

# The Dane County Veteran

November 2011

## New Dane County service officer

William J. (BJ) Ganem is the new Dane County Veterans Service Officer. He replaces Michael Jackson who retired last fall after 23 years in that office and Assistant Service Officer Dan Connery who has been acting in that role.

In announcing the appointment on Aug. 8, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi said, "Sergeant Ganem has shown a deep commitment to helping his fellow soldiers returning from service access the critical assistance they and their families deserve here at home. I have no doubt he will serve Dane County's veterans well as our new Veterans Service Officer."

Ganem began his military service in 1996 as an active duty member of the Marines. In 2000, he became a member of the reserves in Gulf Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 24<sup>th</sup> Marines, participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2004 to 2005. He was awarded a Purple Heart for serious injuries he received in combat, injuries that ended his service.

"I am honored to continue to serve the veterans of Dane County in my new, official capacity," said Ganem. "Veterans advocacy, advisement, rights, and benefits are my passion. As the number of soldiers continue returning home from service continues to grow, our already important mission to serve them, and their families, will continue to grow as well."



BJ Ganem spoke at the announcement of his selection. Listening are Assistant CVSO Dan Connery, Supervisor Robin Schmidt, Supervisor Dave de Felice, County Executive Joe Parisi, and Supervisor Dennis O'Loughlin.

Hello Dane County!

I am excited and honored to be the new County Veteran Service Officer serving all veterans in Dane County. As veterans of this great country, we have earned an array of benefits and services. The Dane County Veterans Service Office is here to help you understand and apply for all benefits (federal, state, or local) and with any other questions veterans or their family members may have in regards to life after the service. We may not be able to answer every question but we will know who to ask to get your question answered.

This office has been serving veterans for almost 70 years, and I intend to continue that tradition with passion and integrity. I encourage all veterans to stop in to our office at a minimum to say "hello" and to see what our office has to offer; you will not be disappointed. Please help me spread the word to all the veterans that this office is here to help all veterans with many issues that are related to their service or in their transition from the service.

I would like to thank County Executive Joe Parisi for the opportunity to lead this department in ensuring that the veterans of Dane County have access to their benefits and services. I am proud to be a part of this community and I am honored to be in a position that allows me to serve my fellow veterans.

Sincerely,  
BJ Ganem

# New County Veterans Service Officer, William (BJ) Ganem, has strong background

In December of 1996, William (BJ) Ganem graduated Marine Corps Recruit Depot Paris Island, S.C. as a Squad leader. His next stop was advanced infantry training at Marine Corps School of Infantry at Camp Lejeune, NC. Upon graduation from School of Infantry he received orders to Officer Candidate School as a member of the training cadre. The training cadre performed demonstrations and served as instructors for Marine Officer Candidates. He then completed a tour with 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR). While at 2<sup>nd</sup> LAR, he was assigned as a scout for the unit. Next, he had the opportunity to be assigned to G6 at Camp Lejeune, NC. While with G6, his duties



included preparing Marine Expeditionary Units for deployment in the form of a trainer mentor role.

Ganem's end of regular active service was in December, 2000 and he immediately joined the reserves with Co. G 2<sup>nd</sup> BN 24<sup>th</sup> MARINES. The unit deployed in 2004 to North Babel Province in Iraq nicknamed, "the triangle of death" by the media. He performed the role of a staff non-commissioned officer as a Sergeant. As the senior enlisted Marine in an infantry platoon, he looked after three squads of 12 to 14 men each. His platoon was tasked with support and stability operations along a main supply route, south of Baghdad. All 43 Marines in his platoon lived under a bridge overpass on this highway.

On Thanksgiving Day November 25, 2004, Sgt. Ganem's patrol drove into a combined arms ambush. The ambush was triggered by a victim-initiated IED (Improvised Explosive Device) that blew up the vehicle that he was driving. The ambush took the life

of one Marine, Lance Cpl. Ryan Cantaffio of Beaver Dam, and wounded three others including Sgt. Ganem who eventually lost a portion of his left leg.

Most of the time since Ganem's injuries has been filled with surgeries and physical therapy. Although he sustained multiple injuries and was discharged from the Marine Corps, he is still active in veterans' related events. In January of 2010, he underwent a revision to his amputation in an effort to improve his mobility and reduce the amount of pain caused by the injury. The surgery was a resounding success.

Ganem has participated in many athletic events such as hand cycling, snowboarding, ice climbing and much more. He is a member of Team Semper Fi, who is sponsored by the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund. He took part in the Mid West Soldier Ride in June, 2010, and hand cycled from Madison to Chicago by way of Milwaukee. He is also a peer mentor for the Wounded Warrior Project helping veterans of all the services with issues they face.

On September 26, 2011, Ganem stepped into a new role as Dane County Veterans Service Officer with the hopes of helping all Dane County veterans and their families. Before accepting this position, he was a sales manager for Kraft Foods Global Inc. for over 10 years.

He presently resides in Reedsburg with his wife Sarah and their two children, Dylan and Mackenzie.



# VETERANS DAY ACTIVITIES

## DEFENDING LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

### Friday, November 11, 2011

#### NOVEMBER 11

##### **Madison**

State Capitol Rotunda

9:30 – Madison Veterans Council Band performs in concert at the State Capitol, followed by a 10:00 ceremony. Hosted by the Madison Veterans Council.

VFW Post 7591

11:00 – Madison Veterans Park ceremony

12:00 – Chili lunch – free to all veterans  
301 Cottage Grove Road, Madison 53716

##### **Stoughton**

Stoughton Senior Center, 248 W. Main St.

11:30 – Program at Senior Center

Noon – Lunch (free for all veterans)  
Please call 873-8585 for reservations by 1:00 on 11/8/11

##### **Verona**

11:00 – Flag ceremony at Hometown Junction

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

##### **Waunakee**

10:30 – Program at Waunakee Middle School Gym  
1001 South Street

##### **Oregon**

Sponsored by VFW Post 10272

11:00 – Memorial service/short program at WW I Monument in downtown Oregon

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

#### NOVEMBER 12

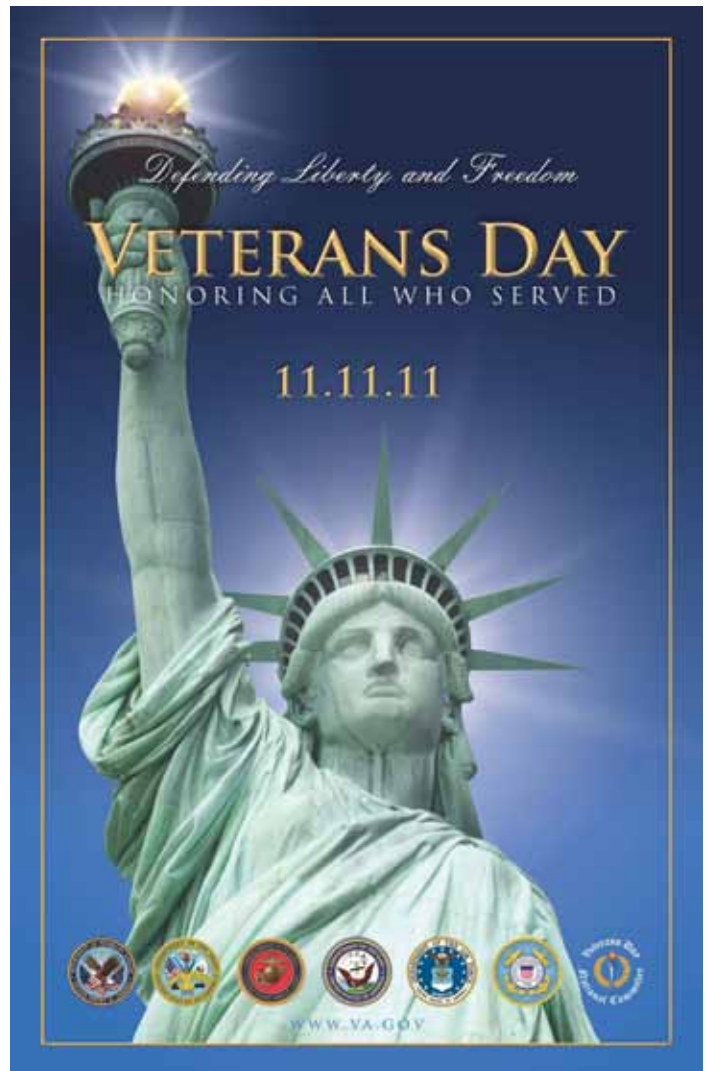
##### **Madison**

9:00 to 12:30 Elks Club Breakfast

711 Jenifer Street, Madison

All you can eat buffet. Free to all veterans and active duty personnel – must prove veteran status. Non-veterans \$9.00 per person.

12:15 – Program



Quaker State and Lube, located at 2259 Deming Way, Middleton, is offering a free meal to all veterans on Veterans Day. You must provide dog tags, military ID or uniform.

Call 608 831-5823 if you have questions



# VA promotes public service announcement about women veterans

## Nationwide release encourages public to join VA culture change

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



WASHINGTON (Oct. 13, 2011)- The Department of Veterans Affairs is taking its internal culture-change message to the public with a new video about the vital role women play in the military and the importance of providing women veterans with high quality health care.

VA's Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group recently completed a 60-second public service announcement (PSA) that challenges viewers to rethink pre-conceived notions about women veterans. This dynamic video features images of women in service to our country: they drive supply trucks, participate in reconnaissance missions, walk safety patrols, and operate helicopter machine guns.

"When these brave women complete their service and become veterans, we want them to know that VA is there to meet their health care needs," said Dr. Patricia Hayes, chief consultant of the VA's Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group. "At the same time, we want the public to recognize the contributions of women veterans and the benefits they have earned through their service to the nation."

The PSA is available for viewing on YouTube: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_profilepage&v=BOP5DCgixPE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_profilepage&v=BOP5DCgixPE) and [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). Broadcast organizations interested in obtaining a broadcast-quality version of the PSA should contact VA's Office of Public Affairs (202-461-7600).

The number of women using VA has doubled in the past decade, and that increase is expected to

continue into the next decade. More than half of the women using VA health care have service-connected disabilities. These range from combat PTSD to missing limbs. The PSA gives a sampling of the service-connected disabilities women veterans must cope with on a daily basis.

The PSA was developed for nationwide release from a new employee orientation video-available at [www.womenshealth.va.gov-created](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov-created) as part of VA's ongoing efforts to change its culture to be more understanding and accommodating of women veterans and honor the important service they have given our country.

"The VA's goal is to provide the highest quality care for every veteran, regardless of gender. Part of this initiative has been educating staff so they understand and appreciate that it is their job to make sure women veterans receive the best care anywhere," said Hayes.

In addition to new employee orientation, VA is spreading its culture-of-change message to current employees through posters, conferences, and e-mail messaging. VA health care providers are all given the opportunity to participate in a ground-breaking mini-residency program in Women's Health for Veterans. This program has already educated more than 1,100 VA providers on the latest knowledge in gender-specific health care.

For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit: [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet) and [www.womenshealth.va.gov](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov).

# Women veterans lead the way

*Dan Connery, assistant CVSO*

Source: <http://www.madison.va.gov/services/women/WVHP.asp>

Women are one of the fastest growing groups among our veterans population. According to [www.womanshealth.va.gov](http://www.womanshealth.va.gov), 8 percent of veterans are women and 13 percent of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) veterans are women. As our population of women veterans changes, the VA's focus on care is changing as well.

All VA Medical Centers nationwide have women veterans program managers who serve as central points of contact in helping to case manage and coordinate care particular to women. At Madison's VA Medical Center, Gail Hunt is the program manager. Gail and her team can be reached at (608) 256-1901 Extension 11121. The Women Veterans Health Program provides respect, dignity, and privacy women veterans deserve while meeting their unique health care needs in an outpatient setting. Madison's program is one of seven national sites with a Women's Health Fellowship, training tomorrow's leaders in women's health research, education, and clinical care.

At the state level, Carolyn Morgan serves as a Women Veterans Outreach Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). Carolyn works to ensure that women veterans in Wisconsin are getting the proper services. Carolyn can be reached at (608) 266-1312.

According to the WDVA, Wisconsin has a growing population of over 28,000 women veterans; proactive coordination of services to our women veterans is essential.

Additional resources can be found at <http://dva.state.wi.us/womenvets.asp>.

# New address for the National Personnel Records Center

*from Wisconsin Dept. of Veterans Affairs Media Relations*

The new address for the National Personnel Records Center is:

National Personnel Records Center  
1 Archives Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63138-1002

The majority of staff has moved to the new location and the military personnel records are in the process of moving. The entire move should be completed by the end of the summer of 2012.

As a reminder, ALL retirees and honorably discharged veterans should ensure that their family knows the location of their military separation document or DD214. The preferred method of submitting a request to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) is via the Internet. As you know, the NPRC provides copies of documents from military personnel records to authorized requesters. Our web-based application will provide better service on these requests by eliminating our mailroom processing time. Also, since the requester will be prompted to supply all information essential for us to process the request, delays that occur when we must go back for more information will be minimized. You may access this application at:

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

This improved on-line request process should be used INSTEAD OF Standard Form 180 for requests from the veteran or the veteran's next of kin, if possible. Your assistance with this initiative will allow us, and you, to better serve the needs of our veterans. If you do not wish to use the Internet, you should use Standard Form 180. You should print Standard Form 180 as you need it, not in advance because the form is periodically revised and updated. The link to the National Personnel Records Center is:

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>

# Changes to the WI GI Bill and Post 9/11 GI Bill

By Tom Hay, assistant CVSO

Until recently, a veteran would lose the amount of credits of WI GI Bill they received under Post 9/11 GI Bill (also known as Chapter 33). While veterans must use their Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits first, they no longer lose that amount (credits) of WI GI Bill benefits. The change in the recent budget took effect with the spring 2010 semester. Students/veterans do not have to take any action to have their WI GI Bill credits restored.

For veterans/students eligible for 100 percent of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, all WI GI Bill credits used are restored. For veterans/students eligible for less than 100 percent of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, WI GI Bill credits are restored on a proportional basis (i.e. 50 percent eligible for Post 9/11 GI Bill and the other 50 percent remitted under WI GI Bill, will get 50 percent of their credits restored).

Remember that WI GI Bill and Post 9/11 GI Bill are completely different programs. WI GI Bill is a state remission program and Post 9/11 GI Bill is a federal program administered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

For more information, check the website at: [http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben\\_education.asp#WIGI](http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_education.asp#WIGI)

## New services for family caregivers of Post-9/11 veterans

[www.caregiver.va.gov/support\\_benefits.asp](http://www.caregiver.va.gov/support_benefits.asp)

Family caregivers provide critical support in caring for veterans. The VA recognizes that family caregivers in a home environment can enhance the health and well-being of veterans under VA care.

Under the “Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010,” additional VA services are now available to seriously injured post-9/11 veterans and their family caregivers through comprehensive assistance for family caregivers. VA is now accepting applications for these services.

### Who is eligible?

Veterans eligible for this program are those who sustained a serious injury – including traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma or other mental disorder – incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, on or after September 11, 2001.

Veterans eligible for this program must also be in need of personal care services because of an inability to perform one or more activities of daily living and/or need supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological impairment or injury.

To be eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, veterans must first be enrolled for VA health services, if not enrolled previously.

### New services available to family caregivers through this program

The new law will provide additional assistance to primary family caregivers of eligible post-9/11 veterans and service members. New services for this group include:

- \* Monthly stipend
- \* Travel expenses (including lodging and per diem while accompanying veterans undergoing care)
- \* Access to health care insurance (if the caregiver is not already entitled to care or services under a health care plan)
- \* Mental health services and counseling
- \* Comprehensive VA caregiver training provided by Easter Seals
- \* Respite care (not less than 30 days per year)

If you think you fit the criteria for these new services, please visit: [www.va.gov/healtheligibility/caregiver](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/caregiver)

Eligible veterans are able to designate one primary family caregiver and up to two secondary family caregivers, if desired. Caregiver support coordinators are available at every VA Medical Center to assist veterans and their family caregivers with the application process. The coordinator at the Madison VA Medical Center is Jennifer Jaqua. Jennifer can be reached at (608) 256-1901 Extension 11485.

# JOBS FOR VETS

UNEMPLOYED?

LOOKING FOR  
A JOB?

**Here is a good resource:  
Wisconsin Department of  
Veterans Affairs website:**

*dva.state.wi.us/Employment*

## VA Hospital updates

By BJ Ganem

The William S. Middleton VA Hospital in Madison has been recognized as one of the twenty top performing VA hospitals in the nation. An independent commission compared hospitals of all sorts all across the country and twenty VA hospitals made the list to include our very own here in Madison, WI.

Along with the above good news, the long awaited parking garage is set to be in full operation in December of this year. The exact date has not yet been determined; however, the construction is on pace to make the target month of December, 2011. Continue to use



the valet service when accessing the hospital. The people working this free service do a great job of parking cars and delivering to the patients when they are finished with their business at the hospital.

More information to come soon.

## Read us online

We're stepping into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If you want to get the newsletter via e-mail (and save some trees and postage), please email us at: [vets@countyofdane.com](mailto:vets@countyofdane.com) Thanks! We hope to have a link soon on our web page where you can update your information with a click of a button.

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list or have changes to your information and don't have email, please call 266-4158 and we would be happy to help you make any changes.

## Your service office

*The Dane County Veteran* is published by the Dane County Veterans Service Office  
City-County Building, Room 108  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 266-4158  
E-mail : [vets@countyofdane.com](mailto:vets@countyofdane.com)  
On the web: [countyofdane.com/veterans](http://countyofdane.com/veterans)

BJ Ganem, Service Officer  
Chuck Goranson, Editor

Other contributors:  
Dan Connery  
Eleanor Harris  
Tom Hay  
Shirley Shaw  
Lori Redepinning

Announcements and news contributions are welcome.

The Veterans Service Office is accredited to represent claimants/applicants before the US Dept. of Veterans Affairs through:

- \* American Legion
- \* AMVETS
- \* Disabled American Veterans
- \* Military Order of the Purple Heart
- \* National Association of County Veterans Service Officers
- \* The Retired Enlisted Association
- \* Vietnam Veterans of America
- \* Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

The Veterans Service Office has memberships in the following organizations:

- \* National Association of County Veterans Service Officers
- \* County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin
- \* WI State Association of County Veterans Service Commissions
- \* Madison Veterans Council

**Dane County Veterans Service Office**  
**City-County Building, Room 108**  
**210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.**  
**Madison, WI 53703**  
**Phone: (608) 266-4158**

## *A veterans service office is near you*

### **Main Office-Downtown Madison**

Monday-Friday: 7:45 to 4:30  
City-County Building, Room 108  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

### **UW-Madison**

Student Activities Center, 333 E. Campus Mall,  
Suite 3136  
Most Thursdays from 12 until 4 during the  
school year

### **VA Hospital**

Every Wednesday, 12 until 4  
(Beginning 12/7/11)

The **Sun Prairie** branch of the Summit Credit Union,  
1333 W. Main

Most first and third Tuesdays each month, 12 until 4.

The **Stoughton** Area Senior Center,  
248 W. Main St.

Most Fridays each month from 8 until 4

**Appointments recommended**

**266-4158**