

VETERANS CHRONICLE

JULY 2020

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS, FAMILIES

Community resources
available to assist those
who served and their
loved ones



VETERANS CHRONICLE



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PTSD MYTHS AND FACTS

June was PTSD Awareness Month. Coaching Into Care, a national telephone service of the VA which aims to educate, support, and empower family members and friends who are seeking care or services for a veteran, wants to dispel some myths about post-traumatic stress disorder, based on questions and concerns from their callers. Information provided by partners the National Center for PTSD (www.ptsd.va.gov/) and Real Warriors (www.realwarriors.net/).

Myth: “Veterans can never recover from PTSD.”

Fact: Treatment for PTSD is effective, and veterans do recover and lead full lives. And although treatment works, most people who have PTSD don’t get the help they need. Getting help early can significantly improve symptoms, but it’s never too late to get help.

PTSD can recur, but treatment can make you feel in control and give you tools to cope.

What you can do: Watch the video series at www.maketheconnection.net and www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/AboutFace/ featuring veterans discussing their PTSD and treatment. When ready, visit www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/decisionaid/ to learn about PTSD treatment options and what may be best for your veteran.

Myth: “Talking about it always helps. If I can just get them to open up, things will be better.”

Fact: Talking about traumatic events can be difficult for anyone and is not always helpful. Sometimes the best thing is to give your veteran some space and not pressure them to talk. Everyone is different as to what they can tolerate and sometimes talking

about the trauma is best left to a professional therapist who can also provide coping skills for dealing with it. Sometimes veterans don’t talk about it with family and friends because it’s just too painful or they don’t want you to have the same thoughts and nightmares in your head.

What you can do: Pay attention to your veteran’s body language and other nonverbal cues. Avoid giving advice; sometimes you just need to listen without judgment and with empathy. You might hang out casually, or try another activity while talking, like walking, which sometimes makes it easier to begin the conversation.

For tips on listening and communication with your veteran, contact Coaching Into Care at www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/ or call (888) 823-7458, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EDT.

VETERANS CHRONICLE

VETERANS CHRONICLE

A supplement to The Spokesman-Review
July 17, 2020

VETERANS HELP NET

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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.

For advertising information, please contact advertising@spokesman.com or (509) 459-5095.

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HEY VETERANS, DID YOU KNOW ...?

... You can apply for a discharge upgrade?

All branches of the military will consider a case for a discharge upgrade if you can show a discharge was connected to any of these categories:

- Mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Sexual assault or harassment (known as military sexual trauma or MST) during military service
- Sexual orientation (including under the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy)

Answer a series of questions to get customized, step-by-step instructions on how to apply for a discharge upgrade or correction. If your discharge is upgraded, you will be eligible for the VA benefits you earned during your period of service.

Visit www.va.gov/discharge-upgrade-instruction to start your application.

... You may be eligible for VA benefits related to hearing loss or tinnitus?

If you have ringing in your ears (tinnitus) and or hearing loss that developed due to military service, it is highly likely you are eligible for some VA health care benefits and a monthly disability check.

Currently, there are over 1.7 million veterans who receive compen-

sation for tinnitus (or ringing in the ears) and over 1.1 million veterans who receive compensation for hearing loss. Most of the hearing loss among veterans is the result of noise exposure from gunfire, aircraft, tanks, and bombs. Contact a Veterans Service Officer (VSO) to help you file a claim; this service is free of charge. Find a VSO in "How Can I Get Help?" on page 5.

... Vietnam veterans with Parkinson's or prostate cancer are eligible for additional benefits?

If you had "boots on the ground" in Vietnam or 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 January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975) and you have Parkinson's disease or prostate cancer, it is presumed to have been caused by Agent Orange exposure and you are automatically eligible for VA health care benefits and a monthly disability check.

Parkinson's disease or prostate cancer are only two of the 14 "presumptive" diseases that are associated with Agent Orange. Visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/ to learn more about other qualifying conditions.

For more information or to get help filing a claim, contact the Spokane County Regional Veteran Services office at (509) 477-3690, or the North Idaho Veteran Services and Benefits Office in Post Falls at (208) 446-1092. They can help you

enroll in the VA medical system and get you to a Veteran Service Officer to help file your claim.

... Type II diabetes may qualify you to receive VA benefits?

If you develop Diabetes Mellitus (Type II), you are eligible for VA health care benefits and a monthly disability check. Due to presumed exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam, there are currently 14 listed diseases that automatically qualify you to receive compensation. Conditions secondary to diabetes are also covered, including neuropathy, chronic kidney failure and heart disease. Contact your Veterans Service officer (VSO) for more information or for assistance in filing a claim. This is a free service. Find a VSO in "How Can I Get Help?" on page 5.

... There are several types of Veteran identification cards you can use for different purposes?

Here are four types of Veteran ID cards available:

- **Department of Defense Identification Card:** A DoD Identification Card is used to show your military status and to get access to services at military bases. You may also use this card to get discounts offered to veterans businesses and restaurants. If you have a

DoD Identification Card, you don't need to request another type of photo ID card to prove you're a veteran or to get retail or business discounts.

- **Veteran Health Identification Card:** When you're enrolled in VA health care, you get a VHIC that you use to check in to your appointments at VA medical centers. You may also use this card to get discounts offered to veterans businesses and restaurants. If you have a VHIC, you don't need to request another type of photo ID card to prove you're a veteran or to get retail or business discounts.
- **Veteran ID Card:** A VIC is a form of photo ID you can use to get discounts offered to veterans at stores, businesses and restaurants. When you have this card, you won't need to carry around your military discharge papers or share sensitive personal information to receive discounts. If you have a VIC, you don't need to request another type of photo ID card to prove you're a veteran or to get retail or business discounts.
- **Veteran's designation on a state-issued driver's license or ID:** Currently all 50 states and Puerto Rico offer a veteran designation on state-issued driver's licenses or IDs. The type of veteran designation may vary from state to state. If you have a veteran's designation on your state-issued ID, you may be able to get discounts offered to veterans at stores, businesses and restaurants.

Visit www.va.gov/records/get-veteran-id-cards/ to learn if you are eligible for one of these ID cards, and what documentation you need.

VETERANS CHRONICLE

VETERANS BULLETIN BOARD

If you have information or events to share with veterans in our community, email details to info@veteranshelpnet.com.

JOB NOTICES

Spokane Vet Center Work Study

Veterans, spouses or dependents attending school on the GI Bill can assist veterans and learn new skills. Hours and days are flexible. Pay is minimum wage. Interested? Contact Andrea at (509) 893-4752 or email your resume to Andrea.Rehfeld@va.gov.

American Red Cross Services to the Armed Forces VA Work Study

Provides part-time employment to students receiving VA education benefits who attend school three-quarter time or more. Remote work opportunity. Call James McLaughlin at (509) 22-4812 or email james.mclaughlin2@redcross.org to apply.

EVENTS

Newport Stand Down

Saturday, July 18, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
Newport High School
1400 5th St., Newport, Wash.

Free services, information and assistance from federal, state and county agencies, non-profits and more. Enjoy a free lunch! For more information, call Brad at (509) 671-3585. www.dva.



wa.gov/newport-veterans-stand-down

Historical Monument Dedication

Friday, Aug. 7, 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
Greenwood Memorial Terrace
211 N. Government Way, Spokane, Wash.

Join Fairmount Memorial Association, the Jonas Babcock Chapter (NSDAR) and Daughters of the American Revolution for the Historic Monument Dedication of Walter Lawson (1862-1917), a private with the segregated 25th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Cavalry and one of Spokane's first Black police officers. Reception to follow at Heritage Fu-

neral & Cremation. www.fairmountmemorial.com/

A Day of Fishing with the Northwest's Finest Walleye Anglers

Saturday, Aug. 15, 5 a.m.-3 p.m.
Crow Butte Park
1 Crow Butte State Park Rd., Patterson, Wash.

Free to all veterans and First Responders (no dependents please); 100 seats available.

Fishing gear is provided. Hosted by Heroes on the Water. Shore lunch provided by Sportsmen's Warehouse Kennewick; co-hosted by Safari Club International Columbia Basin Chapter. heroesonthewater.org/chapters/south-east-washington/

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

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VETERANS CHRONICLE

SOLDIER, MOM AND GRADUATE

National Guardsmen finishes 18-year quest

By Kip Hill

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

West Valley High School graduate Ashley Cardinal had just started her first semester at Washington State University in Pullman when the towers fell.

"To be honest with you, I didn't really fully understand," SFC Cardinal said in a 2019 interview. "My parents were like, 'Oh my gosh, you're going to go to war.' I said the National Guard, they're paying for my college."

Following a deployment to Iraq after 9/11, the births of four children and multiple moves across the state in the 18 years since, Cardinal walked Saturday, June 15, 2019, as a graduate of Eastern Washington University. At 35 years old, Cardinal was the first in her immediate family to finish college, a journey she said was still incomprehensible.

"I don't really feel like it's real yet," Cardinal said. "I don't even know what to think."

Cardinal said she started basic training in June 2001 after signing up with the National Guard to pay for her college. It was a decision her mother, Jamie Wilke, said was upsetting, especially after the attacks in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania and the news her unit would be part of a deployment in Iraq.

On top of that, Cardinal gave birth to her first daughter weeks before she was shipped out.

"It was a crazy time. I had to be on blood pressure medication and I had a baby I was trying to raise in my 40s, and run a business," said Wilke, who's operated Shear Haven Pet Salon grooming service on Pines Road for 28 years.

Spokesman-Review photographer Brian Plonka captured an image of Cardinal in February 2003, a month before U.S. forces invaded the Middle Eastern country. Tears are welling in the 19-year-old's eyes beneath a camouflaged fatigue cap.



SPOKESMAN-REVIEW PHOTOS

ABOVE: Sgt. Ashley Cardinal stands as veterans are recognized on June 15, 2019, during Eastern Washington University's graduation ceremony at Spokane Arena.



LEFT: In this February 2003 photo, Cardinal, then 19, of Spokane, lets her emotions show as she and the 1161st Transport Company from Ephrata faced deployment.

"Back then, the National Guard hadn't deployed since Desert Storm," Cardinal said. "There were a whole lot of unknowns."

Wilke said she waited by the mailbox for letters from her daughter, who worked transportation bringing supplies to and from combat areas. Rare was a phone call during the deployment, which ended in August 2004 with Cardinal moving back in with her mother and now 22-month-old child.

"When I came back, my daughter had no idea who I was," Cardinal said.

Still determined to earn a degree that would enable her to become a teacher, Cardinal enrolled

first at Spokane Falls Community College, and then Eastern in Cheney. Her tuition was paid for through the GI Bill, while Cardinal continued her duties with the Guard and married her first husband. Three more children would follow, now ages 12, 10 and 9.

Cardinal completed coursework piecemeal, enrolling for as many classes as her schedule would allow each quarter. In 2006, her second child arrived a month early.

"I ended up giving birth in the middle of the academic quarter, and ended up dropping out," she said. "I had an instructor who said, 'You didn't make it to the final.' I said, 'That's because I went

into labor.'"

The couple eventually moved to Western Washington, and after a divorce and Cardinal meeting her current husband, Army National Guard Spc. Cristanos Cardinal, she received encouragement once again to take up her studies. So she began taking online courses in 2014 in children's studies, in the hopes of later attaining a master's degree in education.

"My current husband was like, 'What are you doing? You have two years of school left,'" Cardinal said. "I said, 'I can't. I'm too old.'"

Adding to her desire was her professional work with the Washington Army National Guard in its

education department. Starting as a temporary worker, Cardinal is now a supervisor there, assisting other students in receiving their GI education benefits. In 2017, Congress eliminated the 15-year requirement for military personnel to use their tuition benefit, but the clock was still ticking for Cardinal.

With one credit left to complete, the sergeant believed the end was near. But she couldn't sign up for the last online course she needed to take.

"My academic adviser said that's because it's an internship," Cardinal said. "I said, wait a minute, what part of all-online did we miss out on here?"

Cardinal, who'd been completing her coursework after putting the kids to bed each night following her day job, began pooling her time-off credits at her job. This year, she was able to complete that internship as a first-grade classroom assistant at Shining Mountain Elementary School in Spanaway, Washington, where her children attend, while still working half-days with the National Guard.

"It was the greatest experience," Cardinal said.

Wilke said her daughter has always been driven, but even she is surprised that her daughter will get a diploma.

"She got married, went on to have children, then moved up the ranks in the military," Wilke said. "With four kids, I thought, there's no way, she's going to lose her mind before she graduates."

For Cardinal, those children are precisely the reason it's important she finishes school, two decades after that first semester at Washington State University. She was working hard to coordinate a potential helicopter flight for her husband, who was training in Yakima, to attend the ceremony in Cheney.

"I can't wait for my kids to see how hard work and dedication pays off, despite the struggles, the ups and downs," she said.

Originally published June 19, 2019.

VETERANS CHRONICLE

Community helps children in foster care honor veteran grandfather

**By Don Walker
and Houston Scrudder**
VETERANS HELP NET

This is a story about the desire of two kids in foster care from Deer Park who wanted to arrange the cremation and internment of their Vietnam veteran era grandfather in the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake and needing some help to make it happen.

It started with a phone call to Alene Alexander, the Executive Director of Embrace Washington, a foster care support organization in Spokane, from a social service specialist with the Department of Children, Youth and Families in Spokane.

The specialist asked Alene if Embrace could help with funding the cremation, internment and transportation cost that would allow the children's grandfather to be buried at Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake.

Alene immediately said "Yes, we can help" and so started this story of caring, cooperation and commitment of many individuals, social services and veteran organizations to help these kids honor their veteran grandpa.

With only a few days' notice, Alene sent out the call for help. With her husband Houston Scrudder, one of the founders of Veterans Help Net, the couple requested help from individuals and organizations and quickly received commitments to fund the costs for this memorial.

Not stopping there, and with the help of Veteran Cemetery director Rudy Lopez and his staff, they organized a very special internment ceremony for June 12, which was not an easy task during COVID-19 limitations and restrictions.

VFW Post 51 Chaplain Wes Anderson led the service and Col. Brian Newbury, from Rotary 21 of Spokane, performed the military honors. Col. New-



COURTESY PHOTOS

bury, a former Fairchild AFB Commander, presented each of the boys with a memorial flag in a proper display case. The ceremony also included a moving bagpipe rendering of "Amazing Grace" by piper Fred Freeman.

When Col. Newbury presented the flags to the boys, he said, "The markers on a grave contain two dates and a dash. The dates, we know, represent the birth and death of your Grandpa. The dash represents the life he lived. I don't know much about your Grandpa's dash, but I do know two things. He loved his country and he

loved you two."

After the ceremony a meal was arranged offsite by Alene and her team of helpers. It was attended by the two boys, the ceremony participants and some of their grandpa's friends.

This is a wonderful example of a group of committed and caring folks showing respect and honor to a veteran and leaving his grandsons with an impacting and powerful memory of their grandfather.

Thank you, Alene, for organizing and making this happen. Thank you all for stepping up when asked. God bless you all and God bless America.



The service for the Vietnam veteran included military honors, and a memorial flag was presented to each of his grandsons.

VETERANS CHRONICLE

What is a health exposure registry?

A registry is defined as a system for collecting and maintaining, in a structured record, data on specific persons from a defined population, which allows for preliminary research analyses and reviews.

Two broad categories of health registries are disease-based registries and exposure-based registries. A disease-based registry organizes data based on the cases of a specific disease or condition, while an exposure registry organizes data based on people who have had a common exposure. For example, a disease-based registry would focus on cases of multiple sclerosis or cancer, while the registry for the World Trade Center 9/11 workers is an exposure registry.

The VA's Post Deployment Health Services oversees six exposure registries, also called environmental health registries. Veterans who have served since 1990 may be eligible for the four following registries:

- The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry
- The Gulf War Registry
- The Depleted Uranium Follow-Up Program
- The Toxic Embedded Fragment Surveillance Center

Veterans who served before 1990 may be eligible for one of the other two registries offered by Post Deployment Health Services:

- The Agent Orange Registry
- The Ionizing Radiation Registry

The Depleted Uranium Follow-Up Program, Toxic Embedded Fragment Surveillance Center, Ionizing Radiation Registry, and Agent Orange Registry are for specific exposures, while the Gulf War Registry and Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry address a broad spectrum of exposures; for example, airborne hazards-related illnesses can be caused by ambient air pollution, smoke, dust from the desert environment, or emissions from substances incinerated in burn pits.

Registries have several advantages. Participants who join and give their contact information provide a way for VA to reach them with updates. Registries can also be tools for surveillance. Individuals within the registry can be tracked and monitored for health trends within the group. Registries can also generate ideas (hypotheses) for research on associations between exposures and disease.

Self-reported registries, however, have limitations. They are subject to recall bias (misremembering), as the deployment events may have happened over a decade ago. Self-reported registries also tend to be self-selecting, meaning some types of people may be more motivated to participate than others. For example, those with significant health issues may be more likely to participate compared those who consider themselves healthy, and so the registry data may not represent the actual health of the population. Also, registry information can be used in research studies but are not usually studies in themselves. Finally, participation in a registry does not suffice for a compensation and pension examination. One does not need to enter a registry to put in a compensation claim.

Local veterans who are interested in joining a registry should contact Spokane Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center Environmental Health Coordinator Stacie Woody at (509) 434-7544 or Stacie.Woody@va.gov.



Spokane Vet Center: Support after deployment

Vet Centers across the country provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to returning combat veterans and their families.

Services for a veteran may include individual and group counseling in areas such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), alcohol and drug assessment, and suicide prevention referrals. All services are free of cost and are strictly confidential.

It is VA's goal of keeping Vet Centers open and operational for veterans, active duty service members, and their families. All Vet Centers

are currently open and operational, providing face to face and virtual counseling and outreach. Vet Centers will continue to assess the community impact of COVID-19 at a local level and may begin to restrict access or limit foot traffic, transitioning services to virtual care if needed. This would be assessed on a case by case basis and as a last measure. Please check back regularly as this situation may change.

To learn more, visit www.vetcenter.va.gov or call 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387).

Spokane Vet Center

Where: 13109 E. Mirabeau Prkwy., Spokane Valley

Contact: (509) 444-8387

Schedule

Monday: 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday to Wednesday: 7 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Thursday to Friday: 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Saturday: By scheduled appointment only

VETERANS CHRONICLE

On a hill above the Lilac Bowl

Monument built to honor Vietnam vets

By Wesley S. Anderson
VFW POST 51 CHAPLAIN

High on the hill above the Lilac Bowl in Riverfront Park sits a lone figure. He is sitting there in silent testament to the soldiers, sailors and Marines from the Spokane region who gave the last full measure during the Vietnam conflict. Looking out over the park and city with the 1,000-yard stare that those who have been there know all too well.

The memorial was erected to honor those 300 soldiers who called the Inland Northwest home. Sitting in silence, he is guarding his charge: the names of the fallen.

In his hand is a letter; you fill in the blanks. Who is it from? We may never know. I would like to think that it is from home, a wife, a mother, a girlfriend. Telling him that all is well at home and for him to be safe.

He sits in silence, in a daydream, thinking of his hometown. He sits staring out at his city. A city he left long ago, in hopes to one day return. Did he return? We may never know.

For some 34 years, he has set in silent testament to America's finest who answered the call. A tes-



COURTESY PHOTO

The Inland Northwest Vietnam Veterans Memorial, located in Riverfront Park, was dedicated November 10, 1985. The sculpture was created by Deborah Copenhaver-Fellows.

tament to those who did not return as they had left, but to those who did return.

It has become a place of reflection for those of us who did return. A place of quiet contemplation. A place to remember those that we left behind.

A place to find healing. A place where families can reconnect and spend a quiet moment with family members.

He will sit nameless and unknown, but always watchful and always vigilant. Watching over his city.



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WE BELIEVE IN VA FINANCING



The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers home loans to active military members, reservists, and retirees, as a benefit of service in our nation's Armed Forces.

Many service members are not aware this earned benefit is available to them; many sellers are not aware of the advantages to VA loans in the transaction process.

We encourage all Spokane realtors - to become familiar with this loan type so that we can all join in saying "We believe in VA financing!"

Visit www.spokaneopen.com to view VA qualified homes in your preferred area

VETERANS CHRONICE



RESOURCES FOR VETERAN CAREGIVERS

During this difficult time of quarantine and uncertainty, we must not forget how many of our veterans depend on a partner caregiver ... and that those caregivers need our help as well. The VA has several programs intended to provide caregivers support, no matter the distance.

Building Better Caregivers (BBC) is a free 6-week online workshop developed by Stanford University to support caregivers of veterans of all eras. Join a community of caregivers who share similar challenges, such as dealing with stress and finding time for yourself.

Trained facilitators guide you in learning new ways to manage

stress and improve communication skills with your care partner.

Program includes:

- 24/7 access to self-guided lessons and resources
- Safe, secure & anonymous environment
- Ongoing support from other caregivers during and after the workshop

If you are a caregiver of a veteran, visit va.buildingbettercaregivers.org to learn more.

Another essential resources for caregivers is the VA's Caregiver Support Line. Whether you need of immediate assistance or have questions about what ser-

vices you may be eligible for, the licensed social workers who answer the support line can:

- Provide you with information about assistance available from VA;
- Help you access services;
- Connect you with the Caregiver Support Coordinator at a VA Medical Center near you; or
- Just listen, if that's what you need right now.

Whether you are a new or longtime veteran caregiver, the Caregiver Support Line is available to connect with you with the many resources available to support veterans and their essential, at-home caregivers. Call 1-855-260-3274 to get started.

ATLAS connects rural Montana veterans with health care

Courtesy of the VA Office of Connected Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ATLAS program has been making headlines for its unique telehealth pod located inside Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 6786 in Eureka, Mont. ATLAS, which stands for Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations, is a VA effort to bring health care access to Veterans in rural communities, such as the remote town of Eureka.

USA Today reported on the unique approach to telehealth that VA, Philips, and VFW took in Eureka, when opening the first ATLAS location in October 2019. Discussions with local veterans resulted in the creation of a futuristic, ATLAS telehealth "pod," designed by the Phillips team. This pod provides a comfortable, private space for veterans of Eureka to have video appointments with VA providers within their local VFW Post.

Normally, veterans living in Eureka drive about 5 hours, or 10 hours roundtrip, to the closest VA hospital for routine appointments or consultations. With the help of the ATLAS telehealth pod, veterans have been able to virtually speak with health care professionals without having to dedicate an entire day to travel.

"This is meeting the needs for the veterans here in Eureka, and that's the most important thing," Kevin Jamison, veteran and assistant director for corporate relations at the VFW, told USA Today.

This year, ATLAS will roll out additional sites across the country, located inside American Legion posts, VFW Posts, and Walmart clinical services rooms.

To learn more

Contact associated VA medical centers:
Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center, Spokane
Marvin Boyd, (509) 434-7462
VA Montana Health Care System - Fort Harrison, Mont.
Decker Konya, (406) 758-2786

VETERANS CHRONICLE

GET TO KNOW THE SPOKANE AMERICAN LEGION POST 9 RIDERS

By Darrel Maddux

AMERICAN LEGION
HISTORIAN/DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC RELATIONS
COMMITTEE

The American Legion Riders are members of the American Legion who are also motorcycle enthusiasts. They are a family-oriented organization and can be found participating in parades, partaking in motorcycling events and supporting the community. Members of the ALR come from the Legion, the

Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion.

The American Legion Riders were formed to participate in parades and other ceremonies that are in keeping with the aims and purposes of the American Legion. They promote motorcycle safety programs and provide a social atmosphere for American Legion members who share the same interests.

Spokane American Legion Post 9 Riders promote and support programs

of the American Legion at the Spokane Veterans Hospital, Spokane Veterans Home, The Young Marines, The Thunderbird Car Club, Inland Northwest Honor Flight, flag lines at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake and assistance for active duty or newly discharged military families. The American Legion Riders also participate in the Legacy Run, which provides scholarships for students who lost a parent in war since Sept. 11, 2001.



COURTESY PHOTO

Inland Northwest American Legion Riders organized a “Roar” to remember and honor America’s veterans and caregivers at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center on Memorial Day on Monday, May 25, 2020.



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