

## The civilian - soldier cycle

By Amy Jagielski

After 18 years of training in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, motor sergeant Rayton Deacon felt prepared for a deployment overseas. However, his transition from civilian to soldier and back proved in some ways to be harder than his time in Iraq.

“It is hard to go from part time – two days a month - to living Army 24/7 for over a year. And then you’re back in your old life and your family expects you to be the same and we expect them to be the same,” he said.

Deacon is part of the 118<sup>th</sup> Medical Battalion. He was deployed in November of 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. It was his first call to active duty in his 18 year career with the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Deacon said he was ready to go overseas. He felt his long commitment to the Guard and extensive training would help with the company’s success in Iraq. Still, he is reluctant to leave his family for so long.

Leaving behind his wife and two-year-old son, Deacon was gone more than 15 months. He had never been away from home for longer than his two week annual training with the Guard. Adjusting to life overseas did

not come easy. The nine hour time difference made it difficult to call home, while the food and harsh environment made it difficult not to miss home. “It was hard knowing my family was living their lives without me,” he said.

Amanda Lubbert, another member of the 118<sup>th</sup>, was a student at Madison Area Technical College studying nursing and a single mother when she got her call to active duty. Her four-year-old daughter had a hard time understanding why her mom would be gone for so long.

“I told her I would be gone for a long time. She couldn’t really understand what a full year meant. Leaving my daughter for over a year was the hardest thing either of us have ever been through,” Lubbert said.

*Continued on page 2*

***Veterans Day  
activities  
Pages 4 & 5***



*Thanksgiving Day in Iraq. The author is shown lower right.*

Once in Iraq, the 118<sup>th</sup> guardsmen preformed their military occupational skills that they had been trained to do. Many were medics that treated the injured. A small headquarters platoon supported the medical mission with vehicle maintenance, communications, supplies and as cooks.

As the lead vehicle mechanic, Deacon said his job overseas was similar to that at home. "I worked on the same vehicles I had for years. The problems that came up were sometimes different, but there is only one way to change a tire," he said.

Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have worn thin the active duty component of the U.S. Armed Forces. This triggered many National Guard activations and deployments across the country. Before 9/11, guard units were rarely activated for overseas deployments. Therefore, many guardsmen are not accustomed to spending extended periods of time away from family and friends. Many of the issues guardsman had with their deployments came at the very beginning and continued after returning home.

"I had the hardest time sleeping when I got home. Nightmares – I didn't have them there [in Iraq], I had them when I got home," Deacon said.

After a long deployment, guard members get reacquainted with their families. Many left young children behind or even a pregnant wife. Getting back their old lives was sometimes frustrating.

"I kept trying to make up for the lost year, but I never could. I just had to realize it's lost, gone, and I can't get it back," Deacon said.

Lubbert said it took some time for her and her daughter to get to know each other again. "Lexi had to get used to having a mother again, and I had to get used to having a daughter again," she said.

Going from part time soldier to full time soldier created tensions within the ranks of the 118<sup>th</sup>. David Hess, a member of the 118<sup>th</sup>, was an independent bachelor when he was deployed. He was also one of the lowest ranking soldiers in the company. He had to start taking orders from higher ranking soldiers even if some of those giving orders were his friends. "Many of us are friends in our unit. We go out together, hang out together. But, then I had to start taking orders from them. It made the friendships difficult, especially when there was a lot to be done, you are tired, and

someone that's your buddy is barking out the orders," Hess said.

Once back in the U.S., the 118<sup>th</sup> had nearly three months until they had to report back to normal guard duty. They were away from those they had just been with for 15 intense months straight. Many kept in touch with occasional phone calls. They still depend on each other for support, even after returning home. "No one understands what it was like being there. It's frustrating when my wife can't understand the situations I was in. Even when I try to explain it, she just can't understand," Deacon said.

The civilian-soldier-civilian cycle has made a complete 360° for the 118<sup>th</sup>. Although another deployment is not immediate, it is not improbable. If they get the call again, "I will have the experience from the past deployment and be more equipped for the next one," Deacon said.

*The Dane County Veteran* is published by the  
Dane County Veterans Service Office  
1919 Alliant Energy Center Way  
Madison, WI 53713

(608) 266-4158

e-mail : [Vets@co.Dane.Wi.US](mailto:Vets@co.Dane.Wi.US)

Michael R. Jackson, Service Officer  
Chuck Goranson, Editor

Other contributors:

Amy Jagielski  
Eleanor Harris  
Maria Kluever  
Shirley Shaw  
Jim Larson.

Announcements and news contributions are  
welcome.

# “Times – They are a Changing”

By Michael Jackson  
Dane County Veterans Service Officer

Jim Robarts, former Assistant County Veterans Service Officer, retired August 6, 2005. Barb Paar, former Administrative Assistant II in our office, retired in January of this year; and, a little “birdie” has told me that Assistant Veterans Service Officer Maria Kluever is planning to retire January, 2006. That is fifty percent of our staff!

These folks have been the core of our delivery of services to veterans and their families. It has been through their efforts, and the efforts of the colleagues they have left behind, that



*Robarts*



*Paar*

Dane County veterans have been well served. In the case of Barb and Jim, not only have we lost a high level of productivity, but their wonderful sense of humor they consistently brought to the workplace.

When Maria does, in fact, say hasta leugo, she will also take not only her years of productivity and great sense of humor, but a vast wealth of institutional knowledge and history that no one else here has. She started to work here June, 1984. I miss Barb and Jim as do, I’m sure, many of their former clients.

But I appreciate the remaining staff as all of us strive to continue to serve veterans and their families honorably. Enjoy yourselves retirees; in my opinion you earned it!

*VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC. WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL*

## SCHOLARSHIP 2006

Four (4) \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to four (4) eligible veterans or their dependents/ direct descendants for the fall 2006 semester. The award is to be used for continuing education at an accredited school.

### TO BE ELIGIBLE THE APPLICANT MUST:

- Be a U.S. Vietnam Era Veteran, proof of service required. (Veterans are not required to do an interview.)
- Or, you must be a dependent or direct descendant of a U.S. Vietnam Era Veteran.

### SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

Write an original essay based on an interview with any U.S. Veteran. The essay must be original, typed – double spaced, and three to five pages in length. Return the essay, application form, proof of veterans service and if currently in school, transcripts, or letter of acceptance to the school.

Entry must be postmarked no later than January 7, 2006.

Mail to: Richard T. Nuske, Chair  
VVA Wisconsin State Scholarship  
N5448 Broder Road  
Shawano, WI 54166

For more detailed information, call (715) 524-2487

# DoD announces two new campaign medals

(Article courtesy of "The Navigator" – Waukesha County Veterans Service Office)

WASHINGTON—The Department of Defense announced today the creation of two campaign medals for Afghanistan and Iraq.

Service members authorized the Afghanistan Campaign Medal must have served in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom on or after Oct. 24, 2001, to a future date to be determined by the Secretary of Defense or the cessation of the operation. The area of eligibility encompasses all land areas of the country of Afghanistan and all air spaces above the land.

Those authorized the Iraq Campaign Medal must have served in direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on or after March 19, 2003, to a future date to be determined by the Secretary of Defense or the cessation of the operation. The area of eligibility encompasses all land area of the country of Iraq, and the contiguous water area out to 12 nautical miles, and all air spaces above the land area of Iraq and above the contiguous water area out to 12 nautical miles.

Service members must have been assigned, attached or mobilized to units operating in these areas of eligibility for 30 consecutive days or for 60 non-consecutive days or meet one of the following criteria:

- Be engaged in combat during an armed engagement, regardless of the time in the area of eligibility; or
- While participating in an operation or on official duties, is wounded or injured and requires medical evacuation from the area of eligibility; or
- While participating as a regularly assigned air crewmember flying sorties into, out of, within or over the area of eligibility in direct support of the military operations; each day of operations counts as one day of eligibility.



## September 11--Patriot Day remembered

*Submitted by Mary Lloyd, Vice Commander, American legion Post 59 and Secretary of VFW Auxiliary Unit 328.*

Patriots Day has been set aside for us to honor our veterans and to memorialize the victims of 9/11. VFW Post 328 and American legion Post 59 and their Auxiliaries joined together with a crowd of about 75 people to remember those who perished and to honor those who are currently serving.

The remembrance started at 6:00 p.m. at Veterans Park with the presentation of colors by the Stoughton VFW. Blue Star Banners were presented to four families who have family members currently serving in the military. The banner has a white field with blue star(s) sewn onto a red banner. Each star represents a family member in service and is typically displayed in the front window of the home.

Following the remembrance programs came the formal retirement of American Flags that had been soiled, overused and were ready for disposal. Approximately 200 flags were properly disposed by burning with the assistance of Stoughton Boy Scout Troop 167.

*Thirtieth Anniversary*

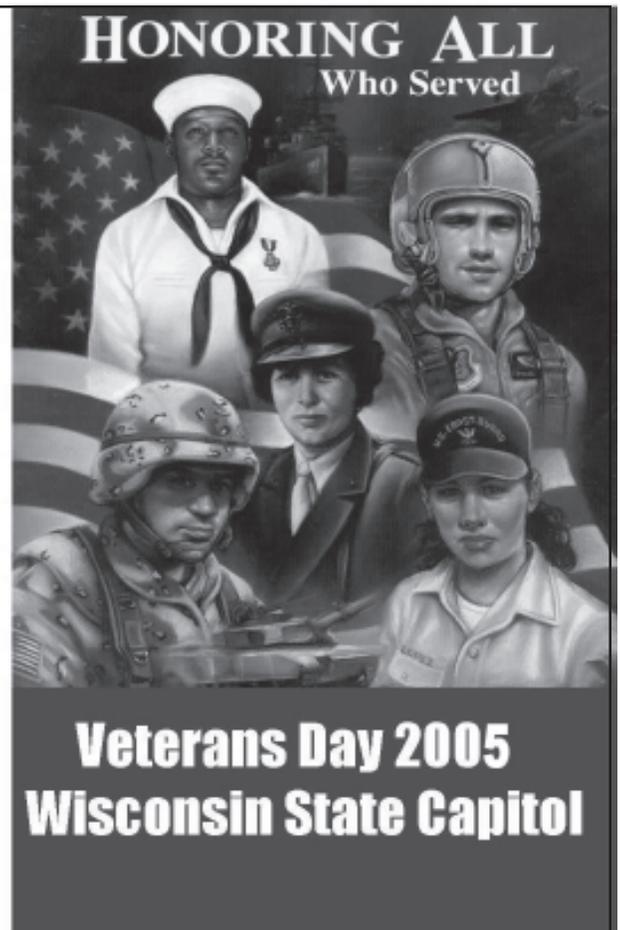
# Honoring Vietnam Vets “Sacrifice and Service”

**State Capitol Rotunda**

Band concert – 9:30

Ceremony – 10:00

Speakers include Governor Jim Doyle, Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs John A. Scocos and USMC Inspector-Instructor Major George Williams



## *VETERANS DAY ACTIVITIES*

### **Sun Prairie**

11/05/05 – AL Post 333, Sun Prairie, 137 S. Bristol St,  
Sun Prairie

Veterans Day Dinner & Program

\$8.50 Dinner

5 pm - Open Cash Bar

6 pm - Dinner

7 pm - Program

### **Oregon**

11/11/05 – 11 am – Memorial Service/Short Program  
Sponsored by: Oregon-Brooklyn Memorial Post  
No. 10272

@ Triangle Park, Oregon – followed by a  
Free Lunch for Veterans @ Oregon Senior  
Center

### **Stoughton**

11/11/05 – 12 noon – Veteran’s Day Celebration  
Stoughton Senior Center  
Free Lunch for all Veterans  
Call 873-8585 for reservations by 11/10/05  
(by 12:00 noon)

### **Barneveld**

11/13/05– WI Vietnam Veterans Chapter 4  
Veterans Day Breakfast Fundraiser  
@ AL Post 433, Barneveld  
8 am-noon – Adults \$6.00

### **Verona**

11/11/05- 11:00 a.m. – Flag Raising &  
Dedication of Veterans Memorial @  
site in Verona  
11:45 a.m. – Lunch at Verona Senior  
Center – 108 Paoli St, Verona  
12:30 p.m. – Program following lunch

# Assistance to needy veterans

The following information is from <http://dva.state.wi.us/>

With the enactment of 2005 Wis. Act 25 (effective Wednesday, July 27, 2005), the Subsistence and Health Care Aid Grant in their familiar form have ceased to exist. They were replaced by the Assistance to Needy Veterans grant program when Governor Jim Doyle signed the Budget Bill.

- Concentrates on veterans; covers dependents only if:
  - service members killed in the line of duty
  - activated or deployed service members
- Lifetime limit of \$5,000 for Subsistence and Health Care grants combined.
- Most applicants must have income below the federal poverty limit.
- Applicants whose eligibility is based on activation or deployment need not have income below the federal poverty limit but they must demonstrate an “economic emergency”; that is, a natural disaster which damages the primary residence, a medical emergency, the failure of the sole means of transportation, or a severe disruption in essential household systems caused by a failure of the applicant’s stove, refrigerator, heating system, ventilating and

air conditioning system, plumbing system, or electrical system such that it materially compromises the applicant’s ability to live.

## Health Care Component

- Does not cover bills incurred in the past
- Pays vision, hearing and dental:
  - Vision up to \$ 500
  - Dental up to \$2500
  - Hearing \$1500 per ear
- All limits are per 12-month period with lifetime maximum of \$5,000
- Future care OK’d for 90 days
- 90 days allowed if justified without a new application
- Income limit set by federal poverty guidelines

## Subsistence Component

- Pays for subsistence if income is lost due to illness or injury
- Aid provided when income is lost due to disaster such as fire or tornado causing severe damage to home
- Grant amount limited to \$2,000 for lifetime. Lifetime limit of \$5,000 for both components.

## Veteran home loan eligibility expanded to many Guards and reservists

(Article courtesy of “The Navigator” – Waukesha County Veterans Service Office)

Guard and reserve personnel with 6 continuous years of service are eligible for the Wisconsin Veterans Primary Mortgage Loan and Home Improvement Loan. They must be living in the state of Wisconsin at the time of their application for a housing loan benefit. **This extends PML and HILP benefits** to Guard and Reserve Members who do not meet the statutory definition of veteran.

**Refinance of Existing Mortgage and HILP Loans Permitted**—Veterans are now able to refinance the balance due on existing mortgage loans used for purchase, construction or improvement of a residence.

**Principal Residence Restriction Liberalized**—Loans made under the Primary Mortgage Loan Program and Home Improvement Loan Program can be used for an additional residence. The law no longer

requires that the property to be purchased, constructed, improved or refinanced be a person’s principal residence, but rather used by the person as a secondary residence. Remaining unchanged is the requirement that one unit of an income producing property (such as a two-to-four-unit residential property) must be occupied as the borrower’s principal place of residence.

**\$25,000 Cap Eliminated From HILP Program**—The cap has been removed from the veterans Home Improvement Loan Program. Veterans who meet WDVA underwriting criteria may now obtain low interest, fixed rate loans of up to 90% of their home equity for the purpose of improving their residence. Applications for the loan can be made through your County Veterans Service Office, 266-4158, or on the web at [www.dva.state.wi.us](http://www.dva.state.wi.us).

# New education grants for Wisconsin veterans

Written by James Larson

As the 2005-06 school year rolls into full steam, veterans who had been taking advantage of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs education grants are quickly (and necessarily) learning about the new programs that have replaced the old Part-Time Study Grant and the Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant.

Two separate programs have replaced the previous WDVA educational grants: the Wisconsin GI Bill and the VetEd program. The easiest way to understand which education grants one is entitled to is to view each one separately at first, then figure out if you qualify for their combined benefits.

## Wisconsin GI Bill

The Wisconsin GI Bill (not to be confused with the federal Montgomery GI Bill) is simply a 50 percent remission, or waiver, of tuition granted by the educational institution itself. There are only two criteria for eligibility: first, the school attended must be part of the University of Wisconsin system or the Wisconsin Technical College system, and second, the veteran must have been a resident of Wisconsin when entering active duty. Certain restrictions have been eased, *e.g.*, eligible vets now have no cut-off dates from the year they were discharged to qualify, no income caps, and any level of college degree can already have been earned. Establishment of eligibility for Wisconsin benefits is required.

Dependents of eligible veterans with 30 percent service-connected disabilities may attend free. Children must be between the ages of 18 and 25. Spouses are eligible for 10 years from the disability rating or death.

For full details and the application form go to the WDVA website:

[dva.state.wi.us/Forms/WDVA\\_B0105\\_Wisconsin\\_Tuition\\_Programs\\_\(WI\\_GI\\_Bill\).pdf](http://dva.state.wi.us/Forms/WDVA_B0105_Wisconsin_Tuition_Programs_(WI_GI_Bill).pdf)

## VetEd

The VetEd program is the new WDVA program which can reimburse the remaining 50 percent of tuition, but has more requirements for eligibility.

These are:

- Establishment of eligibility for Wisconsin benefits by the WDVA must be completed
- Household income cannot exceed \$50,000
- The vet cannot already have a bachelors degree
- If the vet has been discharged for more than 10 years then he/she must go to school part time, taking 11 credits or less. The number of credits available to them is determined from the length of active duty served. Veterans are entitled to 30 credits or two semesters, if active duty is between 90-180 days; 60 credits for 181-730 days; and 120 credits for over 731 days of active duty
- The vet must achieve an average grade for the semester of "C" or better to be reimbursed

If a Wisconsin eligible vet did not enter the military from Wisconsin or goes to an institution outside the UW or WI Technical College systems, the VetEd program will reimburse up to the equivalent of the UW-Madison rate for the same number of credits. Veterans eligible for the National Guard Tuition Grant (NGTG) or Reserve Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) are not eligible for the VetEd program. The mere fact that the Guard or reservist is eligible for either of these grants will automatically eliminate VetEd eligibility, whether he/she has applied for them or not.

**Starting the spring semester of 2006 student vets will need to pre-register for the VetEd program as well as apply for reimbursement at the end of the semester; therefore, if a vet plans to start classes Jan. '06, he/she should pre-register sometime in 12/05 or 01/06. The forms to do this are not yet available as of this writing.**

**Dane County Veterans Service Office**  
**1919 Alliant Energy Center Way**  
**Madison, WI 53713**  
**(608) 266-4158**

## *A veterans service office is near you*

### **Main Office**

Monday-Friday: 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
1919 Alliant Energy Center Way

The **Stoughton** Area Senior Center,  
248 W. Main St.  
Most Fridays from 11 until 4.

**UW-Madison** in room 141 of the Peterson  
Building on most Thursdays from 8 until 4.

The **Sun Prairie** branch of the Summit Credit  
Union,  
1333 W. Main  
Most first and third Tuesday afternoons each  
month, 12 until 4.

### **Oregon Senior Center**

219 Park Street  
Most 2nd and 4th Fridays, 8 until 11

### **VA Hospital**

Most 4th Mondays of each month - 9 until 3.

### **Black Earth** 1116 Mills St.

Most fourth Tuesdays each month  
8 until noon

**Appointments recommended**

**266-4158**