

October 12, 2009

Volume 09 Issue 2

# The Waukesha Patriot

Waukesha County Veterans Services

*New name—same great information*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

### FEDERAL BENEFITS

- P 1—VA Reopening Health Care Enrollment To Thousands of Veterans
- P 2—COMMENTARY CORNER
- P 3—VA Launches 10-Year Health Study of 60,000 New Veterans
- P 3—VA Presumptive POW Disease Update 02
- P 4—VA Unresponsive to Questions, Needs of Gulf War Veterans
- P 5—VA Web Site Helps College Counselors Aid Veterans
- P 6—As VA Reaches Out to Veterans, Health Care Access Issues Magnify
- P 8—VA's Suicide Prevention Program Adds Chat Service—New Service Expands Online Access for Veterans
- P 9—Secretary Shinseki Announces \$3.9 Million Grant to Wisconsin
- P 9—VA Warns Veterans of Telephone Prescription Scam
- P 10—Secretary Shinseki Announces Ability to Sign Up for Emergency Education Benefit Payment On VA Web-site
- P 10—Camp Wawbeek, Wisconsin Dells April 9-11, 2010, Retreat for Veterans With Physical Disabilities & Their Families
- P 11—Over \$50 Million Already Paid to Schools and Students
- P 12—Fact Sheet on Refunds for Combat Veterans

### STATE BENEFITS

- P 13—VA Awards \$526,000 for Wisconsin State Veterans Home
- P 13—Update Certification Process Approved for Administering the Wisconsin Veterans & Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit
- P 14—Veterans Mortgage Loans Available at Rate of 4.85%
- P 15—The 19th Century Museum Gallery is Open Again with Restoration Work Completed
- P 15—"Welcome Home, Boys!" Set to Open at the WI Veterans Museum
- P 15—Exhibit—Faces In the Sand NOW through July 2010
- P 16—Pictures—Operation Military Comfort

## FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL BENEFITS UPDATE

### NEWS UPDATE FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS



### VA Reopening Health Care Enrollment to Thousands of Veterans

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/ssrel/>



WASHINGTON (June 19, 2009) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which now has nearly 8 million Veterans enrolled in its award-winning health care system, is poised to welcome nearly 266,000 more Veterans into its medical centers and clinics across the country by expanding access to health care enrollment for certain Veterans who had been excluded due to their income.

"This incremental approach to expanding enrollment ensures that access to VA health care for a greater number of beneficiaries does not sacrifice timely access or quality medical care for those Veterans already enrolled in VA's health care system," Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Acting Under Secretary for Health, said. "Over the next four years, we hope to provide enrollment to more than 500,000 Veterans."

Under a new regulation effective June 15, VA will enroll Veterans whose income exceeds current means-tested thresholds by up to 10 percent. These Veterans were excluded from VA health care enrollment when income limits were imposed in 2003 on Veterans with no service-connected disabilities or other special eligibility for care. There is no income limit for

Veterans with compensable service-connected disabilities or for Veterans being seen for their service-connected disabilities.

Veterans who have applied for VA health care but were rejected due to income at any point in 2009 will have their applications reconsidered under the new income threshold formula. Those who applied before 2009, but were rejected due to income, must reapply. VA will contact these Veterans through a direct-mail campaign, Veterans service organizations, and a national and regional marketing campaign.

Information about enrollment and an income and assets calculator are available at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility). The calculator provides a format in which Veterans enter their household income, number of dependents, and zip codes to see if they may qualify for VA health care enrollment.

In addition to applying online, Veterans may also contact VA's Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387). Each VA medical center across the country has an enrollment coordinator available to provide Veterans with enrollment and eligibility information.

## COMMENTARY CORNER **By: Tom Ludka, Director**



Hello, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Tom Ludka and I am the new Waukesha County Veterans' Service Officer. My short military history is that I enlisted in the USMC in July of 1971 and served four years active duty, two years USMCR and then joined the Wisconsin Air National Guard in 1977. I became a full time Air Technician for the Guard and served from 1978-2000 retiring as a Chief Master Sergeant. I spent my entire military career working on or supervising maintenance on fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

From 2000 to 2002, I was employed as an adjunct instructor at the Milwaukee Leadership Training Center (MLTC). MLTC is a Milwaukee Public School charter school for at risk youth. The American Legion Department of Wisconsin selected me as the assistant Service Officer in 2002 and I assumed the duties as the Department Service Officer in 2006. The American Legion office is located at the VA Regional Office in Milwaukee. As the Legion Service Officer, I had many of the same responsibilities as a County Veterans Service Officer, obtaining VA benefits for veterans and their dependents such as compensation, pension, burial, DIC and education to name a few. I served in that capacity until I was appointed to my current position in August 2009.

The staff of the Waukesha County Veterans Service Division, Chris Wiesner, MarySue Mariani and Mary Jane Will, all possess years of experience and are a wellspring of knowledge on state and federal veterans benefits. It is a pleasure to work with such fine people.

I would like to wish outgoing Director, John Margowski a long and happy retirement. Thanks to his years of service, thousands of Waukesha County veterans and their dependents received earned benefits, which helped to improve their lives. That is a wonderful legacy and a credit to John and his staff.

Your veterans' service office will continue to provide top of the line service in assisting you in obtaining your earned benefits.

There are several new resources available for families dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). The Defense Center for Excellence [www.dcoe.health.mil](http://www.dcoe.health.mil) provides current information on research and treatment for PTSD and TBI. There are separate areas for Warriors, Families, News Media and Healthcare Professionals. Another excellent resource for TBI is found at [www.Brainline.org](http://www.Brainline.org). Brainline's mission is to help prevent, treat and learn how to live with Traumatic Brain Injury. The sites has information for individuals who suffer from TBI and for the families of TBI victims. Those service members who have returned from a combat zone should checkout [www.realwarriors.net](http://www.realwarriors.net) and [www.afterdeployment.org](http://www.afterdeployment.org). Both sites will help you to understand what you are going through. Additionally, you will be able to communicate with others who have experienced the stress of family separation, deployment and combat. If you need help don't wait!

### LOCATED AT:

Human Services Center  
500 Riverview Ave Rm G138  
Waukesha WI 53188-3680

Phone: 262-548-7732

FAX: 262-896-8588

TTD: 262-548-7311

### E-Mail:

[tludka@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:tludka@waukeshacounty.gov)

or

[vetserve@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:vetserve@waukeshacounty.gov)

### Web Page:

[www.waukeshacounty.gov/veterans/](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/veterans/)

*"The Patriot" is published by:  
The Waukesha County Veterans' Service Office.*

*If you have any questions or comments about the contents of the newsletter, please contact Waukesha County Veterans' Service Office at 262-548-7732.*

## VA Launches 10-Year Health Study of 60,000 New Veterans

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (June 22, 2009) -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has initiated a large, long-term study to look carefully at a broad array of health issues that may affect Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans and their counterparts who served during the same time period. VA's "National Health Study for a New Generation of U.S. Veterans" will begin with 30,000 Veterans deployed to OEF/OIF and 30,000 comparison Veterans who were not deployed.

"This study will help us fulfill President Obama's pledge to 'stand with our Veterans as they face new challenges' by enabling us to understand the health problems of our newest generation of combat Veterans," Dr. Gerald M. Cross, VA's acting under secretary for health, said. "The study's findings will help us plan more effectively to provide the best care possible for these deserving Veterans."

The study will include Veterans who served in each branch of service, representing active duty, Reserve, and National Guard members. Women will be over-sampled to make sure they are represented and will comprise 20 percent of the study, or 12,000 women. A

combination of mail surveys, online surveys, telephone interviews, and in-person physical evaluations will be used to collect data from the Veterans.

The study will compare the deployed and non-deployed Veterans in terms of chronic medical conditions, traumatic brain injury (TBI), post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other psychological conditions, general health perceptions, reproductive health, pregnancy outcomes, functional status, use of health care, behavioral risk factors (smoking, drinking, seatbelt use, speeding, motorcycle helmet use, and sexual behavior), and VA disability compensation. VA has contracted with an independent Veteran-owned research firm, HMS Technologies Inc., to collect the data.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for providing federal benefits to Veterans and their families. VA is the second largest of the 15 cabinet departments and operates nationwide programs for health care, financial assistance and burial benefits. The VA health care system operates more than 1,400 sites of care. Nearly 5.5 million people received care in VA health care facilities in 2008.

## VA Presumptive POW Diseases Update 02

The following information was found on the internet [http://post\\_119\\_gulfport\\_ms.tripod.com/raol.html](http://post_119_gulfport_ms.tripod.com/raol.html)

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending its adjudication regulations to establish a presumption of service connection for osteoporosis for former Prisoners of War (POWs) who were detained or interned for at least 30 days and whose osteoporosis is at least 10% disabling. The amendment implements a decision by the Secretary to establish such a presumption based on scientific studies. VA is additionally amending its adjudication regulations to establish a presumption of service connection for osteoporosis for POWs who were detained or interned for any period of time, have a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder

(PTSD), and whose osteoporosis is at least 10% disabling. This amendment reflects statutory provisions of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008. Effective Date for the amendment is 28 Sep 09. For further information contact: Thomas J. Kniffen, Chief, Regulations Staff (211D), Compensation and Pension Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 461-9725. Source: Federal Register 28 Aug 09 (Vol 74, Number 166 Rules and Regulations Page 44288-44289 29 Aug 09.

**America is #1  
Thanks to Our Veterans**



## VA Unresponsive to Questions, Needs of Gulf War Veterans

The following information is from WDVA Media Relations <http://dva.state.wi.us>

Washington, D.C. - On Tuesday, May 19, 2009, the House Veterans' Affairs Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, led by Chairman Harry Mitchell (D-AZ), conducted the first of a series of hearings on Gulf War Illness research. The hearing provided a review of the history of the research that has been conducted on Gulf War Illness, examined the methodology used by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to determine possible exposure to toxins and pesticides, and focused on the ongoing challenges veterans face as a result of their service in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

"It has been almost 19 years since the United States deployed some 700,000 service members to the Gulf in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm," said Chairman Mitchell. "When these troops returned home, some reported symptoms that were believed to be related to their service. Still today, these same veterans are looking for answers about proper medical treatment and the benefits that they bravely earned. While we hear about numerous studies and millions of dollars spent on Gulf War Illness research, many questions remain unanswered. Today, we will attempt to establish an understanding of the research that has been conducted - and the actions that have been taken - in relation to Gulf War Illness."

According to Congressional testimony, VA had concerns that returning veterans might have certain unique health problems including respiratory effects from exposure to the intense oil fire smoke even before the 1991 Gulf War cease-fire. During the summer of 1993, U.S. troops' exposure to chemical warfare (CW) agents first became an issue. The Department of Defense (DoD) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) concluded that no troops had been exposed for two reasons: there were no forward-deployed CW agent munitions, and plumes of CW agents released from the bombing that destroyed the chemical facilities could not have reached the troops. This conclusion was maintained until June 1996, when DoD publicly acknowledged that U.S. troops had destroyed stockpiles of chemical munitions at Khamisiyah after the war.

In 1998, Congress passed legislation, the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998 and the Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1998, which directed the VA Secretary to seek to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review and evaluate the available scientific evidence regarding associations between illnesses and exposure to toxic agents, environmental or wartime hazards, or preventive medicines or vaccines to which service members may have been exposed during service in the Persian Gulf during the Persian Gulf War. Congress directed the NAS to identify agents, hazards, medicines, and vaccines to which service members may have been exposed during the Persian Gulf War.

Between January 1, 2000 and September 12, 2006, NAS issued four reports on health effects of various toxins, chemical

warfare agents, and insecticides. Each report concluded that the available evidence did not warrant a presumption of service connection for any disease discussed in the report. The fifth report, released October 16, 2006, reviewed published, peer-reviewed scientific and medical literature on long-term health effects from infectious diseases associated with Southwest Asia. VA is currently drafting a proposed rule to establish presumptive service connection for nine infectious diseases discussed in the report and providing guidance regarding long-term health effects associated with those diseases. It was determined, however, that the scientific evidence in the report does not warrant a presumption of service connection for any illnesses caused by these diseases or agents.

Veterans raised a number of concerns at the hearing, mostly based on lack of information, outreach, and resources available from the VA. Veterans reported frustration that there is no formal Gulf War I Registry, no service-connected benefits for maladies, inadequate research to determine the cause of illness, no formal recognition by the VA of Gulf War Illness, and a lack of epidemiological tools in use to further track effects of Operation Desert Storm and Operation Desert Shield.

Recommendations from witnesses included increasing the VA research budget, formal recognition by DoD and VA of Gulf War Illness, access to disability benefits, and an end to the perceived secrecy that surrounds research findings, treatments, and new information. Also discussed was the immediate need to implement an electronic medical health record that fully incorporates the veteran's military record.

Rick Weidman of Vietnam Veterans of America testified, "VA needs to move quickly to modify the Computerized Patient Records System (CPRS) or VISTA, to incorporate a military history that will include branch of service, periods of service, places assigned and when, military occupational specialties, and notes on what happened to the individual that may be of note. This also needs to be searchable on a nationwide basis, so that if an individual has an unusual medical condition, then the physician can search and find out if others who served in their unit at the same time have the same or similar conditions. This would be an invaluable epidemiologic tool that could/would point VA in the direction of where there needs to be research that is directed where there are obviously problems. You may ask why they never did this before? Well, we have come to the inescapable conclusion that they never did it because they did not

*(Continued on page 5 - Gulf War Veterans)*

## VA Web Site Helps College Counselors Aid Veterans

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (May 27, 2009) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a new Web site to strengthen the connection between college and university mental health professionals and the Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts now studying on their campuses.

"Many of our newest Veterans are beginning their post-service lives by furthering their educations," said Dr. Gerald M. Cross, VA's acting under secretary for health. "This initiative is designed to ensure that colleges and universities are able to assist with any special mental health needs they may have."

The Web site, [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/College](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/College), features recommended training for college and university counselors, with online modules including "Operation SAVE" for suicide prevention, "PTSD 101" and "Helping Students Who Drink

Too Much." It also will feature a resource list that will be updated regularly.

Although the Web site is designed primarily for counselors, it also serves as a resource for Veteran-students who wish to learn more about the challenges they may face in adjusting to their lives after leaving the military.

"We hope counselors and our returning Veterans find this site helpful and easy to use," Cross said. "As the site grows, we expect it will become an increasingly valuable resource."

The new site is one of several Web-based tools VA has developed to assist Veterans in dealing with mental health issues. Others include a guide for families of military members returning from deployment and information about a suicide prevention hotline for Veterans.

### *(Gulf War Veterans—Continued from page 4)*

want the information. As the cost to make this change to the CPRS is really minimal, we can come up with no other explanation that makes any sense whatsoever."

"If Gulf War veterans have been harmed by their service to their country, we must ensure they are taken care of through presumptive service connection for that illness," said Bob Filner (D-CA), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "I support President Obama's call to develop joint electronic medical records that contain military records. Not only is this information sharing between the DoD and VA imperative to more accurately treat maladies and service connected injuries, it will allow the VA to refocus its efforts and direct care to its wounded warriors. It is time for the VA to compassionately and immediately serve its clients."

Subsequent hearings on this issue will take a multi-level view of the methodology and conclusions of Gulf War Illness research, how the review of information was compiled, and why certain methods were employed

Witnesses:

Panel 1:

- ◆ Jim Bunker, Gulf War Veteran and President, National Gulf War Resource Center
- ◆ Paul Sullivan, Executive Director, Veterans for Common Sense
- ◆ Richard F. Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America
- ◆ Roberta F. White, Ph.D., Scientific Director, Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, Professor and Chair of the Department of Environmental Health, Associate Dean for Research, Boston University School of Public Health (Did not testify due to illness-

submitted statement for the record)

- ◆ Lea Steele, Ph.D., Immediate Past Scientific Director, Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, Adjunct Associate Professor, Kansas State University School of Human Ecology

Panel 2:

- ◆ Robert D. Walpole, Former Special Assistant for Gulf War Illness Issues, Office of the Assistant Director of Central Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency

Accompanied by:

- ◆ Loren J. Fox, Jr., Former Senior Analyst for Gulf War Illness Issues, Central Intelligence Agency
- ◆ R. Craig Postlewaite, DVM, MPH, Deputy Director of Force Readiness and Health Assurance, Force Health Protection and Readiness Programs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense
- ◆ Lawrence Deyton, M.D., MSPH, Chief Public Health and Environmental Hazards Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Accompanied by:
  - ◆ Joel Kupersmith, M.D., Chief Research and Development Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
  - ◆ Mark Brown, Ph.D., Director, Environmental Agents Service, Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Prepared testimony for the hearing and a link to the webcast from the hearing is available on the internet at this link: <http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/hearing.aspx?newsid=394>.

## As VA Reaches Out to Veterans, Health Care Access Issues Magnify

The following information is from WDVA Media Relations <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>



Washington, D.C. - On Tuesday, May 19, 2009, the House Veterans' Affairs Health Subcommittee, led by Chairman Michael Michaud (D-ME), held a hearing to assess the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to conduct an outreach program to veterans of all eras. The hearing focused on the coordinated efforts between the three separate administrations (Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration and National Cemetery Administration) to reach veterans and alert them of available benefits and services, and the role of nonprofit and community organizations currently providing services to veterans.

"Six decades separate the newest generation from the oldest generation and nine million veterans are over the age of 65, and outreach strategies for older veterans should differ from that of younger veterans," stated Congressman Harry Teague (D-NM). "According to the VA's Center for Minority Veterans, the minority veteran population including women veterans comprises approximately 15 percent of the nation's 23.4 million veterans. The VA is also faced with the challenge of developing effective outreach strategies which are culturally competent and thus, able to overcome potential cultural barriers. This demographic data illustrate the sheer number of veterans who stand to benefit from improved VA outreach efforts.

During the Vietnam War, increased awareness of veterans not receiving adequate information about health care benefits resulted in Congress enacting the Veterans Outreach Services Program (VOSP). Congress charged the VA with the responsibility of actively seeking out eligible veterans and providing them with benefits and services. Under the current law, the Secretary is responsible for advising each veteran at the time of discharge or release of all benefits for which the veteran may be eligible. Enacted in 2001, the Veterans' Survivor Benefits Improvement Act (VSBIA) further expanded outreach to eligible dependents and provided that the Secretary ensure the availability of outreach services and assistance through the Internet, veterans publications, and media.

On July 18, 2002, a VA Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Operations and Management issued a memorandum to all regional directors of the VHA prohibiting

marketing geared toward increasing enrollment. VHA at the time was facing a growing demand for health care services that exceeded their resources. Veteran Service Organizations accused the VA of not providing outreach to veterans and dependents in accordance with the law. Nearly 18 months later a second memorandum was issued by VHA instructing the directors to ensure that their facilities were in compliance with responsibilities outlined in the VOSP.

Dr. Romberg, founder and president of Give an Hour, offered the following assessment of the balance between outreach efforts and current needs of veterans: "Our government is clearly working hard to assist this generation of combat veterans and families. VA funding for the past four years is at unprecedented levels and continues to grow. We cannot assume, however, that more money, more staff, more outpatient clinics, more Vet Centers, more "clinics on wheels," more organizational restructuring, and more (and different) leadership will enable the VA to meet the mental and physical health care needs facing this generation of combat veterans. We see from all the statistics, which I will cover shortly, that this is a public health crisis that will take more than extended outreach. Yes, current outreach efforts are clearly insufficient. But even if the current outreach efforts were sufficient, it is evident that the system does not have the capacity to meet the growing and ongoing needs of OIF and OEF veterans who are experiencing a full range of ongoing physical and mental health concerns upon returning home. Finally, even if outreach efforts were sufficient and the VA had the capacity to meet most of the needs of returning service members, this solution would still be inadequate. If returning troops are to truly and successfully reintegrate into our communities, than our communities must be involved in the solution."

National Association for Uniformed Services Legislative Director Rick Jones discussed the

*(Continued on page 7 - VA Reaches Out)*

*(VA Reaches Out—Continued from page 6)*

critical need for outreach during the transition from military to civilian life: "Studies conducted by The Army surgeon general's Mental Health Advisory Team clearly show that our troops and their families face incredible stress today. According to the Department of Defense (DoD), 27 percent of noncommissioned officers on their third or fourth tour exhibited symptoms commonly referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder. That figure is far higher than the roughly 12 percent who show those symptoms after one tour and the 18.5 percent who demonstrate these disorders after a second tour. And among the approximately half-million active-duty soldiers who have served in Iraq, more than 197,000 have deployed more than once, and more than 53,000 have deployed three or more times. A recent Rand Corporation study suggests that almost half of these returning troops will not seek treatment. Many of these veterans do not believe they are at risk or they fear that admitting to a mental health problem will mean being stigmatized. Yet if these brave individuals and their families are made aware of access to VA facilities, to which they are entitled, they are likely to find a treatment therapy that leads to health. If not addressed, stress symptoms can compound and lead to more serious health consequences in the future."

"Unfortunately, initial war planning did not include a plan to care for veterans when they returned home," commented Bob Filner, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "The Obama Administration understands that added resources and immediate attention are needed to meet the growing demands of veterans of all generations. Priority Group 8 veterans will soon be able to access VA health care, severely injured veterans are returning home after combat, and veterans of past generations are increasingly in need of specialized care. We must act boldly and we must act now."

Witness List:

Panel 1

- ◆ John Rowan, National President, Vietnam Veterans of America

- ◆ Reynaldo Leal, Jr., OEF/OIF Veteran, Representative, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
- ◆ Richard A. Jones, Legislative Director, National Association for Uniformed Services

Panel 2

- ◆ Bruce Bronzan, President, Trilogy Integrated Resources
- ◆ Barbara Van Dahlen Romberg, Ph.D., Founder and President, Give an Hour
- ◆ John King, Co-Director, Veterans Community Action Teams Mission Project, Altarum Institute
- ◆ Randall L. Rutta, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, Easter Seals
- ◆ Jeffrey W. Pollard, Ph.D., ABPP, Director, Counseling and Psychological Services, George Mason University, American Psychological Association

Accompanied by:

- ◆ Michael Johnson, Military and Veterans Liaison, George Mason University

Panel 3

- ◆ Paul J. Hutter, Chief Officer, Legislative, Regulatory, and Intergovernmental Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Accompanied by:

- ◆ Ev Chasen, Chief Communications Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- ◆ John Brown, Director, Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Outreach Officer, Veterans Health Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- ◆ Emily Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, Officer of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Prepared testimony and a link to the webcast is available on the internet at this link: <http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/hearing.aspx?newsid=401>.

## VA's Suicide Prevention Program Adds Chat Service New Service Expands Online Access for Veterans

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>



WASHINGTON (August 31, 2009) - The Suicide Prevention campaign of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is expanding its outreach to all Veterans by piloting an online, one-to-one "chat service" for Veterans who prefer reaching out for assistance using the Internet.

Called "Veterans Chat," the new service enables Veterans, their families and friends to go online where they can anonymously chat with a trained VA counselor. If a "chatter" is determined to be in a crisis, the counselor can take immediate steps to transfer the person to the VA Suicide Prevention Hotline, where further counseling and referral services are provided and crisis intervention steps can be taken.

"This online feature is intended to reach out to all Veterans who may or may not be enrolled in the VA health care system and provide them with online access to the Suicide Prevention Lifeline," said Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Acting Under Secretary for Health. "It is meant to provide Veterans with an anonymous way to access VA's suicide prevention services."

Veterans family members or friends can access Veterans Chat through the suicide prevention web site [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org). There is a Veterans tab on the left-hand side of the website that will take them directly to Veteran resource information. On this page, they can see the Hotline number (1-800-273-TALK), and click on the Veterans Chat tab on the right side of the Web page to enter.

Veterans retain anonymity by entering whatever names they choose once they enter the one-on-one chat. They are then joined by a counselor who is trained to provide information and respond to the requests and concerns of the caller.

If the counselor decides the caller is in a crisis, the counselor will encourage the Veteran to call

the Suicide Prevention Hotline, where a trained suicide prevention counselor will determine whether crisis intervention techniques are required.

The pilot program, which has been in operation since July 3, has already had positive results. In one instance, the online counselor determined that a Veteran in the chat required immediate assistance. The counselor convinced the Veteran to provide the counselor with a home telephone number and then remained in the chat room with the Veteran while the hotline staff called the number and talked to the Veteran's mother. The hotline counselor worked with the Veteran's mother to convince the Veteran to be admitted to a medical facility for further treatment.

"The chat line is not intended to be a crisis response line," said Dr. Janet Kemp, VA's National Suicide Prevention Coordinator at the VA medical center in Canandaigua, N.Y., where VA's trained counselors staff the chat line 24 hours a day, seven days a week. VA's suicide prevention hotline is also staffed continuously.

"Chat responders are trained in an intervention method specifically developed for the chat line to assist people with emotional distress and concerns," Kemp said. "We have procedures they can use to transfer chatters in crisis to the hotline for more immediate assistance."

Both Veterans Chat and the VA's Suicide Prevention Hotline have been established under the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which was established through collaboration between VA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Since becoming operational in July 2007, VA's Suicide Prevention Hotline has received more than 150,000 calls, resulting in 4,000 rescues.

## Secretary Shinseki Announces \$3.9 Million Grant to Wisconsin

The following information was received from <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (September 2, 2009) Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has announced a grant of \$3,896,563 from the Department of Veterans Affairs to expand the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Union Grove.

"By supporting expansion of this cemetery, VA helps ensure that memorial benefits for Wisconsin Veterans will be available for many more years," said Secretary Shinseki. "We are proud to partner with the state Department of Veterans Affairs to commemorate their service and sacrifice of Wisconsin's Veterans."

The cemetery expansion grant will provide 100 percent funding for the development of a 22-acre parcel. This phase of development will include 419 standard burial plots, 3,484 pre-placed crypts and 1,595 in-ground cremation gravesites. The grant will also fund construction of roads, a committal shelter, a scatter garden, irrigation, landscaping and supporting infrastructure.

The 105-acre cemetery, approximately 30 miles south of Milwaukee, was established with the assistance of a VA grant in 1996. The closest

national cemetery that is able to provide full burial benefits is Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Ill., approximately 110 miles south. The closest state cemetery is the Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in King, Wis., approximately 150 miles north.

VA's State Cemetery Grants Program was designed to complement its 130 national cemeteries across the country. Since 1980, the program has awarded grants totaling more than \$389.5 million to establish, expand or improve 74 Veterans cemeteries in 38 states or territories. These state cemeteries provided nearly 25,000 burials in 2008.

Residents of Wisconsin who are Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children may be buried in the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery. For more information about this cemetery, call 262-878-5660, or visit <http://dva.state.wi.us/cemeteries.asp>.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov) or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000.

## VA Warns Veterans of Telephone Prescription Scam

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (Sept. 17, 2009) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning Veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information.

"America's Veterans have become targets in an inexcusable scam that dishonors their service and misrepresents the Department built for them," said Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "VA simply does not call Veterans and ask them to disclose personal financial information over the phone."

Veteran Service Organizations have brought to

VA's attention that callers are misrepresenting the VA to gain personal information over the phone. They say VA recently changed procedures for dispensing prescriptions and ask for the Veteran's credit card number.

"VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines," Cross said. "Nor has VA changed its long-standing commitment to protect the personal information of this nation's Veterans."

Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call, toll-free, 1-877-222-8387.



## Secretary Shinseki Announces Ability to Sign Up for Emergency Education Benefit Payment on VA Web-site

The following information was received <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>



WASHINGTON (Sept. 30, 2009) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki today announced further outreach to Veteran-students eligible for a special emergency payment of their education benefits. Veterans can now apply online beginning Oct. 2. Veteran-students can also request courtesy transportation to VA regional benefits offices.

"Our Veterans went the extra mile for their country," Shinseki said. "One of our top priorities in transforming VA is to be, first and foremost, the advocate for Veterans."

Last week Shinseki announced that on Friday, Oct. 2, VA's 57 regional benefits offices will begin providing on-the-spot emergency payments up to \$3,000 to students who have applied for their education benefits but who have not yet received a government payment.

Citing the distance many Veterans would have to travel to apply in person at a VA benefits office, Shinseki announced Veterans can also apply online at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), starting Oct. 2. The online application will guide Veterans through the process to supply needed information. Shinseki noted that online applicants will receive their emergency payments through the mail after processing.

"VA is adapting to meet the financial needs of our Veteran-students who are on campus," Shinseki said. "They should be focusing on their studies, not worrying about financial difficulties."

Students without their own transportation can also request free van service, provided by volunteers, to carry them to the nearest benefits office. To obtain

this service, Veterans would have to call their nearest VA medical center and ask for the "Volunteer Transportation Coordinator." Transportation will be on a first-come, first-served, space-available basis. Veterans can find a map and list of medical centers at <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/division>.

Whether traveling by personal vehicle or volunteer van, VA officials suggest students check their mail boxes and banking accounts before leaving home, since some Veterans will find their checks have already arrived. VA would like to recognize the volunteers and Veterans Service Organizations for partnering with the Department to ensure that Veterans' needs are met.

The emergency checks are an advance on each student's education benefits, and the amount will be deducted from future benefits payments. Checks will be written at the regional offices for Veterans who bring a photo ID and evidence of their enrollment. VA officials emphasize that \$3,000 is the maximum payment, with many Veterans receiving smaller payments based upon their likely monthly education benefits.

A map and list of the participating VA regional benefits offices is available on the Internet at <http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/division>. The most updated information regarding VA issuing emergency checks will be available at VA's web site [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) starting Oct. 1, 2009.

Applications from approximately 25,000 Veterans are currently being processed for Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefit payments to students or schools.

## Camp Wawbeek, Wisconsin Dells—April 9-11, 2010 Retreat for Veterans with Physical Disabilities & Their Families

The following information can be found at [www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com](http://www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com)



Easter Seals Wisconsin is offering our second "Healing Adventures" weekend in April, 2010, for military service veterans with physical disabilities and their families. Vets, along with their spouses and children, will have a unique opportunity to meet

and interact with peers adjusting to and living with similar circumstances.

The weekend, which will be held on Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek's 400 beautifully-wooded acres just north of Wisconsin Dells, will focus on fun

*Continued on page 11 - Camp Wawbeek)*

## Over \$50 Million Already Paid to Schools and Students

The following information was received <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>



WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it has provided certificates of eligibility to nearly 200,000 applicants for the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. Over 61,000 payments totaling over \$50 million to schools and students have been issued since the August 1, 2009, implementation of the new program.

“Our top priority is providing our students and schools with accurate and timely benefit payments so Veterans can focus all of their energy on studies,” said Under Secretary for Benefits Patrick W. Dunne.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill authorizes the most extensive educational assistance opportunity since the passage of the original GI Bill in 1944. The maximum benefit allows every eligible Veteran, Servicemember, Reservist, and National Guard member an opportunity to receive an in-state, undergraduate education at a public institution at no cost.

Since VA began accepting Veterans’ applications on May 1, 2009 and school enrollment certifications on July 6, 2009, approximately 277,000 applications for eligibility determinations and/or school enrollment certifications have been received for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

During this same period, VA received over 603,000 applications for other education benefit programs, such as the Montgomery GI Bill; processed more than 503,000 of those applications; and authorized payments to students totaling over \$1 billion.

VA’s current average claims processing time for Post-9/11 GI Bill claims is 35 days. This number temporarily

increases during the fall term as most Veterans begin their school year. Moving forward, VA’s goal is to process Veterans’ initial claims in less than 25 days and re-enrollments in subsequent terms in an average of 10 days.

VA has over 900 personnel processing education claims. To address the large fall enrollment workload, employees are working overtime, and VA has rehired retired claims processors to provide additional processing support.

VA also contacted schools directly to address questions or concerns about the new program, and sent letters to schools to keep them updated on VA’s progress in implementing the new program.

“We appreciate the cooperation we are receiving from Veterans and educational institutions as we implement this new and complex program,” added Under Secretary Dunne.

Post-9/11 GI Bill students should be aware that a full housing allowance payment will not be issued until after the first full month of enrollment. Students beginning school in August will receive a pro-rated housing payment in September, and a full payment beginning October 1, 2009.

Additional information about VA education benefits can be found at [www.GIBILL.VA.gov](http://www.GIBILL.VA.gov) or by calling 1-888-GIBILL-1, where over 100 call agents are standing by to assist Veterans’ with their questions and concerns.

### *(Camp Wawbeek—Continued from page 10)*



and fully-accessible recreational activities that all members of the family can participate in together. A climbing tower, high and low ropes courses, team-building activities, arts & crafts and adaptive sports and games will be available. The weekend's agenda may include trips to the Dells area attractions. There will also be downtime for rest and reflection.

Along with the recreational activities, three informal groups - one for veterans, one for spouses, and one designed especially for children - will be offered to talk about readjustment issues. These sessions are optional

and will be run by staff from Madison's William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital.



While the weekend focuses primarily on fun, participating families will have the opportunity to begin forming with each other a social and support network that many be helpful for them year round. Our total is to provide the program at no cost to participants and we are seeking financial support for the veterans’ participation. All meals and lodging will be provided

Space is limited, so please register early! For more information visit [www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com](http://www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com) or call 800-422-2324 ext 124.

## Fact Sheet on Refunds for Combat Veterans

The following information is from the VSO Meeting—September 16, 2009

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 (NDAA) (Public Law 110-108) extended the period of enhanced enrollment eligibility and cost-free care for conditions potentially related to the theater of combat operations.

Major implications of this law are:

(1) Any combat Veteran currently enrolled and new combat Veterans enrollees who were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003, are eligible for enhanced enrollment placement into Priority Group (PG) 6 (unless eligible for higher PG placement), for 5 years post discharge.

(2) Combat Veterans discharged from active duty before January 28, 2003, who did not previously enroll in VA's health care system and apply for enrollment on or after January 28, 2008, are eligible for enhanced enrollment placement into PG 6 (unless eligible for higher PG placement) through January 27, 2011.

As a result of the NDAA, Veterans are also eligible for retroactive refunds of copayments they made for medical services and prescriptions associated with treatment related to their combat experience.

VHA facilities are presently conducting reviews to determine applicable copayments which should be refunded to these Veterans.

VHA anticipates mailing letters to impacted Veterans in November 2009 informing them that they are due a refund which will be subsequently issued by the end of December 2009.

A sample of the letter that will be sent to Veterans who will receive refunds follows this article.

Veterans will be encouraged to contact the Health Resources Center with any questions at 1-800-983-0932.



Dear Veteran:

On January 28, 2008, Public Law 110-108, the "National Defense Authorization Act of 2008" (NDAA) extended the period of a Combat Veteran's post discharge period of enhanced enrollment eligibility and cost-free care for conditions potentially related to the theater of combat operations.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will be refunding charges that were paid for care and/or prescriptions rendered to Veterans whose Combat Veteran period was extended. Our records indicate that you have paid a copayment or copayments for care which is covered by the NDAA, and that you are due a refund. The refund amount will include any copayment charges plus any interest and administrative late payment charges that were previously paid during this period of time.

If you have any questions about this refund, please call 1-800-983-0932 (toll free) for assistance.

Thank you for your service to our nation.

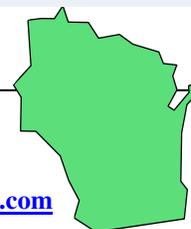
Sincerely,

Gary M. Baker



**HAPPY HALLOWEEN**

## NEWS UPDATE FOR STATE BENEFITS



### VA Awards \$526,000 for Wisconsin State Veterans Home

The following information was received from: [rebecca.boehlke@militaryonesource.com](mailto:rebecca.boehlke@militaryonesource.com)

WASHINGTON (Aug.26, 2009) -- To support high-quality health services for Veterans at the state home in King, Wis., the Department of Veterans Affairs is awarding a grant of up to \$526,000 for upgrades to the facility's water supply well.

The estimated total cost for the project at the state Veterans home in King is nearly \$810,000, with VA's grant covering 65 percent of the cost. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs agreed to enter into a contract for the improvements within 90 days of an agreement with VA.

Last year, VA spent more than \$1.4 billion in

Wisconsin on behalf of the state's 437,000 Veterans. VA operates major medical centers in Madison, Milwaukee and Tomah, 17 outpatient clinics, two Vet Centers and the national cemetery in Wood.

The state-run Veterans homes in King and Union Grove are open to Veterans who entered military service from Wisconsin or who were residents of the state for 12 consecutive months after discharge. Spouses of Veterans living at the homes are also eligible to be residents. For more information about the Wisconsin Veterans Homes, visit <http://dva.state.wi.us/Homes.asp>.

### Updated Certification Process Approved for Administering the Wisconsin Veterans & Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit

*New law came into effect Jan 1, 2009* - The following information <http://dva.state.wi.us>

(MADISON) – The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) announces that the application process and procedures have been approved for administering the Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit program under the new law that came into effect on January 1, 2009.

The department is currently updating the "Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit Information, Request Form and Instructions" booklet (WDVA B0106), available on the website at [www.WisVets.com/Forms#WDVAAB0106](http://www.WisVets.com/Forms#WDVAAB0106). Applicants should wait until this booklet and the certification Request Form (WDVA 2097) contained within it are updated to replace the November 2005 version, in order to avoid confusion and having to resubmit multiple applications or required documentation.

For property taxes paid prior to Jan. 1, 2009, the Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit program provides a refundable property tax credit for the primary residence (in-state) via the state income tax form for: eligible veterans age 65 or older who were residents of Wisconsin at the time of entry into active duty and have a VA service-connected disability rating of

100% under 38 USC 1114 or 1134; the unremarried spouse of an eligible veteran; or, the unremarried spouse of a veteran who entered active duty as a Wisconsin resident, died in the line of duty, and was a Wisconsin resident at the time of death.

Beginning with qualifying property taxes paid in 2009 and claimed in 2010, the Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit will expand by allowing veterans with five continuous years of Wisconsin residency to apply, eliminating the age requirement, and including otherwise eligible veterans who receive 100% payment for Individual Unemployability, as well as veterans with 100% service connected disabilities and their unremarried surviving spouses.

Upon completion of updates to the booklet and the certification request form, WDVA will notify County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO's) and the updated information will be available on the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs website.

For CVSOs' contact information see WDVA's website at [www.WisVets.com/ServiceOffices](http://www.WisVets.com/ServiceOffices). For more information about the Property Tax Credit program, go to [www.WisVets.com/Taxes](http://www.WisVets.com/Taxes), or call WDVA toll-free at 1-800-WIS-VETS (1-800-947-8387).

## Veterans Mortgage Loans Available at Rate of 4.85%

The following information <http://dva.state.wi.us>

(MADISON) - The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) recently announced that it is now offering loans under the Primary Mortgage Loan Program (PLMP) at a 30-year fixed interest rate of **4.85%**, the lowest rate ever offered in this program.

“This a great opportunity for veterans looking to buy a new home,” said WDVA Acting Secretary Ken Black. “Besides this new low rate, unlike many conventional loans, only 5 percent down payment is needed, with no primary mortgage insurance required. WDVA’s loan programs offer below market interest rates combined with flexible terms to meet the various borrowing needs of Wisconsin’s veterans.”

WDVA state veterans home loans may be used to finance the purchase or construction of a single family home, a condominium or 2-4 unit owner occupied residence that will be the veteran's principal residence. The loan requires only a 5% down payment. The down payment may be provided in whole or in part by an approved down payment assistance program.

In addition to the 30-year term and low interest rate the WDVA primary mortgage loans offer several advantages to Wisconsin veterans including no points or pre-payments penalties, no funding fee and all qualifying veterans receive the same rate. The loan must be used to buy or build the veterans principal residence and may not be used to refinance an existing mortgage. Veterans may borrow up to \$385,000.

The funding for the Primary Mortgage Loan Program is derived from federally tax-exempt Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bonds (QVMB). Besides state veterans eligibility requirements, federal tax law govern-

ing the QVMB program requires that the qualifying veteran be no more than 25

years from the date of discharge from active duty military service at the time of application.

The state veterans home loan program is not associated with the federal VA veterans home mortgage guaranty program.

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs also offers low interest fixed rate loans as low as 5.85% through the Home Improvement Loan program (HILP) and Personal Loan Program (PLP). Veterans who opt to stay in their current homes but want to make improvements or borrow for other purposes may be eligible for Home Improvement Loans to perform a variety of alterations, construction or repair of their principal residence, including garage construction, or Personal Loans, which can be used for any purpose including debt consolidation, education, or purchasing a vehicle.

In order to take advantage of WDVA’s loans program, Wisconsin veterans must establish eligibility with WDVA directly (veterans who have obtained past benefits from WDVA can request a new Certificate of Eligibility) or through their County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO).

More information on WDVA’s loans program is available at [WisVetLoans.com](http://WisVetLoans.com) or toll-free at 1-800-WIS-VETS (1-800-947-8387). Veterans are encouraged to contact their CVSO. Contact information is available at [WisVets.com/cvso](http://WisVets.com/cvso) or by checking a local telephone book under County Government.



### VISIT THE WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM

30 W. MIFFLIN ST  
MADISON WI 53703  
(Across from the Capitol)

#### SERVICES:

Gallery & Gift Shop Hours:  
Monday—Saturday (year-round)  
9 a.m.—4:30 p.m.  
Sunday (April—September)  
Noon—4:00 p.m.

#### ADMISSION:

Free for museum and programs unless otherwise specified.



#### GUIDED TOURS:

Available for groups of 10 or more.  
(Advance reservations required)

#### Research Center

Tuesday & Thursday (Year-round)  
9 a.m.—3:30 p.m.  
or call for an appointment

#### FOR INFORMATION CALL:

608-267-1790—Museum  
608-267-1799—Museum Store  
WEB PAGE

<http://museum.dva.state.wi.us>

## The 19th Century Museum Gallery is Open Again with Restoration Work Completed

The following information was received from:

<http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/>

The Veterans Museum encourages people of all age groups and backgrounds to visit our award winning facility. We serve the public in four unique areas. The Veterans Museum offers instructive exhibits that highlight important events in Wisconsin military history from the Civil War to the present. The museum has received national recognition for its displays. Secondly, the Veterans Museum develops educational programs often focusing on specific themes such as World War II or Korea. Thirdly, the Museum also operates a Research Center where books, photographic materials, oral histories, and archival collections can be accessed. In addition, the Research Center provides online reference assistance. Finally, the Museum cares for and safeguards a large collection



of artifacts associated with Wisconsin's military history.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is an active member of the area community. The museum hosts school tours, veterans group meetings, commemorative events, special programs and participates in activities sponsored by its governing agency, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. The message of the Veterans Museum is one of affirmation. The Museum recognizes, acknowledges and affirms the role of state veterans in America's military past. We believe that our educational programs, exhibits, and services contribute to the quality of life Wisconsin citizens enjoy.



## “Welcome Home, Boys!” Set to Open at the WI Veterans Museum

The following information was received from <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/>

MADISON—Wisconsin Veterans Museum will open a new photography exhibit, “Welcome Home, Boys! Welcome Home Signs in Post-World War II New York City,” on Tuesday, August 4, 2009. An opening reception will be held from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. the same day, with a gallery talk beginning at 5:30 p.m. The exhibit will remain on display until October 31, 2009.

When she began working at Acme News pictures at the age of 18, Ida Wyman thought that the job would be a nice diversion before she began nursing school in the fall following her high school graduation. Instead, she fell in love with the news business, getting to read and see breaking news before the public, and developing a talent for taking photographs. On her lunch hour, she would walk the streets of Manhattan searching for inspiration. What started as a hobby became her life's work and

a sixty-year career as a photojournalist.

“Welcome Home, Boys!” features 18 silver gelatin prints of ‘Welcome Home’ signs that hung in taverns, parlor windows, and on the exteriors of brown stones in all boroughs of New York City. All professionally made, these signs represented patriotism and tremendous support for the returning servicemen. Also included are several shots of spontaneous celebrations on V-J Day.

For more information on the exhibit, contact Jeff Kollath, Curator of Programs and Exhibitions, at (608) 261-0541. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is a free public educational activity of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and is located at 30 W. Mifflin St., across the street from the State Capitol. For more information go to [www.museum.dva.state.wi.us](http://www.museum.dva.state.wi.us).



## Exhibit—Faces In the Sand—NOW through July 2010

The following information was received from <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/>

Visit our new exhibit on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and learn about the service and sacrifice of Wisconsin veterans through firsthand interviews, rare artifacts, and battlefield souvenirs.



**DOWNTOWN WAUKESHA**  
**October 3, 2009**

**“THE BIG READ”**  
**OPERATION MILITARY COMFORT**

