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WDVA Announces Virtual Memorial Day Commemoration Encourages Public to Submit Photos of Veterans to Wisconsin Veterans Museum

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Mary Kolar today invited Wisconsin veterans, family, and friends to join the WDVA and Governor Tony Evers to honor the fallen by participating in Wisconsin’s virtual Memorial Day commemoration, available at www.WisVetsMemorialDay.com.

“For countless families across the United States, Memorial Day is a painful reminder of those who didn’t come home. And as many of us know all too well, the members of our armed forces are not just service members, they are also friends, family members, and loved ones,” said WDVA Secretary Mary Kolar. “To those of you missing someone – we cannot repay our debt to you, but I hope that this Memorial Day, and every day, you are able to find some comfort in our nation’s recognition of and gratitude for their and your sacrifices.”

As we continue to take precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19, WDVA is once again bringing its Memorial Day commemoration to homes across Wisconsin virtually. The commemoration website, www.WisVetsMemorialDay.com, includes a remembrance video recognizing Wisconsinites who were killed in service during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and the terrorist attacks on 9/11; video messages from Gov. Tony Evers, Sec. Mary Kolar, and other leaders; resources to help families and individuals engage at home; and tools to encourage public participation and social media interaction. The commemoration will culminate on Monday, May 31 with a virtual Memorial Day ceremony at 10:00 a.m. on *Facebook*.

Secretary Kolar and Wisconsin Veterans Museum Director Chris Kolakowski are also inviting Wisconsinites to join us in an effort to honor the memory of every Wisconsinite who fought to protect our freedom. Our goal is to collect an image of every Wisconsin veteran. These photographs will be housed at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and shared to remind others of the tremendous cost paid by some and to honor their legacies for all time. Please visit www.WisVetsMemorialDay.com for more on how you can help by submitting a photo of a friend, loved one, or yourself.

Remembering Wisconsinites Who Died in Service

In 2021, our nation marks the 30th anniversary of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on 9/11. This Memorial Day, while we remember and honor veterans of all eras, we pay special tribute to those who were killed in service during this time with a video memorial.

Video Address and Tribute Gallery

The commemoration website includes video messages from Gov. Tony Evers and Sec. Mary Kolar. As a nod toward our public ceremonies, WDVA has invited those who are elected to represent districts that include the Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemeteries and the Wisconsin Veterans Homes to participate in the commemoration. Their messages can be found in the Tribute Gallery.

Remember and Share

While we cannot yet hold large, in-person events, our online community can come together to remember and honor Wisconsin's veterans and their families. A Wisconsin Memorial Day profile frame is available for download on Facebook. We encourage the use of #WIRemember to tag any Memorial Day related posts. We also invite the public to join us in our efforts to collect a photograph of every Wisconsin veteran – see www.WisVetsMemorialDay.com for more information.

Commemorate at Home Resources

To assist in observing this important day from home, we have gathered resources and activities that both children and adults can use to commemorate, honor, and respect those who have died in military service. Resources include a guide to making poppies with items you likely have at home, a Memorial Day reading list for young readers, step-by-step instructions on searching the American Battle Monuments Commission database, an American flag coloring sheet, a flag folding guide, and information on how to set up a Missing Man Table at home.