

VA reaching out to vets with mortgage Problems

From <http://www.va.gov>

WASHINGTON – Many home owners have found it difficult recently to pay their mortgages, but quick intervention by loan counselors at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has actually reduced the number of veterans defaulting on their home loans.

“VA is reaching out to veterans -- both those who use our home-loan guaranty program and those who don't take advantage of our guaranties -- to keep people in their homes,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. “I'm proud of our solid record of success in helping veterans and active-duty personnel deal with financial crises.”

Accounting for much of this success are VA counselors at nine regional loan centers who assist people with VA-guarantied loans avoid foreclosure through counseling and special financing arrangements. The counselors also can assist other veterans with financial problems. VA counselors have helped about 74,000 veterans, active-duty members and survivors keep their homes since 2000, a savings to the government of nearly \$1.5 billion.

Depending on a veteran's circumstances, VA can intercede with the borrower on the veteran's behalf to pursue options -- such as repayment plans, forbearance, and loan modifications -- that would allow a veteran to keep a home.

To obtain help from a VA financial counselor, veterans can call VA toll-free at 1-877-827-3702. Information about VA's home loan guaranty program can be obtained at www.homeloans.va.gov.

VA considers ALS presumptive to military service

From VA News Release dated September 23, 2008
Dan Connery, Assistant CVSO

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) was recently added as a compensable presumptive condition to military service. Also called Lou Gehrig's disease, ALS is a neuromuscular disease that affects about 20,000 to 30,000 people of all races and ethnicities in the United States. ALS is often relentlessly progressive and is almost always fatal. “Veterans are developing ALS in rates higher than the general population, and it was appropriate to take action,” Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake said.

If you know of a veteran with 90 days or more of continuous active duty service who has this condition or someone who may have died from this condition, please have them or their family contact the Dane County Veterans Service Office at 608-266-4158. Surviving spouses and dependent children of veterans who passed away from ALS may qualify for VA benefits as well.



Dane County Veterans Service Office staff at the Veterans Memorial garden.



Michael Jackson's 20th anniversary at the Dane County Veterans Service Officer was February, 2008. CVSO Association President Lidonne presents him with a 20 year service certificate from the CVSO Association of WI. at the Fall conference held in Waupaca September

The Circle of Life

By Michael R. Jackson, Dane County Veterans Service Officer

It's reported that WWII veterans are dying at the rate of 1,000 a day. A national movement is underway to help those men and women, referred to as "the greatest generation", have a free flight to our nation's capitol in Washington DC to see the WWII memorial. The first Honor Flight in Wisconsin was coordinated in LaCrosse October 8, 2008. WWII veterans that live within 100 miles of LaCrosse can apply.

The LaCrosse website is www.freedomhonor-flight.org The Milwaukee area is called "Stars and Stripes Honor Flight." Their initial honor flight is scheduled for November 19, 2008. This flight is full; however, a tentative flight is scheduled for May 15, 2009. WWII veterans who live within a 120 mile radius of Milwaukee may apply. Plans are currently underway to establish an Honor Flight program in Madison. Connie Allord and Doug Manthe are leading this effort. Their contact information is:

Telephone: Doug Manthe (608) 516-6179 or
Connie Allord (608) 833-6222

Donations will be gladly accepted at, and checks made out to:

FREEDOM HONOR FLIGHT
c/o Doug Manthe
3023 Bunker View
Sun Prairie WI 53590

It costs \$500 per WWII veteran to go on the flight. Priority is given to WWII veterans and any veteran with a terminal illness. Honor Flight provides trained volunteers, called guardians, to accompany the veterans, helping them enjoy the one day trip. Each guardian pays a total of \$500 and attends a required training session.

All three Honor Flight service areas are accepting donations. In addition, the LaCrosse and Stars & Stripes service areas are accepting applications for veterans and guardians. Please share this information with others.

So, you may be wondering about the title of this article "The Circle of Life". Approximately 3500 Wisconsin National Guard members will be mobilized early next year for military service in Southwest Asia. It's been suggested that we get to know these families now so that ongoing support for them during the service member's deployment will be seamless. WWII veterans, OEF/OIF veterans; the Circle of Life.

Meet Commissioner Marjorie Marshman

Written by Chris Scoville, Dane County Assistant CVSO

Marge has been an active member of the Dane County Veterans Commission since her selection to the commission in 2002, currently serving as the vice-chairman of the committee. The commission advises the Dane County Executive and the Dane County Veterans Services Office. Marge served in the US Marine Corp during WWII from 12/03/1943 to 01/26/1946. Marge has always been a very involved member of the veterans' community. She is also a member of the following organizations:

- Madison Firing Squad, since 1992, currently serving as Chaplain, presiding over the honor of the final recognition of the veteran and flag presentation to the families of 125 Madison funerals annually;
- American Legion since 1986 (past post Chaplain, adjutant, 1st vice

Commander for the county, commander for Dane County, and American Legion auxiliary since 1986);

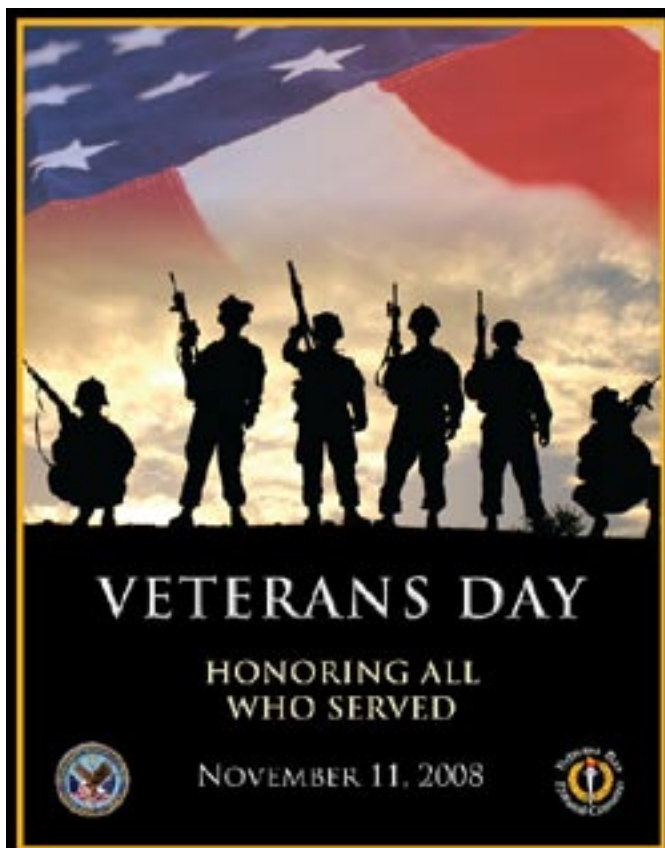
- VFW auxiliary (Cooties Auxiliary Chaplain);
- Marine Corp League – life member since 1993 (past Chaplain, adjutant for the Four Lakes, commandant for two terms for Four Lakes Detachment, member of the Devil Dogs);
- Madison Veterans Council since 1986 (past secretary, Chaplain- presiding over all Madison Veterans Council events);
- Active participant in the Madison Stand Downs;
- Am Vets since 2004 (past district chaplain);
- VA hospital volunteer (former escort for patients, current volunteer for Dane

County Vets Service Officer during outreach at VA hospital);

- Pearl Harbor Association (new affiliation);
- WIMSA (Women In Military Service Association -charter member).

It's a pleasure and honor to know and work with Marge. She has devoted over 20 years of her life to working with veterans and their families. Marge is a valuable asset to the Dane County Veterans Service Commission and the veterans community in general. Thank you Marge for your dedication to veterans!





VETERANS DAY ACTIVITIES

November 8

9 am-11 am Elks Club Breakfast
711 Jenifer Street, Madison
Free to all veterans – must prove veteran status
11:00 am – Program at Veterans Park in London.

November 11

Stoughton

Stoughton Senior Center, 248 W. Main St.
11:45 am – Presentation from Fox Prairie School
12:00 pm – Free lunch for all veterans. Please call
873-8585 for reservations by 12 noon on 11/10/08

Verona

11:00 am – Flag ceremony at Hometown Junction
11:45 am – Lunch at the Verona Senior Center,
108 Paoli St. Please call 845-7471 in advance for
reservations
12:15 pm – Program

Verona

4:00 to 7:30 pm – Chili Supper at the AL Post,
207 N. Legion St

Waunakee

10:15 a.m. – Program at Middle School Gym
1001 South Street

Deerfield

8:00 a.m. – Program at Deerfield High School
414 Beloit Street

Sun Prairie

VFW Post 9362, 949 S. Walker Way
11:00 am – Program
12:00 pm– Cookout (brats and burgers)

Oregon

Sponsored by VFW Post 10272
11:00 am – Memorial service/short program at WW I
Monument in Triangle Park
12:00 pm – Free lunch and musical entertainment for
veterans at Oregon Senior Center, 219 Park St.

Black Earth

John Bird's Office, 1116 Mills St
3:30 – Flagpole dedication and Flag Retirement
ceremony

Generations of Thanks for Generations of Service

Veterans Day
Tuesday, November 11, 2008
Capitol Rotunda
Madison, WI
Sponsored by The Madison Veterans Council

Program

9:30 – Band concert	Invocation
10:00 Welcome	Introduction of guests
Rose ceremony	Presentation of colors
Rifle salute & taps	National Anthem
Recessional	Pledge of Allegiance

11:00 – 11th hour of 11th day of the 11th month

Veterans Day History

From WDVA website: www.dva.state.wi.us

World War I officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919. However, the fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of “the war to end all wars.” The following year, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day, saying “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations.” The original conception of Armistice Day called for parades and public meetings and a brief suspension of business at 11:00 am.

In May 1938, an act passed declaring November 11 a legal holiday dedicated to the cause of peace and to be celebrated and known as Armistice Day. In 1954, after the United States had mobilized troops for

World War II and the Korean War, the 83rd Congress amended that act by replacing the word armistice with the word veterans. Thus November 11 became known as Veterans Day, a day to honor veterans of all wars. In October 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first Veterans Day Proclamation and created a Veterans Day Committee to coordinate the planning for Veterans Day activities.

With the passage of the Uniforms Holiday Bill in 1968, the observance of Veterans Day was moved to a Monday. October 25, 1971, was the first Veterans Day not celebrated on November 11th. Due to the historic and patriotic significance of November 11, President Gerald R. Ford signed a law in 1975 returning the day to November 11, beginning in 1978.

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of the day of the week on which it falls, preserving the significance of the date. It also focuses attention on the true purpose of Veterans Day: a celebration to honor America’s veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Camp American Legion

Written by Connie Allord

Camp American Legion is always one of the highlights of the summer for many veterans who enjoy the north woods, the lakes and various activities. The recreation director was most accommodating and put in extra effort to make sure that everyone was having a good time. The therapists who volunteer their time and talents are the finest and this summer was no exception. The equipment was top-notch and beneficial to all who chose to take advantage of it. Various trips off campus are always fun too. Attendance seemed to be down, sad to say but looking forward to camp next year.



Pictured are Connie Allord, Annette Howards, Marion Forrer and Nancy Sheridan, all enjoying one of several outings on one of the pontoon boats and enjoying the fishing. Yes, they did bite - and ladies DO fish. These ladies are all WWII Marine veterans who have gone to camp for several years. Of course male veterans always outnumber the women but that has also changed a bit in the last few years. (They didn't get in the picture)

Traditional veterans plates to be re-issued

News release from Rep. Terry Musser

MADISON... Many veterans were surprised by the new look of the veterans license plates when the renewal forms arrived in the mail. The traditional red, white and blue design had been changed. Musser introduced legislation (AB518) to change the plate design back to the traditional red, white and blue favored by so many Wisconsin veterans. After negotiations, the process of applying for the slightly modified traditional red, white and blue plate is as follows:

- If you are still to receive the new plates, you will get the new design in the mail, until June 30, 2008. You are urged to accept the plate and pay the fees as usual.
- If you like the new plates that were sent to you, no special steps need to be taken.
- As of July 1, 2008, the slightly modified traditional plate will be re-issued. If you want the traditional plate again, you will need to request it from DOT and send them \$10. The DOT will not send information to you. It will be up to each veteran to apply for the newly issued red, white and blue plate.
- If you are applying for a veterans plate for the first time, you will receive the new plates until June 30, and the traditional plates beginning July 1.
- To apply for the traditional plates you can visit: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/vehicles/plates/replaceplate.htm>. Choose form MV2118. Fill out the form, choose the 'military' option, and enclose the \$10 fee. The application should be mailed after July 1 to: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 7949, Madison, WI 53707-7949.
- Your new plates will have a new number unless your plates are personalized. In that case you will keep your personalized plate number. If you have questions on the process, you can call DOT at (608) 266-1466.

NACVSO

conference

by Chris Scoville, Assistant CVSO

On June 15, 2008, Michael Jackson, Chris Scoville, Dan Connery, and Eleanor Harris from the Dane County Veterans Service Office had the privilege of attending the six-day National County Veterans Servicer Officer conference held in Charleston, South Carolina. The conference was extremely well orchestrated and included valuable training in numerous veterans' issues. One of the more powerful presentations was by Lieutenant Colonel Tim Maxwell, one of the highest-ranking U.S. service members wounded in Iraq. LTC Maxwell was wounded in Iraq in 2004, when a mortar round exploded and inserted shrapnel into his brain. He is the founder of the Wounded Warrior Barracks at Camp Lejeune and the www.sempermax.com web site. Other training topics included the basics of TBI, PTSD and other mental health issues, the Appellate Process, and Medical Evaluation Boards. In between training sessions, the staff toured some of the historic areas of Charleston including Ft. Sumter, the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown and the Cold War submarine USS Clamagore.



Staff members Dan Connery, Chris Scoville and Eleanor Harris at Fort Sumpter in Charleston Harbor.

The Dane County Veteran is published by the Dane County Veterans Service Office
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Announcements and news contributions are welcome.



Gold Star Wives member Ellen Blissenbach and Dane CVSO Michael Jackson at Memorial Day event at the State Capitol May, 2008

Non service connected pension and aid & attendance benefit alert

CVSO Insights -written by Donna Chrzas, Columbia County CVSO

Misleading information is being distributed to Assisted Living facilities and Nursing Homes soliciting to assist veterans in obtaining Veterans Administration (VA) benefits for a fee. The fee can vary from around four hundred dollars (\$400) to seven hundred dollars (\$700) or more. This is a huge disservice to our veterans and barely within the law. Each county in Wisconsin has a County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO). The job of the CVSO is to assist military veterans to apply for benefits from the VA. The assistance provided by the local CVSO is without cost to the veteran or the veteran's family, guardian, POA, or other persons representing the veteran's interests.

Several companies around the country are participating in this type of activity. As an example, two companies currently known to be sending misleading information are: Kneifel and Associates in Avoca, WI and Alliant Associates, LLC based in Kearney Nebraska, with affiliations in Madison, WI. The companies involved remain marginally within the law by taking advantage of a loophole that does not allow them to charge the veteran directly but does allow them to charge what is referred to as "Disinterested Third Parties," such as family members, guardians, POAs or other persons representing the veteran's interests. Once these companies have contact with the veteran or persons representing the interests of the veteran, they are leading them to believe that they can work more effectively in the veteran's behalf by getting the VA claims through the system faster and with a higher rate of success than the local CVSO. They are also intimating that they will give more hands on assistance. However, no matter who files the VA claim or how quickly the claim is submitted, once it reaches the VA it is subject to VA's processing time frame, current back logs, etc.

CVSOs are trained and accredited to assist veterans with all aspects of State and Federal VA benefits. In addition, they receive many hours of continuing education each year to maintain the ability to assist veterans with a high degree of efficiency, accuracy and success. Veterans should never have to pay to apply for VA benefits to which they may be entitled. Nursing Homes,

Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRFs) and other service related providers, as well as the general public, can help to keep veterans from being taken advantage of by these unscrupulous companies and do them a great service in the future by referring veterans, their families, guardians, POAs or other persons representing the interests of the veteran to the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) in their county. Working with their CVSO, veterans will receive accurate and efficient hands on service that does not come with a fee.

The local CVSO is listed in the telephone book under County Government or may be found by logging on to the following website: www.wicvso.org.

Public Television is Searching for Wisconsin Vietnam War Veterans to Tell Their Stories

From Wisconsin Dept. of Veterans Affairs and Wisconsin Historical Foundation

Mik Derks from Wisconsin Public Television is planning to film a documentary on Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans. Public television has previously filmed and air documentaries on WWII and Korean veterans from Wisconsin. Both were a huge success and are being modeled in other states. The film is a compilation oral interviews and scheduled to debut in the Spring of 2010. You may contact Mik at 265-6376 if you would like to participate. Also, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum is always interested in oral histories from veterans for placement in their archives. Contact Jeff Kollath at (608) 261-0541.

Strassman puts injured vets lives back in motion

*From Crusader Connection [Edgewood College], Summer 2008.
Lori Battista, Director of Alumni Relations and Special Events*

A few years ago, Dave Strassman became interested in the Segway, an upright two-wheeled vehicle that looks a bit like an old-fashioned rotary lawnmower you can stand on and ride. He brought one home and began to “tinker” with it and see how he might be able to make it easier to operate. After some trial and error, Dave was able to adapt it to have a seat to help out a friend who had hip surgery. Jere Fabick, who is involved with Disability Rights Advocates For Technology (DRAFT), wanted to have Segways for injured veterans. Jere and Dave worked to build the Segs4Vets program and co-founded SegVator LLC which designs the seat adaptations and power left attachments for cars. Strassman and SegVator are developing new products

and modifications for Segways including snow-plow and lawnmower attachments.

By partnering with all branches of the military, veterans assistance funds and private donations, veterans from OIF/OEF can apply for a Segway at no cost. The Segways are distributed in groups and trained in how to use the Segway as part of their daily lives. As of May, 2008, 160 Segways had been given to disabled veterans.

To find out more about the great work that the Segs4Vets people are doing, please visit their website at www.segs4vets.com

VA revises TBI disability rating schedule

*From VA News Release dated September 23, 2008
Dan Connery, Assistant Veterans Service Officer*

In light of the recent Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has seen a dramatic rise in the number of traumatic brain injury (TBI) cases. As a result, the VA has revised its rating schedule so that VA employees can more appropriately respond to and rate TBI claims.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used for roadside bombs are the common cause of TBI injuries. When exposed to an IED, a service member’s brain may bounce back and forth inside of the skull; TBI is often the result. Closed head injuries account for more than 90 percent of all combat-related TBI cases. More

often than not, TBI symptoms include some of all of the following: headaches, sleeping difficulties, memory problems, trouble concentrating, irritability, and depression.

Veterans who may be suffering from TBI should seek medical treatment and consider filing a service-connected disability claim with the VA. For further assistance, please contact the Dane County Veterans Service Office at (608) 266-4158.

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

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

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

UW - Madison campus

Vets for Vets, 714 University Ave.
Most Thursdays, 9 until 3

Appointments recommended

266-4158