

Wisconsin Veterans Honor Legislators at a special Salute in February

The Wisconsin Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars hosted the 12th annual *Salute to the Legislature* on February 26th, at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison, assisted by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and other Veterans Service Organizations from throughout the state.

About 500 people attended the 2004 *Salute*, which provided veterans an opportunity to meet with state legislators and look to the future of veterans' issues in Wisconsin. The event was coordinated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, and the WDVA, and a number of other veterans organizations also helped financially sponsor the event, including: the CVSO Association of Wisconsin, the Gold Star Wives of America, the Marine Corps League, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Polish Legion of American Veterans, and Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans. Each February, legislators are invited to participate in the *Salute* and talk with veterans from their districts who travel to Madison from as far away as Superior.

This year, the VFW took the lead in coordinating the Salute and Commander Al Kochenderfer emceed. John A. Scocos, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, offered a "salute" to the legislature, on behalf of the WDVA, veterans service organizations, veterans and their families, for the bi-partisan support veterans have received from the Governor's Office and the legislature.



VFW Commander Al Kochenderfer at podium



WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos addresses the audience



"Through working together as partners," Scocos said, "Wisconsin continues as a national leader in providing state veterans' benefits and services. The salute is an opportunity for veterans to express their gratitude."

Speaking on behalf of Governor Jim Doyle, Wisconsin Department of Tourism Secretary Jim Holperin expressed appreciation for veterans' dedication and service. Members of the Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Homeland Security, Veterans and Military Affairs and Government Reform attended. Senator Ron Brown, committee chair, said, "It is an honor to work on behalf of veterans' interests."



Tourism Secretary Jim Holperin

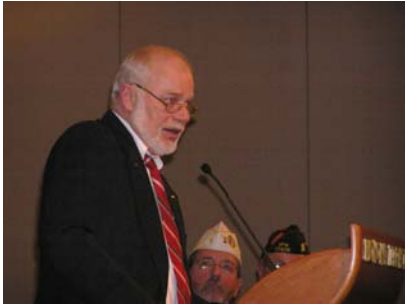


Senator Ron Brown tells attendees about his first session as committee chair of the Senate Veterans Committee



Sen. Majority Leader Mary Panzer

Representative Terry Musser, Chairman of the Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, told the attendees how important it is to invite legislators to their districts, even just to attend meetings as a listener instead of as a speaker.



Rep. Terry Musser

Special awards were presented by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs to Senator Fred Risser and Representative J.A. "Doc" Hines for their years of dedicated service, not only to veterans but also as veterans of World War II.



(Left to Right: Rep. J.A. "Doc" Hines and Sen. Fred Risser receive awards from VFW Commander Al Kochenderfer and WDVA Secretary John Scocos)

After the program, there was an evening reception for legislators and constituents to socialize, in the Grand Terrace of the convention center.