

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



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September / October – 2009

Director's Message

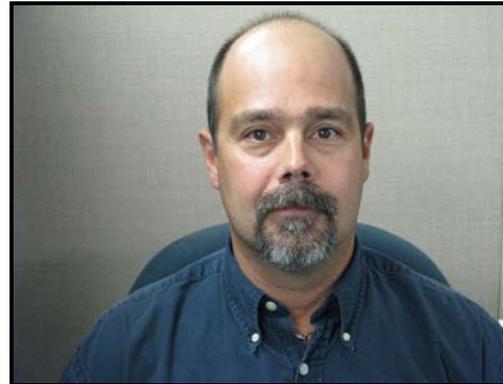
Dear Friends -

Summer has ended and fall is upon us...It won't be long before snowflakes will again be in the air. The older we get the less we look forward to those days.

On October 13th another 500 WWII veterans left the Des Moines airport on a 747 and 737 aircraft to visit their memorial in Washington, D.C. Another 747 will leave on November 4th with 350 more WWII veterans aboard. Hopefully the weather will cooperate to make this last trip of the year as great as all the previous flights.

A simple "thank you" does not seem enough to show our sincere appreciation to all of those who have contributed to make these flights possible - especially to Hy-Vee for the Aug 11th flight as well as the upcoming Nov. 4th flight. To Casey's General Stores for the two October 13th flights and to Prairie Meadows for the great send off events on October 12th. I know the WWII veterans in attendance were thankful, as are the rest of us who truly appreciate their thoughtfulness for our veterans.

Last month, I attended the national conference for State Directors of Veterans Affairs and was elected Junior Vice-President of the organization. The even better news out of the conference was that Iowa was selected as one of five states to receive a U.S. Department of Defense Yellow Ribbon Program Specialist. I would like to officially welcome Shawn Hippen to our staff. He began working in our office in early October and as a federally funded employee, he will be working to fill the gap we have in reaching reserve members from all branches of the service. We look forward to serving Iowa reservists who may not be getting their entitled benefits from either the federal or state departments of veteran's affairs.



Shawn Hippen, Yellow Ribbon Program Specialist

We are currently developing our plan to implement the 10% across the board cuts implemented by the Governor last week. Regardless of the cuts, we will find a way to continue to serve and provide services under these circumstances. As always, where there is a will, there is a way. We have to be thankful for what we have and for the support shown by all veterans during these trying times. We know with everyone working together, we will persevere.

Sincerely,
Patrick J. Palmersheim, Executive Director
Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Day Events

Veteran's Day is Wednesday, November 11th. This year will be the first Veteran's Day Ceremony at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery in Van Meter. This ceremony begins at 8 AM.

Other Veteran's Day events include:

- Korean & Vietnam Veterans - 10 AM - Korean & Vietnam Memorials, Iowa Capitol Grounds
- Veterans Memorial Auditorium - 11 AM - Followed by a free concert by *The Nadas* - 12:30 - 2:30 - Donations go to the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund
- WWII - 2 PM - WWII Memorial, Iowa Capitol Grounds
- Gold Star Hall Ceremony - 2:30 PM - Memorial Union, ISU, Ames, IA

Military Community Covenant

Just prior to the 2009 Veterans Day Parade at the Iowa State Fair, approximately one hundred fair-goers, veterans, elected officials, and military personnel gathered in front of the fair administration building to witness the signing of a statewide community covenant.

The covenant signals an understanding between the state, elected officials, community partners, veteran service organizations, and the military that there will be a concerted effort between these groups to protect a military member's family while deployed, welcome veterans home following service, and eliminate barriers for them as they reintegrate to civilian life.



(l-R) Brigadier General Timothy Orr, Adjutant General of the IA Army National Guard, Patrick Palmersheim, IA Department of Veterans Affairs, Congressman Loeb sack (D, IA -2), and Congressman Boswell (D , IA - 3), watch as Lt. Governor Patty Judge addresses the crowd.



Executive Director Palmersheim signs the Community Covenant on behalf of IDVA.

Iowa Armed Forces Community Covenant
17 August 2009













TOGETHER, WE ARE COMMITTED TO BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES.

WE RECOGNIZE... THE COMMITMENT SERVICE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE MAKING EVERY DAY.

THE STRENGTH OF SERVICE MEMBERS COMES FROM THE STRENGTH OF THEIR FAMILIES.

THE STRENGTH OF FAMILIES IS SUPPORTED BY THE STRENGTH OF THE COMMUNITY.

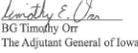
THE STRENGTH OF THE COMMUNITY COMES FROM THE SUPPORT OF EMPLOYERS, EDUCATORS, CIVIC AND BUSINESS LEADERS AND ITS CITIZENS.

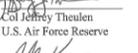
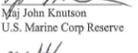
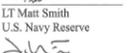
WE ARE COMMITTED TO BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE STRENGTH, RESILIENCE AND READINESS OF SERVICE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

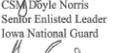
WE ARE COMMITTED TO ASSISTING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IOWA ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT.

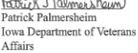

Honorable Chester J. Culver
Governor of Iowa

Honorable John Kibbie
President of the Senate

Honorable Pat Murphy
Speaker of the Iowa House

BG Timothy Orr
The Adjutant General of Iowa

BG Mark Corson
U.S. Army Reserves

COL Jeffrey Theulen
U.S. Air Force Reserve

Maj John Knutson
U.S. Marine Corp Reserve

LT Matt Smith
U.S. Navy Reserve

LT John Martin
U.S. Coast Guard

CSM Doyle Norris
Senior Enlisted Leader
Iowa National Guard

Greg Reed
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Patrick Palmersheim
Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs

Dick Rue
State ESGR Chairman



Among the dignitaries signing this document were Governor Chet Culver, Jack Kibbie, President of the Iowa Senate; Pat Murphy, Speaker of the Iowa House of Representatives; Brigadier General Orr, Iowa National Guard; Brigadier General Mark Corson, US Army Reserves; COL Jeffrey Theulen, US Air Force Reserves; MAJ John Knutson, US Marine Corp Reserves; LT Matt Smith, US Navy Reserves; LT John Martin, US Coast Guard; CSM Doyle Norris, Senior Enlisted Leader, Iowa National Guard; Greg Reed, US Dept of Veterans Affairs; Executive Director Patrick Palmersheim, IDVA; and Dick Rue, State ESGR Chairman.

Following the signing of the Community Covenant, the crowd was invited to watch the annual Veteran's Day Parade at the Fair. There were 105 parade entries this year, the most that has ever participated, and it lasted well over an hour. The Grand Marshals for the parade this year were members of the Senior Non-Commissioned Officers Association. As always, Bob King announced each entry. ~

Patriot Day

There were several events held this September to commemorate the 8th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on our Nation.

The first event was held on September 2nd in the Capitol rotunda. The primary purpose of this gathering was to recognize the United States Emergency Chaplains Corp and to honor the memory of Aaron Eilerts. Aaron was a Boy Scout who was killed when a tornado hit the Little Sioux Scout Camp in western Iowa.

As part of their annual 9/11 event, the Emergency Chaplain Corp was traveling to the Scout camp to help with the rebuilding. They brought with them a flag that was flying on the day that the twin towers in New York were attacked. It was repaired by nursing home residents in Greensburg, Kansas with donated flags. Greensburg was 95% destroyed when a severe tornado swept through in 2007 and one of the few remaining structures was the nursing home. The Emergency Chaplain Corps was there to minister to the town and used the flag to provide the residents with a project.



The "mended" Ground Zero flag is lowered from the 3rd floor of the Capitol rotunda.

The tattered remains of this flag are a stunning reminder of the horrific acts of September 11, 2001.

One of the other Patriot Day commemorative events was held outside the Fort Des Moines Museum on September 11th. Patrick Palmersheim, Executive Director of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs was the keynote speaker.



Director Palmersheim giving the keynote address at the 9/11 memorial outside the Fort Des Moines Museum.

The North High School JROTC presented the colors and music was provided by the Hoover High School Band. Following the event, two videos were presented inside the museum on the 9/11 memorial in New York City. ~

National Guard Retiree Day

Every September, the Iowa National Guard hosts a Retiree Day. This year's event was incredibly well attended, with over 800 veterans, retirees, and family members in attendance. IDVA had a booth to provide information on state veteran's benefits and to highlight the Iowa Veterans Cemetery.



The crowd was non-stop at the annual National Guard Retiree Day at the Freedom Center at Camp Dodge.

Along with various booths representing medical care, ID cards, Social Security, service connected disability compensation, and other retiree benefits, there were seminars and presentations. IDVA was pleased to provide additional information in the seminar setting. ~

Iowa State vs. Army

On Saturday, September 26th, the Iowa Lottery sponsored an event called "Rock the Stadium for Veterans." This promotion offered Freedom Rock scratch-off ticket players a second chance of winning. They could send in their losing tickets and were entered in a drawing to win 2010 Iowa State Football season tickets along with \$1,000 cash. Ten individuals were drawn and they all gathered at the Lottery tent just prior to the kickoff of the Iowa State/Army game for a picnic. Their names were then placed in a drum and Bubba Sorensen, the Freedom Rock artist, selected the names. The winner this year was Joseph "Howard" Cox of Grimes. Those not selected were given a goody bag full of Lottery and Cyclone gear.



Mary Neubauer, Vice President, External Relations with the Iowa Lottery, Joseph "Howard" Cox, Barb Cox, and Ray "Bubba" Sorensen pose for a photo after being named the winner of 2010 ISU Football season tickets.

Following this, Bubba, Howard, and Mary were on field prior to the game to present the season tickets and spending cash.

On top of the goody bag, those not chosen were still able to attend the game and were given \$100 to spend while in Ames.

Once the game started, the Iowa Lottery presented the department with a check in the amount of \$2.78 million dollars. These funds have been deposited in the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund and are the proceeds from the fiscal year 2009 lottery tickets. Sales of these tickets met expectations and have been a huge benefit to the Trust Fund. ~



Iowa Lottery CEO Terry Rich presents the veterans lottery tickets proceeds check to Kent Hartwig, Executive Officer, IDVA.

Tall Corn Contest

Just for fun, Bob Steben planted a few kernels of corn in front of the IDVA office building to see how tall they would get. These kernels were from the *Our Iowa* magazine's Tall Corn Contest. The corn variety is apparently a South American hybrid which grows very tall in our climate, but does not produce very many ears.

IDVA's corn grew 13 feet 5 inches before it frosted. We know we didn't win because the magazine reported stalks as tall as 12 foot 6 inches in late July. ~



Bob Steben puts our corn's height in perspective.

Cemetery Update

Through September, the Iowa Veterans Cemetery has interred 373 veterans, spouses and dependents and has processed just over 3300 pre-approved applications for burial. Interest in the cemetery is not judged by burials and applications alone.

There are many tours of the facility and presentations within the community. Recently, the cemetery hosted two tours for ISU students. The students were a part of an engineering design class and another program called "Death is a Part of Life." Several Boy Scout troops are also participating in tours with their parents with flag ceremonies.

Veterans Day, November 11th, is an excellent day to visit the cemetery and to tour the grounds. The Avenue of Flags will be raised and miniature flags will be placed at each burial location. Weather permitting, 110 flags will surround the ring road and lead the way to the Fallen Heroes Monument. The Van Meter American Legion Post #403 has volunteered to help set the flags the day before.

Also, on Veteran's Day, Iowa Workforce Development will dedicate a bench in honor of WWII veteran Glenn McDole, a Palawan Massacre survivor and POW. The bench will then be turned over to the cemetery for future placement on the grounds.

Wildlife on the cemetery is becoming an issue. Several male deer have begun to rut and are creating rubs on our young trees. In order to prevent further damage, staff has placed drainage tile around the trunks of the trees.



Steve Young, Cemetery Director, presents PO2 Adam Ringo with a Certificate of Appreciation.

The cemetery continues to receive excellent support from volunteers who have been of great assistance helping staff inside and out. One volunteer, Petty Officer Second Class Adam Ringo, has served as the United States Navy Honors Coordinator. Adam has been doing this for the past year, but will now be heading to Afghanistan. Good luck and thank you for your support! ~

IDVA Staff Spotlight



Bob Betz - Clerk Specialist

Bob handles license plates, DD214's, grave registrations, lifetime hunting and fishing licenses, military home ownership program, and various veteran requests.

Bob Betz was raised on a farm in Johnston, IA, which is now part of Camp Dodge. He joined the service in April of 1966, attaining the rank of SSG before being commissioned as a transportation officer in the Iowa Army National Guard. He retired from the Guard in January 2002 as a Lieutenant Colonel with 36 years of service. He received his college degree from Upper Iowa University.

Bob is a clerk-specialist for IDVA and records DD 214 discharges, graves registrations, and processes the applications for veteran license plates, Military Home Ownership Program, and Lifetime Hunting and Fishing Licenses. Bob also handles individual requests for records that are held by IDVA.

His hobbies include Harley Davidson Motorcycles, John Deere and Farmall tractor restoration, tractor rides (WMT & WHO Radio), the Iowa Hawkeyes, travel, and management of farms in Black Hawk, Cedar and Humboldt Counties in Iowa and San Patricio County, Texas. ~

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