

97 WWII vets go on Badger Honor Flight

by Lori Redepening, Dane County Veterans Service Office

On Saturday April 17, 2010, 97 World War II veterans were flown from Madison to Washington D.C. to view the war memorial that was built in their honor. These men and woman from Dane County and surrounding areas were able to go on this all-expenses-paid tour, along with a family member or friend as a guardian, made possible by the Badger Honor Flight.

Their day began with check-in at the Madison Airport by 4:30 a.m. as they were greeted by volunteers and organizers. Each veteran was presented with a red jacket and the guardians received blue jackets. A special color was assigned to each person to designate which bus they were assigned to through out the day. Off they flew into the wide blue yonder!

Upon arrival in Washington, D.C., the group was in for a sunny day with lots of laughter, but memories of a time long ago also came to mind, as many resurrected stories they had not spoken of in the past. As passersby and visitors congregated to take pictures and thank them for what they had done, the stories continued to be heard by those anxious to listen. Of course, they were not without shedding tears as the memories of fallen comrades appeared as though it were yesterday.

The journey home was going to be a quiet one, with thoughts of the day gone by and hopes of catching a long-awaited nap...Not so! As the lights dimmed on the plane, a voice shouted "MAIL CALL"! Volunteers handed out to every veteran, their own package of letters from home and words of appreciation that were long overdue. This time there were tears of joy as each one read through their gift!

At approximately 10:00 p.m. they arrived back in Madison to be whisked off to the comforts of their own homes. Alas, not so! Upon reaching the stairs in the terminal, what did they see? An Honor Guard,

a band and over 1,200 welcoming fans to make the end of their special day even more memorable! Once again, there were tears of disbelief and more "Thank you's"...What a way to end the day!

That Saturday approximately 950 veterans and roughly 500 guardians on Honor Flights from around the country toured Washington D.C., quite a difference from the first "honor flight" in 2005 that flew 6 small planes from Springfield, Ohio, with only 12 WWII veterans. The Badger Honor Flight that originates from the Madison airport is now in the next



phase of planning its second trip. The cost for each flight is around \$100,000 to fly 100 veterans. These funds come from corporate sponsors, private donations and funds that the guardians pay. If you know of a WWII veteran, please encourage them to apply for this memorable event. Statistics from the U.S. Veterans Administration estimate that 850 WWII vets die every day. You can contact the Badger Honor Flight for an application or to make a donation at www.badgerhonorflight.org

MEMORIAL DAY ACTIVITIES May 31, 2010

Forest Hill Cemetery

Speedway Rd. and Regent St., Madison.

8:00– Assembly at Soldiers’ Rest. Organized by VFW Post 1318.

8:10– Service at Soldiers’ Rest. Organized by Madison Veterans Council.

8:30– Service at Union Rest National Cemetery. Conducted by The Sons of the Union Veterans & its Auxiliary.

8:50 – Service at Confederate Rest. Organized by the 61st Georgia Infantry.

State Capitol Building – State Street (Rain Location 1st Floor Rotunda)

9:30 – Band Concert

10:00 – Memorial Service. Posting of the Colors, National Anthem, Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation. Introduction of Honored Guests, General Logan’s Memorial Day Proclamation; Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. Choir, Speakers, Rose Ceremony, Conclusion. Rifle Salute, Buglers, Benediction. Organized by Madison Veterans Council.

VFW Post 10272, Oregon/Brooklyn

8:00 – Jug Prairie Cemetery

8:15 – German Church Cemetery

8:45 – Graves Cemetery

9:00 – Rutland Cemetery

9:30 – Storytown Cemetery

10:00 – War Memorial @ Oregon

10:30 – Prairie Mound & St. Mary’s Cemetery

10:45 – Dunn Cemetery

11:15 – Brooklyn Cemetery

12:45 – Fitchburg Wayside Memorial

VFW Post 7591, Madison

9:00 – Memorial Service @ Monona Grove High School.

10:00 – Monona Grove Memorial Parade, starts at Monona Grove High School

11:00 – Services @ Blooming Grove Cemetery

12:00 – Services @ Roselawn Memorial Cemetery

1:00 – Services @ Highland Memory Cemetery

2:00 - Services @ Madison Veterans Memorial

3:00 – Services @ VFW, 301 Cottage Grove Rd. for members of post who passed away last year.

AL Post 460, Belleville

10:00 – Services @ Belleville High School

AL Post 313, Black Earth

8:00 Legion assembles at Legion Hall

8:30 Depart for Sunny Hill Cemetery

8:45 Sunny Hill Cemetery Honors

9:15 Oak Hill Cemetery Honors

10:00 St. James Cemetery Honors

10:45 Vermont Church Cemetery Honors

11:15 Veteran’s Park Honors

11:30 Legion Meeting at Legion Hall

12:30 Lunch at Luckenbooth Cafe

AL Post 437, Mazomanie

10:00 – Memorial Services @ Elementary School
Gold Star Mother Service, followed by Memorial Services both cemeteries
Potluck dinner @ Community Building,
public invited

AL Post 534, McFarland

6:00 –Flags are put up

8:00 –Flag Raising Ceremony @ 2 cemeteries

12:00 – Parade starts at Christ the King Church

1:00– Memorial Services @ Post. Speaker: Michael Jackson. Retirement service to follow.

5:00 - Flags come down, folded & put away

VFW Post 328 & AL Post 59, Stoughton

10:00 – Parade followed by Memorial Services @ Mandt Park. Return to Post for social, public invited. If rain, program @11:00 at Mandt Park.

VFW Post 8216, Middleton

9:30—St. Peters Cemetery, 7121 County K, Ashton

AL POST 245, Cross Plains & WI Vietnam Veterans

6:00 a.m. - Services at six local cemeteries

11:00— Parade

11:30 —Chicken BBQ at Cross Plains pool

11:30— Memorial Service @Legion Park.

AL Post 279 - Marshall

10:00 – Parade. Program will start on/about 10:30 at Marshall Elementary School.

AL Post 360 & VFW Post 11244. Waunakee

10:30 – Parade from Old Village Hall parking lot. Following parade, Memorial Services at Village Park. Speakers and reading names of deceased veterans. Potluck to follow at the Legion bldg. – bring dish to pass. Public invited. Hot dogs & soda provided.



Dedication of Madison Veterans Memorial Park, Star Spangled Trail, Madison WI on Saturday, December 5, 2009.

VFW Post 9362 & AL Post 333, Sun Prairie

10:00 – Parade

11:00 – Memorial Service @ Post 9362, 349 S. Walker Way, Sun Prairie

Ellen Blissenbach

Michael Jackson, Dane CVSO

Gold Star Wives Representative, Ellen Blissenbach, succumbed on March 16, 2010. Ellen was a faithful veterans advocate who attended Madison Veteran Council meetings, Board of Veterans Affairs committee meetings, state of Wisconsin veteran-related public hearings and regularly provided public testimony regarding MIAs in Washington, DC. Her life-long hope was that the remains of her husband would be found in Korea. Unfortunately, such was not to be realized during her life time. She was a model of consistency. I have the image of her crocheting in the back of the meeting room. Her finished products of afghans and pillows became treasured items at fund-raising events for various veterans groups. Ellen was a kind, gentle, special person who will be missed. The Council on Veterans Programs of Wisconsin honored her at their April meeting with a memorial certificate. She is survived by a son who lives in Indiana.



Michael Jackson & Ellen Blissenbach at Veterans Day ceremony, 2008.

Goodbye and Welcome

Michael Jackson, Dane County Veterans Service Officer

Christine Scoville

Chris Scoville, Dane County Assistant CVSO, quietly retired at the end of 2009.

Her passion for serving veterans and their families remained, but the cold Wisconsin winters took their toll on Chris and her husband Norm. They retreated to Mesa, Arizona, and became snow birds. As a testament to her interest and enjoyment in veterans advocacy work, she volunteered with the Disabled American Veterans in Mesa by helping veterans with their VA claims. Her former colleagues, veterans, Stoughton and Oregon Senior Center staff all miss her and wish her family well.



Thomas Hay

Thomas Hay joined the County Veterans Service Office as a new Assistant Veterans Services Officer on April 5, 2010. Thomas is retired from the Wisconsin Army National Guard, including 4 years in the active Army and over 12 years of civil service with Department of Military Affairs. His military career included mobilizations for Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as state active duty for the Kentucky ice storm in February 2009. He spent half his career as an enlisted soldier and the other half as a commissioned officer, retiring as a Captain.



Tom is “thrilled that he can serve in another capacity and help veterans and their families.” Outside of work, he enjoys watching sports, especially the Packers, Brewers, Bucks and Badgers. Tom is married to Lisa, a member of the 115th Fighter Wing and the two of them are expecting twins in late September, 2010. Welcome aboard, Tom!

Medallion

from <http://www.cem.va.gov/hm/hmtype.asp>

The Department of Veterans Affairs is making available a new medallion to be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a veteran.

If requested, the medallion will be furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or marker for veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990, and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

The medallion will be available in three sizes, 5 inches, 3 inches, and 1 ½ inches. Each medallion will be inscribed with the word VETERAN across the top and the Branch of Service at the bottom. Appropriate affixing adhesive, instructions and hardware will be provided with the medallion.

We estimate this new medallion will be available by June 30, 2010 and we will begin accepting claims at that time.

Important: This benefit is only applicable if the grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. In these instances, eligible veterans are entitled to either a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both.

If you think you may be interested in submitting a claim for the new medallion, we will begin accepting claims once a contract has been awarded for its manufacture. A new claim form is being developed for the medallion and it will be posted to this website once it has been approved.

Please continue to monitor this site for updated information regarding the new medallion.



Wisconsin Veterans Homes

Quality care for veterans

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Press Release

The State of Wisconsin offers two outstanding veterans homes that proudly serve military members and spouses who have served our country. The Wisconsin Veterans Homes at King (in Waupaca County) and Union Grove (in Racine County) offer veterans and their spouses quality care in an enriching environment that fits the need of the veteran.

To be admitted to a Wisconsin veterans home, veterans must have entered service from the state of Wisconsin, or resided in the state of Wisconsin for 12 consecutive months since his/her discharge from military service. Spouses and widows of eligible veterans may also qualify for admission to the Homes.



The Veterans Home at King is a self-contained community on a 320-acre campus in Waupaca County on the shores of Rainbow Lake near the city of Waupaca. The King Home includes four separately licensed nursing facilities that provide comprehensive nursing care including a memory care unit, an on site dentist, a licensed librarian, pontoon boats, a bowling alley, and a complete woodworking shop.

The King Home is one of the largest skilled long-term care facilities in the United States. Approximately 500 nursing staff and over 300 support staff provide quality care for about 700 veterans and spouses who call "King" their home.

The Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove in Racine County includes assisted living facilities with many recently remodeled rooms, as well as a new skilled nursing facility and activity center. It offers a wide range of care for about 220 members, with Medicare services and a memory care unit.

The Union Grove Home has recently received notification that its nursing home (Boland Hall) has again received a "5-Star Rating" for overall quality of care for the second time in a row. Out of 16,000 nursing

homes across the country only 15 percent receive this honor, and Boland Hall is one of them. The facility is a state-of-the-art, connected to a beautiful recreation center where veterans enjoy a library with computer/internet access, pool tables, pub, chapel, ceramics, and leather and woodworking activities.



In addition, WDVA's Veterans Assistance Program (VAP) helps homeless veterans and those veterans at risk of becoming homeless (male and female) to receive job training, health care, counseling and rehabilitative services to give them the skills to reintegrate back into the community, while providing them with a stable, safe and secure shelter. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, established the VAP in



1994. This statewide "back-to-work" program operates Veterans Assistance Centers, with convenient access to nearby VA medical centers. The centers are located at: Fort McCoy, the campus of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, the campus of the Southern Wisconsin Center

near Union Grove, and the campus of the Northern Wisconsin Center in Chippewa Falls.

A project is still in the planning stages for the proposed construction of a third state veterans home, in Chippewa Falls. Initial funding requests have been approved, but the final approval by the Federal VA may not be announced until 2010.

For photos and information about the Homes, including admissions and eligibility, please visit www.WisVets.com/Homes, or contact the Dane County Veterans Service Office at 266-4158.

VA adds 9 new Gulf War presumptive conditions

From VA News Release dated March 18, 2010

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the VA is taking steps to make it easier for veterans to obtain disability compensation for certain diseases associated with service in the Persian Gulf War or Afghanistan. This will be the beginning of historic change for how VA considers Gulf War Veterans illnesses.

Following recommendations made by VA's Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force, VA is publishing a proposed regulation in the *Federal Register* that will establish new presumptions of service connection for nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War, or in Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001.

The proposed rule includes information about the long-term health effects potentially associated with the nine diseases: Brucellosis, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Coxiella burnetii* (Q fever), malaria, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, Nontyphoid Salmonella, *Shigella*, Visceral leishmaniasis and West Nile virus.

With the proposed rule, a veteran will only have to show service in Southwest Asia or Afghanistan, and a current diagnosis of one of the nine diseases. Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted over the next 60 days. A final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments received.

Because the Persian Gulf War has not been declared ended, veterans serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom are eligible for VA's new presumptions. Secretary Shinseki decided to include Afghanistan veterans in these presumptions because NAS found that the nine diseases are prevalent in that country.

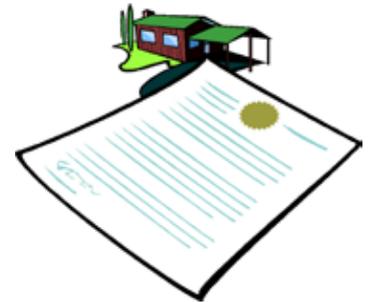
Disability compensation is a non-taxable, monthly monetary benefit paid to veterans who are disabled as a result of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service. For more information about health problems associated with military service during operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and related VA programs go to www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/. For assistance with filing a VA claim, please call the Dane County Veterans Service Office at 608-266-4158.

Property tax credit benefit expanded

Dan Connery, Assistant CVSO

Adapted from http://dva.state.wi.us/Ben_TaxBenefits.asp#property

Beginning with qualifying property taxes paid in 2009 and claimed in 2010, the Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit was expanded by altering the residency requirement, eliminating the age requirement, and including veterans rated as being individually unemployable and their unremarried surviving spouses. In a collaborative effort between the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and Wisconsin Department of Revenue, the Department of Revenue will issue a credit for annual property taxes paid on qualifying applicant's "principal dwelling."



Core benefit requirements:

Must be an honorably discharged veteran

Veteran must have a US Dept of Veterans Affairs (VA) service-connected disability rating of 100 percent OR must be in receipt of individual unemployability (IU) from the VA

Veteran must have entered service as a Wisconsin resident OR veteran must be able to prove Wisconsin residency for any consecutive 5-year period after entry into service

An unremarried surviving spouse is eligible if the above can be shown for veteran at time of veteran's death OR, in lieu of veteran having a VA rating, the veteran met the other requirements but died while serving on active military duty

Benefit recipient must reside in Wisconsin.

Qualifying for this benefit requires several pieces of documentation. The Dane County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) is adept in helping to determine what paperwork is needed and walking applicants through the application process; as such, it is highly recommended veterans or their unremarried surviving spouses call our office to set up an appointment. To set up an appointment with a service officer, please contact our office at 608-266-4158.



Your service office

The Veterans Service Office is accredited 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

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Announcements and news contributions are welcome.

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1919 Alliant Energy Center Way
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(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 each month from 8 until 4

UW-Madison

Student Activities Center, 333 E. Campus Mall,
Suite 3136 on most Thursdays from 8 until 4.

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

Oregon Senior Center

219 Park Street
Most 2nd Fridays each month, 1 until 4

VA Hospital

Most 4th Mondays of each month - 8 until 4.

Black Earth 1116 Mills St.

Most fourth Tuesdays each month, 8 until noon

Appointments recommended
266-4158