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## **WDVA and American Legion to Help Bury Indigent Veterans**

MADISON - The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and the American Legion Department of Wisconsin today announced an effort to ensure that military veterans receive the proper burial they deserve. The partnership seeks to remedy a situation where a veteran may pass away without a next-of-kin claiming them or without the funding to hold a funeral for them.

Together, the WDVA and American Legion are working to reach out to the more than 450 funeral service providers in Wisconsin to identify the remains of deceased veterans who may be potentially eligible for a military burial.

"Not all those who have served our nation honorably have been afforded their full honors," WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos said. "Of the many thousands of brave men and women who served our nation from World War II to the present day, sadly, some will pass on without a next-of-kin to arrange their funerals or without enough money to cover the costs associated with burial. When these Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen serve our country, the very least we owe them is a dignified burial and final salute."

When a veteran is located who died without a next-of-kin or without enough funds to cover burial, the American Legion has created a restricted fund to assist with burial costs to ensure the veteran receives the dignified memorial service he or she deserves.

The WDVA operates three State Veterans Cemeteries located in Union Grove, King and Spooner which may be used as a final resting place for these veterans.

As with any other veteran, the American Legion will also perform honors at the funeral – a final rifle volley, playing of 'Taps,' and folding the U.S. flag. The WDVA will also assist in coordinating Military Funeral Honors throughout the state.

"It is important to us to ensure those who served their nation are afforded the final respect they have earned," said Dale Oatman, American Legion Department of Wisconsin commander. "No veteran should go unrecognized, especially in regard to their final honors."

Funeral service providers and cemeteries are asked to contact the American Legion – Department of Wisconsin at 608-745-1090 for further details on providing information about the deceased in order to make a determination of their veteran status.

For more information about the WDVA's Veterans Cemeteries and the Military Funeral Honors program visit [www.WisVets.com](http://www.WisVets.com).