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## Attention Newsroom—Media Advisory

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# Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs to host Veterans Day Ceremony at Union Grove

(MADISON) – Welcoming home Wisconsin’s veterans from their service in Iraq and Afghanistan will be the special focus of this year’s Veterans Day on Nov. 11 at the **Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Union Grove**, announced Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John Scocos.

Veterans Day this year coincides with the WDVA’s new program called "Mission: Welcome Home," which will help Wisconsin soldiers return to society after many months serving in foreign conflicts.

“Veterans Day is our time to pay special tribute to all veterans, who have honorably worn the uniform of service with dedication to their country,” Scocos said. “This Veterans Day will be especially important because it is our chance as a state to focus on those who are currently sacrificing so much to serve our country.”

A **3:00 p.m. ceremony** will be held in Union Grove on **Thursday, November 11**, Veterans Day, at the SWVMC. The cemetery is located at 21731 Spring Street, Union Grove. Veterans and the public are invited to attend.

**Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John A. Scocos** will speak about the importance of remembering Veterans Day and continuing the mission of serving veterans. John A. Scocos was appointed as the seventh Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs on October 21, 2003. A veteran with more than 24 years of active and reserve military service with the U.S. Army, including service in Operation Joint Endeavor (Bosnia), he continues his service in the U.S. Army Reserves at the rank of Colonel.

Guest Military speaker will be **Captain Joseph Ricker**, who was commissioned in May 1992 as Reserve Ordnance Officer. His first assignment was as Platoon Leader for the 826<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Company in Madison, Wisconsin. In February 2002 Captain Ricker was assigned to the 521<sup>st</sup> Maintenance Battalion in Milwaukee. Captain Ricker was mobilized on May 2003 with the 406<sup>th</sup> Corps support Battalion and deployed to Karshi-Khanaband Uzbekistan where he performed duties as Liaison and Executive Officer of a Forward Logistics Element in Mazar E Sharif Afghanistan. Master of Ceremonies will be **Bill Kloster**, Administrator of

WDVA's Division of Veterans Benefits. The Director of the SWVMC, **Marian Lewandowski, Jr.**, will provide the welcome.

Featured will be music by the Celtic Nations Pipes and Drums, posting of the colors by Korean War Veterans Association #227, TAPS sounded by John Johnson of Burlington Wisconsin, and a rifle salute by Marine Corps League Detachment # 346 Agerholm Gross. Reverend Louis Luljak will deliver the invocation and benediction.

"On this Veterans Day let us thank our veterans and those who serve, providing assistance to them to receive the benefits and services they've earned," said Lewandowski. "Let us also stand united in our resolve and remember the men and women who help to preserve our nation's freedom."

Dedicated in May 1998, the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery is operated by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs.

The WDVA will also be hosting Veterans Day ceremonies at: the cemetery at the Marden Center Multi-purpose Room at the Wisconsin Veterans Home **at King, at 10:30 a.m.** and at the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery **at Spooner, at 1:00 p.m.**

The public is invited to attend these events. For more information, go to <http://dva.state.wi.us> or call 1-800-947-8387 (WIS-VETS).