

Communities come together for Leschi-Quiemuth Honor Walk

By Cathy Hamilton-Wissmer, Directorate of Public Works May 2, 2019



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A Soldier walks with two members of the civilian community during the 11th annual Leschi-Quiemuth Honor Walk, April 27 at JBLM. (Photo Credit: Cathy Hamilton Wissmer, Directorate of Public Works)
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Members of the Nisqually tribe, the public, and the Joint Base Lewis-McChord community came together April 27 for the 11th annual Leschi-Quiemuth Honor Walk on the base. The walk brings participants through the lands where Chief Leschi and his brother, Quiemuth, once had homes, pastured their horses, and past tribal cemeteries and allotments where their ancestors lived.

On a beautiful spring morning, the Nisqually tribal members generously supplied T-shirts and goodie bags to fortify walkers, runners

and riders as they piled into buses headed out to the Artillery Impact Area (Range 91) on JBLM.

The elders boarded first, and led the way as a six full buses of participants including Nisqually tribal members, members of other local tribes, interested community members, service members, JBLM civilian and contractor staff, participated in the annual Leschi-Queimuth honor walk.

"We honor the spirit of our ancestors today and keep their memories alive when we walk on our ancestral lands," said Hanford McCloud, tribal council member, as he opened the ceremony with his drum.

Colonel William Percival, JBLM joint base deputy garrison commander, welcomed the attendees and spoke about the important relationship between JBLM and the Nisqually tribe.

"JBLM understands and values the close partnership between the Nisqually tribe and the installation," he said. "It is an honor to welcome the tribe to visit their families' homesteads and strengthen ancestral ties to the landscape."

The participants chose to do either a 7-mile run/walk, a bus ride and short walk of 2.5 miles, or a 12-mile bus ride past signed locations that marked historical sites where homes, cemeteries and allotments once stood. Purple camas blanketed the prairie and in the distance, the Olympic Mountains were out and a pair of eagles bent the top of a Douglas fir watching the long walkers make their way along the edge of the prairie.

Percival brought up the rear on the short walk with Willow Dailey, age 9.

"She didn't want to walk the rest of the way, and her dad was doing a great job of encouraging her," Percival said. "I told her that if she walked the entire route she could have my Air Mobility Command patch from my uniform. At the end, I told her 'great job' and gave her my patch.

"Willow's 13-year-old sister, Keira, finished, too. Command Sergeant Major (Timothy) Marble was kind enough to give her his 101st Airborne Division combat patch."

"Command Sergeant Major Marble came to congratulate my daughters on their completion and shook my family's hands," Dawn Dailey, the mother of the girls said. "My daughters were given instructions to rip the Velcro patches off of Colonel Percival, and Command Sergeant Major Marble, and were told by them what the symbols of the patches meant, and how they were earned in service.

"Willow learned how to be resilient, the value of camaraderie and the rewards of commitment. She learned this from Colonel Percival and by her Army veteran father, Edwin Dailey. I can't imagine anyone better to learn these virtues from than the men who supported my daughter that day. What an honor."

After completing the walk, the hungry crowd straggled to a gathering spot near the Clear Creek Hatchery. There they enjoyed a boxed lunch, honoring the spirit of the land, the ancestors and a future together.