

VETERANS CHRONICLE

MAY 2020

MEMORIAL DAY ISSUE

Honoring the fallen



VETERANS CHRONICLE

Veterans Help Net: Helping vets find hope, help

Veterans Help Net is a volunteer veteran support organization that started in the Northwest to serve veterans in Eastern Washington and North Idaho. It was conceived by a small group that believed that there were a lot of veterans out there that were not aware of the benefits and help that was available to them because they served. The group came up with an awareness marketing idea that centered around two focused messages.

"Hey Veterans, Did You Know?" – Informational briefs sharing details about little-known or forgotten benefits that are available to veterans or their families.

Veteran Stories – Articles about veterans who have received help or care through a benefit for themselves or family members. These stories celebrate



the successes of veterans while also increasing awareness about the opportunities and resources available.

With these two focused messages we intend to give hope

and help to many veterans that have earned the benefits but did not know where or how to find the help.

We currently publish Veterans Chronicle on the third Friday of every month in partnership with

The Spokesman-Review. This monthly 12-page section highlights the success stories of local veterans, resources and organizations that support veterans, and other relevant stories and events for veterans and their families. Previously published stories and articles are available to read online at VeteransHelpNet.com and

www.spokesman.com/special-sections.

What's next?

In the future, we plan to produce a series of "Hey Veterans, Did You Know?" videos to spread the messages of hope and help for veterans online and on television.

We are always looking for more veteran stories, "Hey Veterans, Did You Know?" facts and other information for veterans. If you are interested in sharing a story or getting involved as a volunteer, please visit VeteransHelpNet.com or contact us.

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Department of Veteran Affairs: Mission Statement and Core Values

MISSION STATEMENT:

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans.

Core values

The VA's five core values underscore the obligations inherent in VA's mission: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence. The core values define "who we are," our culture, and how we care for veterans and eligible beneficiaries. Our values are more than just words – they affect outcomes in our daily interactions with veterans and eligible beneficiaries and with each other.

Taking the first letter of each word creates a powerful acronym, "I CARE," that reminds each VA employee of the importance of their role in this Department. These core values come together as five promises we make as individuals and as an organization to those we serve.

Integrity: Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Commitment: Work diligently to serve veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy: Be truly veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of veterans and other beneficiaries.



Respect: Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

Excellence: Strive for the highest quality and

continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

Veterans Chronicle

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

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Veterans Help Net partners with The Spokesman-Review to publish Veterans Chronicle on the third Friday of every month to increase awareness about veteran issues and to help veterans find hope and help.

To share a veteran story or information about resources for veterans, please contact

info@veteranshelpnet.com or visit
www.VeteransHelpNet.com.

To advertise, please contact **advertising@spokesman.com** or **(509) 459-5095.**

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HEY VETERANS, DID YOU KNOW ...

The VA does not pay for veteran funerals or cremations?

The VA does not pay for caskets, embalming, cremation, urns, memorial or funeral services. The only thing that is free of charge is burial or inurnment at a state or national veterans cemetery (the cost for spouses is \$300). Veterans that qualify for veteran cemetery burial or inurnment must either be cremated or buried in a casket.

For veterans who do qualify for VA death benefits, there is a partial reimbursement after the fact. The amounts provided are a fraction of actual costs in most cases. For more information, contact Kellie Richardson at KellieR91@yahoo.com or (509) 714-7482.

Disabled veterans can access Fairchild AFB?

As of Jan. 1, veterans with a disability rating are now entitled to access Military Installations. Bring the following documents to the Fairchild Welcome/Visitor center: Veteran’s Medical ID verifying status as a service-connected veteran and a current (valid) state driver’s license or enhanced driver’s license. Following a background check, the security personnel will establish a veteran’s profile in the database. Afterward, the veteran can show their VA Medical ID at the gate for future access. Spouses accompanying the veteran will need to provide identification. The access is limited, as it does not include the base hospital and pharmacy. Contact the Welcome/Visitor Center at (509) 247-5495 with questions.

Blue Water Navy veterans qualify for disability benefits?

Veterans who served on a Blue Water Navy vessel offshore of the Republic of Vietnam, or on another U.S. Navy or Coast Guard ship operating in the coastal waterways of Vietnam, between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, may have had contact with Agent Orange, an herbicide used to clear trees and plants during the war.

Due to this presumption of contact, veterans who have been diagnosed with an Agent Orange-related illness qualifies these veterans for disability compensation that they may have been previously denied, as a result of Public Law 116-23, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019.

A veteran may be eligible if the following is true:

- A veteran has a presumptive disease presumed to be caused or aggravated by Agent Orange and
 - Between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, a veteran:
 - Was aboard a U.S. military vessel that operated in the inland waterways of Vietnam, or
 - Served on a vessel not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia.
- Qualified dependents may also be eligible for benefits through this program.

If this sounds like you or someone you know, contact a Veteran Service Officer. Contact information can be found on page 5.

Disabled veterans can qualify for both monthly compensation and a pension?

The VA can pay a monthly compensation if a veteran is at least 10% disabled as a result of military service. The VA can pay a pension if a wartime veteran with limited income is permanently and totally disabled or is 65 or older.

If this sounds like you or someone you know, contact a Veteran Service Officer. Contact information can be found on page 5.

Dependents and survivors are eligible to continue receiving VA benefits?

Disability and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is payable to survivors of:

- Service members who died on active duty,
- Veterans who died from service-related disabilities, and
- Certain veterans who were being paid 100% VA disability compensation at time of death.

Death Pension is payable to some surviving spouses and children of deceased wartime veterans. The benefit is based on financial need. VA Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA) shares the cost of medical services for eligible dependents and survivors of certain veterans.

If this sounds like you or someone you know, contact a Veteran Service Officer. Contact information can be found on page 5.

There are several education and training benefits that veterans and dependents can receive?

Service members who first entered active duty after June 30, 1985, and contributed to an education fund are generally eligible to receive the Montgomery GI Bill. Some Vietnam Era veterans and certain veterans separated under special programs are also eligible. The bill also includes a program for certain reservists and National Guard members.

The Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP/Chapter 1607) is available to persons who were activated under federal authority for a contingency operation and served 90 continuous days or more after Sept. 11, 2001.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is available to those who served on or after Sept. 11, 2001. The maximum benefit will cover the full cost of public, in-state tuition and fees; a portion of tuitions is covered for private and foreign schools. A monthly housing allowance and a stipend for books and supplies is also available. These benefits can be transferred to a spouse or child of a qualifying veteran.

Survivors’ and Dependents’ Educational Assistance is available to some family members of certain disabled or deceased veterans as well.

To find out more, contact a Veteran Service Officer. Contact information can be found on page 5.

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HOW CAN I GET HELP?

Every county and state has a Veteran Affairs office to answer questions about benefits and provide assistance. There are also other useful resources for veterans in the Inland Northwest.



GO ONLINE

VA.gov

The Department of Veterans Affairs website has resources on every topic relevant to veterans.

VA.gov/welcome-kit

The VA Welcome Guide covers all types of benefits and services available for veterans, new recruits, active service members and their families.

DAV9.com

Based in Post Falls, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 9 Fort Sherman shares links and information to both local and national help organizations for veterans.

Explore.VA.gov/benefits-navigator

Explore VA benefits and discover which ones you and your family may be eligible to receive.



IN PERSON

Spokane County Regional Veteran Service

1117 N. Evergreen Rd.,
Spokane Valley, WA
(509) 477-3690

Apply for emergency services, or have any benefits or service questions answered by 5 Veteran Service Officers (VSO) and staff.

North Idaho Veteran Services and Benefits Office

120 E. Railroad Ave., Post Falls,
ID (208) 446-1092

Meet with a VSO or staff for help with VA benefits enrollment, claims or other veteran needs.

Goodwill Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

130 E. Third Ave., Spokane, WA
(509) 828-2449
SSVF helps homeless veterans and their families find housing and connects veterans with other support organizations.



BY PHONE

Spokane County Regional Veteran Service

(509) 477-3690

North Idaho Veteran Services and Benefits Office

(208) 446-1092

Veteran Crisis Line

1 (800) 273-8255, press 1

North Idaho Crisis Center

(208) 625-4884

Washington or Idaho 2-1-1

Dial "2-1-1" for health and human resources referrals.

Healthcare for Homeless Veterans HCHV

In Person or Phone
504 E. Second Ave.,
Spokane, WA

Phone: (509) 435-2019

Provides healthcare and outreach for housing, job opportunities and counseling.

Get to know ... the Office of Survivors Assistance

The Office of Survivors Assistance was established by in 2008 to serve as a resource regarding all benefits and services furnished by the Department to Survivors and Dependents of deceased veterans and members of the Armed Forces. Contact the OSA if you need help with claim status, tax documentation, death of a veteran notification, information on burial and mortuary benefits, and other benefits for veteran survivors.

For more information, visit www.va.gov/SURVIVORS/ or contact officeofsurvivors@va.gov.

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The changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery

By Len Crosby

In July, my wife and I took our grandkids to Washington, D.C. for their first visit to our nation’s capital. One of the spots we visited was the National Cemetery at Arlington where their great-grandfather is buried, having qualified for Arlington by virtue of serving 35 years as an officer in the Army and receiving the Silver Star during WWII.

We toured the grounds and were privileged to observe the changing of the guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The guard are all members of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, which is the oldest active duty infantry regiment in the United States Army, hence its nickname, “The Old Guard.”

The changing of the guard is a truly impressive ceremony. The Tomb of the Unknowns is guarded 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in all weather conditions. The Tomb contains the remains of unidentified soldiers from World War I, World War II and Korea. Until recently, the Tomb also contained the remains of an unknown soldier from the Vietnam War, but those remains were identified using DNA and moved at the family’s request.

The guard at the Tomb wears “dress blues” (Army Service Uniform) with all medals and badges displayed. The guard is armed with an M-14 rifle that has a chrome bayonet attached and is at shoulder arms during the entire guard tour. The rifle is always carried on the shoulder that is away from the Tomb signifying that the guard stands between the Tomb and any threat.

The guard walks a prescribed 21 steps south, across a black mat at the front of the Tomb (think 21-gun salute), stops, does a crisp 90 degree turn in two movements (not an about-face) and faces east for 21 seconds. The



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOS

A member of the U.S. Army 3rd Infantry Regiment walks his post in front of The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery during the Memorial Day weekend in Arlington, Va., on May 27, 2018.

guard then executes a second 90 degree facing movement and faces north for 21 seconds. The guard then executes a crisp “shoulder-arms” movement which again places the rifle on the shoulder away from the Tomb. After the change in the placement of the rifle, the guard again paces 21 steps north and repeats the process.

Tomb guards are changed every 30 minutes between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. from April 1 through Sept. 30, and every hour between

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. the rest of the year. At all other times, like when the cemetery is closed, the guard is changed every two hours.

The changing of the guard ceremony starts with the sergeant of the guard and the relief guard approaching from the south along the front of the Tomb. The sergeant of the Guard and the relief guard are both in dress blues with all medals and badges. The sergeant of the guard is armed with a Colt .45, and the relief guard is armed with an

M-14 rifle with bayonet affixed.

The ceremony consists of a thorough inspection by the sergeant of the guard of the relief guard. The relief guard’s rifle is thoroughly inspected in a series of impressive movements, and then the relief guard’s uniform is carefully inspected.

Once the inspection is completed, the ceremony consists of a series of marching and facing movements by the two guards and the sergeant of the guard. During the ceremony,

military salutes (rifle salutes from each of the guards with weapons at “present arms”) are rendered twice to the Tomb. At no time during the ceremony is the Tomb unguarded, with either the current guard or the relief guard continuing the 21-step guard procedure, except when all three members of the guard render the two salutes to the Tomb.

The ceremony is completed when the relief guard advances to the black mat and resumes the guard process of the previous



The honor guards marches near the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., during the ceremonial changing of the guard on Nov. 11, 2007.



An honor guard’s rifle is inspected, during the ceremonial changing of the guard, near the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., on Nov. 11, 2007.

guard, who accompanies the sergeant of the guard marching to the north and away from the Tomb.

I had a chance to speak with the sergeant of the guard after the ceremony and he shared some interesting facts about the

ceremony and guard:

- Guards moisten their white gloves to ensure that they maintain a firm grip on their rifles during their tour of duty.
- To be chosen as a guard for the tomb, a soldier must be in

superb physical condition, possess an unblemished military record and be between 5 feet, 10 inches and 6 feet, 4 inches tall, with a proportionate weight and build. Guards are required to have no greater than a 30-inch

The Changing of the Guard is a truly impressive ceremony. The Tomb of the Unknown is guarded 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in all weather conditions. The Tomb contains the remains of Unknown Soldiers from World War I, World War II and Korea. Until recently, the Tomb also contained the remains of an unknown soldier from the Vietnam War, but those remains were identified using DNA and moved at the family’s request.

waist.

- Tomb guards typically serve a one-year period in that position but can move to other positions available in the 3rd Infantry Regiment. Guards are not required to live on post.

• Tomb guards wear specially made low quarter shoes with very thick soles to insulate them from the heat and cold weather. The shoes have metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe. These plates provide the loud “click” when the guards halt or do a facing movement. During the changing of the guard there are several of those facing movements all of which are performed in unison by the tomb guard, the relief guard and the sergeant of the guard. These are so carefully timed that you only hear one loud “click” as they are performed.

- The guard’s shoes also have a built-up sole, so that the sole and heel of each shoe are equal in height. This allows the guard to stand in a manner that straightens the back and ensures that the guard is perpendicular to the ground. A side effect of the sole build up is that the guard can “roll” on the outside of each

shoe’s build up as the guard walks down the black mat, allowing them to move in a fluid fashion with hat and bayonet never appearing to move or “bob up” with each step. This produces a formal smooth look to the guard’s walk.

- The guard’s shoes also have a steel tip on the toe and a “horseshoe steel plate on the heel which prevents wear and allows the guard to make smoother facing movements.

• Tomb guards dress before each tour of guard duty before a full-length mirror. They are also carefully inspected to ensure that there are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform.

- Tomb guards must continuously undergo rigorous training, including several hours a day of marching, rifle drill and uniform preparation, and every tomb guard is expected to be completely versed in the history of both the tomb and of Arlington National Cemetery, including knowing how to find the graves of prominent persons buried in the cemetery. That makes for a full day, even on days where they are not on guard duty at the tomb.

VETERANS CHRONICLE

LOCAL AMERICAN LEGION ESTABLISHES CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM TO PROMOTE 'GOD AND COUNTRY'

By Tech. Sgt. Richard Hamley
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, RETIRED

As veterans of the United States military, we all raised our right hand on our service induction day and said an oath that we would defend the constitution of the United States and serve God and country.

The phrase "God and country" stands as the backbone for many veteran-connected organizations.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower was responsible for the insertion of 'under God' into the Pledge of Allegiance. He added, "(These words) will strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our most powerful resource, in peace and in war."

Previous to this Act of Congress, Eisenhower addressed the nation and said, "America makes no sense without a deeply held faith in God — and I don't care what it is!"

Chaplain David Sutton, U.S. Army veteran and spiritual leader of American Legion Post 241 in Spokane Valley, took the words of the former president literally and established the only known Chaplaincy Program at a veteran's organization.

Included in the post and community services program are volunteer veterans from the post who are trained and continue to promote "God and country."

For example, WWII and Korean War veteran Betty Wooley and her daughter Meda developed a relationship with every woman whose husband passed away while a member of the post. Due to her medical condition, Wooley is unable to visit the women, but makes

sure each one gets a monthly letter or card from her giving words of comfort, support and encouragement. A strong Christian believer, she includes words from Scripture in each correspondence.

Last Valentine's Day, the two women received several bouquets and boxes of candy from women to whom she writes as gestures of appreciation for her work.

"Our veterans have shown an interest in visiting hospitals and the VA Hospice unit," Sutton said.

Those who visit patients regularly were trained by Sutton, and encouraged to read books and articles on hospital ministry and courtesies.

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers in the Chaplaincy Program made telephone calls to all 180 Post 241 members, checking on their condition and anxieties, asking about their needs and just listening to them. Some of the volunteers who are strong and proactive in their faith stood ready and able to pray with those quarantined veterans on the phone.

In each of the phone calls, the veterans were reminded that the chaplain remembers them in prayer regularly in his personal devotions and is available to help them.

Another activity associated with the Chaplaincy Program is volunteering at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery. Chaplain Sutton is a part of a team of clergymen who conduct funeral services for the families of deceased veterans who do not have a family pastor.

This has opened the door of opportunity for service in the



GETTY IMAGES

community for the Post 241 team. Chaplain Sutton is frequently asked to conduct private funerals and weddings for veterans. He is also asked to bring the team to conduct meetings in area schools and other public places. The education sessions include patriotic subjects in history and military work.

U.S. Army veteran Tzena Scarborough has spoken at elementary schools using her collection of military headgear, including flight helmets and military battle gear. She worked in helicopter computers while serving in Germany. She also leads a team of Color Guardsmen in explaining the meaning of each fold of the American flag, which includes some religious connotations. Her work with Wreaths Across America always includes the presence and activity of the Post

chaplain.

Veteran Don Sessions, U.S. Army, always enthalls his young audience by reciting scripture verses in German that he learned while serving in Germany. He also explains the preamble to the American Legion bylaws and its importance to God and country.

Navy veteran Tom Toewy, former Mayor of Spokane Valley, was invited as a guest speaker representing the American Legion at a special inurnment service at the Veterans Cemetery. His emphasis was very patriotic and included many spiritual references relating to a veteran's death while serving God and country.

"We are by no means a religious organization or trying to be one," explained Sutton. "We appreciate the words of General Eisenhower and we attempt to support his thoughts

and leadership," he added.

Chaplain Sutton has been in pastoral ministries and chaplain work for 45 years. USMC vet Rex Walker, an ordained Gospel minister conducts weekly worship services at Brighton Court Assisted Living in Spokane Valley. Walker supports the Post Chaplaincy Program and stands ready to assist the chaplain wherever he is needed.

"We believe our program not only widens our influence in the community, but it also gives a uniqueness within our veteran's service organization," he noted.

With a strong emphasis on veteran participation, this program opens the doors for veterans of strong faith to serve others in a non-threatening way while staying loyal to tenants of our veteran oath to serve God and country.

VETERANS CHRONICLE

Just A Common Soldier

(A Soldier Died Today)

Poem by A. Lawrence Vaincourt

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every one.
And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Bill has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.
He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way,
And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.
When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell their whole life stories, from the time that they were young,
But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.
Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land
A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?
Or the ordinary fellow who, in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?
A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives
Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives.
While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps, a pension small.
It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago,
That the old Bills of our Country went to battle, but we know
It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys.
Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,
Would you want a politician with his ever-shifting stand?
Or would you prefer a soldier, who has sworn to defend
His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end?
He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us we may need his like again.
For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part
Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.
If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in a paper that would say,
Our Country is in mourning, for a soldier died today.

Reprinted with permission

About the Author: A. Lawrence Vaincourt was born in New York in 1923 to French-Canadian parents and raised in southeastern Quebec. He enlisted with the Royal Canadian Air Force and was stationed in England as an aircraft mechanic near the end of World War II. After the war, he married and raised five sons in the Montreal area.

According to his son Randy, Vaincourt almost never spoke about the war. He began writing professionally in his retirement. "Just a Common Soldier" was originally published in a Montreal-area community newspaper in 1987.



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VETERANS CHRONICLE

Honoring military service and sacrifice at Washington State Veterans Cemetery

By Rudy Lopez

WASHINGTON STATE VETERANS
CEMETERY DIRECTOR

The Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake helps veterans and their families through one of life's most challenging times while honoring their military service and sacrifice. Knowledgeable cemetery staff guide veterans and families through the process of preregistering for cemetery services and work with families after a death occurs. The facility serves eligible veterans and their families regardless of state of residency, and determines eligibility based on established Federal VA National Cemetery Administration criteria.

Federal law provides eligibility for burial in a state or national cemetery to veterans who have met minimum active duty service requirements as applicable by law and who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Members of the reserve component of the armed forces are also eligible, provided they died while on active duty under certain circumstances, or while performing training duty; have 20 years of service creditable for retired pay; or were called to active duty and served the full term of service and have met characterization of discharge requirements. Family member eligibility is determined based on the veteran's military service meeting eligibility criteria. The veteran does not have to be interred at this facility for a qualifying spouse to be interred at the State Veterans Cemetery.

The cemetery offers pre-need planning services, giving veterans and eligible family members the peace of mind that they've satisfied eligibility criteria, knowing their end-of-life needs will be met without burdening their families. The pre-need



LIBBY KAMROWSKI/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Layla Miller, 6, lays pennies on graves after a Memorial Day ceremony at the State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake, Wash., on May 27, 2019. The ceremony attracted nearly 1,300 guests who came together to pay their solemn respect to fallen service members.

eligibility determination process is non-binding and does not obligate the family to use the State Veterans Cemetery should life situations and end-of-life plans change.

There are no charges for veteran interments, which include an interment plot, government headstone or memorial marker, use of a committal shelter for interment services and perpetual care of the grounds as a national shrine. The cemetery recovers a cost of \$300 at the time of interment for family member interments.

The 120-acre Washington State Veterans Cemetery opened in 2010 through federal grants, totaling \$11 million for capital

development from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This facility makes the federal VA burial benefit more accessible to veterans in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. In the coming years, WDVA will continue to expand burial areas incorporating additional public spaces and maintenance facilities. Additionally, WDVA is committed to developing a second state veterans cemetery in central or southeastern Washington to better serve veterans across this region.

Since opening, the site is a final resting place for over 5,200 veterans and family members. The cemetery offers traditional

casket burials as well as options for cremation inurnments; in-ground burial, a columbarium wall for above ground placement, as well as a scattering garden. All inurnment options include a personalized granite marker to memorize veterans and their family members. Families are invited to use the committal shelter for memorial services including full military honors for veterans. Military honors are a statutory entitlement for qualifying veterans, which includes playing of taps and presentation of a burial flag to the veteran's next-of-kin. The cemetery does not provide graveside services for safety

concerns. We are also fortunate to have the assistance of a team of over 100 volunteers who assist with a wide range of supportive services. Individuals interested in volunteering should contact the cemetery directly for additional information.

The Washington State Veterans Cemetery grounds are open to the public seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to sunset. Interments are conducted Monday through Friday and are scheduled by contacting the cemetery staff. Additional information and pre-registration forms are available online at dva.wa.gov/cemetery or by calling (509) 299-6280.

VETERANS CHRONICLE

Wreaths Across America: Remember, honor, teach

By Rudy Lopez
WASHINGTON STATE VETERANS
CEMETERY DIRECTOR

Remember our veterans, honor their service and sacrifice, and teach our children and others about our freedoms. The Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake is honored to be participating in Wreaths Across America for the 11th year on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020.

In 2017, 1.56 million wreaths were sponsored and placed at 1,433 participating locations. There will be more than 1,600 participating locations on National Wreaths Across America Day this year.

In 2010, 300 wreaths were donated. The need



COURTESY PHOTO

will ensure the individuals who served to protect the freedoms of our country are never forgotten as part of a solemn community commemoration.

Our local community has come together enduring all types of weather to remember, honor and teach. Without our veterans' and service members today, where would we be? "Don't say I should have, say I did" honor veterans today.

Individuals interested in making donations should contact Joyce with the Ladies & Gentlemen of the Veterans Cemetery (501c3) at (509) 928-1189. Contact the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs Cemetery at (509) 299-6280 for additional information on the ceremony.

for additional wreaths has increased annually. This

year, the goal is to raise enough funds to place

2,000 veterans' wreaths on the headstones of our

local heroes laid to rest at this hallowed shrine. This

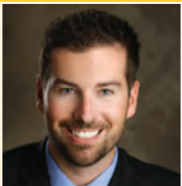


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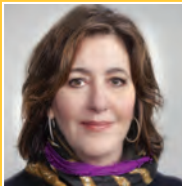
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