American Lake Golf Course offers rehabilitation therapy, socialization and support to those who have given so much for our country. To restore just one person to a productive life, enhances our community. To help one young soldier turn away from suicide, to ease the feelings of isolation and depression which ultimately improve their quality of life. Thank you to the American Lake Golf Course Volunteers for your dedication and support!</p>
2022 Legislator of the Year Award	Senator Tim Sheldon	<p>Senator Sheldon represents that 35<sup>th</sup> District that serves Mason County, Parts of Thurston, and Kitsap Counties. He is the longest-serving member of the Legislature. He served for 7 years in the House of Representatives including two years as a Deputy Majority Leader before being elected to the Senate in 1997. He has authored major job training, infrastructure, job-creation, and sex-offender community notification legislation. Senator Sheldon has been instrumental in securing and maintaining capital project funding for the creation of the Shelton Veterans Village to build tiny house village like Quixote Village for homeless veterans living in Mason County. This is an innovative approach to homelessness which makes housing a priority and it also recognizes the important contributions made by veterans who deserve support after their service to our country.</p>

2022 Legislator of the Year Award	Representative Ed Orcutt	Representative Orcutt represents the 18 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District – Clark County. His focus is on creating jobs and advocating for policies that benefit families and communities. Rep Orcutt sponsored House Bill 1250 that designates Washington as a Purple Heart State and honors individuals who have received the Purple Heart Award. The bill authorizes various agencies to erect Purple Heart State signs and to accept gifts or donation to assist efforts related to Washington being a Purple Heart State.
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