The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act, signed into law in 2017, designates March 29 of each year as National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

This day commemorates the sacrifices of Vietnam Veterans and their families and is part of a national effort to recognize the men and women who were denied a proper welcome upon returning home more than 40 years ago. Returning Vietnam Veterans were often blamed for a war they didn’t start, when they should have been commended; they were sometimes blamed for misdeeds of a few, when the honorable service of the many should have been praised; they came home and sometimes were denigrated, when they should have been celebrated.

This was a disgrace that should have never happened. We, as a nation, resolve that it will not happen again.

This is the main focus of the U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration—a national 50th anniversary commemoration, which was authorized by Congress and launched in 2012. A main objective of this multi-year tribute is to thank and honor our nation’s Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice. The commemoration will continue through Veterans Day, November 11, 2025, with ceremonies and events hosted by thousands of commemorative partners across the U.S., to include VA Portland. This year, however, we'll have to avoid any in-person events as we have done in the past due to required COVID safety precautions.

As you all well know, all military families endure the hardship of separation, uncertainty and fear, but the families of our Vietnam Veterans also witnessed their husbands and wives, sons and daughters, and fathers and mothers returning home to a nation in turmoil. They watched as the vast majority received no formal recognition for their service, or welcome home ceremonies hosted by their communities.

Like Veterans returning from today’s battlefields, those who served in Vietnam came home with both physical and unseen injuries of war; neighbors, friends and family members came home with seen and unseen scars that required mending and extensive care for years... decades, or they did not come home at all.

Sadly, many of the unseen injuries suffered by our Vietnam Veterans went undiagnosed and weren’t understood by our medical community, or citizenry, as they are now. Veterans were left to meet these challenges without the outpouring of assistance available today.

(Continued on next page)
Message from the Director

(Continued from previous page)

I believe it is helpful to put context and understanding of the true cost of war. It is not measured in dollars and cents, but in lives. During the Vietnam War, the sacrifices were many ...

58,297 names of our war dead appear on the Vietnam Wall; their average age ... 23.1 years;
many tens of thousands were disabled;
approximately 7,500 women, most of whom were nurses, served in Vietnam; 8 were killed in theater, all nurses;
1,585 service members are still considered missing in action as their families still await word of their fate.

This annual commemoration is focused specifically on remembering, thanking and honoring our 6 million living Vietnam Veterans and the 9 million families of those who served during the Vietnam War period. I, however, would like to personally thank the 95,000+ Veterans we at VA Portland have the honor to serve and their families who support them.

I, of course, would prefer to do this in person, shake hands, and welcome each and every one of our Vietnam Veterans home. We can’t for this year’s Vietnam War Veterans Day, but I am hopeful that very soon we will be able to gather, celebrate, hug our grandchildren, friends, neighbors, and our fellow brothers and sisters-in-arms.

Thank you for your service and for allowing us at VA Portland the privilege to serve you.

Darwin Goodspeed

---VAPORHCS---

VA News Release

SAVE LIVES Act allows VA to soon provide COVID-19 vaccinations to all Veterans, their spouses and caregivers

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden signed the SAVE LIVES Act into law today (March 24, 2021), expanding VA’s legal authority to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all Veterans, regardless of their VA health care enrollment status, as well as Veteran spouses, caregivers and some beneficiaries.

The SAVE LIVES Act removed some of the legal limits on the medical care VA can provide to Veterans, based on health care eligibility and priority groups.

The expanded authority depends on readily available COVID-19 vaccine supply and requires VA to continue to prioritize vaccinations and healthcare delivery for our nation’s Veterans enrolled in VA care. (Full article link)

We have no specifics on when this will happen yet, but we will provide information as soon as we have details.
VA Portland Surpasses 50,000 COVID Vaccinations

PORTLAND, Ore. — VA Portland Health Care System today surpassed administering more than 50,000 COVID-19 vaccinations across its healthcare system.

The healthcare system runs two mass-vaccination clinics at the Portland VA Medical Center and at the Vancouver VA campus with the ability to give more than 1,500 vaccinations per day when the vaccine is available. VA Portland staff also run multiple ‘pop-up’ vaccination events across its 26-county, two-state area of operations to reach rural-area Veterans and provides vaccines at several of its smaller clinics.

“I am incredibly proud of the hundreds of VA Portland staff who have volunteered extra hours, worked weekends, and traveled across the state to get COVID vaccines in the arms of Veterans,” said Darwin Goodspeed, Director, VA Portland Health Care System. “Our rural Veterans have been a major focus as well, and we could not have had all the events we did without our partners in the Oregon National Guard and the VFW in Redmond. Thank you for your support!”

Getting to Portland for not one but, typically, a two-shot vaccination series is not easy for many people. To reduce Veteran travel and to reach our homeless Veteran population, VA Portland has hosted and planned many single and multi-day vaccination events including at The Dalles, Warrenton (Camp Rilea), Newport, Redmond, and in our Community Resource and Referral Center. These events have resulted in getting about 2,500 vaccine doses to our Veterans with about 1,500 still planned for.

VA Portland is currently offering vaccinations to enrolled Veterans of all ages, but some of the smaller clinics with limited capacity are still focusing on older Veterans. Veterans are contacted and scheduled by phone, are emailed direct to schedule themselves and, for specific vaccination events, may also call to get scheduled for their vaccinations. All the details are available at www.portland.va.gov. If not enrolled for VA care, Veterans are encouraged to check eligibility and enroll by calling the VA Health Eligibility Center at 1-877-222-VETS (8387). More eligibility information is here.

Updated information on vaccination details is available at www.portland.va.gov as well as the national “COVID-19 vaccines at VA” website. Anyone can sign up on that main VA Portland web page to receive email updates where it says “CONNECT WITH VA PORTLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.” Information is also shared on the VA Portland Facebook page.

Veterans are asked to please not call the health care system for COVID vaccination scheduling or for updates. They are encouraged to communicate their questions or concerns about their care through their care teams, preferably through secure messaging via My HealtheVet.

-VAORHCS-
March 25 is National Medal of Honor Day
For “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty...”

VA Portland's "Portland Medal of Honor City" display at Portland VA Medical Center honors 16 Medal of Honor recipients from the Portland area.

The display was donated by the Bend Heroes Foundation, BNSF Railway, and Michael's of Bend, and orchestrated by Bend resident and Vietnam Veteran Allan R. “Dick” Tobiason. It has been on display since 2020 and is located on the first floor of building 100 in the hallway outside of the A-B-C clinic area.

The Medal of Honor is our nation's highest award presented to a member of our Armed Forces for “acting with conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in combat with an enemy of the United States”. It is rarely awarded. Only 3,507 awards have been made during the last 157 years. Presently, 69 recipients are living in our nation.

Oregon is home to 29 Medal of Honor recipients from 12 Oregon cities who served in 8 wars in 9 countries over 108 years since the Civil War.

-VAPORHCS-
Meet ROSA ONE

VA Portland’s newest ‘member’ of Neurosurgery’s technology toolbox

VA Portland acquired the ROSA ONE dual platform brain and spine neurosurgical robot in September. Since then, surgeons, nurses, and support staff have been preparing and training to be able to offer Veterans another highly technical advantage that augments the already greatly talented neurosurgery team’s vast capabilities.

VA Portland is the very first VA in the country to have a ROSA ONE and the second of only five hospitals nationwide to be utilizing the dual platform neurosurgical robot.

ROSA ONE provides dual brain and spine modalities on one system. The dual function robot can increase the utilization of the robotic platform for both brain and spine surgeries. Procedures can be less invasive, significantly shorter, improve surgical accuracy, and minimize the risk of pain or infection.

VA Portland’s Dr. Justin Cetas performed the very first procedure on a patient at Portland VA Medical Center on December 10, 2020 — a spine procedure.
Whole Health Veteran Classes

ALL Veterans are welcome!
These classes are offered with morning, afternoon & evening availability.

Call (503) 220-8262, ext. 50536, or via MyHealeVet.

Introduction to Whole Health

During the Introduction to Whole Health class, Veterans learn more about the Whole Health approach to care, the concepts behind Whole Health living, and complete a Personal Health Inventory.

You can download and complete the Personal Health Inventory before you even step into the classroom.

Discovering Your M.A.P. (Discover Mission/Aspiration/Purpose)

• What REALLY matters to you in your life?
• What do you want your health for?
• What brings you a sense of joy and happiness?
• What is your vision of your best possible health?

• A Woman-only group is available!
Whole Health Coaching

Whole Health Coaches work with Veterans one-on-one and in group settings to empower the Veteran to develop and achieve self-determined goals related to health and wellness.

Coaches support Veterans in mobilizing internal strengths and external resources, and in developing self-management strategies for making sustainable, healthy lifestyle, behavior changes.

As partners and facilitators, coaches support Veterans in achieving health goals and behavioral goals, while collaborating with the Veteran’s healthcare team. Coaches assist Veterans to use their insight, personal strengths and resources, goal setting, action steps and accountability toward whole health changes.

More information on Whole Health can be found at

Whole Health - VA Portland Health Care System

Cancer Support Group

FOR VETERANS, FRIENDS & FAMILY MEMBERS
FEATURING; Guest Speakers, Activities, Nutrition Info, Support

Please join us during any portion of your cancer journey…

Phone: 872-701-0185
Conference ID: 707 725 506#

Get more VA Portland Cancer Care information
@  www.portland.va.gov/serv.../
Cancer_Care_Services.asp

Share on Facebook

To register, contact:
Marcy Stockbury, Oncology Dietitian @ (503) 273-5232
Or Tarin Bickford, Oncology Social Worker, @
(503) 220-8262 , ext. 55786

(Continued on next page)
Women On Wednesdays Weight Mgt. (Basics)

A MOVE Weight Management Program for women Veterans;
Women Basic program.

Call (503) 220 - 3482

MOVE!® is a weight management, health promotion program designed to improve the lives of Veterans. MOVE!'s core ideas—encouraging healthy eating behavior, increasing physical activity, and promoting even small weight losses—are easy to follow and based on the latest in nutrition science.

Get Started: Schedule a 90-minute Basics of Weight Management group telephone* class that can help get you started in weight management. Veterans must complete this class prior to joining the MOVE!® Program.

Mindful Resilience Yoga Class (on-line)

An offering from The Caregiver Support Program for Veterans & Caregivers.

Twice a week via VA Video Connect.

Tuesdays, 9-10 a.m., Fridays, 2-3 p.m.

- This is a Seated Yoga class, no experience necessary
- Classes are 60 minutes
- Offering Range of Motion, Centering and Relaxation
- Open to Veterans of all eras, and their caregiver

To register, contact:
Judy Ulibarri, 971-373-3928,
or email Erin.danileson@va.gov

(Continued on next page)
Online Mindfulness Orientation

Join Us for a 60-minute Online Mindfulness Orientation;
Learn:
- What formal and informal Mindfulness Training is, along with an opportunity to practice.
- How it improves attention regulation, to help us be more present, less reactive and, if wanted, choose new habits.
- About the many health benefits of Mindfulness Practice such as: reduced anxiety, depression, chronic pain, blood pressure, and GI difficulties, as well as improved sleep, self-esteem, communication, and quality of life.
- In addition, you will hear about the Mindfulness Training Programs available at VA Portland and be encouraged to sign-up and/or schedule for a program of your choice.

Tuesdays at 11 a.m. via VA Video Connect (VVC).

To register, contact:
Caitlin O’Neill on 503-220-8262, Ext. 51177, or alert a member of your healthcare team of your interest.

Let’s get Growing Series

Do you want to grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers at home? No need to purchase plant starts, learn to grow your own from seed. Simply follow along with us to answer your questions.
Live online weekly classes on Tuesdays through May 4; 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

To register, contact:
VA FARMS @ 360-737-1441, or email brenda.taylor2@va.gov

Share on Facebook
New VA Portland “Nutrition Classes” web page

For 2021, try participating in one of the MANY virtual VA Portland nutrition classes!

Your VA Portland dietitians are offering many nutrition classes designed to help you achieve your health goals via VA Video Connect (VVC).

- VA Video Connect makes VA health care more convenient for you and other Veterans and caregivers.
- VA Video Connect enables you to quickly and easily meet with your VA care team through secure and private videoconferencing sessions.
- You can attend nutrition classes in a virtual medical room using the camera on your phone, computer, or tablet.
- There are NO Co-Pays for VVC appointments.

Registered dietitians are available to meet with you to discuss nutrition concerns:

- **Contact**: Nutrition Scheduling (503) 273-5112 - You can self-refer to these classes, but an appointment is required.
- **Or Consult**: Contact your provider or care team and ask them to enter a consult to schedule into the group.
Sign up to get email alerts on all things VA Portland!

- COVID Vaccine updates
- Emergency Notifications
- News & Announcements
- Customize to get ANYTHING VA

Go to the VAPORHCS main web page
And click
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VA Portland Health Care System

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-VAPORHCS-