

## **Remembering their sacrifice:**

### **Governor marks Memorial Day at Union Grove Veterans Cemetery**

(5/25/14 - front page)

By Christine A. Verstraete  
KENOSHA NEWS CORRESPONDENT

DOVER — Beyond the parades and barbecues, Sunday’s ceremony at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery highlighted the true meaning of the Memorial Day weekend — honoring those who served and those who gave their lives for their country.

Keynote speaker Gov. Scott Walker said it’s important to remember the sacrifices made “not just today but everyday” by soldiers like Lance Cpl. Daniel R. Wright of Caledonia, who died in service to his country.

“His father was a Vietnam veteran, and I remember reading back how his father said a day after the funeral that his son understood what he was getting into, that if you want to appreciate freedom you have to be willing to defend it. To everyone serving today and those who serve, I say thank you.”

From his pocket, Walker pulled out uniform patches from two National Guard units and Army Reserve units he recently saw off on their deployment to Afghanistan.

He said he gave the commanding officers of the units a folded state flag “to remember while they are deployed the flag is like a blanket, that we are praying for their courage and for their safe return home. I also give them a flag as a constant reminder of the heritage of this state.

“When people ask where they get their courage from, it goes back to the rich predecessors we have in this state. During the Civil War, we sent over 91,000 soldiers — that was one for every man, woman and child.”

Walker called on the audience to “continue to pray for those still serving today, say thank you to those who served, and to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, remember their sacrifice each and every day.”

#### **‘We are their legacy’**

Pat Adams of the Vietnam Veterans of America Racine Chapter 767 noted the symbolism of the POW/MIA Table, which featured the headgear of each of the different branches of the armed services.

“We should remember why we are free and remember that we are their legacy,” he said. Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Burlington, talked about the rousing receptions given to veterans on Honor Flights to Washington, D.C.

“For me it’s also a reminder of the thousands who never got a parade of gratitude,” he said. “We are in debt to these soldiers who passed on in the line of duty. Today we celebrate this great American holiday by showing our sincere, deep gratitude for these veterans.”

In his address, Wisconsin Veterans Affairs Secretary John A. Scocos, a 31-year veteran who did two tours in Iraq, said, “We are a nation whose freedom has been guaranteed by our veterans. ... We must be ever mindful of their courage, valor and singleness of purpose.”

The event included a flyover of vintage planes from the Commemorative Air Force from Waukesha and music by the Milwaukee American Legion Band and the Wisconsin Independent Pipers. It concluded with the placement of wreaths by Korean War veterans and a representative of the Blue Star Mothers, followed by an explanation of the battlefield cross ceremony, a rifle salute and the sounding of Taps.

### **Solemn occasion**

For many in the audience, the annual event is a special part of their Memorial Day weekend.

Tina Boise of Raymond, whose husband served in the Vietnam era and whose son served 22 years in the Marines, has been attending the event 19 years

“Freedom is not free, definitely not when you see the veterans,” she said

The day also had special meaning to 33-year-old Nicole Johnson of Racine, who brought her brother Bryce, 11, to remember their grandfather, Bert Johnson, a World War II veteran who died last September.

“They’ve done so much for us,” she said. “I find so much peace when I come here.”

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(Photo: Christine Verstraete)

## **Locals Protest Barricading of Washington Veterans Memorial**

By Christine A. Verstraete  
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Even as thousands of veterans flocked to Washington, D.C., Sunday morning to protest the closing of the World War II memorial and other memorials during the U.S. government shutdown, a local group of veterans, family members and friends also gathered at the Kenosha Veterans Memorial on 52nd Street to voice their outrage.

“It’s a shame. It’s just not right,” said Pleasant Prairie resident Cindy Clark, whose father, now deceased, served in the U.S. Air Force. “The vets are dying at such a fast rate and they can’t go in (to see their monument). It’s ridiculous.”

Members of the small but vocal group waved flags, sang “God Bless America” and held signs urging passing drivers to “honk if you want the World War II Memorial opened.”

### **Local support**

The peaceful protest was organized by Mary Domes of Pleasant Prairie and Sharon Janusz, co-sponsors of the Friday morning American Heroes Café held at SuperValu on 80th Street.

Domes said they heard organizers of the Washington march ask for veterans to show support in their communities, so they wanted to be sure Kenosha played a part.

“I’m angry,” said Domes, who had an uncle serve in Vietnam and whose father served during World War II. “The veterans deserve everything. They don’t deserve to have to beg to have their memorials open. They shouldn’t have to storm barricades. I’m absolutely infuriated that these men don’t have their memorials open to them and welcoming them.”

### **Flights continuing**

Despite the government shutdown of national sites, previously scheduled Honor Flights of veterans being taken to visit the World War II memorial have continued, with veterans bypassing barricades to visit their monument.

Funded primarily by private donations and dedicated in May 2004, the monument honors the 16 million veterans of the armed services, the 400,000 veterans who died and those who supported the war effort at home during World War II. The memorial became part of the National Park System in November 2004.

### **‘A disgrace’**

Angie Roscioli, who volunteers at the American Heroes Café, cried when she talked about veterans being turned away from their own monument.

“I think it’s a disgrace to the country and what we’re supposed to stand for,” said Roscioli, 89.

Others like her son, the Rev. Dominic Roscioli, had harsher words for what is being done to veterans in Washington.

“I think it’s a sin to close those memorials to veterans,” said Roscioli, who held a framed dedication to his father, Lawrence, who served as a bombardier during World War II. “You get these WWII veterans going there for the first time in their life. These guys defeated Hitler and they can’t see their own memorial? I think it’s mean-spirited and cruel.”

Anthony Martin brought his daughters, Angela, 17, and Gabrielle, 15, to the local veterans memorial to show support for veterans like his father, Roger, who served in Vietnam.

“I just think both (political) parties should come together and come to a resolution so veterans have an opportunity to visit their memorials, so they don’t have to be shut out,” he said.

**‘Our veterans don’t deserve this’**

Kenoshan Ed Stevens, a World War II veteran who served on the USS Phoenix in Panama, knows what it means to see the monument in person, having been part of the second group of veterans sent to Washington through the Vets Roll organization. The group sends veterans and “Rosie the Riveters” at no charge to see the monuments on chartered buses.

“To view it is something,” said Stevens. “I witnessed veterans, some who had never been to Washington, some who got to see it at 95 years old for the first time. I’m hoping the government will get in order so all veterans can continue to go and not have a barricade in front of them.”

Veterans like 56-year-old Bob Miller of Pleasant Prairie, who served in the Air Force loading nuclear weapons into planes in the late 1970s, agreed, saying this shouldn’t be happening in Washington.

“It’s a disgrace, a total disgrace,” he said. “We need to support our veterans. Our veterans are the backbone of our country. It’s why we have what we have, the freedom and the choices. Our veterans don’t deserve this.”