

Oldest trooper recalls lifetime of state service

Lieutenant Robert Rupp

It was a perfect northwest morning.

The backyard of the lakefront house ran down to the water's edge and fishermen lined the bank, casting hopefully into the pristine water.

Robert Rupp, then a Sergeant with the Washington State Patrol, propped his foot on a porch step and leaned back against the house. At that point the screen door opened and the house's guest stepped onto the porch.

"Good morning, Mr. President," said Rupp.

"Good morning, Sergeant," replied Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States. "So what are they fishing for down there?"

"Oh, just little trout," said Rupp.

"Isn't it so nice to stand here on a morning like this and watch them fish?" said Eisenhower. "You can't do this in Washington, D.C.! You know you folks surely have the most beautiful country out here in these United States."



Over 50 years later retired Lieutenant Robert Rupp, Kennewick, Washington's oldest living state trooper, recalls his chat with President Eisenhower like it happened this morning. During Eisenhower's time in office he occasionally paid a visit to his brother Edgar who lived in Lakewood. On those occasions, Rupp would deliver Secret Service agents from their Tacoma hotel to Edgar's home, and on one of these visits he had the above encounter with the president.

Recently, Rupp talked about meeting the president and other memories from a 35-year career as a Washington State trooper and an additional six years as sheriff of Benton County. One of his favorite memories was the honor of driving Governor Arthur Langlie across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in 1949.

In 1941 the original Narrows Bridge had its famous "Galloping Gertie" collapse. Eight years later the rebuilt bridge was ready to open.

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“We had a convertible that we got from Ford,” Rupp says, “and my captain said ‘get the convertible and go pick up the governor.’ So I went to the Winthrop Hotel in Tacoma, picked up Gov. Langlie and we were the first to ride across the rebuilt bridge.”

In 2007, when the second Narrows Bridge was opened, Rupp was again honored to be in the first car to cross the bridge. He rode with WSP Chief John Batiste and Gov. Christine Gregoire.

Rupp reaches age 96 in December 2010, and he is often asked for his secret to a long, healthy life.

“Don’t drink and drive, for one,” he says. “Alcohol is such a big problem on our roads. Beyond that, I was raised on a farm and we raised what we ate. But really I don’t know, it’s in the genes, I guess.”

These days Rupp is still very active. He purchased a cabin on Lake Cle Elum many years ago and he enjoys getting away to it for quiet and relaxation. But if he’s at his cabin, don’t try calling.

“A few years ago the telephone man came out and asked us if we wanted him to run lines and install phones for us,” he says. “We all said ‘no, thanks.’ That’s one of the reasons I have this cabin.”

Looking back, Rupp has fond memories of his service to his state.

“I just loved working for the people of the state of Washington, and helping to keep them safe,” he says. “We tried everything we could to slow them down.”

“I can’t complain,” he adds. “I’ve had a good life.” ■

Newsletter goes online with next edition

Beginning in 2011, this newsletter will be available online only. This will help us deliver information the way the majority of our customers want to receive it while saving budget dollars.

If you need to receive a printed copy, please call us at (360) 664-7000 or toll-free (outside the Olympia area) at 800-547-6657.



You’ll always find the most up-to-date information about your benefits on our website. If you haven’t already, come see us today at www.drs.wa.gov. ■

Does DRS make “house calls”?

The phone rings. The caller asks to arrange an appointment at your home to talk about your retirement benefits.

Could this be DRS?

No. We would be happy to talk with you over the phone or arrange an in-person meeting at our office in Tumwater, but we don’t ask to meet at your home. If you receive such a call, you’ll want to know what company the person represents before making an appointment.

If you have a question about your retirement account, please call us at 1-800-547-6657.

What's the state of your pension plan?

The status of public pension plans is a popular topic across the country. There's so much being written on the subject, it can be hard to tell what applies to our state and what does not.

Here are the facts for Washington:

- All but two of our state's retirement plans – Public Employees' (PERS) Plan 1 and Teachers' (TRS) Plan 1 – are currently healthy.
- The State Actuary's latest actuarial valuation report shows that as of June 30, 2009, PERS 1 was funded at 70 percent and TRS 1 was funded at 75 percent. A plan is considered healthy if it is funded at 80 percent or higher. The state's remaining plans are each funded at over 100 percent.
- Regardless of which plan you belong to, your monthly benefit will continue to be paid.

A few months ago, the State Actuary's office completed an assessment of the financial risks facing all of the state's public pension plans. The study recognized that Washington's public pension plans are, overall, in a better position than those in most other states, but projected affordability challenges ahead.

State leaders are discussing not only how to best fund PERS 1 and TRS 1 at a time when government budgets are strained, but also how to protect the health of the remaining plans over the long term.

You can read more on our website, www.drs.wa.gov, or the Actuary's website, <http://osa.leg.wa.gov>. ■

Your 1099-R Form will be mailed by the end of January

We will mail your IRS tax reporting form for 2010 (1099-R) by the end of January.

The fastest way to get your 1099 is by signing up for our online service. Defined Benefit Access is available through the myDRS section of our website (www.drs.wa.gov) and signup is fast, easy and secure. Your 1099 will be available online in mid-January.

Beginning with this year's 1099, you will see only the last four digits of your Social Security number on your form. The number will appear in this format: xxx-xx-1234. We are making this change to further protect the privacy of your personal information. ■



2011 Schedule of Benefit Payments

At right is a schedule of the 2011 dates that monthly retirement benefits will be electronically deposited in retirees' accounts.

More than 95 percent of DRS retirees now take advantage of direct deposit. If you haven't yet signed up, it's easy to do. Just complete the Authorization for Direct Deposit form available on our website or call us at 800-547-6657 to have the form mailed to you. ■

2011 Electronic Deposit Dates

1/31/2011	7/29/2011
2/28/2011	8/31/2011
3/31/2011	9/30/2011
4/29/2011	10/31/2011
5/31/2011	11/30/2011
6/30/2011	12/30/2011

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