

Veterans News And Views

Volume 6 Issue 3

July– September 2006



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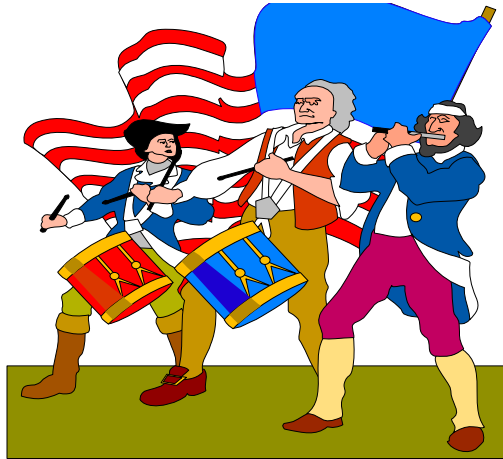
My Swing Should Look So Good !!!



ATTACHED

VA Records Update
Expert Advice
PLP Update
Eyeglasses from the VA
Letter From the Governor

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA !!!



We have once again had the opportunity to celebrate the birth of our great nation.

And once again, I fear that it has passed by our neighbors, with little reflection on their part, as to the sacrifices our brothers and sisters have made throughout history, to keep this land free.

Everyone enjoys the company of family and friends, and the fireworks are something that I look forward to every year, but to many, that is all the 4th of July represents.

I would invite each of you to read the attached pages that talk about our founding fathers and our flag. Then share them with your family, friends, and neighbors.

I think you would be surprised to discover how poorly educated our children are in the history of America's wars. I guess the subject isn't "Politically Correct", and thus, is glossed over, if mentioned at all. I would invite you to take a look at virtually any school text book, from elementary school on up. You'll see what I mean.

We can not afford to let the next generations forget the sacrifices made at places like Meuse-Argonne, Flanders Fields, Normandy, Anzio, Ardennes, Midway, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Iwo Jima, Chosin Reservoir, Inch' on, Khe Sanh, Hue, Vin Long, the deserts of Kuwait, Somalia, Beirut, Afghanistan, Iraq or the cold a lonely oceans of the world.



LOCAL VOLUNTEER RECOGNIZED

Eugene Pierron, a member of the Belgium American Legion post, and a "volunteer" driver for our office was recently recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Eugene received a certificate and plaque recognizing his 7500 hours of volunteer service to his fellow veterans.

Eugene has been keeping himself busy as one of 3 volunteer drivers for the Vet-

erans Service Office since 1987 .

Without the invaluable contribution of Eugene Pierron, and the other drivers a number of veterans residing here in our county would not be able to make use of the VA Medical system.

AND A BIG "B Z" TO EUGENE !!!

(That's, Bravo Zulu for you non-Navy types)

Federal Legislation

There are a number of bills in Congress that will affect veterans benefits, if they are passed.

A number of these bills are going nowhere.

In the past, it has been the track-record for Congress, and the Administration to talk a good game, but fail to come through when it counts.

This year has been no different.

It boggles the mind to see Congress and the Administration fail to come to the plate to help not only our fellow veterans, but fail to provide those serving on active duty any incentive to remain in the military.

With so few in Congress having any military service of their own, and heaven forbid that any of THEIR children should serve, it shouldn't surprise any of us.

Its an election year, time to remind them who we are!

State Issues

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs will be holding a "Stake-holder's" Conference again this year to show "interested parties" the current state of the Veteran's Trust Fund, as well as actions to date to sustain the fund for the long-term.

Several initiatives in the State Legislature over the past year have contributed to maintaining the "solvency" of the Trust Fund, not the least of which was the passage of SB-613. This act, (it has been signed by the Governor) will provide 100% tuition remission to Wisconsin Veterans who attend a UW system school. Unfortunately, it will not "kick-in" until the fall of 2007.

Property Tax relief for 100% service-connected veteran was a real nice "feel good" bill, but did not cover a broad enough spectrum of our fellow veterans. The veterans service organizations will continue to work with the legislature to "enhance" this bill, and open it up to more of our most deserving veterans.

Veterans' Day at State Fair

Every year, during the "run" of State Fair, the last Sunday of the fair is designated as "Veterans Day".

The fair runs this year from August 3rd through August 13th, with August 13 being the "Veterans' Day".

I hope to have some discount coupons for admission to the fair for that day.

Plans are still in development as to what the "emphasis" will be this year. If something dramatic unfolds, I'll keep you informed through a separate mailing.



VA RECORDS FIASCO

As many of you know, the Department of Veterans Affairs has had a serious breach of their internal security, which POTENTIALLY could expose millions of current and former members of the military to identity theft.

The attached information is gleaned from a number of sources.



The VA is in a serious scramble mode to determine exactly what data was "lost" and who might be affected.

Other than the sheer stupidity of the situation, the VA has not been terribly forthcoming with all they know in a timely manner.

The attached articles give some basic guidance as to

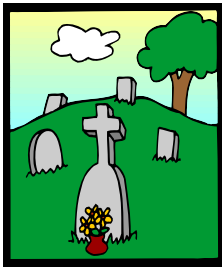
what we all should do to make sure we do not fall victim to some ne'er do well, who may have access to our personal information.

As if the VA doesn't have enough problems, they now have at the very least a MAJOR public relations disaster.

I read one article that summed up the situation across the board at the federal level. A gentleman commented that the VA had rules designed for a paperwork world, but are living in a digital world.



Many Thanks !!!



The Memorial Day Holiday has come and gone, and once again the volunteers who come forward every year to assist with getting the cemeteries decorated for the holiday have done a magnificent job!

This year we placed over 2,800 flags on the graves of our departed comrades. Needless to say, I could not get this monumental task completed without the help of many of you. Your work does not go unnoticed!! Believe me, if we miss even one, my office gets a phone call from that veteran's family or friends, pointing out our error.

This annual undertaking is just a small token of appreciation to our departed friends, who like you, served their country honorably.

POW/MIA UPDATE

During a recent visit to Vietnam, by Secretary Rumsfeld, the issue of MIA's from the Vietnam War was discussed at some length.

The Vietnamese government has promised to continue, and even increase their cooperation with our search and recovery teams to help in repatriating the remains of our MIA's.

The North Koreans continue to "play games" on all fronts, not the least of which is allowing our teams into their country to try and locate remains. So, we have suspended searches in that country for the time being.



A Special Thanks.....

I probably don't do this often enough, but I would like to extend my personal gratitude, as well as the appreciation of all of our county's veterans to:

Eugene Pierron, Charlie Watry & Ron Kuta.

These three gentlemen are the "volunteer" drivers for our office. They make themselves available to our office in assisting our county's veterans, who can no longer drive to their VA medical appointments in Milwaukee.

Their on-going dedication to serving their fellow veterans deserves ALL of our respect as well as our gratitude. THANKS GUYS !!!

Hearing Aids, Eyeglasses and Dentures

I frequently get asked about these benefits, and their availability from the VA.

If you do not have a service connected disability, that specifically relates to any of the above, the chances that you will receive these services from the VA is mighty slim!

There are certain exceptions given for the extremely low income, and those who's VA doctor specifically recommends receive these areas of care.

Otherwise, don't bet the farm on getting help in these areas!



WDVA Offers a Personal Loan for ANY Purpose

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has recently announced that they have made some changes to their Personal Loan Program.

As part of the on-going changes to our State Veterans Benefits, WDVA has changed not only the available loan amounts, but also the available terms for repayment.



As you can see from the attached, loans are available for up to \$25,000.

Remember that proceeds from the loans are what helps fund the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs benefits to our fellow veterans.

If you have any questions regarding this program, or any other program offered by the WDVA of the Federal VA, please give me a call.

OZAUKEE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

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Located in the Justice Center
Room 232
Hours: M-F 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

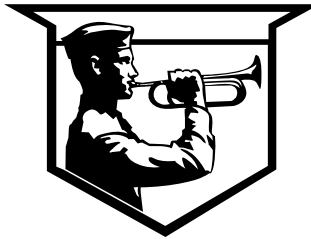
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**County Veterans
Service Office**

Serving Those Who Served America

We're on the Web
www.co.ozaukee.wi.us



**The following comrades have passed
away since our last newsletter:**

Robert Janssen; Amanda Puch; Franis Kennedy;
Herman Huebener; Chester Giese; Charles Spear;
Wilbert Prom; Robert Marion; Donald Jensen;
James Clausing; Eugene Keller; William Bateman;
George Boehm; Ellsworth Shock; Marshall Mercier;
Oscar Schmidt; Raymond Antoine; Donald Ganter;
Ernest Sader; Roger Posser; Robert Sauers; John Dieterich;
Warren Klumb; Lee Thorpe; Jerald Bell; Alfred Ratatori;
Ervin Lorence; Edward Kellin; Robert Schueller;
Dewey Porter; Jerome Kimba; Richard Bacher;
George Styducher; Richard Altendorf and Earl Farmer.



In Memory Of

A Parting Thought

Just as I was getting ready to send this newsletter to the printer, the news broke the we had managed to finally get one of the “most wanted” terrorists in Iraq. Al-Zarqawi.

While this is a triumph, it is just another small step in the right direction. Unfortunately, I'm sure there are several other “nut-jobs” waiting to step in and fill his shoes.

I believe our biggest problem in Iraq and Afghanistan is not so much with the “nut-jobs” but the local populace who condones or at the very least turns a blind eye to the actions of these very bad men.

Until someone convinces the locals that cooperating with us will stop these tragic bombings, I can't see us leaving either place anytime soon.

How do you win the hearts and minds of the locals? Good question. Their culture is so different from ours, that I do not believe anyone has a clear plan, and that is scary.

MAY THEY REST in PEACE

On a positive note, we have begun to turn over the responsibility of security to some of the Iraqi units. The sooner they get their act together, the sooner we can bring our troops home.

Until we reach that point, we as veterans, must insure that we, our families, our friends and neighbors know how important it is to maintain our unflinching support of the troops !

Enjoy your summer!

Ken

