

# Supermarket of Veterans Benefits coming to Schofield October 31 — November 1 (see pages 21–23)



# WDVA UPDATE

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Issue 32

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Available online at WDVA Web site <http://dva.state.wi.us>, click on "News"

Budget funding  
approved —

## Governor Jim Doyle announced support for opening a new 120-bed skilled nursing facility at Union Grove

At a news conference July 16 at the Southern Wisconsin Center campus, Governor Jim Doyle announced he would approve funding in the 2003–05 biennial budget to open a new 120-bed Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove.



Governor Jim Doyle announces budget provision for expansion at Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove.

## Secretary Ray Boland announces retirement

The passing of Bob Hope in July at 100 years of age brought back memories for us all as we were reminded of his many years of great service and dedication to our soldiers. For nearly six decades, "GI Bob" traveled to all ends of the world to bring goodwill and a boost of morale to our U.S. servicemen and women. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Hope in 1990 while serving as Commander at Ft. McCoy.



Just as Bob Hope dedicated his time and efforts to entertaining the troops overseas and here in the USA, during these recent times of war in Iraq, we know that Hope's example of dedication and commitment is still very important. When our servicemembers return home as veterans, we are committed to serving them by providing benefits and services they have earned.

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, I informed the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs that I would be retiring, effective October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Board accepted my resignation and has begun a search for a new Department Secretary. As I look back over my



Secretary Boland with Bob Hope at Ft. McCoy.

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years of service as your Secretary, I think of the many things we have accomplished together, but I think most about you, the veterans of Wisconsin.

You have not only provided the purpose but also the inspiration for all of the efforts we have undertaken. As we expanded and built new facilities, created new programs, increased benefits, and preserved our history, through it all you were the “wind beneath our wings.”

It has been a joy to travel throughout our great state and meet so many of you. In posts and chapters, in towns and events large and small, at meetings, ceremonies, conventions, and dedications, I have been so very proud to see our veterans standing tall in their communities, carrying our colors, saluting, and maintaining the special spirit that is shared by all of us who have ever worn the uniform.

It has also been a great pleasure for me over the last 11½ years to work with the Board of Veterans Affairs, County Veterans Service Officers, the Veterans Service Organizations, the Office of the Governor, the State Legislature, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, local officials, and many other agencies and organizations in continuing our objectives for helping veterans.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all who have dedicated their time, efforts, and partnership to the mission of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. Together we have provided the best state benefits program in the nation, and we can all take pride in what we have accomplished.

Lastly, I would like to say to everyone, “Thanks for the memories.”

*(A reception was held in Secretary Boland's honor on October 2, 2003. The next WDVA Update will highlight that event as well as the accomplishments of the department under Boland's tenure.)*

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**BUDGET** Continued from Page 1

Secretary Ray Boland welcomed the crowd of area veterans and elected officials and spoke in front of Gates Hall which is currently under construction as a 40-bed Residential Care Apartment Complex.

He introduced Governor Doyle, who announced budget approval of \$1.3 million in funding and 44.5 staff positions to begin the operation of a Skilled Nursing Facility. The Joint Committee on Finance had voted unanimously to support 44.5 full-time employees for the first year of operation and \$1,267,400 in General Program Revenue (GPR) to fund the start-up phase of the SNF. The project also includes a campus-wide activity center and Adult Day Health Care (ADHC).

### **WDVA welcomes two new members of the Board of Veterans Affairs**

- **Peter Moran**, of Superior, was appointed to the Board on June 2 by Governor Jim Doyle. Moran is a retired Colonel of the United States Army Reserve. He spent 30 years in the Army Reserve and served as platoon leader of the 205<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Platoon in Vietnam from 1965 to 1966. From 1970 to 2002, Moran served as a marketing and management instructor at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC) in Superior.
- **Douglas Bradley**, of Madison, was also appointed by the Governor on June 2. He served as a military correspondent with the United States Army Command Headquarters in Vietnam. Bradley also worked to establish the Vets House, Inc. in Madison. He is currently employed as a special assistant with the University of Wisconsin.

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**BUDGET** Continued from Page 2

“Here in Wisconsin,” said Governor Doyle, “we have a long history of providing excellent programs and services that support our veterans and their families. It is not lost on me that in a state of over 5 million people, there are 475,000 veterans in Wisconsin — one out of every 10 people in our state. Today I am announcing that I will sign into law a provision that will allow us to provide even better services to Wisconsin veterans and their families.”

Gov. Doyle said the new facility would also benefit the state economically, creating jobs in the southeastern Wisconsin region and leveraging federal health care per diem payments to help veterans defray the cost of skilled nursing care.

“I am signing this provision,” Gov. Doyle added, “because taking care of our veterans by making sure they receive the health care they need is the right thing to do to honor those who have served our country.”

Phase I of the project is planned to be completed by 2005.



Wisconsin Veterans Affairs Secretary Ray Boland addresses crowd.

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## **Veterans Home resident openings in new and recently renovated facilities at Southern Center**

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) continues to develop Southern Center and the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove.

Currently, WDVA provides assisted living services for up to 80 veterans and spouses at Southern Center, and will have additional capacity in early 2004. Within the next two years, with authority granted by the Legislature and Governor Doyle in the recently passed state biennial budget, WDVA will also open a 120-bed skilled nursing facility and an Adult Day Health Care Program at Southern Center.

The facilities at Southern Center, some freshly renovated and others newly constructed, offer excellent residential amenities that provide a safe environment, top quality care, and a good deal of privacy with most single residents residing in single rooms, and most married residents residing with their spouses in double-capacity rooms.

The facility also offers the necessary supportive services for elderly and disabled veterans to be as active and independent as possible, and to experience the camaraderie of other veterans who reside at the Home, as well as the numerous volunteers who donate their time and effort here. Convenient access to VA health care is available through the VA's Community Based Outpatient Clinic located on the campus. The Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee is less than 30 minutes away. VA offers financial support options that make living at the veterans home at Southern Center extremely affordable, and most residents find that it is significantly less costly than comparable facilities in the surrounding area.

To apply for admission to the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove contact: Steve Stead, Deputy Commandant, WVH-Union Grove, 21425 C Spring St., Union Grove, WI 53182; phone: (262) 878-5668; e-mail: [steve.stead@dva.state.wi.us](mailto:steve.stead@dva.state.wi.us).

Eligibility requirements are available on the WDVA Web site, at <http://dva.state.wi.us/benefits.asp>. County veterans service offices can help interested veterans or their family members with the application process.

## Korean War 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration events



WDVA Board Member Ken Wendt speaks to the crowd at the Korean War Memorial in Plover on June 1, 2003. The VFW Marching Band-Oshkosh is in the background.

*(Photo courtesy of Don Koch of Waunakee, sent in by Col. Cliff C. Borden, Jr. U.S. Army-Ret.)*

On July 27, the actual anniversary date, WDVA Deputy Secretary John Scocos was the keynote speaker at the SWVMC event. He talked about the importance of remembering the Korean War veterans and supporting all servicemembers, including those overseas. Korean War POW Grant McMillin was a guest speaker. Dan Omelina, a member of the Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA), was the Master of Ceremonies. The KWVA posted and retired the colors. Mr. Sang-Yoon Park, a dignitary from the Korean consulate in Chicago, presented Republic of Korea war medals. The Wisconsin 84<sup>th</sup> Division Band provided music at Union Grove. After the ceremony, attendees sampled Korean food and saw a Tae Kwon Do demonstration.

July 2003 commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic signing of the Korean War Armistice at Panmunjom in the De-Militarized Zone on July 27, 1953. Across the state Commemorative Community events were held to honor all Americans who served in the "Forgotten War." On June 1<sup>st</sup> at the Korean War Memorial in Plover, Veterans Affairs Board Member Ken Wendt spoke about the service and sacrifice of Korean War veterans and about the history of the war.

On July 20<sup>th</sup>, Secretary Ray Boland addressed an audience at the Waukesha County Fair. Then, on July 24<sup>th</sup> and July 27<sup>th</sup>, there were official commemorative ceremonies presented by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, at the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (NWVMC) in Spooner, and at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (SWVMC) at Union Grove, respectively.

At the NWVMC event, Secretary Boland flew an L-19 "Birdog" Cessna that bears his name on the side of it. Boland received flight training in the L-19 when he first entered the Army in 1963 and flew it for several years afterward. WDVA Office of Public Affairs Director Andrew Schuster provided the keynote speech, and Korean War veteran Matthew Kelly was also a guest speaker before the large crowd gathered. Names of Korean War veterans were read prior to the ceremony. Members of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Army Band, Wisconsin National Guard, provided music.



WDVA Secretary Ray Boland stands next to L-19 that bears his name on the side of it.

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Korean War veteran Matthew Kelly.



Members from Rice Lake American Legion Post #87 presented the wreath at NWVMC.



Korean War Veterans Association color guard unit retires the colors.



Sampling a "Taste of Korea."



Tae Kwon Do demonstration that took place after the ceremony at SWVMC.

## Milwaukee Supermarket of Veterans Benefits on May 9–10 was a success

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) hosted its sixth *Supermarket of Veterans Benefits* at Miller Park in Milwaukee on May 9–10, 2003. Over 2,000 veterans and their families were served by the two-day event to provide information about veterans benefits and services.



WDVA Secretary Ray Boland talks with Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Division of Workforce Solutions Administrator Bettie Rodgers and Bruce Markert, DWD Program Delivery Specialist for Veterans' Issues, at the *Supermarket of Veterans Benefits* at Miller Park in Milwaukee May 9.

There were over 55 providers on hand to greet attendees and explain about such items as VA Health Care, Military Funeral Honors, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, Education and Training Grants, Loans, and Job Training and Employment.

Special guests who came to the *Supermarket* event to talk to veterans included:

Governor Jim Doyle, Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, and Ulice Payne.

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Governor Jim Doyle and Secretary Ray Boland talk with a veteran.



A veteran chats with Sec. Boland and Gov. Doyle.



Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker extends thanks to WDVA on behalf of Milwaukee County's veterans.



Ulice Payne, President and CEO of the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club, stopped by.

Attendees listened to briefings and received free refreshments. Feedback received by the department was that all-in-all people enjoyed their time at the *Supermarket*, with such comments as: "Keep up the good work," — "I thought the *Supermarket* was excellent," — and "I learned very interesting things, and I am proud to be an American Veteran!"

In an ongoing effort to serve more veterans through effective education and outreach, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs will host a *Supermarket of Veterans Benefits* on **October 31<sup>st</sup> through November 1<sup>st</sup> at Greenheck Field House at D.C. Everest High School in Schofield** (just southeast of Wausau). The *Supermarket* will be the seventh such event presented by the WDVA, to provide information and assistance to veterans and their families on applying for benefits and services they've earned, as part of WDVA's "I Owe You" outreach program to veterans. The times of the event in Schofield are from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on October 31<sup>st</sup> and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on November 1<sup>st</sup>. All veterans and their families are highly encouraged to attend, especially seniors, who may gain valuable information about claims, VA health care, the Veterans Homes at King and Union Grove, and the Military Funeral Honors Program.

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## **Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant and Part Time Study Grant increased to 100% and offer on-line applications**

Education for veterans is very important. For that reason we are very pleased to inform readers of two significant changes and additions.

Effective with courses completed after September 1, 2003, the reimbursement rates for the Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant and Part Time Study Grant were increased from the previous 85 percent. Effective with classes completed after September 1, 2003, the Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant now provides reimbursement up to a maximum limit of 100 percent of the cost of the same number of undergraduate credits at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The Part Time Study Grant now provides reimbursement for up to 100 percent of the applicant's tuition and fees, not to exceed 100 percent of the cost of tuition and fees for the same number of undergraduate credits at UW–Madison.

Because the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is committed to serving our Wisconsin veterans through benefits service delivery, the department offers on-line applications for the Tuition and Fee Reimbursement Grant (TFRG) and Part Time Study Grant (PTSG).

The on-line applications expedite the processing time for grant awards and make applying for financial assistance as effective and efficient as possible. Veterans will have several choices when submitting an on-line education

grant application. They may go to the county veterans service office (CVSO), to the school veterans officer/coordinator, or they may complete an application on-line by themselves.

To start the process for an on-line education grant application, veterans will access <https://services.dva.state.wi.us/veteran/> to complete the registration information. They will then receive an e-mail from WDVA providing them with a password to access the on-line application. Once the veteran completes the application and changes the status to "submit application" it will automatically be e-mailed to the school veterans official/coordinator for input. Once completed, the school veterans official/coordinator will submit the application to WDVA.

When the application is received at WDVA, it is checked to verify eligibility and then processed by the Grants Section. If additional information is required, the veteran or the school, as appropriate, will be sent an e-mail requesting the information, with a copy sent to the CVSO. When all the required information is completed, the application is processed for payment.

This is one more way that the WDVA is working to serve veterans. Furthering their education is an important tool for veterans to advance in the work place.

## New WDVA staff

This spring, three new staff joined the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA):

- **Anthony Hardie** joined the Secretary's Office as the new Executive Assistant, effective May 15. Mr. Hardie comes to WDVA with much governmental experience, having most recently served as Senior Field Representative for U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin. Hardie served with the U.S. Army from 1986 through 1993 and is a veteran of the Gulf War from 1991. Hardie holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the UW-Madison, with triple majors in international relations, political science, and economics and has completed additional advanced studies. He serves as the primary Legislative Liaison for WDVA to the state Capitol.
- **William (Bill) Crowley** became the new Commandant at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, effective June 2. Crowley previously served as a member of the Board of Veterans Affairs since 1997, and as a County Veterans Service Officer for Columbia County for the past 14 years. Crowley is a combat veteran with the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Management and Communication from Concordia University and is a 1995 graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- **Christine (Chris) Wrolstad** has been appointed Deputy Commandant at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, announced Commandant Bill Crowley on August 21, 2003. The Deputy Commandant position is responsible for overseeing the home's medical services, nursing, social services, activities, admissions and discharges, dietary services, and also provides leadership for budget development of the largest nursing home facility in Wisconsin. Ms. Wrolstad has over 20 years of direct management experience and has served as a dedicated staff member for 17 years at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. She is only the third person to hold the position of Deputy Commandant.



WDVA Executive Assistant Anthony Hardie and King Commandant Bill Crowley on a visit to the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove.

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## Home Improvement Loans only 5.65%

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs' (WDVA) Home Improvement Loan currently carries a low fixed interest rate of 5.65% with a 15-year repayment term.

The WDVA Home Improvement Loan can be used to make improvements such as replacing a furnace, remodeling a kitchen, adding a garage, or making repairs to better winterize your home.

The maximum WDVA Home Improvement Loan amount is \$25,000 with up to 50% of the proposed value of the improvements considered as equity in qualifying for the loan. Eligible veterans may also qualify for more than one Home Improvement Loan to meet their home improvement needs.

## Recent events

### Corvettes on the Isthmus — May 9–11, 2003

In an effort to raise financial support for area families of troops overseas, the second annual “*Corvettes on the Isthmus*” event in Madison joined forces with the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) to collect donations at this year’s event, which was held at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum at the Alliant Energy Center the weekend of May 9–11.

Secretary Raymond G. Boland and National Guard Major General Al Wilkening were presented with a \$6,000 check to support families of troops. The funds have been administered by the WDVA working with the Family Assistance Center through the Wisconsin National Guard, to identify families needing support and to dispense funds.



Event coordinator Brian Newlun presents a check to WDVA Secretary Ray Boland and Wisconsin Military Affairs Adjutant General Al Wilkening as others look on.

### Milwaukee County Veterans Service Office slated to move in 2004



Secretary Raymond G. Boland and Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker at the Milwaukee War Memorial.

An announcement was made at a press conference May 23, 2003 at the Milwaukee War Memorial for plans to move the Milwaukee County Veterans Service Office from the County Courthouse to the Veterans Administration complex located on National Avenue. The move will place the office in the same area as the VA Hospital and the VA Regional Office creating a “one-stop shop” to better serve veterans and their families. Bob Cocroft, the CEO of America’s Freedom Center, Secretary Raymond G. Boland and Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker were all present for this announcement. Current plans are for this move to take place in Summer 2004.

### Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin announces bill to assist visually-impaired veterans — July 2, 2003

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin rolled out a new bill to help visually impaired veterans on July 2. She announced the *Dr. James Allen Disabled Veterans Equity Act* in a news conference at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. The bill will allow veterans to receive disability compensation if they are legally blind in one eye and have begun to lose vision in the other eye, due to a service-connected injury. Current legislation does not compensate for loss of vision until the veteran is legally blind in both eyes. Rep. Baldwin's bill will provide compensation before blindness sets in, allowing the veteran to receive treatment before losing sight completely. Rep. Baldwin presented information about the bill and Secretary Raymond G. Boland spoke about the importance of this initiative for veterans, thanking Rep. Baldwin for the work she has been doing for veterans and their issues. Rep. Baldwin and Sec. Boland were joined by Don May of Lodi, a World War II veteran affected by the bill, and Dr. James Allen, the ophthalmologist for which the bill is named.



Don May, Dr. James Allen, Rep. Baldwin and Secretary Boland presenting the Dr. James Allen Disabled Veterans Equity Act.

### U.S. Senator Russ Feingold announces the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act — August 4 and 8, 2003



Senator Feingold unveils his bill at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison.

Senator Russ Feingold unveiled new legislation to ensure that all veterans who earned benefits through their service in the U.S. Armed Forces receive those benefits. He was joined by Secretary Raymond G. Boland in a series of news conferences, including stops at the Milwaukee County War Memorial and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. Sen. Feingold's bill will create a fund to be used for Veterans Affairs (VA) outreach, allow and encourage federal VA offices to work with state Departments of Veterans Affairs to promote benefits, and provide funding to state VA offices to develop outreach efforts like the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs' (WDVA) "I Owe You" program. Sec. Boland called the bill "critically important" because it will assist tens of thousands of veterans to learn about and receive the benefits they deserve.

## Memorial Day ceremonies

Observances to commemorate Memorial Day were held on May 25 and 26 at various locations statewide. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs held ceremonies on May 25<sup>th</sup> at the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (NWVMC) at Spooner, and on May 26<sup>th</sup> at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (SWVMC) at Union Grove and at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.



Memorial Day ceremony viewed from markers at the SWVMC.



Military Funeral Honors Team at NWVMC is shown marching.

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## Low rates on state veterans home loans

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) primary home mortgage loan rates have dropped significantly over the past several years, with a current interest rate of only 5.75% over a 30-year term. For eligible state veterans considering a move to a new home, now may be an excellent time to take advantage of low current interest rates.

There are no income limits and veterans can apply for home loans up to \$342,000. The loan requires a minimum 5% down payment but does not require personal mortgage insurance, which can greatly reduce monthly payments.

In addition to very low interest rates, another benefit of a WDVA veterans home loan is knowing that interest payments are going to help other state veterans. Interest payments on all loans administered by WDVA help to support the state's wide array of veterans benefits, programs, and services.

For additional information about a WDVA state veterans home loan, visit the WDVA Web site at <http://dva.state.wi.us>, e-mail at [loans@dva.state.wi.us](mailto:loans@dva.state.wi.us), or call WDVA toll-free at 1-800-947-8387.

## RECENT EVENTS Continued from Page 11

**Service seals dedicated at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery**

Five branch of service emblems were recently dedicated on May 30, 2003 by the Kenosha Civic Veterans Parade Committee, Inc. to the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Bosman Monuments in Kenosha also donated staff time and acknowledgement plaques. Pictured from left to right are: Frank Puidokas; Bruce Bosman; Edo Maccari, Senior Treasurer and Fran Puidokas, Chair of the Kenosha Civic Veterans Parade Committee; and Marian Lewandowski, Jr., Director of the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The brand of service emblems that were ceremoniously dedicated will serve as a continuing reminder to all who visit in years to come.

**Secretary Boland presents certificates to SECC volunteers**

Secretary Ray Boland posed with volunteers for last fall's State Employee Combined Campaign (SECC) on May 21<sup>st</sup> after presenting the group with certificates of thanks. Final statistics for last year were 84 donors out of 112 employees for an amount of nearly \$13,000 contributed.

**WDVA outreach program submitted for national awards**

In 2003, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) submitted applications for both the Harvard Innovation in Government Awards through the John F. Kennedy School of Government and the Council of State Government Innovation Awards, submitting the "I Owe You" program for both applications.

Wisconsin did advance as a Regional Finalist for the Council of State Government Awards (CSG), as a representative from the Midwest Region. A conference took place from August 24 to 27 in Milwaukee, allowing an opportunity for the ten Midwest Regional Finalists to present their programs. Two regional finalists (the Ohio Business Gateway and South Dakota's Substance Abuse Prevention Services for At-Risk Pregnant Women) were chosen to proceed to the national finals. The "I Owe You" campaign was the only Wisconsin program to rank as a regional finalist for the CSG award.

We are still waiting to hear from the John F. Kennedy School of Government about this year's submission.

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## RECENT EVENTS Continued from Page 12

**Purple Heart Day ceremony was held August 7<sup>th</sup>**

August 7<sup>th</sup> is Purple Heart Day in Wisconsin. A special ceremony was held at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to commemorate the event. Over 25 Purple Heart recipients were present as Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Ray Boland spoke and then presented a proclamation signed by Gov. Jim Doyle to Kevin Kavanaugh and Jack Reynoldson of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Legislators from around the state attended; both U.S. Senators Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold's offices sent representatives with prepared remarks. Boland told the Purple Heart recipients that our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines of today are inspired by their heroism.



Veterans Affairs Secretary Ray Boland presents proclamation to Kevin Kavanaugh and Jack Reynoldson of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

**Dedication of rest area memorial to honor 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division**

WWII veteran William Heinlein of the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division poses by monument with two Wisconsin State Patrol troopers.

On September 10, the Wisconsin Departments of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and Transportation unveiled a stone monument at the rest area on Highway I-94 west-bound near Johnson Creek. A host of area officials gathered to dedicate the monument, including Transportation Secretary Frank Busalacchi, State Representatives Dan Vrakas and Stephen Nass, and WDVA Executive Assistant Anthony Hardie who represented the department on behalf of Secretary Ray Boland. Mr. William Heinlein, a 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division veteran from Delafield, Wisconsin, initiated the effort to establish the monument. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation granted permission to locate the rest area monument following a request from Mr. Heinlein, who had contacted Rep. Vrakas about erecting a 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division memorial along I-94 between Milwaukee and Madison, for travelers to view.

RECENT EVENTS Continued from Page 13

**Badger football *Salute to Veterans* on September 6**

The University of Wisconsin (UW) Badger football game on September 6, 2003 featured a pre-game *Salute to Veterans* as 39 color guard units from veterans groups statewide marched onto the field during the pre-game show before the UW met Akron. Led by Secretary Raymond G. Boland, the color guard units presented the colors and a fine display. The oldest included World War II veterans and the groups from farthest away were from Lac du Flambeau.



Thirty-nine color guard units stand in front of the UW fieldhouse.



WDVA Secretary Ray Boland leads marchers onto the field.



Boland and marchers leave the field.



Naval Reserve Unit color guard.

## Wisconsin Veterans Museum news

### The Wisconsin Veterans Museum celebrates three awards

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) has been recognized as a leader in educational programs and preservation, through three awards it received over the summer:

- In June, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Deputy Secretary John Scocos accepted the 2003 Governor's Archives Award on behalf of the museum. The award acknowledges the museum's outstanding work to preserve and provide access to historical records about Wisconsin men and women's service in the armed forces. Growth in archival collections, expansions of programs through the Letters to Soldiers project, and the Wisconsin Veterans Oral History program are also mentioned in the award explanation. The Governor's Archives Award is sponsored by the Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board, a 10-member group that assists Wisconsin institutions in applying for federal grants for archival work and in improving the appreciation and care of historical records in Wisconsin.
- In July, the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) selected WVM to receive a Certificate of Commendation for public programming. The award recognizes WVM's annual "Talking Spirits: Forest Hill Cemetery Tour" as an important program dedicated to documenting local history. Last year's tour focused on Madison residents from the World War I era. This year's tour emphasizes World War II individuals. The tour includes living history vignettes, analysis of gravestone art, and an overview of the history of Forest Hill Cemetery.
- Also this summer, The National Historic Records and Publications Commission (NHRPC) of the National Archives awarded the WVM Research Center, lead by Gayle Martinson, a grant of \$110,278. Grant funds will strengthen the archival program by upgrading the cataloging system to improve public access to the materials. The museum's archival collections have experienced substantial growth. Grant funds will assist WVM staff in processing the archival collections.



WDVA Deputy Secretary John Scocos accepts the Governor's Archives Award from Robert Thomasgard.  
(Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.)



WVM Director Richard Zeitlin and WVM Research Center Archivist Gayle Martinson accept formal recognition from Secretary Ray Boland.

- In August, Jessica Doyle, along with the Department of Tourism, selected WVM to kick-off a new travel program entitled: "Where in Wisconsin is Jessica Doyle?" Doyle invited students to tour the museum and hosted a news conference to promote attendance at cultural attractions like WVM.

Each award or formal recognition compliments the museum's fulfillment of its mission to affirm, commemorate, and acknowledge the achievements and sacrifices of Wisconsin veterans. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum offers free admission and is located on the Capitol Square in Madison. For more information call (608) 267-1799 or go to <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us>.



Wisconsin's First Lady Jessica Doyle and two students learn to use WVM's Civil War database with WVM Director Richard Zeitlin.

## Current Veterans Museum projects and programs

### Navajo Code Talkers

A photographic exhibit honoring the Navajo warriors who used their native language to defeat the Axis powers in WWII is on display at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum through November.

### [www.WisconsinAtWar.com](http://www.WisconsinAtWar.com)

Following the museum's successful "Letters to Soldiers" project, Wisconsin at War accepts on-line diaries from those serving the U.S. in either Iraq or Afghanistan. The project is a partnership with *WisPolitics.com*.

### Wisconsin WWII Stories

The second program in the series is scheduled to air in November.

### On-line Memorials Catalog

A searchable database of memorials to Wisconsin veterans is now available on-line at <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us>. On the homepage, click on *Memorials Catalog*.

### Wisconsin Veterans Museum Gift Shop

The gift shop is now on-line! Go to <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us> and click on *Gift Shop*. The gift shop offers a broad selection of books, hats, videos, and patriotic gifts, all relating to Wisconsin veterans.

For more information on Museum events, go to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Web site at <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us>, click on *News*, then click on *Calendar of Events*.

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## Calendar of upcoming events

- October 31–November 1, 2003 — *Supermarket of Veterans Benefits* — Schofield
- **WDVA Veterans Day Events**
  - November 7, 2003, 5–8 p.m. — Veterans Reception — Milwaukee County War Memorial
  - November 11, 2003 — Veterans Day Ceremonies:
    - 10:30 a.m. — King Cemetery
    - 1 p.m. — Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (Spooner)
    - 3 p.m. — Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (Union Grove)
    - 11–3 p.m. — Veterans Day Program/Reception — Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs/Wisconsin Veterans Museum

*Numerous Veterans Day events are being held around the State of Wisconsin. See the WDVA Web page (<http://dva.state.wi.us>) and watch your local newspapers for ceremonies in your area.*

- December 7, 2003 — **Pearl Harbor Day**
- February 26, 2004 — **Salute to the Legislature** — Monona Terrace, Madison

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## “I Owe You” program increases Wisconsin VA enrollments

By WDVA Deputy Secretary John A. Scocos

You probably know that WDVA has been working hard for several years to increase enrollments into the VA health care system through Secretary Ray Boland’s “I OWE YOU” campaign. I want to share with you some of the outcomes associated with that program.

In Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) 12, the VA healthcare network that encompasses Chicago, northern Illinois, and most of Wisconsin, recent growth in enrollments was measured at 7.11%, which ranks the VISN at 6th among all the nation’s 23 VISNs. Most of the VISN 12 increase is coming from the Wisconsin facilities. Out of an overall growth of 11,798 unique users, 77% were from VA–Madison, VA–Milwaukee and VA–Tomah. In fact, if the Illinois portions of VISN 12 were making the kind of gains seen in Wisconsin, VISN 12 would be the top VISN nationwide in growth.

Of particular note is growth in enrollments of veterans in Priority Groups 1 through 6. These are important to the VISN because these are veterans that bring VERA money back to the VISN at a rate of approximately \$44,000 per patient in fiscal year 2002. While the Madison, Tomah, and Milwaukee VA medical centers grew substantially with over 3,000 additional enrollments, the Chicago hospitals actually lost veterans in this area. And, we are seeing similar growth in the Wisconsin portions of VISN 23, which covers the northwestern portion of the state.

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## WDVA's Weekly Legislative Update

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) publishes a weekly legislative update on its Web site ([http://dva.state.wi.us/News\\_LegislativeUpdate.asp](http://dva.state.wi.us/News_LegislativeUpdate.asp)) at the beginning of each week that the State Legislature, U.S. Congress, or both are in session. The update is intended to provide key department staff and external stakeholders with a reliable, timely, unified source of information regarding upcoming federal and state legislative activities and other governmental meetings related to veterans issues.

For more information regarding when the Legislature or Congress is in session, consult the Wisconsin Legislative Calendar at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/leginfo.html>, U.S. House of Representatives Schedule at [http://www.house.gov/2003\\_House\\_Calendar.html](http://www.house.gov/2003_House_Calendar.html), or U.S. Senate Legislative Schedule at [http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/one\\_item\\_and\\_teasers/2003\\_schedule.htm](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/one_item_and_teasers/2003_schedule.htm).

Weekly Legislative Updates are in Adobe Acrobat PDF format so readers can view and print them as they were originally formatted. The Adobe Acrobat Reader can be downloaded at no cost from Adobe (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>).

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### **"Taps" bill signed into law**

On August 11, 2003, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) participated in bill signing ceremonies as Governor Doyle signed Wisconsin Act 42 into law. The Act allows funeral directors to issue a \$25 voucher good towards college or university tuition/fees for students enrolled in grades 6-12, college, or university who sound "Taps" at a veteran's funeral in Wisconsin.

Introduced by Assembly Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs chair Rep. Terry Musser (R-Black River Falls), the legislation requires institutions of higher education within the UW Technical College Systems to accept the voucher for the remission of tuition/fees, and encourages private institutions to do the same. Act 42 went into effect on August 26, 2003.

In accordance with the new law, WDVA created a tuition voucher form with explanation and instructions to be used and issued by funeral directors. To print the forms, funeral directors should access the funeral directors' section of the WDVA Web site. There is no charge to access or print the form. WDVA strongly encourages funeral directors to print the form directly from the Web site rather than photocopying it, as a "watermark" has been built into it to discourage unauthorized use.

Wisconsin's population of WWII veterans is rapidly aging. Current estimates suggest that of the nearly 500,000 veterans in the state, approximately 12,000 will die annually during the years 2003-2012, creating both a greater need for appropriate funeral honors, and an educational opportunity for the state's youngest generations. Act 2 provides an excellent opportunity for students to help fulfill this need, and to learn from their experience. Thanks to Rep. Musser, the state legislature, and Governor Doyle, the "Taps" tuition voucher program will help provide a significant public service.

Students, veterans, or family members interested in the program should coordinate directly with their local funeral director.

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## Senate Bill 170 (S.B. 170): Veterans Omnibus Bill

In May, 2003, S.B. 170, a veterans' benefits and services omnibus bill, was introduced before the Wisconsin State Senate by Senator Ron Brown (R-31) and Representative Terry Musser (R-92). The bill represents the best efforts of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure the state's veterans receive among the best state veterans' benefits in the nation to complement existing federal benefits.

Senate Bill 170 protects and expands existing programs, helps preserve the veterans' trust funds, and ensures the financial visibility of state veterans' programs. If enacted, the bill will also ensure that the men and women in uniform activated from Reserve or National Guard status are also eligible for state veterans' benefits without having to serve a full two years of active duty.

S.B. 170 improves the department's tools for flexible and responsive fiscal management of programs, including the Personal Loan Program. It authorizes WDVA to purchase, no longer lease, the department and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum buildings. It expands educational benefits to those recently deployed, increases WDVA's ability to provide outreach to more veterans, and restricts Health Care Aid Grants to the most needy veterans.

On June 17, 2003, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security, Veterans and Military Affairs and Government Reform introduced and recommended adoption of Senate Amendment 1, and recommended passage of the bill as amended, through unanimous vote.

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## Governor, Legislature, WDVA enhance veterans programs

While the federal VA is the primary provider of veterans benefits, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) serves to provide benefits and services that supplement and complement those federal veterans benefits, providing the best state veterans benefits package in the country. The WDVA also provides numerous services to inform and assist those in the state who may be eligible learning about and applying for federal and state veterans benefits.

To that end, recently, WDVA has significantly enhanced its Claims Outreach Program. The quantity and quality of compensation and pension claims processing was improved. WDVA did this by conducting enhanced training of veterans representatives, by performing aggressive outreach and marketing, and by adding three mobile claims officers. In the two-year biennium, a total of \$773 million dollars in federal revenue was realized by Wisconsin veterans and their families — a 16% increase over the previous two-year period.

For the upcoming biennium, WDVA's educational reimbursement grant programs have been increased through the assistance of the State Legislature and Governor Doyle to a full 100% tuition and fee reimbursement. This is the highest level at which these programs have ever been funded.

WDVA has also helped to coordinate the FastTrac Program. FastTrac is provided by a coalition of education and training organizations led by WDVA to assist Wisconsin veterans in creating or enhancing a small business. This entrepreneurial training teaches the veteran-student how to design a business plan and addresses the myriad of issues confronting a new business venture. In the first three months of the program, nearly 30 veterans received financial and training assistance at three state training sites.

WDVA has also recently revitalized the Troops to Teachers Program. Through resources provided by the federal "No Child Left Behind Act of 2002," the Wisconsin Troops to Teachers Program helps relieve teacher shortages by providing trained, educated, and positive role model veterans as teachers in Wisconsin classrooms. A \$5,000 stipend or \$10,000 bonus to defray teacher certification costs is available to eligible veterans.

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## **WDVA testifies at CARES commission hearing in Minneapolis on September 3, 2003**

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Deputy Secretary John A. Scocos presented testimony on September 3, 2003 before a federal Veterans Affairs (VA) commission, regarding the impact of a draft plan on Wisconsin veterans' health care. The presentation was held at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center before a VA Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) commission hearing on the Draft National CARES Plan and Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23. The testimony was about veterans' health care in northwestern Wisconsin and the support of the commission for the proposed creation of a Northern Wisconsin Veterans Center near Chippewa Falls. Fifteen northwestern Wisconsin counties are in VISN 23.

Deputy Secretary Scocos praised the commission's proposal to add an additional VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) to expand health care services to more veterans in northwestern Wisconsin. The additional coverage would provide improved access for veterans who live too far from a VA facility to seek the care from the VA that they are entitled to. Currently, the VA operates two clinics in northwestern Wisconsin, one in Superior, and another in Chippewa Falls. The site recommended is Rice Lake; however, the intent is to contract with a provider (or providers) to offer services to veterans in several communities in that area, such as Hayward.

The Deputy Secretary also made positive remarks to the commission for the planned initiatives that address the most serious shortcomings that exist for veterans in western Wisconsin. However, he identified a need for nursing home and long-term care for veterans in northwestern Wisconsin. He also stated that the expansion of the state home program to northwest Wisconsin could represent a win-win situation for both partners — WDVA and VISN 23. Wisconsin currently operates a health care facility in Chippewa Falls, the Northern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled (NWC), which is currently being downsized. With this downsizing effort, state infrastructure, both buildings and land, will become available. WDVA is developing a veterans home in southeastern Wisconsin, and a similar initiative could occur at NWC.

The Deputy Secretary concluded his remarks stating WDVA believes significant savings could be realized through a collaborative initiative, one that could provide nursing home care services, assisted living, transitional housing for homeless veterans, primary care, and adult day health care.

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## **In Memoriam**

As we go to print with the WDVA Update, we learned of the death of a long-time friend and employee of the department, William (Bill) Klein of Sparta. The department offers its deepest condolences to the family of Bill Klein and all who knew and served with him. Prior to Bill's employment with the department he had a distinguished career. Bill served over 20 years in the United States Army Reserve retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer 4. In addition, he completed over 30 years as a Department of the Army Civilian serving as the Director of Logistics at Ft. McCoy. Upon that retirement, he immediately put his energy into the establishment of the Homeless Veterans Program at Ft. McCoy, a program that is now held in every state caring for veterans in need. Bill will long be remembered for his service, dedication, and commitment to civilians, soldiers, and Wisconsin veterans.

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## Excellent nursing training and employment opportunities at King

The Wisconsin Veterans Home at King (WVH-King) is one of the largest long-term care communities in the state, with a distinguished history of service to Wisconsin veterans and their families. However, the mission at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King depends on a full staff capability, and the Home has not escaped the effects of a nationwide nursing shortage.

To help alleviate the effects of this shortage at WVH-King, the State Legislature and Governor Doyle authorized the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) in the recent state budget to offer educational loan forgiveness for WVH-King employees working towards a degree as a Registered Nurse (RN). WDVA already offers paid training leading to certification as a Nursing Assistance (CNA) for individuals interested in working at WVH-King who might not yet have a background in health care.

WDVA offers excellent employment opportunities for health care personnel, particularly Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Nursing Assistants. In addition to competitive pay and outstanding state benefits (for health care, vacation, sick leave, etc.), the facility offers exceptional training opportunities. In addition, the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King provides career ladders to individuals seeking career advancement.

The veterans home at King is located in a rural part of central Wisconsin near Waupaca, with good schools and neighborhoods, and easy access to urban amenities. Transitional housing is available for new employees relocating from other areas.

Employment opportunities for both state veterans homes are listed on the Wisconsin Current Employment Opportunities Web site, <http://wiscjobs.state.wi.us>. For more information about employment at the veterans home at King, contact Elaine Hansen at (715) 258-4254, or by e-mail at [elaine.hansen@dva.state.wi.us](mailto:elaine.hansen@dva.state.wi.us).

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## Wausau Supermarket: help spread the word

On the following page, you will find a flyer for the upcoming Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Supermarket of Veterans Benefits. Launched as part of Secretary Ray Boland's "I Owe You" outreach campaign to state veterans, the Supermarkets have helped over 12,000 veterans learn about and apply for federal and state veterans benefits. The program's primary goal is to expand knowledge and use of federal and state veterans programs to all who might be eligible.

The seventh such Supermarket of Veterans Benefits will be held on **October 31 and November 1, 2003 at the D.C. Everest Memorial High School in Schofield, Wisconsin**, just south of Wausau in Marathon County.

The current circulation of the "WDVA Update" is more than 8,000 paper copies, and even more electronically. If every recipient were to post the enclosed Supermarket flyer in a local library, post office, city/village/town hall, coffee shop, union hall, or veterans post or chapter, countless more veterans might be made aware of this outreach program. Your assistance is requested in helping spread the word.

Perhaps you're wondering why you should attend a Supermarket of Veterans Benefits. Just ask any of the over 12,000 people who have attended thus far: in exit surveys, the overwhelming majority say they either found the answer to questions they have had for years, or learned something new about their benefits.

We hope that you'll help spread the word.

# WAUSAU SUPERMARKET OF VETERANS BENEFITS



**Friday, October 31, 2003**

**11 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

**Saturday, November 1, 2003**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Greenheck Field House  
(D.C. Everest High School)**

**6400 Alderson Street  
Schofield, Wisconsin**

**I OWE YOU**

*It's part of our deal*

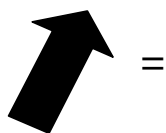
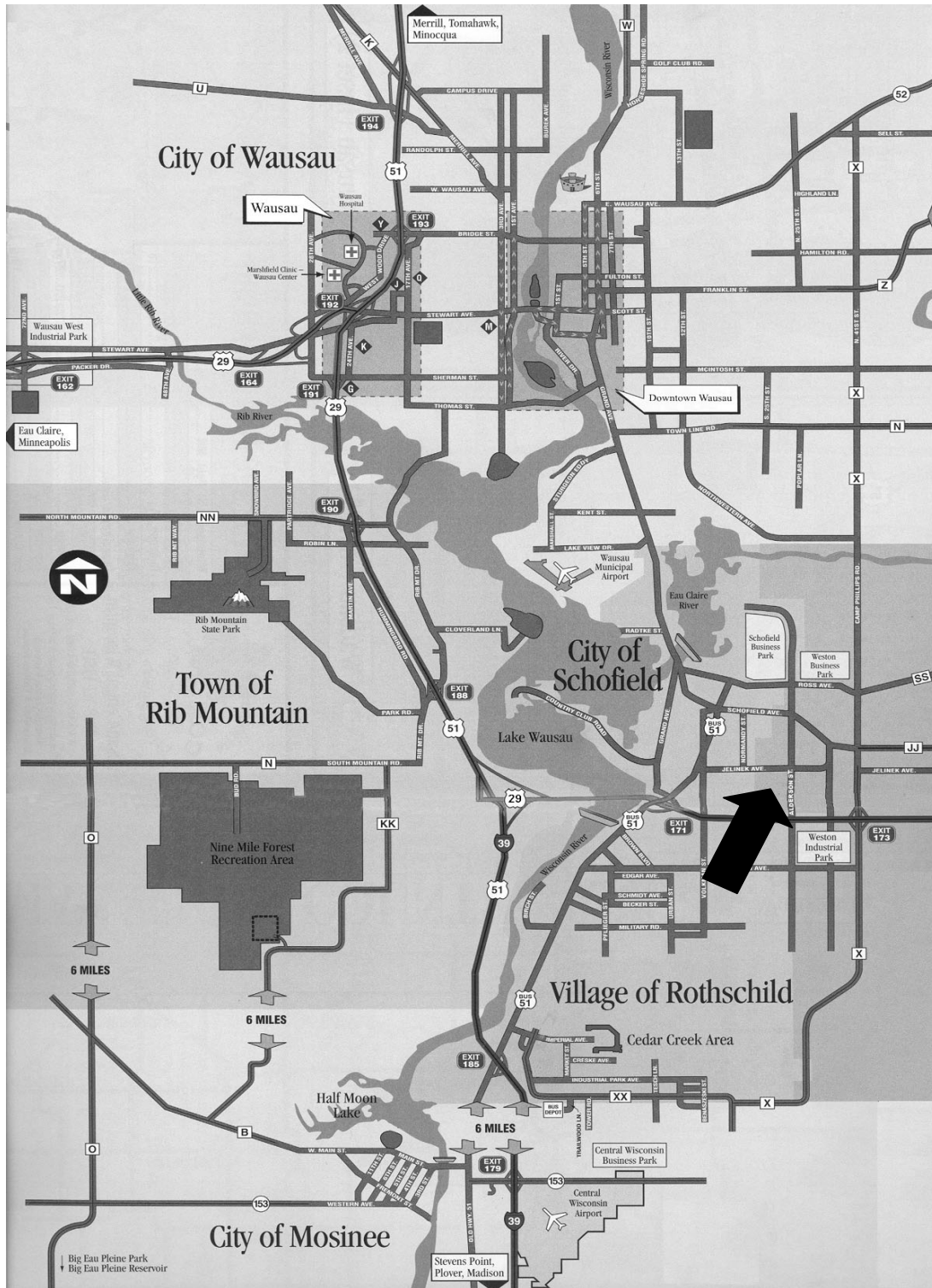
At this “one-stop shop” for benefits, veterans can:

- Establish eligibility for state veterans benefits (bring your DD form 214);
- Apply for benefits such as health care, disability and pension compensation, education and job training grants, personal loans, home improvement loans, and home mortgage loans;
- Receive information on federal VA health care;
- Get help in obtaining military medals and records;
- Find out about employment and education opportunities;
- Obtain information about nursing home care and aging services;
- Preregister for burial in state veterans' cemeteries;
- Learn about veterans assistance for small businesses;
- Receive feedback from the IRS, Department of Revenue, and Social Security Administration;
- Access military retiree information;
- Obtain information on minority veterans programs;
- Apply for a veterans license plate;
- Listen to short information briefings provided throughout the day.

Free admission, free refreshments, and free parking.

Call your County Veterans Service Office or  
Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs  
1-800-947-8387 (1-800-WIS-VETS)  
<http://dva.state.wi.us>

Map to Wausau Supermarket of Veterans Benefits — Oct. 31 – Nov. 1, 2003



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**Greenheck Field House  
(D.C. Everest High School)  
6400 Alderson St.  
Schofield, WI 54476**



## How to receive the *WDVA Update*

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) encourages readers to access the *WDVA Update* primarily by accessing the publication electronically on the WDVA Web site at <http://dva.state.wi.us>, click on *News*. This is the quickest, easiest way to read about the WDVA news and events!

However, for those who do not have Internet access, the department will continue to mail out copies of the publication. If you no longer need to receive the *WDVA Update* through the mail, or if you would like your name added to the mailing list, please contact us at:

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs  
ATTN: Office of Public Affairs  
P.O. Box 7843  
Madison, WI 53707-7843

The *WDVA Update* also is available on the WDVA Web site at <http://dva.state.wi.us>, click on *News*, click on *WDVA Update*.

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