

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE
HEARING RECORDS

1997-98

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on
Veterans and
Military Affairs
(AC-VMA)

Sample:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01a
- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01b
- 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt02

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

➤ **

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Hearing Records ... HR

➤ **

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **97hr_AC-VMA_Misc_pt03**

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

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A message from Governor Thompson

Dear Veteran,

I am proud to announce that the new state budget, which I signed on October 11, contains very significant improvements in Wisconsin veterans' benefits.

Through this legislation, we extended eligibility for state benefits to veterans who served on active duty for at least two years or completed their initial service obligation, whichever is less — **regardless of when they served.** Veterans discharged because of a service-connected disability, hardship or reduction in the armed forces before completing two-years of service also may be eligible.

Approximately 100,000 peacetime veterans are now eligible for Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs' (WDVA) benefits because of this change. With peacetime eligibility, service during a designated wartime period will no longer be required to receive state benefits. However, all veterans previously eligible for WDVA benefits will retain their eligibility.



Tommy G. Thompson

I urge all veterans to contact their local county veterans service office for information about state veterans' benefits, including the new Personal Loan Program and improvements in the Primary Mortgage Home Loan Program.

Wisconsin citizens are grateful for your service to our nation, and our state has earned a reputation for offering the most comprehensive array of state veterans' benefits and services in the nation.

As Governor, I intend to make Wisconsin veterans' benefits even better in years to come.

Sincerely,

TOMMY G. THOMPSON
Governor

Highlights of WDVA 1997-1999 biennial budget

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Peacetime Veterans Eligibility

Under prior law, eligibility for WDVA benefits generally required that a veteran have served on active duty for a minimum of 90 days during a wartime period, other than for training, or received an Expeditionary Medal for service in an armed conflict.

The budget extends eligibility to peacetime veterans who served two years on active duty or completed their initial service obligation, whichever is less. The budget contains qualifiers for veterans who were released early.

Service during a wartime period is no longer required. However, all veterans who are eligible under the previous military service requirements will retain their eligibility.

Personal Loan Program (PLP)

Creates a new Personal Loan Program to meet the economic needs of veterans and generate revenues to cover the cost of grants provided to veterans, including the administration of those programs.

The new program will replace the Economic Assistance Loan Program. The maximum amount of a personal loan initially will be set by the department at \$10,000

and the term of the loan may not exceed 10 years (see insert). WDVA will set the interest rates for the loans based on income and the type of security for the loan. The term of the loan may not exceed 10 years.

Funding for the new program will come from the revenue that was previously used for the Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP) and mortgage loans to disenfranchised veterans. Additional funding may be borrowed from the State Investment Board and the WDVA Mortgage Loan Repayment Fund.

A total of \$15 million in each fiscal year is budgeted for personal loans.

Primary Mortgage Home Loan and Home Improvement Loan Program

Authorizes the use of taxable bonds to fund loans to veterans who do not qualify for mortgage loans funded from tax exempt bonds and to fund the Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP).

Allows WDVA to use its Home Loan Program's subsidy pool to buy down the interest rate for Primary Mortgage Home Loans and HILP, so that loans from taxable bonds carry the same rate as those funded from tax-exempt bonds.

HILP loans of \$3,000 or less may be secured by either a guarantor or by a mortgage.

The annual demand for Primary Mortgage Home Loans and HILP loans is expected to be \$75 million and \$6 million respectively.

Education and Retraining Grant Programs

Modifies the Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant (TFRG), Part-Time Study Grant (PTSG) and Retraining Grant programs and creates separate appropriations for each program.

- **Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant:** Sets funding for TFRG at \$1,821,300 in fiscal year 1998 and \$1,885,000 in fiscal year 1999. Veterans who have a disability rating from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs of 30% or more will receive 100% of the actual cost of tuition and fees up to a maximum of 100% of the standard cost for a state resident for an equivalent undergraduate course at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The number of years a veteran has to use the program is extended from six to 10 years after the date of discharge. Eligible schools under the program will be expanded to include those institutions of higher education in Minnesota that waive nonresident tuition under the Minnesota-Wisconsin reciprocity agreement. Limits the maximum reimbursement to 50% of the standard cost for a state resident of tuition and fees for an equivalent undergraduate course at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- **Part-Time Study Grant:** Funding for PTSG will be \$762,500 in fiscal year 1998 and \$771,800 in fiscal year 1999. The maximum reimbursement per course is set at 50% of the standard cost of state resident tuition and fees for an equivalent undergraduate course at the UW-Madison or 50% of the actual cost of tuition and fees, whichever is less. In addition, the total number of PTSG grants a veteran receives in a 12-month period may not exceed four. Courses of study under the PTSG program are limited to those that are related to occupational, professional or employment objectives and must be approved by WDVA. Educational objectives for self-education will no longer be permitted. Similarly, the cost of textbooks is no longer reimbursable under the program. Veterans who have a disability rating from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs of 30% or more will receive 100% of actual cost of tuition and fees up to a maximum of 100% of standard cost for a state resident for an equivalent undergraduate course at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

- **Retraining Grant Program:** Eliminates enrollment in institutions of higher learning as eligible retraining under the program. Eligible training courses will include those at a technical college in the state or in a proprietary school approved by the Educational Approval Board. WDVA also may promulgate rules identifying on-the-job training programs that would qualify for reimbursement. Veterans who receive a Retraining Grant may not receive reimbursement under the PTSG or TFRG programs.

Health Care Aid Grant Program Reinstatement

The Health Care Aid Grant Program will be reinstated with funding of \$915,700 in each year of the biennium. Payments for health care aid are limited to \$5,000 per veteran or dependent per 12-month period beginning with the first day of care for which the person seeks reimbursement. WDVA may not give prior approval for health care aid under the program, but may issue certificates of eligibility stating that a veteran or dependent is eligible to receive care under the program if the treatment is received within a designated time period. The combined liquid assets of an applicant may not exceed \$1,000 to be eligible for aid under the program.

Southern Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery

General purpose revenue (GPR) funding of \$62,500 will be replaced by the same amount of funding from the Veterans Trust Fund. This is part of the GPR budget reductions that all agencies were required to make. Creates an appropriation to pay the debt service on funds borrowed to finance the construction of the cemetery. It is estimated that debt service payments will average about \$105,000 per year over a 20 year period and will be paid from the Trust Fund.

Veterans Assistance Program

Provides an additional \$200,000 of expenditure authority in each fiscal year for the Veterans Assistance Program. These funds are to be used for a new veterans assistance center at the Southern Wisconsin Center in Union Grove. With the addition of this center, the department will be able to provide statewide assistance to homeless veterans. WDVA must submit a detailed expenditure plan for the new facility to the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee in order to have the funding released.

Automation of County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) and Veterans Service Offices (VSO)

Provides one-time funding of \$71,400 in fiscal year 1998 and \$162,000 in fiscal year 1999 for the purpose, where needed, to fund basic computerization for each county veterans service office (CVSO) in Wisconsin and four Veterans Service Offices (VSO). The computers will be connected to the WDVA network for the electronic submission and processing of applications.

This computer automation creates substantial potential for efficiency gains in the processing of applications by CVSOs, VSOs and WDVA.

County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) and Veterans Service Office (VSO) Grant Allocations

Provides \$408,200 in fiscal year 1998 and \$386,000 in fiscal year 1999 to increase the dollar amount of full-time CVSO grants. State support for this program has not increased for the last five years while county expenses continue to grow. Four categories of CVSO grant amounts will be created. The following grant amounts will be allotted to counties with a full-time CVSO: \$8,500 for a county with a population of less than 20,000; \$10,000 for a county with a population of 20,000 to 45,499; \$11,500 for a county with a population of 45,500 to 74,999; and \$13,000 for a county with a population of 75,000 or more.

A county may not allocate any portion of a grant for use by another county department nor reduce funding to a county veterans service office based on the receipt of the grant.

Increases the maximum VSO grant to \$20,000 per organization per year.

Transitional Veterans Employment Initiative

Provides authority to implement a Transitional Veterans Employment Initiative using existing staff and funding resources. State and federal programs that help veterans find employment or obtain education and job training need to be coordinated better. To accomplish this objective, an Employment and Training Section with five full-time equivalent employees will be created in the Bureau of Veterans Services. This section will establish linkages with federal and state agencies. It will also formalize the VETNET structure (an advisory council with representation from federal, state and county agencies that address veterans issues) and administer the Troops-to-Teachers program.

Wisconsin Veterans Home (WVH) Direct Care Staffing Requirements

Increases direct-care staff by 10 full-time equivalent employees in fiscal year 1998 with another five added in fiscal year 1999. The total funding provided is \$188,800 in fiscal year 1998 and \$532,800 in fiscal year 1999. These positions are needed to meet the increased acuity needs of the WVH members.

The number of direct-care positions is tied to the size of the resident population and the level of nursing care needs. During a typical eight-hour shift, nurse clinicians at WVH oversee the care plans for members, direct the efforts of non-licensed nursing assistants, consult with physicians and monitor the health needs of residents. Nursing assistants take care of members' personal needs. They help members dress, bathe, use the toilet, get in and out of wheelchairs and complete other aspects of their daily routine. Given the projected change in the acuity level of the Home's members for the 1997-99 biennium, the additional positions and funding will allow the Home to maintain the current level of direct care.

Work Therapy Program Revisions at WVH

Provides \$50,000 in each year of the biennium to the work therapy payroll at the WVH. This change will bring the program into full compliance with the U.S. Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act governing workers wages for persons with disabilities.

WVH Medical Services Staffing Requirements

Includes one full-time equivalent employee and funding of \$14,300 in fiscal year 1998 and \$28,100 in fiscal year 1999 for a dental assistant position. Like the private sector, the dentist at the Home is a highly paid professional who can be more effective if a second dental assistant is available to perform routine work and to prepare patients. As a result, the dentist can spend more time performing dental procedures.

WVH Activities Services Staff Requirements

Provides one full-time equivalent employee and additional expenditure authority of \$14,600 in fiscal year 1998 and \$28,600 in fiscal year 1999 to help the Home meet the changing requirements for one-on-one activities for its debilitated members.

WVH Admission Criterion

Provides authority to admit a disabled eligible veteran under 50 years of age without a statement from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that care is not available from the VA.

Transfer of Wisconsin Veterans Museum to General Purpose Revenue

Transfers \$89,900 of expenditure authority in each fiscal year from the Veterans Trust Fund to the state's general fund in order to provide full GPR funding of the museum's operations, excluding the museum store. The operating costs for the museum store are funded from its sales revenues.

Museum Exhibit Rotation & Exhibit Case Replacement

Adds \$15,000 of GPR in fiscal year 1997-1998 for new exhibit development at the museum. The museum needs to develop new exhibits to attract return visitors as well as new visitors. These funds are expected to cover about half of the cost for the new exhibits with the remaining funds coming from outside sources.

Marketing and Visitor Services Position

Provides one full-time equivalent employee and \$18,100 GPR in fiscal year 1998 and \$35,700 GPR in fiscal year 1999 for a marketing and visitor services position for the museum.

This employee will manage the tour schedule and assist with school tour groups programming. The employee will also attend school teacher and tourism conventions representing the museum. At present, staff shortages prevent museum staff from attending more than two teacher conventions per year to market the museum. With the addition of this position, it will be possible to cover a full-range of teacher meetings and conventions and to represent the museum at off-site events.

Scocos appointed WDVA executive assistant

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Raymond G. Boland has appointed John Scocos as the department's executive assistant. Scocos began employment with WDVA on November 3.

Scocos previously served as the Wisconsin Assembly's sergeant at arms and was responsible for logistic and administrative support for 99 legislators. Before serving as sergeant at arms, he was a legislative aide to State Sen. David Zien.

Scocos joined the Army in 1981 and held various leadership positions while on active duty. He currently is a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve. He also has experience as an assistant professor of military science for the ROTC program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In 1995, he was appointed by Governor Tommy Thompson to the Board of Veterans Affairs, which governs the operation of WDVA. He resigned from the board to accept the executive assistant position.

As executive assistant, he will be a member of the department's management team. "John has extensive experience with the legislative process and has demonstrated leadership on veterans' issues," Boland said. "He will play a vital role in the development of new initiatives to better serve veterans now and in the future."

Wisconsin Veterans Home celebrates 110th anniversary

In October, the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King marked its 110th anniversary with a series of special events for its members and the surrounding community.

A Founders Ball, complete with big band music, was one of the highlights of the celebration. During October, many of the Home's staff wore military uniforms and other historic costumes.

At the Board of Veterans Affairs meeting at King, five employees of the Home with 170 total years of service received Certificates of Appreciation. The leadership of the two local unions representing the Home's employees also received certificates. The Home's Member Council was also recognized for an outstanding job of representing residents.

At a special meeting of the King Recreation Committee, certificates of appreciation were presented to the veterans' and civic organizations that donate money and volunteer time to enhance the quality of life at the Home.

Secretary Boland also met with local community leaders in the Waupaca area to thank them for their support of the Home and its mission.

The Wisconsin Veterans Home was founded in October 1887 by the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War veterans' organization.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum opens new exhibit honoring civilians who served in America's wars

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum opened an inspiring new exhibit on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, titled "They Also Served – Civilians in America's Wars."

Using artifacts, photographs, text and dramatic displays, the new exhibit portrays the roles of civilians who performed vital services for the military and the nation during wartime.

The exhibit highlights the contributions of civilian volunteers in organizations like the American Red Cross, which provided blood and other essential medical items to military personnel, and the USO, which sponsored morale-building entertainment and leisure activities for the troops.

During World War II, more than 7.5 million volunteers and 40,000 staff members served in the Red Cross, and the USO was the largest entertainment enterprise in show-business history, according to Richard Zeitlin, museum director.

A life-size figure of Bob Hope entertaining soldiers in Korea during a USO show is prominently displayed in the exhibit. Congress on October 29 made Hope an "honorary veteran of the U.S. armed forces" in gratitude for entertaining American military personnel throughout the world for 50 years.

The exhibit also features specialized organizations, like the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs). The WASPs flew newly built aircraft from factories to airfields around the country during World War II.

"More than 25,000 women volunteered for the WASPs but only 2,000 were chosen. They learned to fly every aircraft in the U.S. arsenal," says Zeitlin. "Military pilots were needed for combat missions, so it became the duty of the WASPs to ferry new aircraft to shipment points in preparation for overseas deployment. Thirty-eight WASPs lost their lives performing this mission, including Margaret "Maggie" Siep of Wauwatosa. The government awarded official veterans' status to the WASPs in 1979."

Another portion of the exhibit shows the sacrifices and achievements of sailors in the U.S. Merchant Marines, who navigated enemy-infested waters during World War II to carry troops and supplies to Europe.

"German U-Boats targeted Merchant Marine vessels, and more than 6,000 Merchant Marine sailors died during World War II. They sustained greater combat losses in proportion to their numbers than did the Marine Corps," Zeitlin said. "The government awarded veterans' status to the Merchant Marines in 1988."

The roles of combat artists, photographers and correspondents from Wisconsin are also chronicled in the exhibit. "These intrepid civilians followed troops

into combat to provide first-hand accounts of the war," Zeitlin said.

This part of the exhibit, called "Reporting the War," focuses on three talented Wisconsinites.

- Robert J. Doyle, a reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal*, who accompanied Wisconsin soldiers in the 32nd "Red Arrow" Division as they battled the Japanese from New Guinea to the Philippines. Doyle's narratives about the average GI made him popular with the soldiers and their families back home.
- Aaron Bohrod of Madison, who flew on bombing missions, sailed on submarines and trudged along with the infantry to produce more than 100 sketches and paintings of World War II action in the Pacific and Europe. He later became an artist-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Georgette "Dickey" Chapelle, a Milwaukee native who was acknowledged as one of the nation's best combat photographers for her stunning work during World War II, Cold War uprisings in Europe, and the conflict in Indochina. Her photos in the *National Geographic* and other magazines in the early 1960s were some of the first images of the war in Vietnam. She was killed in 1965 by a booby trap while on patrol with Marines in Vietnam.

"This new exhibit offers a stimulating perspective on civilian organizations that have been so important in the successes of our nation's military," Zeitlin said. "Like all our exhibits, it offers interesting interpretations that will fascinate visitors, young and old alike."

The museum, located at 30 W. Mifflin St., across the street from the Capitol, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m. It is closed Sundays and holidays. Admission is free.



Bob Hope figure in new exhibit



Personal Loan Program for Wisconsin veterans

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is now offering low-interest rate loans of up to \$10,000 with 10 years to repay.

Loan purpose

WDVA Personal Loans may be used to finance the following:

- Education expenses — for the veteran, the veteran's spouse, or the veteran's children (*including adopted or stepchildren*).
- Debt consolidation.
- Purchase of a business or business property.
- Purchase of a mobile home.
- Medical or funeral expenses.

A Personal Loan may not be used to pay off a WDVA Consumer Loan or an existing Personal Loan. Applicants who have other WDVA loans may apply for a Personal Loan. However, the amount of the Personal Loan plus the remaining balance on a Consumer Loan and/or WDVA Economic Assistance Loan may not exceed a total of \$15,000.

Interest rates

The interest rate will be determined by the amount of family income (*the combined annual income of the veteran plus spouse*). Rates effective October 15, 1997 are:

Income range	Interest rate (type of security)
● Family income below \$40,000	6 % (mortgage or guarantor)
● Family income from \$40,000 to \$60,000	7% (mortgage) 8% (guarantor)
● Family income over \$60,000	9% (mortgage) 10% (guarantor)

Interest rates may change without notice. Your County Veterans Service Office (*listed in the phone book under County Government*) has updated information on interest rates. For interest rate information, you also may call WDVA toll-free at 1-800-947-8387 (WIS-VETS) or access the WDVA web site: [http:// badger.state.wi.us/agencies/dva](http://badger.state.wi.us/agencies/dva)

Eligibility for WDVA's Personal Loan Program

The veteran must meet WDVA military service requirements. Due to recent legislation, veterans with two years of active duty (*regardless of when they served*) are now eligible for Personal Loans and other WDVA benefits. Veterans with other military service, such as 90 days of active duty during a wartime period, may also be eligible.

The veteran must have been a state resident at the time of entry into active-duty service or have lived in Wisconsin for at least five consecutive years after completing active duty. The veteran must be living in Wisconsin at the time of application.

Certain family members of deceased veterans may obtain a Personal Loan if the veteran met the WDVA eligibility criteria for military service and state residency.

The following family members (*who are Wisconsin residents*) of deceased eligible veterans may apply for Personal Loans:

- Unremarried spouse.
- Dependent child (*adult children must be under the age of 26 and attending school full time*).
- Remarried spouse if the loan is used for the education of the veteran's child.
- Parent of a veteran's child if the loan is used for the child's education.

Contact your County Veterans Service Office for more information about WDVA eligibility requirements.

To get an application and more information

There is no cost to apply although the applicant may have to pay for some incidental expenses, such as a title report, when a mortgage is used as security.

To apply for the loan, contact your County Veterans Service Office.

More information is available on the WDVA web site:

<http://badger.state.wi.us/agencies/dva>. You also may call or write:
Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
30 West Mifflin Street
Madison, WI 53707-7843
(608) 266-1311 or 1-800-947-8387 (WIS-VETS)

WARNING: WDVA receives a certified list of all persons who have a delinquent child-support obligation in Wisconsin. According to state law, WDVA must deny a loan application from any individual on the list.

Legislative Update

The following pending bills are being monitored by WDVA:

- ◆ **SB 16** (Sen. Decker, Rep. Turner) – Relating to creditable military service under the Wisconsin Retirement System.
STATUS Referred to Joint Survey Committee on Retirement Systems.
-
- ◆ **SB 60** (Sen. Potter, Rep. Lorge) – Increases the amount of the medical assistance personal needs allowance from \$40 to \$45.
STATUS Passed Committee on Health, Human Services, Aging, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs. In Joint Finance Committee.
-
- ◆ **SB 77** 1997-99 Biennial Budget Bill.
STATUS SSA1 passed Joint Finance Committee.
-
- ◆ **SB 84** (Sen. Wirch, Rep. Porter) – State payment of the property taxes on certain residences of disabled veterans.
(AB 31)
STATUS Referred to Committee on Health, Human Services, Aging, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
-
- ◆ **SB 153** (Sen. Moen, Rep. Underheim) – Changes the term “assisted living facility” to “residential care apartments”.
(AB 219)
STATUS Signed into law. Wisconsin Act 13.
-
- ◆ **SB 161** (Sen. Welch, Rep. Musser) – Includes certain disabled veterans as members of a targeted group for the development zones jobs credit.
(AB 241)
STATUS Referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and Government Operations.
-
- ◆ **SB 190** (Sen. Moen, Rep. Musser) – Relates to noncompetitive appointment of certain disabled veterans to positions in the classified service of the state.
(AB 353)
STATUS Referred to Committee on Health, Human Services, Aging, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
-
- ◆ **SB 221** (Sen. Farrow, Rep. Duff) – Relates to the issuance of alternative teaching permits and teaching licenses.
(AB 399)
STATUS Referred to Committee on Education.
-
- ◆ **SB 230** (Sen. Welch, Rep. Nass) – Relates to the admission of veterans to the University of Wisconsin System.
(AB 206)
STATUS Referred to Committee on Education.
-
- ◆ **SB 232** (Sen. Welch, Rep. Owens) – Income tax refunds for certain disabled veterans.
(AB 272)
STATUS Referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and Government Operations.
-
- ◆ **SB 236** (Sen. Welch, Rep. Musser) – Creates an income tax credit and franchise tax credit for hiring disabled veterans.
(AB 293)
STATUS Referred to Committee on Economic Development, Housing and Government Operations.
-

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- ◆ **SB 241** (Sen. Welch, Rep. Musser) – Veterans' benefits for veterans who are delinquent in child or spousal support, maintenance, medical expenses or birth expenses.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Health, Human Services, Agriculture, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
-
- ◆ **SB 242** (Sen. Welch, Rep. Musser) – Relating to information gathered regarding veterans' burials.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Health, Human Services, Agriculture, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
-
- ◆ **SB 243** (Sen. Welch, Rep. Musser) – Vietnam veteran eligibility for veterans benefits.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Health, Human Services, Agriculture, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
-
- ◆ **SB 352** (Sen. Zein, Rep. Zukowski) – No fee for an annual fishing license for veterans who are state residents and totally disabled from a service-connected disability.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Health, Human Services, Aging, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
-
- ◆ **SJR 4** (Sen. C. Potter, Rep. Otte) – Proclaims the week of June 29 to July 5, 1997 as National 4th Infantry Division Week.
STATUS Passed both houses.
-
- ◆ **SJR 22** (Sen. Potter, Rep. Ziegelbauer) – Relating to naming a Seawolf submarine the “Manitowoc”.
STATUS Passed Senate.
-
- ◆ **AB 31** (Rep. Porter, Sen. Wirsch) – State payment of the property taxes on certain residences of disabled veterans.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Ways and Means.
-
- ◆ **AB 61** (Rep. Gunderson, Sen. Shibilski) – Free fishing license for members of the Wisconsin Veterans Home.
STATUS Signed into law. Wisconsin Act 1.
-
- ◆ **AB 63** (Rep. Schneider, Sen. Moen) – Appropriates \$250,000 for the construction of a memorial at The Highground for the veterans of the Korean War.
STATUS ASA1 passed Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs. In Joint Committee on Finance.
-
- ◆ **AB 100** 1997-99 Biennial Budget Bill.
STATUS Published 10/13/97. Wisconsin Act 27.
-
- ◆ **AB 108** (Rep. Owens, Sen. Zien) – National Guard tuition grants.
STATUS ASA 1 passed Assembly. Passed Senate Committee on Health, Human Services, Aging, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
-

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- ◆ **AB 139** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Wirch) – Veterans' benefits for veterans who are delinquent in child or spousal support.
STATUS Passed Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs. In Committee on Children and Families.
- ◆ **AB 140** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Fitzgerald) – Vietnam veteran eligibility for veterans benefits.
STATUS Passed Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs. In Joint Finance.
- ◆ **AB 141** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Wineke) – Relating to information gathered regarding veterans' burials.
STATUS Passed Assembly. Passed Senate Committee on Health, Human Services, Aging, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
- ◆ **AB 206** (Rep. Nass, Sen. Wirch) – Relating to the admission of veterans to the University of Wisconsin System.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Colleges and Universities.
- ◆ **AB 240** (Rep. Dobyms, Sen. Buettner) – Provides an exception to the open housing law to permit a person to offer a discount or other reduction in price for the lease or rental of housing to a person 55 years of age or over.
STATUS Passed Assembly. In Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and Government Operations.
- ◆ **AB 241** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Wirch) – Includes certain disabled veterans as members of a targeted group for the development zones jobs credit.
STATUS Passed Committee on Small Business and Economic Development. In Joint Committee on Finance.
- ◆ **AB 272** (Rep. Owens, Sen. Buettner) – Income tax refunds for certain disabled veterans.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Ways and Means.
- ◆ **AB 293** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Wirch) – Income tax credit and franchise tax credit for hiring disabled veterans.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Ways and Means.
- ◆ **AB 294** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Breske) – Creditable military service under the Wisconsin retirement system.
STATUS Referred to Joint Survey Committee on Retirement Systems.
- ◆ **AB 295** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Breske) – Changes the legal drinking age.
STATUS Referred to Committee on State Affairs.
- ◆ **AB 353** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Breske) – Relating to noncompetitive appointment of disabled veterans in the classified service of the state.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Labor and Employment.
- ◆ **AB 354** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Rude) – Relating to occupational taxes imposed on bingo receipts.
STATUS ASA 1 passed Committee on Ways and Means. In Joint Finance.

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- ◆ **AB 399** (Rep. Duff, Sen. Farrow) – Relating to the issuance of alternative teaching permits and teaching licenses.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Education.
-
- ◆ **AB 418** (Rep. Schneider, Sen. Breske) – Regarding the Korean War Memorial at Plover.
STATUS Referred to Joint Committee on Finance.
-
- ◆ **AB 506** (Rep. Lorge, Sen. Welch) – Reburial of unknown human remains erroneously removed from a burial site by a cemetery authority.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Consumer Affairs.
-
- ◆ **AB 558** (Rep. Plouff, Sen. Moen) – Special distinguishing registration plates for veterans of the Laos War.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Highways and Transportation.
-
- ◆ **AB 608** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Moen) – Principal and interest payments for veterans' cemeteries to be paid out of the general fund.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs.
-
- ◆ **AJR 20** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Plache) – Urge Congress and the President to enact legislation to allow concurrent receipt of military longevity pay and disability benefits.
STATUS Adopted by Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs. Referred to Committee on State-Federal Relations.
-
- ◆ **AJR 38** (Rep. Turner, Sen. Moen) – Commending African-American veterans.
STATUS Passed both houses.
-
- ◆ **AJR 42** (Rep. Zukowski, Sen. Fitzgerald) – Memorializing Congress to fully fund the federal share of state veterans homes construction projects.
STATUS Passed Assembly. In Senate Committee on Health, Human Services, Aging, Corrections, Veterans and Military Affairs.
-
- ◆ **AJR 52** (Rep. Zukowski, Sen. Zien) – Memorializing Congress amend the constitution to enable states to enact legislation prohibiting the desecration of the American flag.
STATUS Passed Assembly. In Senate Committee on Judiciary, Campaign Finance Reform, and Consumer Affairs.
-
- ◆ **AJR 54** (Rep. Zukowski, Sen. Zien) – Proclaims May 17 Armed Forces Day in Wisconsin.
STATUS Passed Assembly. In Senate Organization.
-
- ◆ **AJR 57** (Rep. Musser) – Memorializes Congress to recognize the services rendered to this country during the Vietnam War by Loatian and Montagnard troops.
STATUS Passed both houses.
-
- ◆ **AJR 75** (Rep. Zukowski) – Urges the U.S. Navy to name the last Seawolf submarine “Manitowoc”.
STATUS Referred to Committee on Rules.



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Wis. Dept. of Veterans Affairs
PO Box 7843
Madison, WI 53707-7843

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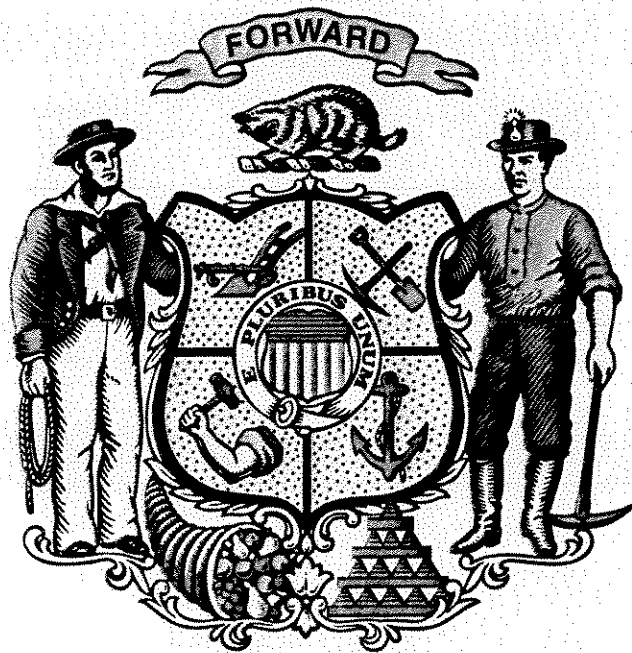
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From the Secretary

Veterans urged to apply for enrollment in VA health-care system

To obtain the medical benefits they've earned, veterans urgently need correct information about the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) new health-care enrollment system. Recently, veterans have asked many questions regarding enrollment. I hope this information answers some of these questions.

The new VA enrollment system is designed to provide access for all eligible veterans to a comprehensive package of VA health-care services at any one of its more than 1,100 locations nationwide.

To ensure this new system accomplishes its mission, I encourage all veterans — who are interested in receiving VA health-care now or possibly in the future — to contact their local VA Medical Center or County Veterans Service Office to apply for enrollment before October 1, 1998.

Although veterans must be enrolled to receive VA health care after October 1, 1998, applications for enrollment will be accepted throughout the year. **Veterans will not lose their eligibility for VA health care if they do not apply by October 1, 1998.**

However, veterans will not be able to receive VA care until their application is processed and they are accepted for enrollment.

Why should veterans apply for enrollment? Basically, this new enrollment system will help the



Raymond G. Boland

VA measure how many veterans are interested in receiving its health-care services, so it can plan accordingly. After receiving the enrollment application, the VA will assign the veteran to one of seven newly created priority groups. The VA will send a letter confirming the veteran's enrollment and priority-group assignment. The VA will determine how many veterans can be served based on the priority-group assignments, the number of other veterans requesting to be enrolled, and the funds appropriated for VA health care.

The VA has set a national goal of increasing the number of veterans served by 20 percent. This means that many veterans who did not receive VA health care in the past may be able to obtain these services in the future.

Veterans in the following categories do not need to apply for enrollment but are encouraged to do so:

- Veterans who have received VA health-care services after October 1, 1996. (VA will

automatically process an application for enrollment.)

- Veterans with a service-connected disability rated as 50 percent or more by the VA.
- Veterans discharged or released from military service for less than one year who have a disability that was incurred or aggravated while on active duty (not yet rated by the VA).
- Veterans seeking care only for a service-connected disability.

Veterans approved for enrollment in the VA health-care system will be eligible for inpatient and outpatient services, including preventive and primary care.

In addition to a new enrollment system, the VA is working hard to provide better access to its health-care resources. A new community-based outpatient clinic, which functions like a local doctor's office, recently opened at the Southern Wisconsin Center near Union Grove. The VA plans to open other community-based outpatient clinics in the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls area, Wausau and Rhinelander with continued expansion expected in other areas of the state. Many veterans soon will be able to receive primary care services through an outpatient clinic close to their home rather than having to travel to a VA hospital.

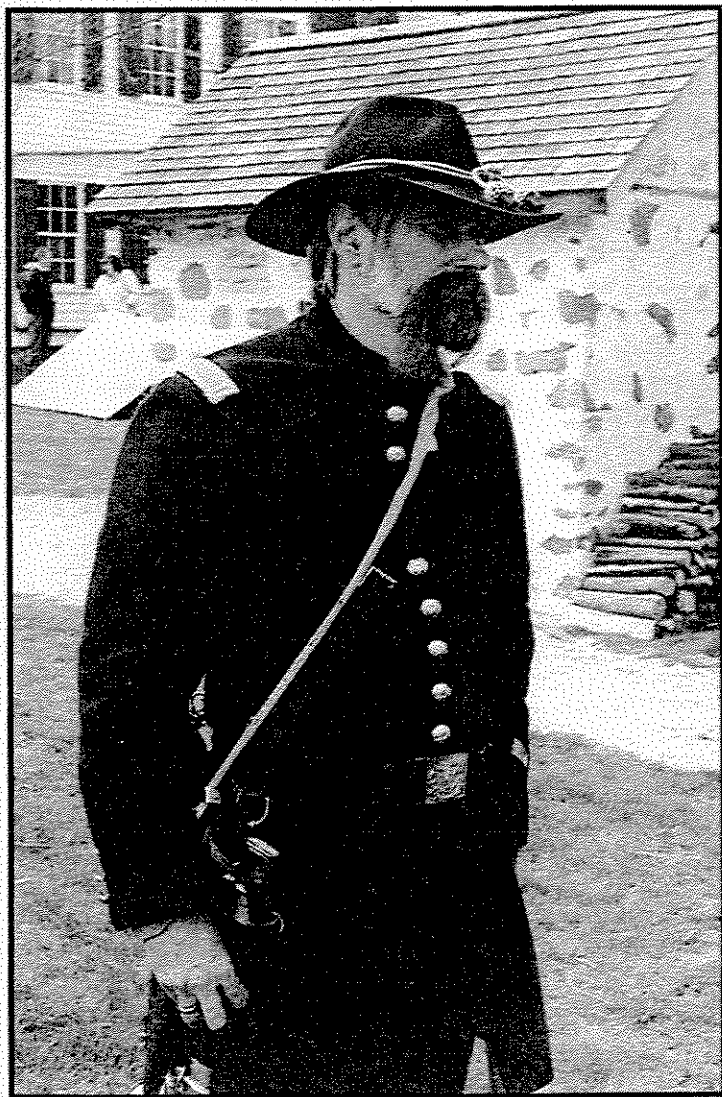
If you have questions about applying for enrollment in the VA health-care system, I urge you to contact your county veterans service office or your nearest VA medical center.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum sponsors major event on Statehood Day

Long before Camp Randall in Madison hosted its first football game, it was home to another type of team — volunteer soldiers training for the Civil War.

When Wisconsin marks its 150th anniversary of statehood on May 29, Camp Randall will be the site of another encampment of soldiers — its first since the Civil War.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum will sponsor "When Johnny Comes Marching Home — The Return of the 2nd Wisconsin Infantry Regiment," a living history program featuring a two-day encampment at Camp Randall that will culminate with a parade at the State Capitol. All events are free. Parking at Camp Randall also is free.



Re-enactors for the Civil War Living History are being mustered into service from their home communities, just like in the 1860s.

Schedule of Events

Friday, May 29

CAMP RANDALL

8 to 10 p.m. Candlelight tours of the encampment

Saturday, May 30

CAMP RANDALL

8:30 a.m. Encampment opens to public

8:30 to 9 a.m. Breakfast

9 a.m. Sick call

10 a.m. Pay call

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Band concerts by 1st Brigade Band

Noon to 12:30 p.m. Mid-day meal

1 - 1:45 p.m. Inspection and roll call

2 p.m. Encampment closes and march to Capitol Square begins

8 to 10 p.m. Candlelight tours of the encampment

Sutlers vending food and beverages typical of the 1860s

CAPITOL SQUARE

3 p.m. Parade begins

3:30 p.m. Re-enactment of homecoming ceremony with a performance by the 1st Brigade Band

WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM

4:30 p.m. Civil War band concert by the Regimental Volunteer Band

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum will be open during the encampment and parade.

FREE ADMISSION



Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery near Union Grove to be dedicated on May 31

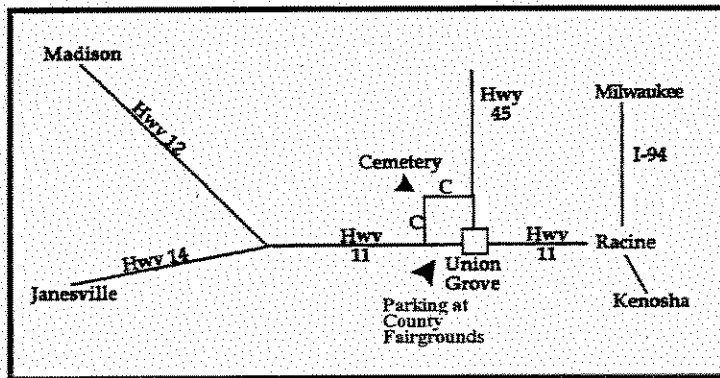
A ceremony to dedicate the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, near Union Grove, will be held on Sunday, May 31, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Governor Tommy Thompson has been invited to speak along with Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Raymond G. Boland and other state and federal officials.

During an open house from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m., veterans and their family members may tour the cemetery facilities, including the new administration-chapel building, outdoor committal chapel, ceremonial flag plaza and columbarium wall. Light refreshments will be served after the dedication ceremony.

"The cemetery is a final resting place for veterans and their families, as well as a lasting reminder of the achievements and sacrifices of all the men and women who served in the armed forces," says Boland. "I urge veterans to join us in dedicating this magnificent new cemetery."

The cemetery is adjacent to the Southern Wisconsin Center on County Highway C, which intersects with Highway 11 (west of Union Grove) and Highway 45 (north of Union Grove). For more information, call the cemetery at 414-878-5660.



To avoid traffic problems, ample parking will be available at no charge at the County Fairgrounds on Highway 11 in Union Grove. Free shuttle buses (with access for the disabled) will provide round-trip transportation from the fairgrounds to the cemetery throughout the day.

Wisconsin Veterans Home to commemorate 110 years of serving state veterans and spouses

To commemorate a historic and successful partnership between the state and federal government in providing service to veterans, the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King will host a special ceremony on Friday, June 19 at 10:30 a.m. in the Marden Memorial Center.

Steve Handrich, commandant of the Home, said, "We are proud of our past and present partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Only through this collaborative effort are we able to continue our great tradition of caring for our nation's veterans and their families."

This partnership dates back to August 1888 when the federal government approved annual payments of \$100 per veteran residing in a state veterans home. In 1930, the payment was increased to \$240 per year. In 1998, the Home will receive more than \$8 million in per diem payments from the VA to care for Wisconsin veterans. In addition, veterans at the Home who have limited financial resources receive VA pension payments, totaling more than \$6 million per year, which help cover their health-care expenses.

Furthermore, the VA has provided the Home with more than \$15 million (65% of the total costs) for the construction of MacArthur and Ainsworth Halls.

Throughout the years, federal inspectors have examined the Home to ensure the quality of care and management are first rate. In 1982, Gen. William W. Averill, inspector general of the U.S. Army, stated, "I find no soldiers home in the United States better managed or where so few mistakes have been made, with more general comforts and conveniences and more to show for the money expended than the Home in Waupaca."

Currently, the VA inspectors annually survey every aspect of the Home's health care delivery systems and physical plant.

WDVA now authorized to create veterans home and retirement facility in southeastern Wisconsin

At a special ceremony at the Southern Wisconsin Center near Union Grove on April 16, Governor Tommy Thompson signed legislation that authorizes WDVA to begin the process of creating the state's second veterans home, which will serve veterans and their spouses throughout southeastern Wisconsin.

The new legislation will allow WDVA to acquire unused space and vacant buildings at Southern Center for conversion to a veterans nursing home and retirement center.

WDVA plans to establish facilities and programs at Southern Center that will provide several types of care for elderly veterans and their spouses, including skilled nursing care, adult day-care, and affordable residences for those who can live independently but need some assistance. WDVA's goal is to have the first residential care building ready by July 1999.

WDVA is preparing to open a veterans assistance center on the Southern Center campus later this year that will help homeless veterans and those at-risk of becoming homeless get the services they need to obtain employment and affordable housing.

Recently, a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) community-based outpatient medical clinic, which is affiliated with the Zablocki VA Hospital in Milwaukee, opened in Wallace Hall at Southern Center. [see article below]

"WDVA will create facilities that will help elderly veterans maintain their health and independence as long as possible by providing day-care and assisted-living residences. In addition, they can access the federal VA medical system through the outpatient clinic at Southern Center. And a new veterans home can provide skilled nursing care on a temporary basis, such as after hospitalization," says WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland.

There is no timetable yet for establishing the veterans facilities. Numerous studies, design concepts, and requests for federal VA grants will have to be completed in the upcoming months.

Through the VA State Nursing Home Grant Program, the federal government may provide 65 percent of the construction and renovation funding needed to create a new state veterans home. In addition, once the home is operational the VA will provide "per-diem" funding, which subsidizes operational costs.

Southern Center is an ideal location for these facilities because nearly 200,000 veterans, which is 40 percent of the state's total veterans' population, live within 50 miles of Union Grove. Furthermore, the veterans' population in Wisconsin is continuing to grow older, and consequently the need for long-term health care will increase.

"Veterans in southeast Wisconsin have worked long and hard to win approval for a veterans home in their part of the state," said Boland. "We are confident that our plan to form a partnership with the federal VA will provide the best possible types of services for the thousands of elderly veterans and their spouses in the area."



Governor Tommy Thompson signs legislation on April 16 authorizing the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs to create a second state veterans home. The bill signing ceremony was held at the Southern Wisconsin Center near Union Grove as part of the Board of Veterans Affairs meeting.

VA opens community-based outpatient clinic near Union Grove

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) opened a new community-based outpatient clinic in April at the Southern Wisconsin Center, near Union Grove. The new clinic is located in Wallace Hall.

The clinic provides primary care medical services, similar to those provided at a doctor's office, along with access to hospital care at the Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee, which operates the new clinic.

Veterans interested in receiving VA care at the Union Grove clinic should call 414-384-2000, extension 2038, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. The Union Grove clinic can obtain the veteran's medical records from a VA health-care provider and schedule appointments.

Shouts from the Wall: Posters and Photographs Brought Back from the Spanish Civil War on display at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum

"Shouts from the Wall: Posters and Photographs Brought Back from the Spanish Civil War," is on display at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum until Sunday, May 18.

This traveling exhibit, from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives of Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., features Spanish Civil War posters mailed or carried home by Americans who risked their lives between 1936 and 1939 helping to defend the Spanish Republic from Nationalist groups supported by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

The posters and photographs document the role 2,800 American veterans played in the Spanish Civil War. The opening of "Shouts from the Wall" at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum marks the first time the exhibit has been on view in the Midwest.

The exhibition, which is organized into four major sections, consists of 20 to 25 posters and 10 - 15 dramatic black and white photographs, which portray vividly the spirit and emotion of the time. Visually, the first section emphasizes the struggle between democracy and fascism and includes several anti-war images of civilians suffering history's first saturation bombing of population centers.

The second section documents many of the major forces in modern art or design — surrealism, expressionism, art-deco, cubist montage, and realism.

The third section deals with the variety of political and social issues that both the Spanish government and

other political groups of the time used color posters to discuss and promote — from aid to the Basques in the north to the cost of alcoholism.

In conjunction with the display, the museum will host a lecture presentation and book signing featuring Abraham Lincoln Brigade veteran and author, William Herrick, on Friday, May 8, from 5 - 7 p.m. Refreshments will be served. In April, the museum presented three lectures by noted scholars about the Spanish Civil War.

The exhibition and special programming are sponsored in part by the Wisconsin Humanities Council, Harvey Goldberg Memorial Fund (exhibit only), History Department, UW-Madison, Nave Fund of the UW-Madison's Latin American and Iberian Studies Program, the UW Press, and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation.



County Veterans Service Officers seeking candidates for Veterans Advocacy Award

The Wisconsin Association of County Veterans Service Officers is soliciting nominees for its annual Veterans Advocacy Award.

A nominee for the award need not be a veteran. However, the nominee must have provided an outstanding service to veterans and their families and demonstrated a high-degree of compassion in delivering this service. Anyone may submit a nomination.

Nomination papers are limited to three pages. The first page is an identification page with the nominee's name, address, phone number and occupation along with the name, address, phone number and occupation of the person submitting the nomination. The other pages should include a narrative of not more than two, double-spaced pages.

The deadline for nominations is June 15, 1998, and should be sent to:

Robert P. Stone
President, Wisconsin Association of CVSOs
311 Miner Ave. E., Suite C-230
Ladysmith, WI 54848

For more information, call the CVSO Association President at 715-532-2144.

Legislative Update

- ◆ **SB 153** (Sen. Moen, Rep. Underheim) — Changes the term “assisted living facility” to “residential care apartments.”
(AB 219)

STATUS Signed into law. Wisconsin Act 13.

- ◆ **SB 352** (Sen. Zien, Rep. Zukowski) — Relating to fishing licenses for disabled veterans.

STATUS Will be addressed during extraordinary session.

Act 322

- ◆ **SJR 4** (Sen. C. Potter, Rep. Otte) — Proclaims the week of June 29 to July 5, 1997, as National 4th Infantry Division Week.

STATUS Passed both houses.

- ◆ **SJR 22** (Sen. Potter, Rep. Ziegelbauer) — Relating to naming a Seawolf submarine the “Manitowoc.”

STATUS Passed both houses.

- ◆ **AB 61** (Rep. Gunderson, Sen. Shibilski) — Free fishing license for members of the Wisconsin Veterans Home.

STATUS Signed into law. Wisconsin Act 1.

- ◆ **AB 100** 1997-99 Biennial Budget Bill.

STATUS Published 10/13/97. Wisconsin Act 27.

- ◆ **AB 139** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Wirch) — Veterans benefits for veterans who are delinquent in child or spousal support.
(SB 241)

STATUS 4/16/98 signed into law.

Act 115

- ◆ **AB 141** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Wineke) — Relating to information gathered regarding veterans burials.
(SB 242)

STATUS 4/16/98 signed into law.

116

- ◆ **AB 735** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Moen by request of WDVA) — Veterans budget adjustment bill.
(SB 438)

STATUS 4/16/98 signed into law.

Act 121

Continued from page 6

◆ **AB 790** (Rep. Vrakas, Sen. Farrow) — Relating to various measures affecting the state civil service.

STATUS Will be addressed during extraordinary session.

Act 307

◆ **AJR 38** (Rep. Turner, Sen. Moen) — Commending African-American veterans.

STATUS Passed both houses.

◆ **AJR 42** (Rep. Zukowski, Sen. Fitzgerald) — Memorializing Congress to fully fund the federal share of state veterans homes construction projects.

STATUS Passed both houses.

◆ **AJR 52** Relating to requesting appropriate action by the congress to propose an amendment to the U.S. constitution prohibiting the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

STATUS Will be addressed during extraordinary session.

◆ **AJR 54** Relating to proclaiming Armed Forces Day.

STATUS Passed both houses.

◆ **AJR 57** (Rep. Musser, Sen. Zien) — Memorializes Congress to recognize the services rendered to this country during the Vietnam War by Laotian and Montagnard troops.

STATUS Passed both houses.

◆ **AJR 98** (Rep. Turner, Sen. Moen) — Designating February 20, 1998 as "Buffalo Soldier Day."

STATUS Passed both houses.

NOTE: Any legislation not acted on during regular session or extraordinary session will be considered inactive and have to be reintroduced during January 1999-2001 session.

Act 115 Child Support
121 adjusted Budget Items
307 - Appt Authority
322 - Fishing



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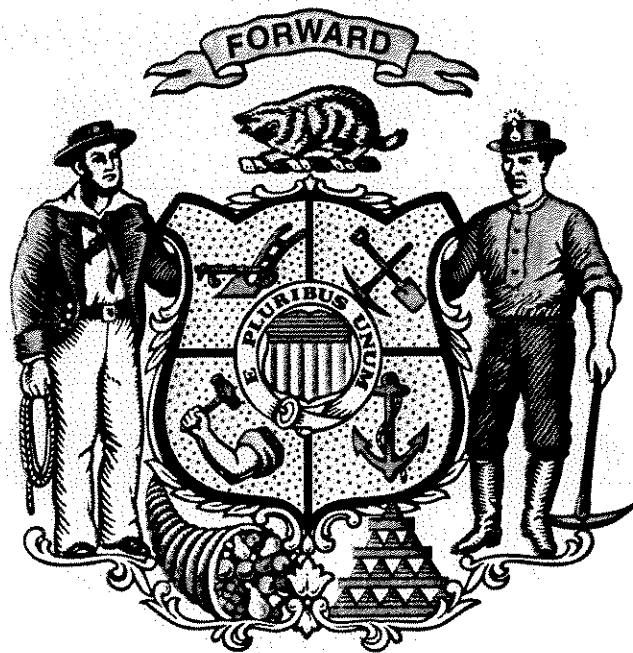
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From the Secretary

Site near Spooner chosen for new state veterans cemetery

I have the great pleasure to announce that our department has selected 80-acres of land, known as Beaver Brook, near Spooner as the site for a new state veterans cemetery. The selection of Beaver Brook was unanimously approved June 19 by the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs.

The site, which will be donated to WDVA by Washburn County, is approximately three miles south of Spooner on the eastside of Highway 53.

On Friday, October 16, at 10 a.m., we will hold a ground-breaking ceremony at the cemetery site. Gov. Tommy Thompson is scheduled to be our speaker [see article on page 2].



Raymond G. Boland

Using criteria developed by the federal government for citing national veterans cemeteries, we chose Beaver Brook because it is centrally located (between Eau Claire and Superior) to serve the maximum number of veterans and their families.

It also is easily accessible from a major four-lane highway and has scenic countryside with terrain and soil suitable for a cemetery.

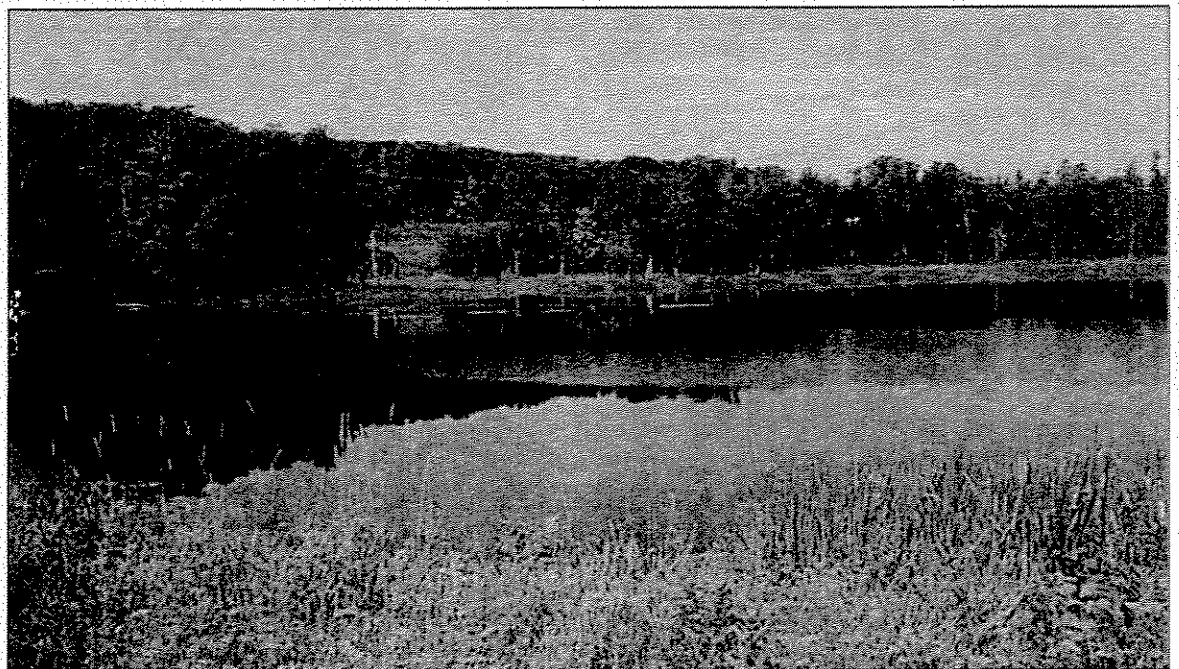
Furthermore, Washburn County is donating the land, which will reduce the total cost of the cemetery project and expedite its completion.

We thoroughly examined nine sites in northwestern Wisconsin as possible locations, including land around Stone Lake near the border of Washburn and Sawyer counties. Beaver Brook best met all the criteria, and I feel it will become an outstanding cemetery.

The estimated cost for cemetery construction is approximately \$3 million and will be funded with a

Continued on page 2

A state veterans cemetery to serve northwestern Wisconsin will be built at Beaver Brook near Spooner.



Continued from page 1

grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The U.S. House of Representatives on August 3 passed legislation that will provide 100 percent funding from the federal VA for the construction of our new cemetery.

With the completion of construction of the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery near Union Grove, we will be able to meet the needs of veterans and their families in southern Wisconsin for many years. To serve central Wisconsin, we plan to expand and improve the cemetery adjacent to the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.

The addition of a state veterans cemetery in northwestern Wisconsin fulfills our department's pledge to provide the best possible coverage throughout the state. Even though the Wood National VA Cemetery in Milwaukee has reached its burial capacity, approximately 82 percent of Wisconsin veterans will live within 75 miles of a veterans cemetery when the new cemetery is completed.

With the great support of Gov. Tommy Thompson and the Legislature, we can ensure that veterans and their families will receive the burial benefits they've earned without having to travel great distances.

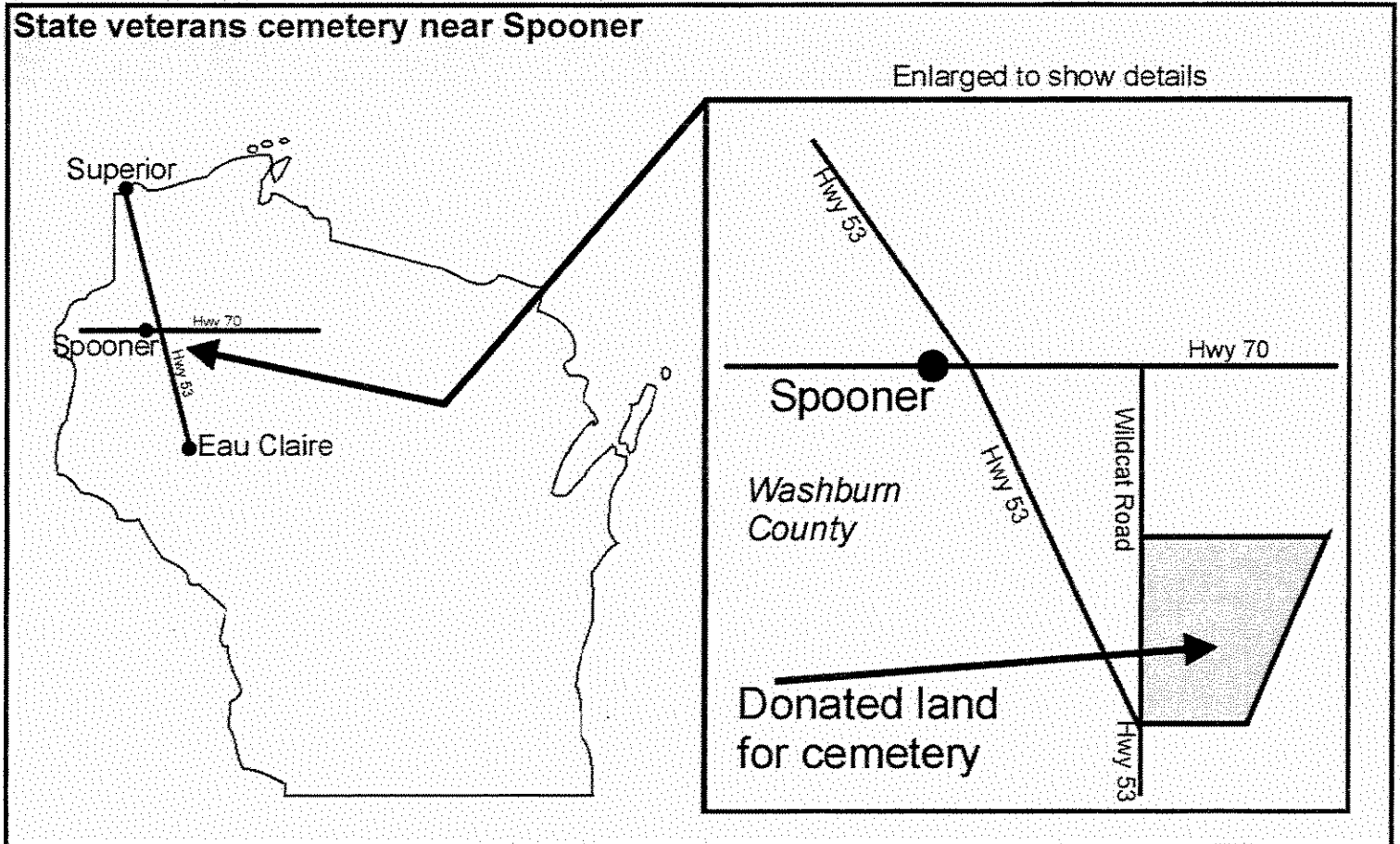
Cemetery ground-breaking planned for October 16

Governor Tommy Thompson along with veterans' organizations and government officials will break ground for the new state veterans cemetery near Spooner on Friday, October 16, at 10 a.m.

To avoid parking problems, all those attending the ceremony are asked to park in Spooner at the Washburn County Fairgrounds on West Beaverbrook Avenue, just off Highway 63. Free round-trip bus transportation will be provided from the fairgrounds to the ground-breaking site.

For more information call Steve Olson, WDVA public relations director, at 1-800-947-8387.

State veterans cemetery near Spooner



Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery near Union Grove dedicated on May 31

Gov. Tommy Thompson, along with other state and federal officials, dedicated the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery on Sunday, May 31. A crowd of approximately 2,000 attended the dedication ceremony and open house.

The ceremony included a helicopter flyover by the Wisconsin Army National Guard and a playing of the carillon, which was donated by AMVETS.

Operated by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, the cemetery has developed 35 scenic acres and has an additional 70 acres for future expansion.

Cemetery construction was financed by \$4.5 million in state and federal funds. To date, veterans' organizations and other groups have donated approximately \$75,000 toward construction costs.

Veterans, their spouses and members of their families may be eligible for burial in a state veterans cemetery. For more information about the cemetery or about advanced registration for interment, contact the cemetery at 414-878-5660.



Governor Tommy Thompson and WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland unveil the plaque on the Administration and Chapel Building at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, near Union Grove, on May 31.

Governor presents Army award to WDVA Secretary

Governor Tommy Thompson presented the Army's Outstanding Civilian Service Medal to WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland during a cabinet meeting on July 2 at the Capitol.

The Wisconsin National Guard nominated Secretary Boland for the award for his "exemplary efforts in strengthening veterans' benefits and services. Secretary Boland's record of successful achievements for veterans is directly attributed to his outstanding professional skill and devotion to duty."

Secretary Boland also received a Commander's Award for Public Service from the Wisconsin National Guard.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum attracts 30 thousand to its Civil War Living History Program

As part of the Statehood Day celebration in Madison on May 29 and 30, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison presented a living history program, titled *"When Johnny Comes Marching Home — The Return of the 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment."*

Civil War re-enactors (along with civilians dressed in the fashions of the 1860s) participated in the Camp Randall encampment, which culminated in a parade around the State Capitol on Saturday, May 30.

More than 30,000 spectators visited Camp Randall during the two-day encampment and thousands more lined the Capitol Square for the parade.

"The attendance and media attention exceeded our expectations," said Wisconsin Veterans Museum Director Richard Zeitlin.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum and the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King sponsored another Civil War living history program on August 15 in honor of the state's sesquicentennial. The program at King, which was titled *"The Boys in Blue Rally Once Again,"* featured an encampment of Civil War re-enactors and performances by the 1st Brigade Band.



Civil War re-enactors — camp and parade.



Top scholars to be featured in military history conference sponsored by the Wisconsin Veterans Museum

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum and the Midwest Consortium of the Society for Military History will hold a seminar titled "*The American Military Experience in Asia, 1898-1998*," on Saturday and Sunday, October 24 and 25 at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison. The conference will feature presentations by scholars from around the world.

The program will commemorate the 100th anniversary of major American commitments in the Asia-Pacific region. The conference will also honor Edward M. Coffman, professor of history emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Renowned author Stephen Ambrose, retired professor of history at the University of New Orleans, will present the keynote address on Saturday evening, October 24. He has written 16 books including the best-seller "*Undaunted Courage*," and his most recent work "*Citizen Soldiers*." He is the founder of the Eisenhower Center and the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans.

For a program brochure and listing of presentations and activities, contact the Wisconsin Veterans Museum at 608-267-1799. More information, including a registration form, is available online at <http://badger.state.wi.us/agencies/museum/society.html>



The American Military Experience in Asia, 1898-1998

Wisconsin Veterans Home's sole remaining World War I veteran celebrates 105 birthday

Clarence Wolfert, who is the last remaining World War I veteran at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, celebrated his 105th birthday on August 2.

To mark the occasion, veterans' groups from Mr. Wolfert's hometown of Sheboygan joined his relatives in celebrating an extraordinary life that has spanned the terms of 19 presidents, 10 major U.S. military engagements, as well as countless changes in science, technology and American society.

Mr. Wolfert was born in 1893 and raised on a farm in Sheboygan County. As young man in search of employment opportunities, he moved to Detroit where he met two of America's most prominent figures — Henry Ford and Thomas Edison.

While in Detroit, he was drafted for World War I service and assigned to Park Airfield in Millington, Tenn., where he made a valuable contribution to military aviation.

"I was an ambulance driver, but because I knew a lot about gas engines I was put to work on planes," he said in a *Sheboygan Press* article. "They had trouble with wooden rudders on the airplanes. The rudders were (made) of wood and shaped like the runners on a sleigh. I figured out a way to make them stronger by putting sheet metal on them. After that, they had no trouble."

Mr. Wolfert married Loretta Manske after the war and worked in Michigan and Texas before joining the Schreier Malting Company of Sheboygan where he was employed for 20 years before retiring.

After his wife's death, he lived alone in their home for 10 years before moving to the Wisconsin Veterans Home in 1980.

At the Home, Mr. Wolfert became well-known for his woodworking skills. He still maintains an active interest in current events and avidly watches CNN.

Although the number of Wisconsin's World War I veterans are dwindling to just a few, their legacy of service and sacrifice for the nation and the defense of freedom throughout the world remains strong. More than 122,000 Wisconsinites served in World War I and nearly 4,000 died while in service.

VA to open more community-based outpatient clinics in Wisconsin

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced the selection of additional sites for community-based outpatient clinics in Wisconsin. The sites offer primary health care through an affiliation with VA hospitals in Milwaukee, Tomah, Madison, Iron Mountain and Minneapolis.

The new clinics reflect the redesign of VA health care to make primary care more accessible and convenient for veterans in a wider geographic area and to meet the increasing need for outpatient care. The VA is using the latest technology and gains in medical knowledge to develop treatments that may be more appropriately provided on an outpatient basis. The outpatient clinics will also help the VA hospitals use their resources more efficiently.

The VA currently operates community-based outpatient clinics in:

- Appleton
- Eau Claire [outreach clinic]
- Loyal [outreach clinic]
- Rhinelander
- Union Grove
- Wausau
- Chippewa Falls

The VA plans to open community-based outpatient clinics in:

- Baraboo
- Beaver Dam
- Janesville
- La Crosse
- Sheboygan
- Milwaukee County

Veterans Assistance Program receives \$560,000 federal grant

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded a \$560,000 grant to a WDVA program that helps homeless veterans obtain the services they need to find steady employment and affordable housing.

WDVA's Veterans Assistance Program with the help of veterans' representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development will use the federal Job Partnership and Training Act Grant to enhance its training and placement services for unemployed or underemployed veterans who are at-risk of becoming homeless, as well as homeless veterans.

"The goal of our Veterans Assistance Program is to help homeless and at-risk veterans turn their lives around," says WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland. "To reach this goal, the program is committed to developing as many opportunities for training and education as possible, so these veterans can support themselves financially and return to the mainstream of society. In addition, because of an exceptionally strong economy, Wisconsin needs more workers. Veterans who complete our program are ready for work, so they can help meet this need."

The Veterans Assistance Program operates regional assistance centers, which are "one-stop shops" for the services homeless and at-risk veterans require. These services include:

- Housing
- Job Training
- Education
- Counseling
- Health Care
- Treatment for alcohol or drug abuse problems

Assistance centers are located in Milwaukee (Vets Place Central), Fort McCoy and the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. The assistance centers are located near medical facilities operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which is a full partner in the program.

Another assistance center will open soon at the Southern Wisconsin Center near Union Grove.

The Veterans Assistance Program also helps prevent homelessness by providing job training, referrals and other services to unemployed or underemployed veterans who are in danger of ending up on the streets or in shelters.

The Veterans Assistance Center at Fort McCoy to move

The Veterans Assistance Center at Fort McCoy, which is part of the statewide Veterans Assistance Program, will move to a building on the campus of the Great Lakes Health Care System VA Tomah Division (formerly known as the Tomah VA Medical Center) by mid-September.

"Many of the veterans at the Fort McCoy assistance center receive job training, counseling, health care and other services through the VA at Tomah, so this move will help consolidate services at a central location," said WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland.

The Veterans Assistance Center will occupy two floors of Building 407 at the Tomah VA campus.

A group of veterans who are about to graduate from the program will continue to live at one of the assistance center's barracks at Fort McCoy. Most of these veterans have jobs on post or in nearby Sparta.

A request has been made by the Wisconsin National Guard to use the veterans assistance center's other two barracks, administration building and dining facility to operate its "Challenge" program for youths who have dropped out of high school.

"About 10 veterans will continue to live at Fort McCoy along with their case manager. The other veterans and the staff will move to Tomah," said Boland.

As of August 1, nearly 440 veterans have resided at the Fort McCoy assistance center since it opened in November 1994, and another 635 at-risk veterans have received services through the center while living elsewhere.

Legislative update

The State Legislature will reconvene in January 1999. WDVA will track legislation pertaining to veterans throughout the 1999-2000 session.



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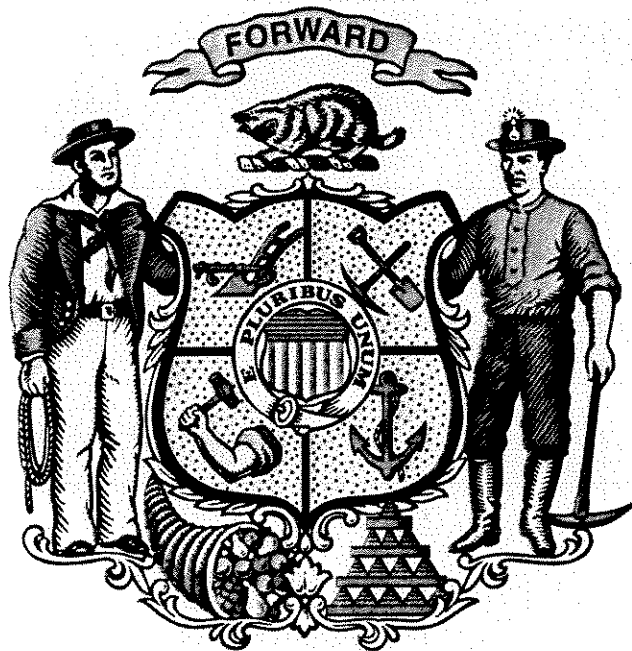
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From the Secretary

*We need to tell the veterans' story
in Wisconsin*

This is the time of the year when we give thanks and reflect on how fortunate we are to live in the greatest country on earth.

We are a nation that is blessed with peace and security. We have the most freedom and the most opportunities of any nation, at anytime, in history.

And here in Wisconsin we are concluding the celebration of our sesquicentennial. Because of our hardworking ancestors who built this great state, we enjoy a quality of life that is second to none.

But during our examination of years gone by, we tend to forget the contributions of veterans to our state's illustrious history, and I believe the story of our Wisconsin veterans is a story worth telling.

To tell this story of sacrifice and achievement during the past 150 years, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison will increase its outreach efforts, particularly to schools throughout the state.

Recently, the museum published a book about Wisconsin's role in the Civil War. It also produced a Civil War living history program in Madison that attracted more than 30,000 visitors during Statehood Day in May. A similar Civil War history program attracted a large crowd at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in August.



Raymond G. Boland

In October, the museum sponsored a two-day seminar, featuring renowned historian Stephen Ambrose, about the American military experience in Asia.

In the upcoming biennial budget and through effective fund-raising, we plan to increase financial support for the museum and its educational mission. For instance, we are building a multipurpose room near the museum's offices that will provide seating for lectures and other educational programs.

With the help of the veterans' community, the museum will ensure that the veterans' story endures for generations to come.

**WDVA submits its
biennial budget
for 1999-2001**

After approval by the Board of Veterans Affairs, WDVA in September submitted its 1999-2001 biennial budget proposal to the Governor for review. In January, the Governor will introduce to the Legislature a bill containing the budget of all state agencies. The new biennial budget is expected to be enacted this summer.

The following items are highlights of WDVA's budget proposals.

- **Increase reimbursement for education grant programs**

For the Part-Time Study Grant and Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant programs, WDVA requests an increase in the reimbursement rate from the current 50 percent to 65 percent beginning in fiscal year 1999-2000. The reimbursement increase can be absorbed within the existing budgets for both grant programs, which are financed by the Veterans Trust Fund.

- **Provide Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grants to veterans attending private schools**

Veterans attending qualified private schools in Wisconsin are currently eligible for Part-Time Study Grants but not Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grants.

WDVA proposes that private schools in Wisconsin that meet the requirements for Part-Time Study Grants also qualify for Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grants.

- **Modify state residency requirement**

Those veterans who were not Wisconsin residents at the time they entered active-duty military service must live in Wisconsin for five consecutive years anytime after discharge from active duty in order to be eligible for state veterans' benefits. WDVA proposes that the state residency requirement be modified so that members of the armed forces who served on active duty in Wisconsin for five consecutive years will fulfill the residency requirement.

- **Increase maximum amount for Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP)**

With a WDVA Home Improvement Loan (HILP), veterans now may borrow up to \$15,000 with 15 years to repay. WDVA proposes that the maximum HILP amount be increased to 25 percent of the median sales price of Wisconsin homes. Based on current home prices, the maximum HILP amount would be \$26,500. HILP loans are funded through bond sales, so an increase in the maximum loan amount will have no impact on the Veterans Trust Fund.

- **Increase funding for Health Care Aid Grant**

To meet the anticipated demand for the Health Care Aid Grant (HCAG) program, WDVA requests an increase of \$284,300 of authorized spending in each fiscal year from the Veterans Trust Fund. Combined with current funding levels, the increase will allow HCAG total expenditures of up to \$1.2 million per fiscal year. Recent changes in Administrative Rules permit WDVA to use up to 25 percent of the total HCAG annual budget to fund grants for dentures. With \$1.2 million in funding per fiscal year, WDVA could provide a total of \$300,000 in grants for dentures.

- **Increase funding for Veterans Assistance Program (VAP)**

WDVA requests additional funding from the Veterans Trust Fund for the Veterans Assistance Program, which helps homeless veterans and those at-risk of becoming homeless obtain steady jobs and affordable housing. The request is for \$554,100 in fiscal year 1999-2000 and \$390,200 in fiscal year 2000-2001. The funding will also provide ongoing support for the new assistance center at Southern Wisconsin Center, near Union Grove.

- **Create program for promoting single-room occupancy (SRO) housing for veterans**

WDVA requests Veterans Trust Fund expenditures of \$54,000 in each fiscal year to create a program to increase affordable housing for low-income and homeless veterans. Of that amount, \$50,000 will be used for grants to community-based organizations that will cover part of the expenses of operating single-room occupancy housing for homeless veterans. The remaining \$4,000 will cover travel costs of WDVA property managers, who will inspect SRO facilities that receive grants.

- **Fully implement the Veterans Employment and Training Program**

WDVA requests funding from the Veterans Trust Fund of \$181,800 in fiscal year 1999-2000 and \$91,100 in fiscal year 2000-2001 to implement fully the employment and training program approved in the last biennial budget. The request includes a one-time expenditure of approximately \$156,000 for the research, design and development of an Internet-based service that will help veterans get academic credit for military experience.

- **Fund operating expenses for the new cemetery in northern Wisconsin**

WDVA requests Veterans Trust Fund expenditures of \$389,800 in fiscal year 1999-2000 and \$275,000 in fiscal year 2000-2001 to operate a new state veterans cemetery near Spooner. All of the expenditure authority in the first fiscal year will be used to purchase equipment for the cemetery. Subsequent funding will provide four full-time equivalent positions to operate the cemetery, which is expected to open in 2000.

- **Improve the provision of benefits to Native American veterans**

WDVA requests Veterans Trust Fund expenditures of \$66,900 in fiscal year 1999-2000 and \$68,000 in fiscal year 2000-2001 to improve the provision of benefits to Native American veterans living on tribal lands in Wisconsin. The funding will finance a new full-time position for coordinating the policy and planning development of programs for Native American veterans. WDVA also will fund grants that will be used by Wisconsin tribes to improve the provision of veterans' benefits.

- **Create positions for federal liaison and research**

To monitor and assess the impact of federal initiatives affecting Wisconsin veterans, WDVA requests Veterans Trust Fund expenditures of \$90,300 in fiscal year 1999-2000 and \$100,900 in fiscal year 2000-2001 to create two full-time equivalent positions. One position will serve as WDVA's liaison with the federal government on issues affecting Wisconsin veterans. The other will research trends in federal funding of veterans' benefits and services in the state.

- **Increase WDVA outreach and training**

WDVA requests Veterans Trust Fund expenditures of \$25,000 in each fiscal year to provide training to authorized lenders participating in the Primary Mortgage Home Loan Program, as well as county veterans service officers (CVSOs) and veterans' organizations service officers (VSOs). The training will lead to greater efficiency and more customers for WDVA home loans. In addition, CVSOs and VSOs will receive training that will help veterans receive federal VA benefits. Of the amount requested, \$5,000 will be used to print informational brochures about WDVA benefits. Another \$5,000 per year will be used to cover the operating costs, including travel, for WDVA's three regional coordinators.

- **Assume operation of the Wisconsin National Guard Museum**

To assume the operation of the Wisconsin National Guard Museum at Volk Field (near Camp Douglas), WDVA requests general purpose revenue funding (state tax dollars) of \$347,500 in fiscal year 1999-2000 and \$259,900 in fiscal year 2000-2001 to fund 3.5 full-time positions and to create and operate a new library that includes the archives, manuscripts and photographic collections of the Wisconsin National Guard. The new library will be located on the third floor of 30 W. Mifflin St., and operated by the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. The new library will also contain the veterans museum's library and research center, currently located in the basement of the building. The Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs will provide \$50,000 in funding for maintaining the artifacts at the Volk Field museum.

- **Increase funding for Wisconsin Veterans Museum advertising and educational events**

WDVA requests an additional \$23,500 of spending authority from the Veterans Trust Fund in each fiscal year for expansion of the museum's advertising in tourism publications, a banner display on the outside of the building and publication of educational materials for students. The museum's current advertising budget is only \$5,000.

- **Increase funding for museum exhibit rotation**

WDVA requests an additional \$20,000 of spending in each fiscal year from the Veterans Trust Fund to cover 50 percent of the museum's expense for developing new exhibits, which are needed to attract visitors. The other 50 percent of the funding will come from private sources.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum sponsors very successful military history conference

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum and the Society for Military History sponsored a presentation by renowned historian and best-selling author Stephen Ambrose on Oct. 24, at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison.

Ambrose's address was part of a two-day international conference titled, "*The American Military Experience in Asia 1898-1998*," which included more than 40 presentations by scholars from around the world.

During the conference, Edward M. Coffman, University of Wisconsin-Madison professor of history emeritus, was honored by his colleagues for his contributions to U.S. military history research and education.

Ground-breaking ceremony for new state veterans cemetery near Spooner held Oct. 16

A crowd of about 350, including color guards from throughout northern Wisconsin, braved a heavy downpour to break ground for the new state veterans cemetery near Spooner on Oct. 16.

WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland was the keynote speaker and was joined by other federal, state and local officials.

Washburn County is donating 80-acres of land for the cemetery, which is 3 miles south of Spooner and adjacent to Highway 53 in the township of Beaver Brook. The cemetery will be built and operated by WDVA.

Cemetery construction will cost approximately \$3 million and will be funded with a grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The cemetery is expected to open in 2000.



Color guards from veterans' organizations throughout northwestern Wisconsin participated in the ground-breaking for the new state veterans cemetery near Spooner.

Confederate battle flag returns to Tennessee on loan from Wisconsin Veterans Museum

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum recently loaned one of its most interesting and unusual artifacts — a First Tennessee Infantry regiment battle flag captured by Wisconsin troops in the Civil War battle of Perryville, Ky. — to the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville where it is now displayed.

At a ceremony in the Wisconsin Veterans Museum on Sept. 16, WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland presented the flag to Stephen Cox, assistant director of the Tennessee State Museum.

"In friendship and in the spirit of our state's sesquicentennial, the veterans of Wisconsin present this battle flag to the veterans of Tennessee for educational display purposes. The Tennessee battle flag is an important historical artifact. And we know the people of Tennessee appreciate their state's history just as citizens of our state appreciate Wisconsin's history," Boland said. "This battle flag has special significance not only to the veterans of Tennessee whose ancestors fought valiantly in the Civil War but also to Wisconsin veterans whose ancestors fought and died to capture it."

According to Richard Zeitlin, director of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, the flags carried by Civil War troops into battle were important both during and after the war. "In the confusion of battle, soldiers often were scattered and separated from their units, so the flags served as a rallying point. In turn, soldiers would fight with great tenacity to

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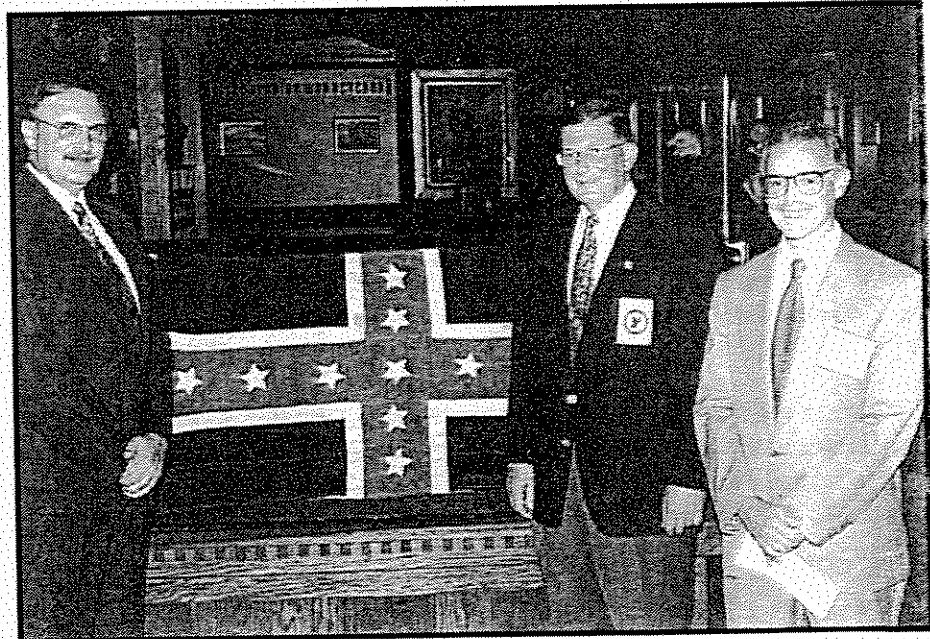
capture the enemy's flag, which could lead to victory," he says. "And when the war ended, the battle flags evoked strong emotional responses among veterans because they symbolized their heroic sacrifices and achievements. Of all the artifacts from the Civil War, the battle flags are the most poignant reminders of a conflict that claimed more American lives than all of our nation's other wars combined."

As the following timeline shows, the Confederate battle flag of the First Tennessee Infantry has a particularly interesting saga:

- Eight Wisconsin units fight in the Battle of Perryville, Ky., on Oct. 8, 1862. The First Wisconsin Infantry Regiment and the First Tennessee Infantry became engaged in desperate combat and fire at one another at close range for many hours. Because of the terrain, neither side is able to retreat.
- Private Morris S. Rice of the First Wisconsin captures the battle flag of the First Tennessee. Rice was from Sheboygan Falls.
- The battle is costly with 50 percent of the First Tennessee either killed or wounded. The First Wisconsin has 204 casualties (approximately a 30% loss), the highest of any Wisconsin unit engaged. Wisconsin units lose a total of more than 600 men, either killed or wounded.
- The First Wisconsin turns over the captured First Tennessee flag along with its military equipment to the Wisconsin Adjutant General.
- Wisconsin Adjutant General transfers the flag to the State Historical Society in 1905.
- State Historical Society staff re-catalogues the flag in 1951. Because there is no identification listed, the flag is noted as "captured from unknown Confederate unit."
- On loan from the State Historical Society, the flag is displayed in the G.A.R. Museum at the State Capitol from 1964 to 1989.
- The flag is identified in 1970 as "likely from the First Tennessee" by H. Michael Madaus, of the Milwaukee Public Museum and author of "*Battle Flags of the Confederate Army of Tennessee.*"
- Photo of the flag, identified as from the First Tennessee, is published in a 1991 Time-Life Civil War book, "*Echoes of Glory.*"
- G.A.R. Museum closes in 1989 to begin work on its successor — the Wisconsin Veterans Museum at 30 W. Mifflin St., and Confederate flag is returned to State Historical Society.
- Governor of Tennessee requests that the First Tennessee flag be given to the state of Tennessee. Governor Tommy Thompson denies the request, explaining that the flag has meaning to the people of Wisconsin, particularly to the descendants of its Civil War veterans.
- Perryville Battle Field Park (a park being developed by the state of Kentucky) requests that the flag of the First Tennessee be given to the park for display at its visitors center. Governor Thompson denies this request.
- State Historical Society in 1993 agrees to transfer most of the state's military artifacts to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. The Confederate battle flag also is transferred to the new museum although the historical society maintains the right to display it.

Continued on page 6

WDVA Secretary Raymond Boland (middle); Richard Zeitlin (right), director of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum; and Stephen Cox (left), assistant director of the Tennessee State Museum, pose with the Confederate battle flag of the First Tennessee Regiment. The Tennessee museum will display the flag, which is on loan from the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.



Continued from page 5

- Wisconsin Chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in 1993 launches campaign to raise the \$1,900 needed to conserve the flag.
- Flag is conserved in 1995 and displayed for a short time at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in 1996.
- The flag is displayed in special exhibit for nine months at the State Historical Museum in 1997.
- At the suggestion of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, the Tennessee State Museum in 1997 officially requests a one-year renewable loan of the flag. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum accepts the request pending completion of standard agreements that ensure the flag's safety and preservation.
- Loan arrangements finalized in 1998 for the flag to be placed on temporary display at the Tennessee State Museum.
- Flag is officially presented on behalf of Wisconsin veterans to Tennessee veterans at a ceremony at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum on Sept. 16, 1998.

In addition to the First Tennessee flag, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum has restored approximately 115 Civil War battle flags, which are part of a collection totaling more than 200 flags from Wisconsin units. The restored battle flags are displayed at the museum on a rotating basis.

Wisconsin veterans can get 6.5% home mortgage loans and 7% home improvement loans

WDVA lowered the interest rate on its Primary Mortgage Home Loan Program to 6.5 percent on October 16. The previous rate was 6.65 percent.

By selling general obligation bonds, WDVA has nearly \$96 million available for home mortgage loans to eligible Wisconsin veterans, including those who entered military service after 1976 or who have been out of service more than 30 years. In addition, because of recent changes in state law, peacetime veterans who served two or more years on active duty are eligible for WDVA home loans and other benefits along with wartime veterans.

Besides the low interest rate, WDVA home mortgage loans offer other advantages such as no discount points, no funding fee, no requirement for private mortgage insurance, and a fixed rate of interest for the 30-year term. The loan must be used to buy or build the veteran's principal residence. It may not be used to refinance an existing mortgage.

WDVA also has reduced the interest rate on its Home Improvement Loan Program from 7.5 percent to a new rate of 7 percent.

With a WDVA home improvement loan, veterans may borrow up to \$15,000 with 15 years to repay for a variety of alterations, construction and repairs of the veteran's principal residence, including garage construction.

WDVA home mortgage loans and home improvement loans no longer have maximum income limits, so higher income veterans may qualify. However, the amount of the WDVA home mortgage loan may not exceed \$266,250.

"Because WDVA's home mortgage loans and home improvement loans are funded through the sale of general obligation bonds, the programs are completely self-supporting and require no state tax dollars," said WDVA Secretary Raymond G. Boland. "Wisconsin is one of only five states that offer home mortgage loans, and one of only two states that offer home improvement loans to veterans. WDVA has provided nearly \$2 billion in home loans to more than 50,000 veterans since the program started in 1974."

To obtain WDVA home loans, veterans must meet military service and state residency requirements. For more information about WDVA home mortgage and home improvement loans, contact a local county veterans service office or call WDVA at 608-266-1311 or toll-free at 1-800-947-8387 (WIS-VETS). More information is also available on the WDVA web site at <http://badger.state.wi.us/agencies/dva>.

Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery holds its first Veterans Day observance

The Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, near Union Grove, held its first Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11 with State Rep. Bonnie Ladwig as the guest speaker.

During the ceremony, special honors were paid to the veterans interred at the cemetery who had no known next of kin.

"Veterans Day 1998 marks the 80th anniversary of the first Armistice Day, which celebrated the signing of the treaty on Nov. 11, 1918, that ended World War I. In 1954, Congress designated Nov. 11 as Veterans Day to honor all those who have served in our nation's armed forces," said Marian Lewandowski, cemetery director. "Our cemetery is a lasting memorial to the men and women of Wisconsin who answered our nation's call to service and placed their lives on the line for our freedom. All veterans — no matter where they served or when they served — deserve recognition on Nov. 11 for their sacrifices and achievements on our behalf."

Wisconsin veterans and their families are eligible for interment in the cemetery. Veterans may make arrangements in advance for interment by completing a pre-registration form, available at the cemetery office or county veterans service offices. For more information, contact the cemetery at 414-878-5660.

U.S.S. Wisconsin's silver service will be displayed at Milwaukee War Memorial

A part of the silver service from the battleship U.S.S. *Wisconsin* will be on display at the War Memorial Center in Milwaukee from March to July 1999. The War Memorial is located at 750 North Lincoln Memorial Drive, next to Milwaukee's Veterans Park, along the shore of Lake Michigan.

The State Legislature in 1899 commissioned a 34-piece silver service for use by the Navy aboard the U.S.S. *Wisconsin*. After many years at sea and in storage during wartime, the silver officially returned to state custody following the decommissioning of the battleship in 1991. The ornate silver service includes punch bowls, candelabra and tea sets that were used during formal receptions for local dignitaries when the ship was in port.



The punch bowl from the U.S.S. Wisconsin's silver service will be on display at the Milwaukee War Memorial beginning in March. A pair of badgers are perched on the bowl's handles along with wheat and pine trees.

Legislative Update

The State Legislature will reconvene in January 1999.

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