Volunteering is ‘in my blood’

After 25 years in the Army, Idaho volunteer Dave Tish now dedicating time to help families of those who serve

For 25 years, Dave Tish served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army, leading religious services and lending an ear when his fellow soldiers needed someone to talk to. He served in Operation Desert Storm and also deployed to Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

“I never saw the enemy, per se, but I sure heard him,” Tish said.

Now as a volunteer with the Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces program, the Greenleaf, Idaho, man now volunteers with the Red Cross.

Dave Tish served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army for 25 years, spending time in Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. The Greenleaf, Idaho, man now volunteers with the Red Cross.

The more that we can help them in those moments and let them know they are not alone the better.

— Volunteer Dave Tish

Questions or concerns? Send them our way

This month we debut a feature called You Want To Know, and we’re asking for your input and feedback.

If there are Red Cross topics you are curious about or questions you might have, please click the link in the graphic at the right. All submissions through this link are anonymous.

Or if you would rather, you can email matthew.schaars@redcross.org.

The Idaho and Montana team will answer those questions in upcoming editions of RED ALERTS.

In January, we will also debut a quarterly video series from regional CEO Nicole Sirak Irwin and the leadership team in which we will answer questions and address topics you suggest. The first video will cover territory realignment, so if there are things you would like to know, please send in questions.

Watch your inbox for more information about the upcoming video.

And now on to our first topic … Our Volunteer Services team has been hearing questions about the volunteer satisfaction survey, especially some confusion around the question “How likely are you to recommend the American Red Cross?”

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Questions: You Want to Know debuts

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Cross to a friend or colleague as an organization where they can volunteer?

Answer: First, we would like to thank everyone who has completed the survey and emphasize it’s important that you take the time to fill it out when it arrives in your inbox. Every volunteer should receive the survey once a year, near the time of your Red Cross anniversary date.

It’s important because we value your Red Cross experience, and this feedback helps guide us as we work to make this a better place to work, said Matt Ochsner, Red Cross communications director for Idaho and Montana. “We are thrilled Amy is donating her time and talent to our writing team.”

Writing team volunteer recognized

Idaho volunteer wins Red Cross coat

IDAHO COUNTY DISASTER ACTION TEAM

This year, the Red Cross of Idaho and Montana provided 1,098 emergency communications to military families. Red Cross also provides transportation and financial assistance to service members when needed.

The Red Cross Hero presentations in Kalispell-area classrooms.

Amy is a talented writer and interviewer who is helping us tell more stories about the amazing work our volunteers and supporters are doing, said Matt Ochsner, Red Cross communications director for Idaho and Montana. “We are thrilled Amy is donating her time and talent to our writing team.”

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Tish was encouraged to do his part. “One of the other delivery guys was about six ounces lighter than me and about 50 pounds heavier and says ‘We’re going to go donate blood.’ And I said ‘Yes sir, we are.’ And I’ve been doing it ever since.”

“Now I’m working on my 50-gallon pin.”

Eventually Tish transitioned from simply donating blood to also helping deliver it as a Red Cross transportation specialist, helping drive lifesaving blood collected at drives back to the lab in Boise for testing and distribution.

When a fire damaged an apartment complex in the small town of Grangeville in northeastern Idaho in October, Red Cross volunteers sprang into action, working closely with community partners to help meet residents’ immediate needs and jump-start their road to recovery.

More than 20 residents were displaced by the fire, most of them elderly or disabled. Red Cross teams opened an emergency shelter, served warm meals, met with clients face to face, provided financial assistance and offered leadership as the community began to move forward. Most important, they worked closely with partners to make sure no one’s needs were left unmet.

“We just were impressed, beyond words, about how the community came together to take care of their own,” Red Cross Disaster Action Team volunteer Randy Clark said. “Not only with the initial response but to work through the process of getting everybody situated back into the community.”

Grangeville unites following fire

He also volunteers at the Caldwell veterans’ hall, with several veterans’ organizations and through his church.

Tish said he often saw a Red Cross presence during his military deployment, whether it was through their emergency communications or when they offered a safe place to grab a cup of coffee and make a much-needed phone call back home. Now it’s his turn.

“You come out of a military career, and the Red Cross has taken care of us so I want to give back,” he said.

“They told me you can mend someone they know to become a Red Cross volunteer. Denise made two referrals last quarter. In order to recommend someone, volunteers should log into Volunteer Connection, hover over the MY 1098 tab and click on Friends and Family Referrals. They can also click here.

For every referral you submit, your name is entered into a quarterly drawing to win a Red Cross jacket. Call 406-493-8778 with questions.

Questions: You Want to Know debuts

If you’re having a positive volunteer experience, it is not asking if you have someone in particular that you would recommend to become a Red Cross volunteer.

Please send in more topics you would like to hear about by clicking this link: volunteerconnection.redcross.org.

And check back next month as we answer more of your questions.

MILESTONES

BETTY MAVES, 90 years
KATHLEEN WEISS, 90 years
SHERIDAWN CAREARTHURS, 5 years
DANA DARKO, 5 years
JAMES DARKO, 5 years

43 Volunteers joined us in October.

SUPPORT AIR FORCE CLINIC

Montana Red Cross needs volunteers to support the 341st Medical Group at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana. Volunteers are needed for administrative tasks, such as answering phones, front desk and administrative support.

Idaho County Disaster Action Team Supervisor and communications team volunteer Denise Bacon will receive a Red Cross jacket of her choosing as the winner of the Friends and Referral Program Drawing. The program encourages volunteers to recommend someone they know to become a Red Cross volunteer.

Amy Joyner has written several Red Cross stories since she joined the team, including a profile on a 90-year-old transportation specialist and Service to the Armed Force volunteer Vic Paul of Boise and a feature on a Montana woman who turned the T-shirts she and her mother received for donating blood into a quilt. She also wrote a story about Pillowcase Project and Pin-Size Support.

The Red Cross volunteer who responded following the apartment fire in Grangeville included, from left, Randy Clark, Marty Heisig, Brittany Joyner and Don Nesbitt.

Tish was going to go donate blood.

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And I want to give it back,

“Is that not good or what?” Clark said.

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Faces from the field

Ravalli County volunteer Dallas Erickson donates blood during a blood drive in honor of his wife and fellow Red Cross volunteer Jenny, below left, in Stevensville. Jenny recently was diagnosed with lymphoma. Nineteen units were collected.

Fourth–and fifth-graders at Alturas Academy in Idaho Falls raised more than $4,100 for Hurricane Dorian relief by organizing a school carnival.

Idaho Red Cross Board Chairman Roy Eiguren, third from left, and regional CEO Nicole Strak Irwin meet with Idaho Sen. Mike Crapo, left, in Washington, D.C. RIGHT: Ty Williams, Mary Kress and Autumn Gibson attend a Veteran’s Day Parade in Lewiston.

Kathy Franck, Beverly Beem, Sandy Harnar and Yeong Beem, front row, and Ed Amstutz, Trevor Blines, Amher Blines, Diana Ochsner, Ashley Freeman, Jim Brown, Tim Dye and Chad Hafer attend logistics training. LEFT: Service to the Armed Forces provides Montana National Guard deployment support.