



Jim Doyle, Governor
John A. Scocos, Secretary

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"Mission: Welcome Home" awardees honored at Supermarket of Veterans Benefits

(MADISON) – Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John A. Scocos presented fifteen awards of appreciation to various communities, organizations, and individuals for their partnership on the "Mission: Welcome Home" program at a Supermarket of Veterans Benefits hosted by the department on Friday and Saturday, October 14 - 15, 2005 at the Wisconsin State Fair Park near Milwaukee.

Among the Awardees were the Milwaukee Brewers, the Milwaukee Mile, the Wisconsin Hospitality Group, Milwaukee County and the City of Franklin. Also recognized were the Zablocki VA Medical Center and several veteran service organizations and their representatives, including Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart and the American Legion.

"The department began 'Mission: Welcome Home' a year ago to create a community of caring to help servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan reintegrate following their service," said Secretary Scocos.

The Supermarket information fair, with more than 75 providers, served veterans and their family members from southeastern Wisconsin. The two-day event assisted attendees in applying for federal and state veterans' benefits and services including VA health care, home loans, education grants, state veterans homes, and more.

As a special surprise for those attending the Supermarket on Saturday, October 15th, former Milwaukee Brewers baseball player Larry Hisle made a guest appearance, providing Brewers T-shirts and talking with attendees about his experiences with the team from 1978 - 1982. He thanked veterans for their service, saying, "My best friend is a Vietnam Veteran. When he came home, he had shrapnel in his back. Now he works in gyms with kids."

One Vietnam veteran, Alan W. Peters, of West Bend, said he came to the Supermarket, "Just to see briefly what was here, and I ended up staying two and a half hours."

Bruce Roth of Watertown is new in his job as a school Veterans Certifying Official. He said, "I came here to find out about veterans' benefits myself since I'm a Marine veteran of eleven years. I've been in my job for a little over a year, so it helps to learn about veterans student programs -- I talked to the education information staff here so I can let others know about different programs and who they can contact." Roth also said he has a nephew in Iraq.

(more)

Charles V. Gomez, a WWII Navy veteran who served on the USS Mississippi, came to the Supermarket with his son, Carlos F. Gomez, a Vietnam veteran who served for four years in the U.S. Navy and then 16 years in the U.S. Army.

Michael and Heidi Burgos of Greenfield came to find out “what benefits we’re eligible for...schooling, VA Health care, and loans.” Michael Burgos is an Army veteran of 14 years wounded in Operation Desert Storm.

Paul Greene, of Wind Lake, a Korean War veteran who served 16 months in combat, stopped by to learn first hand about various benefits and services he may be eligible for. He found the fair to be very informative, “especially on VA health care and services provided at Union Grove to include the Veterans Home.”

For more information about Mission: Welcome Home or the Supermarket of Veterans Benefits, visit the department's website at www.dva.state.wi.us, contact a County Veterans Service Officer or Tribal Veterans Service Officer, or call toll-free at 1-800-WIS-VETS (1-800-947-8387).