

## Transitions

by Dane County Veterans Service Officer Michael Jackson

Lonnie Cooks, a gentle giant, passed away in August of this year. He was a disabled Vietnam combat veteran who had served on the Dane County Veterans Service Commission. He served one year as chair and several years as vice-chair. Ironies and ambiguities often appear in life. It's hard to imagine that one with such a gentle nature and calming spirit was ever a part of the violence and often inhumane acts of war that survival dictates. He was dedicated to his family, his work (broadcast engineer) and veterans. His wise counsel and kind and sincere manner will be missed.

Earlier this year the Veterans Memorial Fountain at the Alliant Energy Center of Dane County (AEC) was transformed into a lovely Veterans Memorial Garden with various flowers and plantings that will offer year round viewing. This change was approved by the Veterans Service Commission and was endorsed by the veterans community of Dane County. A formal rededication ceremony is anticipated in 2007.

Over the last year or so, there has been a 50% turnover in our staff. Barb Paar, Maria Kluever, and Jim Robarts re-



*Veterans Memorial Garden*

tired. All are highly capable and respected in this business. Although I miss them, their replacements – Eleanor Harris, Chris Scoville, and Dan Connery – have accepted the challenge and continue to provide quality services to this very special population. We feel honored to serve.

Finally, I encourage you to participate in, or attend, a Veterans Day ceremony on November 11, 2006. A number of events are listed in this newsletter.

## Court expands coverage for Navy vets

### Sailors who served off Vietnam now considered for Agent Orange

by Jim Larson

Navy veterans who served offshore of Vietnam but did not set foot on Vietnamese soil are now eligible for the same VA benefits as those veterans that did go ashore. In a decision handed down by the United States Court of Appeals on August 16, 2006 for veterans claims, the definition used by the VA to deny claims for presumption of "Agent Orange" related illnesses has changed. Previous to the decision, thousands of Vietnam veterans who set foot on Vietnamese soil, irregardless of the duration of their stay, were eligible to claim presumptive service-connected conditions related to exposure to Agent Orange, such as diabetes type II, prostate cancer and Hodgkin's disease, to name a few. A veteran who served on a vessel floating up a river or on a ship just 100 feet off the shoreline, but who never touched

the land, has never been considered eligible for service-connected claims relating to exposure to Agent Orange. The elimination of the requirement for "boots on ground" will mean that Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans can now file claims based on service in the Republic of Vietnam including "service offshore."

This decision may open the floodgates to millions of Vietnam-era disability claims. Wisconsin Navy and Coast Guard Vietnam veterans are encouraged to contact their county veterans service officer as soon as possible to determine their eligibility to receive service-connected disability benefits based on this ruling. In Dane County, call 266-4158 to find out more or to set up an appointment.

# “100 Hours of Honor”

## An exhibit of the Moving Wall

by Eleanor Harris

**Madison, Wisconsin:** Looking for a meaningful method of recognizing, remembering, and honoring the service and sacrifices of his community’s Vietnam veterans, Jeffrey Unger, State Benefits Advisor for the Wisconsin National Guard and Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Truax-Longmire Memorial Post 8483 sought and received an opportunity of a lifetime, one that would offer healing, reconciliation, opportunities and memories to last a long time for Vietnam veterans.

Unger got a call in early February, 2006, from the Vietnam Combat Veterans Ltd of White Pines, Michigan, proprietors of the Moving Wall, a half-size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. The call came in response to Unger’s application to host the wall. Needing assistance with filling a vacancy created in the exhibit schedule Unger enthusiastically accepted the challenge, approached the post membership and received approval to host the Moving Wall for the first time in its 22-year history during the period September 7-11, 2006.

“What truly makes this entire effort a labor of love for me is, knowing we were able to bring nearly 35,000 visitors out (in austere weather conditions part of the visit) over a period of 100 hours, to honor our nation’s comrades who gave the ultimate sacrifice to enable you and I to benefit from the freedoms and liberties their legacy leaves us today.” Unger continued “Even more importantly however, our CVSO provided service to 210 veterans and their families, and our Vet Center and VA Hospital teamed up



*CVSO staff Christine Scoville, Michael Jackson and Shirley Shaw at The Moving Wall.*

to provide readjustment counseling services to 96 Vietnam veterans (25% of those have been referred for further care) all for free. It hurts to realize it has taken more than 30 years for these veterans to gain access to the veteran’s benefits they earned and paid for so long ago.” No matter how you look at it, the impact of this memorial is powerful. “Thanks to our community partners, our strong and vibrant veteran’s community and our volunteers, we have made a significant and positive difference upon our community. We served veterans of all generations and their families, introducing them to the world of their veterans benefits, both federal and state. That’s awesome!”

## Free tuition for vets starting in fall 2007

by Dan Connery

The Wisconsin G.I. Bill was enacted roughly one and a half years ago giving Wisconsin veterans a 50 percent break on tuition and fees at UW-System schools and Wisconsin Technical College System schools. Since July 2005, thousands of Wisconsin veterans have taken advantage of this educational benefit.

In May 2006, the Wisconsin Legislature passed Senate Bill 613. Effective with the fall 2007 semester, eligible Wisconsin veterans will free tuition.

Some basic Wisconsin G.I. Bill facts-

- Eligibility must be established with the WDVA
- Must have been a Wisconsin resident at time of entry into active duty service
- Benefit recipient must reside in Wisconsin

- Benefit is extended to qualifying spouses and dependent children of service-connected veterans with a combined rating of at least 30 percent regardless of where the initial service-connected rating was awarded
- Can be used concurrently with the Montgomery G.I. Bill
- Applications must be submitted within 14 calendar days of start of the fall or spring semester/term or by June 1<sup>st</sup> for summer sessions. Once granted eligibility, you do not have to reapply each semester.

Please help get the word out about this benefit. If you have any questions, call our office at 608-266-4158 or visit [http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben\\_education.asp#WIGI](http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_education.asp#WIGI)

# VETERANS DAY ACTIVITIES

November 11, 2006

## Sun Prairie

@ VFW Post 9362, 949 S. Walker Way

11:00 – Program followed by groundbreaking for memorial.

12:00 – Cookout (brats and burgers)

## Oregon

Sponsored by VFW Post 10272

11:00 – Memorial service/short program at WW I Monument in Triangle Park

12:00 – Free lunch and musical entertainment for veterans at Oregon Senior Center, 219 Park St.

## Stoughton

Friday, November 10 at the Stoughton Senior Center, 248 W. Main St.

11:45 – Presentation from Foxbury School

12:00 – Free lunch for all veterans. Please call

873-8585 for reservations by 11/09/06.

## Verona

Friday, November 10

11:00 – Flag ceremony at Hometown Junction

11:45 – Lunch and entertainment at the Verona Senior Center, 108 Paoli St. Please call 845-7471 in advance for reservations.

Saturday, November 11

4:30 to 8:00 – Chili Supper at AL Post, 207 N. Legion St.

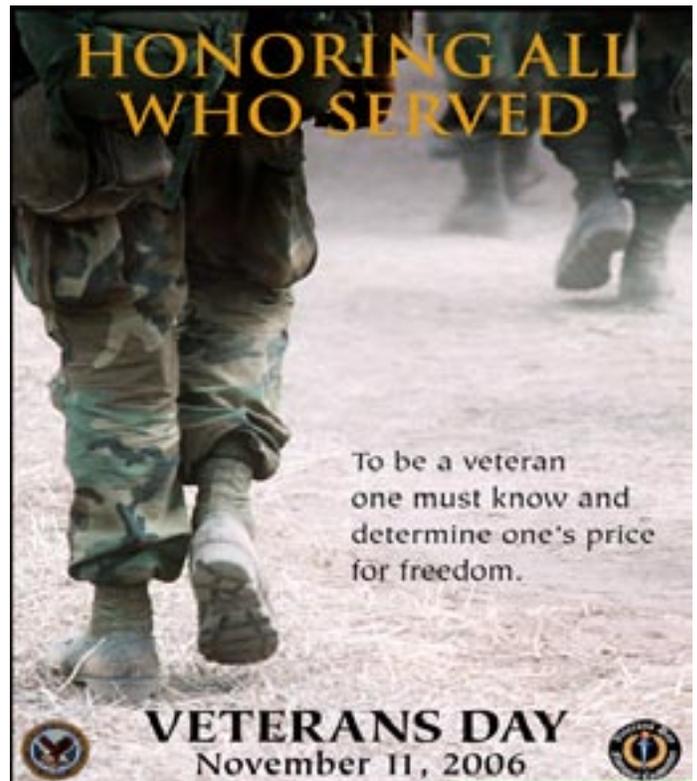
## Holy Cross Lutheran School Veterans' Program

by Jim Larson

The preschool through eighth grade students of Holy Cross Lutheran School cordially invite all veterans and their loved ones to the school's annual Veterans' Program on November 10th at 6:30 p.m. The program will be held in the gymnasium at Holy Cross and will honor all branches veterans with patriotic music, readings, and handmade gifts from the children.

Veterans who would like to wear their uniform are asked to please do so, as it is wonderful for the students to see the different types.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School is located at 2670 Milwaukee St. in Madison, and is handicapped accessible. Please call the school at 249-3101 with any questions.



## *Thankful Remembrance*

### **Veteran's Day 2006**

### **Plaque Dedication to the Veterans of World War II**

### **Capitol Rotunda**

#### **Program**

- 9:30 am – Band concert
- 10:00 am – Welcome
- Moment of silence
- Presentation of colors
- National anthem
- Pledge of allegiance
- Invocation
- Introduction of guests
- Rose Ceremony
- Rifle salute & taps
- Recessional

**12:00 Parade** from State Street to the Library Mall. Participants should gather at the top of State Street on the Capitol Square. A short program will be held at Library Mall. Buses will be available to return participants to the Capitol or their cars after the program.

## Volunteers Needed at VA Hospital

by Chris Scoville

The VA hospital in Madison is always in need of volunteers to assist the staff and to enhance the patients and families experience at the VA hospital. With the holiday season fast approaching, please consider sharing a little of your time with our deserving veterans. Some of the current openings include:

- *Escort duty*
- *Chaplains Office Assistant*
- *Information Desk*
- *Surgical Waiting Room Attendant*
- *File Room*
- *Prosthetics Services*

If you have an hour or two to spare, please call voluntary services to schedule an appointment or to receive specific assignment details by calling (608) 280-7030.

All potential volunteers will need to go through a background check, including fingerprinting.

## MyHealthVet

**(The following information was found on the Internet)**

Enter VA's new Veteran Health portal and discover what the VA has for you and your family. [Myhealth.va.gov](http://Myhealth.va.gov) is a powerful online tool to help you learn about issues affecting your daily living. This website is a gateway to veterans health and wellness. [MyHealthVet](http://MyHealthVet) is a one-stop shop for:

- VA benefits and services
- Health information
- Facts about your health
- Latest news about veterans health issues
- Access to assessment tools (including drug interaction tools)



Additional information on this site includes diseases and conditions as well as resources to learn about computer skills and the Internet.

The site will lead you through the registrations process. Once registered with the site you can create your own

health logs, activity journals, emergency contacts, and store your health insurance information.

Note: These links take you to non-governmental sites and are not an endorsement of products or services offered by the sites. In addition, these sites may have privacy and security policies that are inconsistent with those of MyHealthVet. For more information visit:

[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

## New Purple Heart postage stamp

From the VA web site

WASHINGTON – In continuing recognition of the sacrifices of combat-wounded veterans, the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, joined with top officials from the U.S. Postal Service today to unveil a new Purple Heart stamp.

Nicholson, a West Point alumnus and retired colonel in the Army reserves, also presented the Purple Heart medal to two soldiers being treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for combat wounds.



“This stamp will be a daily reminder of the extraordinary valor of our service members,” said Nicholson during remarks at a ceremony for the first day of issue for the stamp held at Arlington National Cemetery.

“It is fitting that we have every-day testimonials to the wounds of war that, for some veterans, have occurred through their brave and selfless service to our grateful nation,” Nicholson added.

Receiving the Purple Heart were Army Specialist Michael Hilliard and Army Specialist Ian Wagner.

The new 39-cent postal stamp has the image of the military's Purple Heart medal. Created by George Washington in 1782 for soldiers in the Continental Army, the Purple Heart now goes to military men and women wounded in combat. Next of kin of veterans who die in combat also receive the medal.

In 2003, the U.S. Postal Service first issued a 37-cent stamp with the medal's distinctive image – a profile of George Washington on a purple background within a heart-shaped medallion. The new stamp has the same image, although it comes in the new 39-cent value set for first-class postage.

# Rural Development home repair

by Eleanor Harris

Information taken from August, 2006 Area 1 Newsletter



USDA-Rural Development's home repair program is a federally funded program that offers **1 percent interest loans** to homeowners to make repairs and/or improvements to their homes. These loans can be amortized over a 20-year period, making the monthly payments as low as \$4.60 per thousand dollars borrowed. The maximum loan limit is \$20,000.

Rural Development also has a grant program is available to individuals who are 62 years of age or older. The maximum lifetime grant is \$7,500. Grant funds can only be used to correct health and safety hazards. These grants are forgiven if the applicant lives in the house for three years after receiving the grant. Loan and grant combinations are also available.

The home being repaired must be on a minimal lot size. Excess acreage would have to be sold. Also, liquid assets are limited to \$10,000 for elderly households and \$7,500

for non-elderly households. Loans are only available if commercial lenders are not able to help. Value of home must be modest (valued at \$203,000 or less) for Dane County.

Household size and income limits (for Dane County) are as follows:

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL INCOME
1	\$25,600 or less
2	\$29,300 or less
3	\$32,950 or less
4	\$36,600 or less

If you or someone you know has repairs that need to be done to their home, please give Rural Development a call at 608-935-2791, Ext. 4. Credit standards apply to the loan program. Residents cities of Madison, Middleton, Monona, Fitchburg, McFarland and Sun Prairie are not eligible to participate.

*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)

On the web: [www.co.dane.wi.us/veterans](http://www.co.dane.wi.us/veterans)

Michael R. Jackson, Service Officer  
Chuck Goranson, Editor

Other contributors:

Eleanor Harris

Chris Scoville

Dan Connery

Shirley Shaw

Jim Larson

Announcements and news contributions are welcome.

## Dan Connery joins CVSO staff

Dan Connery joined the Dane County Veterans Service Office at the end of May 2006 and is the newest member of our team. Replacing Maria Kluever, who retired in December 2005, he is proud to be working as an Assistant Veterans' Service Officer. Prior to joining our office, he worked with the Dane County Juvenile Court Program for six years.



Connery

Connery, an Army and Desert Storm veteran, feels honored to be working with veterans and their families. "I am learning more and more each day. So far, this experience has been very rewarding," he states.

A Madison-native, Connery has been married to his wife Melinda since 1997. Dan and Melinda have two sons, ages 8 and 5. In his spare time, he is a high school football official and loyal Badger and Packer fan. "At least the Badgers are doing well!" he jokes.

In addition to his normal schedule, Connery is also available for outreach on Thursdays at Vets for Vets on the UW-Madison campus.

**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 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 Fridays, 1 until 4

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

**Black Earth** 1116 Mills St.  
Most fourth Tuesdays each month 8 until noon



Assistant Veterans Service Officer Dan Connery is now available to **University of Wisconsin** students, staff and downtown residents at Vets for Vets, 714 University Ave. on most Thursdays from 8 until 3.

**Appointments recommended**  
**Call 266-4158**