

# Veterans News And Views

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My Swing Should Look So Good !!!

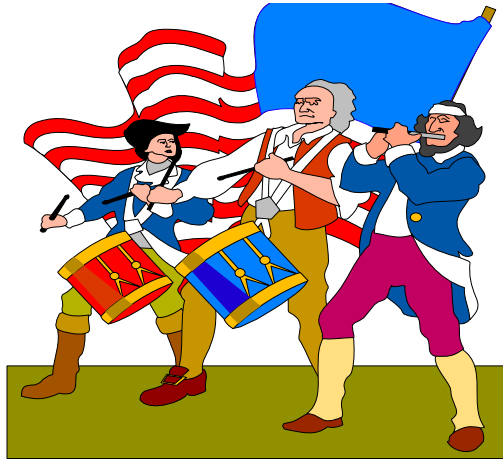


ATTACHED

*UW Football  
PLP Program*

*State Fair Discounts*

## **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.



## **Assault on Education Benefits**

Recent actions taken by our own State Legislature would rescind education benefits provided under the WI GI Bill, that was just enacted in the summer of 2006.

The program hasn't even come into full force yet, as the 100% waiver of tuition at a UW University, doesn't come into force until September of 2007.

It is VERY IMPORTANT that you contact your elected representatives from

your area, to let them know that this "roll-back" in benefits is unacceptable.

The Legislature is running on its own internal "agenda" and DID NOT consult with the veterans community before taking this radical approach.

One Legislator attacked WDVA for publishing a fact sheet reflecting his committee's intended actions, then turned around and did EXACTLY what WDVA had tried to warn the veterans community about.

They need a reminder, that we are here !!!!

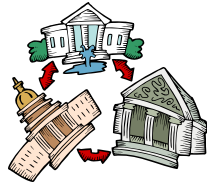
## Federal Legislation

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

Most notably, is the impending battle between Congress and the Administration.

The Bush administration has repeatedly tried to “low-ball” our active duty troops with pay raises that are at or below the cost of living increases, and has tried to force an increase in the cost share of healthcare provided to retirees.

It is only through the actions of the Congress that these “proposals” were nipped in the bud, and proper funding provided to insure our active duty forces receive adequate pay increase, and that retirees are not further burdened with additional costs in a program that was promised to them.



## State Issues

In addition to my remarks on the previous page regarding potential restrictions on the WI GI Bill., there are a couple of things churning their way around Madison, that are of interest to the veterans community.

Representative Terry Musser has introduced legislation that would expand the Property Tax exemption portion of the WI GI Bill.

If this legislation were to be approved, a veteran, who either joined the service from Wisconsin, or who has resided in the state for at least 5 years, AND is either rated at 100% disabled by the VA, by schedule, or by virtue of a rating of unemployability, would qualify for a remission of his/her property taxes from the state. This expands on the current benefits, already in place.

There is also legislation in process that would exempt veterans service organizations “clubhouses” from property tax at all levels. As usual, I’ll keep you posted as things progress in *Madtown.*

## Veterans’ Days 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 2nd through August 12th, with August 15 being the “Veterans’ Day”.

I have some discount coupons for admission to the fair good for any day of the fair.

During the “official”: Veterans Day at the Fair, August 12th, there will be a parade, as well as other activities to honor our fellow veterans.

If you haven’t been to the State Fair lately, then you are missing out on some really good free entertainment, not to mention the world famous cream puffs. I think I gained 3 pounds just thinking about them...

## VA MEDICAL SYSTEM NEWS

The VA Medical System remains open to all veterans. That’s the “good” news.

We here in Wisconsin are fairing better than a number of other areas in the country.

AS of this writing, there is a 4 to 5 month waiting list at the VAMC Milwaukee, or its branch clinic in Cleveland, WI.

In many areas of the country, new veterans are being seen in the system only because someone who was in the system has died, or got so fed up waiting that they dis-enrolled.

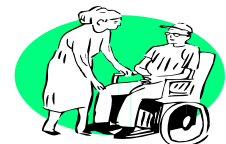
While the situation has improved significantly in the last year, the real answer to the problem is to make VA Funding a mandatory budget item, instead of the annual battle the VA faces before Congress and the Ad-

ministration.

The current Administration’s initial budget proposal for next fiscal year would see a \$1.6 billion dollar decrease from current funding levels, in terms of real dollars available. NOT A GOOD ANSWER, as we are creating more veterans daily, many of whom will return and require services from the VA.

Funny how they can say they support the troops, but fall woefully short on helping the veteran!

Write your congressman, and give him/her a piece of your mind!



## 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 nearly 3,000 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

In an interesting turn of events, Japan has been granted permission to Search Attu island, part of the Aleutian Chain for mass graves of soldiers they left behind during the WWII battle for that island.

Many, who did not live through that period, or study history, may have forgotten that frozen battle zone even existed.

Our recovery efforts continue in Southeast Asia, with nothing significant to report as of this writing.

Did you know that we have 2 MIAs in Iraq? There is no word from the military about what efforts have been undertaken to discover the fate of these two Americans. We can only assume, that they are "doing the right thing".



## A Special (?) Farewell.....

In some late breaking news, Secretary Nicholson, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs announced his retirement, no later than October 1, 2007.

During his tenure, he had to publicly eat crow for the Bush Administration for the debacle at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and try to answer to Congress on how one of his employees managed to lose a laptop containing millions of veterans' records.

The claims backlog continues, and thousands upon thousands of vets still wait to be enrolled in the VA Healthcare system. Another rat deserting a sinking ship.

## Hearing Aids, Eyeglasses and

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 Makes Changes to PLP

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

6.25 % if secured by a 2nd mortgage (\$25,000 max loan)

8.5 % if secured using a guarantor (co-signer) (\$5,000 max loan)

The PLP offers loans for debt consolidation, education, or medical expenses. The repayment can be stretched out over a period of between 12 and 120 months. There

is no charge for early repayment.

If you use your home as collateral, you must have a minimum of 10% equity in the home, after the PLP is issued.

And in either case, your "debt service ratio" (Income to long term payment amounts) can not exceed 35%.

As with all State of Wisconsin and Federal VA benefits, if you have questions, give me a call.



**OZAUKEE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE**

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**County Veterans  
Service Office**

*Serving Those Who Served America*

*We're on the Web*  
[www.co.ozaukee.wi.us](http://www.co.ozaukee.wi.us)

**TAPS**



In Memory Of  
Our Comrades

The following comrades have  
passed away since our last newsletter:

Gail Ward; Randall Peiffer; John Feltes; Donald Borchardt;  
Ralph Port; Robert Martinson; Richard Gierczak; Clarence Metz;  
Dennis Thill; Walter Lewin; Ronald Lewin; Nicholas Schmit;  
Fred Krause; Jerome Wagner; Ralph Raminger; James Prohuska;  
Carl Arentz; Earl Eernisse; James Schroeder; Donald Laine;  
Hazel Boesch; Joseph Mazza; Leroy Schwenner; Warren Luft.

**MAY THEY REST IN PEACE**

**A Parting Thought**

While attending the recent Conference for the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers in Milwaukee, I had the opportunity to hear several highly qualified people from the VA talk on a number of timely subjects.

One of the seminars that particularly struck me, had to do with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). This was a very important topic, as we have a large number of returnees from Iraq and Afghanistan who were in vehicles, or on foot, and were hit by IEDs.

While the research and treatment methods were fascinating to hear about, it struck me that here we had another example of technology in medicine finally catching up with something that has been around since the dawn of explosives.

I began to wonder, as I sat there looking at the slide presentation, how many veterans from wars past had their symptoms mis-diagnosed, because the medical community just didn't know any better.

Not like that hasn't ever happened before....

What is particularly annoying, is the time lag between a medical discovery, and the legislative and beauracratc response to that condition for recognition by the VA .

Science and politics don't mix well.

The VA will not change on their own. Only Congress can get the VA to do what is right, so we need to "encourage" Congress to find a way to streamline the process, and get our veterans the help and compensation they so richly deserve.

See you around the  
County!



*Ken*

