

MINUTES
COUNCIL ON VETERANS PROGRAMS
Meeting of February 15, 2016
Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls
2175 East Park Avenue, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Members

David Schmidt, AMVETS
Fernando Rodriguez, American GI Forum
Paul Fisk, American Legion (excused)
Mike Soehner, American Red Cross
Paul Fine, ANU (excused)
Gary Traynor, Blinded Veterans Assoc.
Tammy Walters, CVSOA
Al Labelle, DAV (excused)
Peter Gilbert, JWV
Phillip Landgraf, MCL
Roger Fetterly, MOAA
William Lobeck, MOPH
William Sims, NABV (absent)
Russ Alsteen, NCUSA
John Recklies, PLAV (excused)
Dale Nelson, PVA (excused)
Lenny Shier, TREA
Elizabeth Benn, UWV
Mike Furgal, VFW
Steve House, VVA
Rich Peters, VVAW
William May, WACVO
Bill Hustad (excused)
Don Heiliger, Am. Ex-POWs (excused)
Inactive, USSVWWII
Inactive, CWV

Others Present (not all inclusive)

Mary Soehner, Spouse of Mike Soehner
Leroy Jansky, VFW Post 1038/Legion Post 77
Bob Mc Roberts, VVA Ch. 5
Aaron Greiser, Clark County CVSO
Marcia Ziegler, Clark County CVS Office
Scott Bachowski, Barron County CVSO

WDVA Present

Mark Wilson, Commandant
Angie Reindl, Executive Staff Assistant

1. Call to order, roll call, Pledge of Allegiance and introductions

The meeting of the Council on Veterans Programs was called to order by David Schmidt, Chair. Roll called; quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A moment of silence was observed for POWs and fallen comrades.

2. Certification of notice of meeting

The meeting was certified as being properly noticed.

3. Action on minutes of November 17, 2015 COVP meeting

It was moved, seconded and carried on a voice vote to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2015 Council on Veterans Programs meeting.

4. Council communications

Peter Gilbert - Suggested meet and greets with legislators

Gunner Furgal – VFW Mid-Winter weekend following COVP meeting

Phillip Landgraf - Marine Corps League held an ice fishing tournament, SB447 renaming of highway 87 between St. Croix Falls and Grantsburg is moving forward, Miller Park events in the future for Marine Corps League

Steve House – mentioned program at Wisconsin Veterans Home at King called “Nobody Dies Alone”

During the discussion regarding LRB 4524/AB821/SB668 William May raised the issue of transportation, and suggested the department look into options for increasing transportation resources.

5. Briefing by Chippewa Falls Veterans Homes Commandant, Mark Wilson

Commandant Mark Wilson provided information on the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls.

- Opened in 2013
- 72 bed facility with 4 ea. 18 unit wings
- Residents must require 24 hour skilled nursing care
- Dimensions Healthcare contract staff
- 290 applications on file
- 90 applicants actively waiting for admission

6. Viper Ride Information

Gary Traynor provided information on the upcoming Viper Ride (details in Attachment 1)

7. LRB 4524/AB821/SB668

Motion for COVP to go on record as being opposed to LRB 4524/AB 821/SB668

Motion to amend the original motion to include Substitute Amendment 1 to AB 821

Motion to amend original motion is seconded and carried on voice vote.

Original motion with amendment - COVP goes on record as being opposed to LRB 4524/AB 821/SB668 and Substitute Amendment 1 to AB 821 is seconded and carried on a voice vote.

8. Assistance to Needy Veteran Grant discussion

Phillip Landgraf, Marine Corps League, shared that the Declaration of Aid requirement for the Assistance to Needy Veteran Grant is found in Administrative Code VA 2.01(2).

Mr. Landgraf added that in most cases, a veteran who would meet the requirements for an Assistance to Needy Veteran Grant for eyeglasses or hearing aids would be eligible to receive assistance with these items from the federal VA, and from his experience, the majority of the ANV applications are for dental needs.

Motion that the COVP send a letter to the department requesting a review of the Administrative Code and department rules related to the Aid to Needy Veteran Grant and suggest the elimination of the requirement that an applicant must apply for Food Share and Medical Assistance. Motion seconded and carried on a voice vote.

Mr. Schmidt, Chair, asked Mr. Landgraf to draft the letter. (Signed letter Attachment 2)

9. Burial requirements and current availability

Information was provided by Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services Manager Marian Lewandowski (details in attachments 3 & 4)

10. Legislative update

The Chair appointed Roger Fetterly as the Chair of the new legislative committee. Mr. Fetterly selected Mike Furgal to join him on the legislative committee. In addition, Tammy Walters and Elizabeth volunteered to be on the committee.

The Chair posed the question, "Will the legislative committee members be reimbursed for mileage to travel to veteran related legislative hearings?"

11. Matters not subject to adoption

Russ Alsteen thanked all the organizations that contributed to the success of the Fisher House. Dedication is scheduled for April 23, 2016.

Peter Gilbert informed the council of free admission to veterans at several facilities in the Milwaukee area over the 4th of July holiday. He also mentioned an upcoming Vietnam Commemoration event at the War Memorial.

Fernando Rodriguez wanted to thank Assistant Deputy Secretary Dan Buttery for his work with the Fisher House. He also suggested that the congressional representative from each district should have input on who represents their district on the Board of Veterans Affairs.

Tammy Walters – CVSO Association Spring Conference April 4-8 in Kenosha, all are invited to attend

Lenny Shier – Shared as a potential source for funding that sand mine operators do not pay sales and use tax

12. Public Input

Bob McRoberts – Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration, Tuesday, March 29, 2016 Eau Claire and information on Military Working Dog Tribute

Dave Zien – Promoting patriotism and support for veterans (see details in attachment 5)

George Adrian – comments on Chippewa Falls Rec Committee functions

4. Future Meetings

July 20, 2016 11:00 a.m. Veterans Home at King

5. Adjournment

It was moved, seconded, and carried on a voice vote to adjourn the meeting.

David Schmidt
Chair

Attachments:

1. Viper Ride Information
2. ANV Recommendation Letter
3. Wisconsin Veterans Cemeteries Brochure
4. Cemetery Capacity Report
5. Dave Zien Handouts
6. ANV Response Letter



Scott Walker, Governor
John A. Scocos, Secretary

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Council on Veterans Programs**

201 West Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7843
Madison, WI 53707-7843
Phone: (608) 266-1315
Toll-Free: 1-800-947-8387
Fax: (608) 264-7616
Website: www.WisVets.com/Council

February 29, 2016

Dear Secretary Scocos,

The Council on Veterans Programs writes you regarding the current state of the Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant (ANVG). We are respectfully requesting a review and policy change requiring that veterans first apply for Medical Assistance (MA) and Food Share when applying for the ANVG. The declaration of aid section the Council is referring to is referenced in the Administrative Codes Chapter VA 2.01(1)(e).

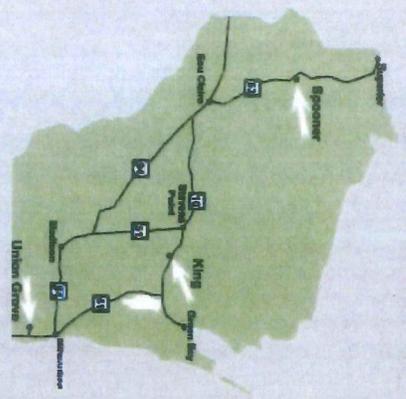
This request stems largely from the stigma which comes with applying for Food Share. Many veterans will not complete this initial step in the ANVG process. A fact reflected by the reduction in usage of the ANVG program over the past several years. Instead of adding duplicated and problematic services to the ANVG such as mental health which has been proposed, the simple elimination of MA and Food Share requirements would assist veterans in the application process. Additionally, it would aid the WDVA in administering benefits to Wisconsin Veterans that they so richly deserve.

In the discussions at the COVP meeting, conversation about future changes to the ANVG was brought up. If this is the case, implementing this suggestion could be a short-term solution. If substantial and meaningful changes to the ANVG are planned, we would be pleased to be a partner in the discussion for improving this benefit for Wisconsin Veterans.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Schmidt".

Dave Schmidt
AMVETS, Council on Veterans Programs Chair



Our Mission

To provide a final resting place for veterans and to create a lasting monument to their achievements and sacrifices on behalf of our grateful nation. The Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs operates and maintains three veterans cemeteries.

Wisconsin's first state veterans cemetery was established in King, Wisconsin in June of 1888. Located adjacent to the Veterans Home the cemetery has been serving Wisconsin's veterans for more than 100 years. Established in 1996 next to the Southern Wisconsin Center campus in Union Grove, Wisconsin, the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery began accepting burials in September of that year. The Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery located just off Highway 53 near Spooner, Wisconsin was established in November of 2000.

The cemetery grounds are open to the public for visitation from sunrise to sunset daily.

Contact Information

**Southern Wisconsin
Veteran Memorial Cemetery**
21731 Spring St.
Union Grove, WI 53182

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Phone: (262) 878-5660
Toll-free: (888) 823-3789
Fax: (262) 878-5664
Email: svwvma@dva.wisconsin.gov

**Northern Wisconsin
Veteran Memorial Cemetery**
N4063 Veterans Way
Spooner, WI 54801

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Phone: (715) 635-3360
Fax: (715) 635-3363
Email: nwvwmc@dva.wisconsin.gov

**Central Wisconsin
Veteran Memorial Cemetery**
N2665 Highway QQ
King, WI 54946

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Phone: (715) 256-5000
Fax: (715) 256-3207
Email: cvvwmc@dva.wisconsin.gov

Upon administration or determining eligibility for benefits offered to veterans by the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs does not discriminate against persons, or denies them, because of their race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation or beliefs, or arrest or conviction record. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Fair Housing Lender.

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
201 W. Washington Ave.
P.O. Box 7843
Madison, WI 53707-7843

Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemeteries

Union Grove — Spooner — King

Eligibility Requirements

Veterans who meet one of the following service requirements and one of the following residency requirements are eligible for burial in state cemeteries operated by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. Spouses and dependent children of eligible veterans also may be eligible for burial. *Military service requirement for burial in Wisconsin state veterans cemeteries must be in accordance with the eligibility standards as set by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, at a minimum must meet one of the following:*

- Veteran was discharged from "active duty" under other than dishonorable conditions, or
- Veteran died while on "active duty", or
- Veteran served at least 20 years in the National Guard or Reserves and qualified for military retirement pay (or would have qualified except death occurred before age 60).

Wisconsin state residency requirement for burial in state veterans cemeteries must meet one of the following:

- Veteran was a Wisconsin resident at the time of entry or re-entry into military service, or
- Veteran was a Wisconsin resident at the time of death, or
- Veteran was a Wisconsin resident for at least 12 consecutive months after entering or reentering service on "active duty."

Note: There is no residency requirement for a veteran who dies while on active duty or person who is a member of the Veterans Home at King, Union Grove or Chippewa Falls. Spouses and dependent children of veterans who were eligible for burial may also be interred in state veterans cemeteries. If you are unsure of your eligibility, please contact any of the cemeteries for a determination.



Burial Options

There are four burial options at the veterans cemeteries located in Union Grove and Spooner. They include in ground burial of caskets and cremated remains, above ground placement of cremated remains in a columbarium wall, and placement of cremated remains in a scattering garden. Both of these cemeteries currently provide pre-set liners for casket burials.

The veterans cemetery in King conducts in ground casket and cremation burial. Pre-set liners are not available for casket burial at King.

All Wisconsin state veterans cemeteries accept outside dealer vaults for casket burials; additional fees apply.



Burial Fees

There is no charge for the burial of an eligible veteran with use of the burial items supplied by the cemetery. A fee applies for a non-veteran spouse or dependent child of an eligible veteran. Please contact the cemetery for current information regarding these fees.

Pre-Registration

Veterans may establish in advance their eligibility for burial at the cemetery. There is no cost or obligation to pre-register. By taking a few minutes to complete a pre-registration form, veterans and their families can plan their interment and gain peace of mind. Call, write or email the cemetery of your choice to obtain a pre-registration form. The pre-registration form is also available to submit online or download from our website at www.WisVets.com.



Donations

Donation programs have been established at each of the cemeteries. These programs allow families, friends and organizations to memorialize their loved ones through the beautification of the cemetery grounds. Please contact the cemeteries directly to find out what donation programs are currently available. Examples of donation programs include: Avenue of Flags, Medal Displays, Commemorative Benches, Patriot and Tribute Stones, and engraved Walkway Stones. Call for details and brochures.

Military Funeral Honors

You or your funeral director can arrange for military honors by calling toll-free 877-944-6667. Veterans' service organizations that wish to provide honors should also coordinate with the Military Honors Program. This coordination will ensure that any additional resources requested for honors, buglers, or flag folders for example, will be provided if available.



Floral Policies

Each cemetery maintains strict floral policies to ensure that the cemetery grounds are maintained to the highest possible standard. These policies are available upon request and are available online at www.WisVets.com.



State Veterans Cemeteries Data as of June 30, 2015

	SWVMC	NWVMC	CWVMC
Acreage	105	97	63
Developed	60	15	14
Un-developed	45	82	49

CASKET GRAVESITES

# Casketed developed gravesites	2,608	565	2,119
# Phased future gravesites	21,166	11,504	7,950
# Caskets sites maintained TD	6,834	747	5,945

IN-GROUND CREMATION GRAVESITES

# in-ground cremation developed gravesites	1,778	692	455
# Phased future in-ground gravesites	11,988	5,164	Master Plan under development
# in-ground cremation maintained TD	1,959	574	605

COLUMBARIUM NICHE SITES

	Phase I Project 2017		
# Columbarium developed niches	2,930	954	N/A
# Phased future Columbarium niches	10,800	4,800	N/A
# in-ground columbarium maintained TD	3,286	926	N/A

February 12, 2016

To Whom it May Concern:

Feel free to write a congratulatory letter to Jeff (their father Mike) Benrud, the Jerry Irwin (their brother Tom) family and the Wisconsin Veterans Tribute. Please consider sending prominent mementos and souvenirs.

Should you be in the area, we would gladly give you or your affiliates a guided tour. There is so much to be proud of.

There very well should be memoirs written, books published and movies made about these heroes. Consider these amazing facts and feats:

Jeff Benrud: 700 Combat missions and a Biker!

The Irwin Family: Excelled in empowering countless others.

The Wisconsin Veterans Tribute/Citizen Soldier monument: Unique 96 ways in the world. Look -- "The Star Spangled Banner and Pledge of Allegiance on the Cadott High School Gymnasium Wall!"

Wheels of Liberty: Helping Veterans acquire freedom on a motorcycle

Here is contact information:

	Address	Phone	E-Mail
<u>Mike Benrud</u>	3311 Golf Rd, Eau Claire, WI 54701	715-834-2292	info@benrudrentals.com
<u>George Olinske</u>	27327 80 th Ave, Cadott, WI 54727	715-829-4845	golinske@centurylink.net
<u>Tom Irwin</u>	1321 Boulder Point, Hudson, WI 54016	715-220-9822	irwin.tom@sbcglobal.net
<u>Dave Zien</u>	1716 63 rd Street, Eau Claire, WI 54703	715-829-9436	davezien@gmail.com

Feel free to contact me for information.

God Bless You!



Dave Zien
former State Senator

Encl: Eau Claire Leader Article
Cadott Sentinel front page
Wisconsin Veterans Tribute/Citizen Soldier Monument Flyer
Wheels of Liberty Flyer

Bike will be sold to help soldiers' families

» Baja
From Page 11

Motorcycles are specifically built to withstand rigors of the course. Jeff's Honda CRF 450X was "extremely powerful. It takes a very strong rider to handle it," Michael said.

MultiCam, Saratland, Cye Precision, American Off-Road and others — including Benrud Rentals in East Clare and Heartland Contractors in Chippewa Falls — sponsored Jeff, whose racing colors were orange and white.

Many of the racers were full-time professionals, Michael said.

Racer chasers

Michael, Nicholas and Lincoln rode in chase vehicles providing mechanical support and supplies for Jeff during the race.

While most of the course rolled through desolate wilderness, every so often the route crossed hard-surface roads where chase crews intercepted the racers to fix equipment, change tires and supply food, water and fuel. Support teams practiced before the event to establish where — and when — to meet racers. Two teams in the truck category even had helicopter follow them.



Continued photo

Jeff practices for the Baja 1000. Racers had to ride through 12 hours of darkness.

lighten after 12 hours of darkness, we could only imagine his feeling of jubilation that he could see the country side again, and know the terrible night was over," he said.

A MultiCam film crew followed Benrud during the race. A more in-depth video is planned than the one shot last year, Jeff said.

Winning and losing

Although Jeff completed the Ironman in 25 hours, finishing far ahead of his competitors, organizers added about three hours to his time in penalties. The penalties dropped his time to 28:33:33, according to SCORE, placing

him second behind Joe Huckins of Pueblo West, Colo. (27:29:23). Relatively short stretches of the race involve public roads with mandatory speed limits. "The penalties for exceeding the speed limits as verified on the bike's transponder are apparently very significant," Michael said, adding others also were penalized.

"Some of the areas are very confusing as to where the speed limits are raised and lowered. It is too bad, as the time gained while speeding would have been almost insignificant," he said.

The race left Jeff in severe pain and dehydrated. "He has severe blisters over his hands, (he) will lose fingernails, his seat and legs are rubbed raw and bleeding, and we had to have a nurse come in after the race to hook up an IV," Michael said. "When I was done, I was just absolutely physically drained. I went to my hotel room and basically passed out," Jeff said.

Last year MultiCam also sponsored Jeff and then fixed up and auctioned off the race bike to raise

money for a charitable fund for special operations soldiers. The company will do the same this year. Last year's auction raised more than \$30,000 for scholarships for children of deceased special operations soldiers, Jeff said.

At first Jeff was in so much pain he didn't plan to compete again next year. Now, although he doesn't know whether he will compete solo or with a team, he said, "For sure I will do it again."

Although he's not as young as when he accomplished his daring military missions, age can't dim his adventurous spirit.

"You're kind of as old as you act or think you are," he said. "I kind of live that way."

Both Michael and Carol Benrud said they are very proud of their son and all he has accomplished. From an early age, Jeff dreamed of racing motorcycles, Michael said, adding his son has been successful but started too late to turn pro.

"He's extremely determined, a no-quit kind of person," Michael said. "If there's a challenge, he's just into it."

Jeff has been an adventurer his whole life, Carol said. "Even as a child, he had that spirit in him."

Competing in the Baja 1000 is costly, so Jeff pursued sponsors.

It is a rather expensive

thrill of it all

After being 12 hours of darkness, Michael recalled thinking about Jeff in the "pink of early morning" Nov. 21.

It's so easy to get lost or break down or run out of gas or crash and get hurt," Michael said.

At one point Jeff's back tire came off the rim, losing him an hour. Because flats would occur often with air-filled tires, racers use ones with hard foam inside.

"There's always something that's going to go wrong. ... We got off light," Jeff said.

About the same time, he was running low on fuel. While racers pay ahead to get gas at pit stops organizers set up on the course, the closest one refused to fuel his bike because of a records mix-up. He fortunately found a private pit stop in the darkness.

The race has motorcycle, car, truck and ATV categories. All zoomed along the same course, with sometimes deadly results.

One racer died this year when a truck ran him over while he was fixing his dune buggy, Michael said.

The risks didn't worry Jeff. He said he and his wife have a "strong faith in the good Lord" and believe everyone is put on the planet for a certain time to do certain things.

"It's your time and place, (then) it's your time and place," he said.

While Michael also has a strong faith, he confessed to worrying about the safety of the racers and the support crews.

"Eight of us were in three chase vehicles going at great speed on very dangerous narrow roads," he said, as they tried to keep ahead of Jeff so they could intercept him at the crossover points.

He shut his eyes sometimes as they traveled on winding roads with drop-off edges and blind corners at high speeds, much of the time in darkness.

"I'm getting kind of old for this," said Michael, 68.

After being 12 hours of darkness, Michael recalled thinking about Jeff in the "pink of early morning" Nov. 21.

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Benrud took part in 700 combat missions

Jeff Benrud shared this glimpse into his adventurous life:

He entered the military upon graduating from Altoona High School in 1968. After 25 years of service, he retired as a sergeant major.

He spent his first five years of service with the 2nd Ranger Battalion out of Fort Lewis, Wash. In December 1989, Jeff participated in a 500-foot combat parachute jump into Rio Hato, Panama, in support of the capture of dictator Manuel Noriega and the ultimate demise of the Panamanian defense forces.

A graduate of the 72-day U.S. Army Ranger school course in 1990, he later acted as an instructor in the jungle phase of Ranger school.

In 1996 he was selected for the Army's helicopter flight program and completed the warrant officer course. During flight school he received about 100 hours of helicopter training.

After much soul-searching, Jeff decided being a career pilot was not what he ultimately wanted to do. He resigned his warrant officer commission and asked for reassignment to Fort



Jeff Benrud soaks in a view of the Pacific Ocean while at Mexico's Baja California Peninsula for the 2015 Baja 1000 off-road race. Contributed photo

Brags, N.C., where he tried out for and was selected for a top-level special operations unit. Jeff spent 15 years as a special operations soldier, making 13 de-

ployments to Iraq and two trips to Afghanistan and traveling to numerous other countries in support of the war on terrorism. During his tenure in the unit,

he participated in more than 700 combat missions, sometimes completing three per night. Jeff retired with eight Bronze Stars, including three with valor.

a Purple Heart, and many other awards and citations. He was the honor graduate and Top Gun of his Army sniper school class. He was also the honor graduate of the Army special operations combat diver course in Key West, Fla.

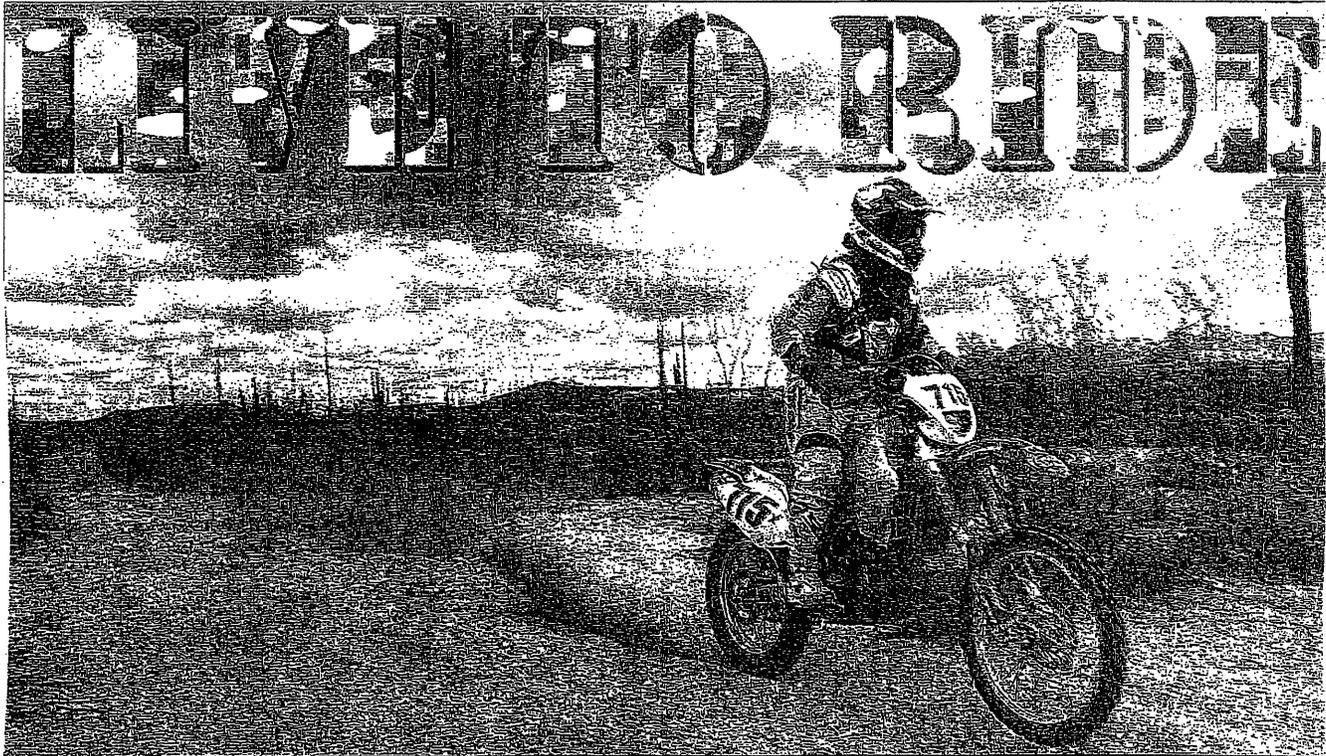
He graduated from the U.S. special operations free fall school and SERE (survive, evade, resist, escape) school, along with many other specialty schools while in the military.

Much of his military history is classified.

Jeff and his wife, Helen, operate a rental management company, owning 25 properties, in Raeford, N.C. They have two children.

He also co-owns a driving company called American Off-Road that caters to special operations soldiers, teaching skills such as driving at high speeds and in close proximity to other vehicles. When time allows, he acts as an instructor in combat rifle, pistol marksmanship and ground tactics for the military.

This November he raced solo in the Baja 1000 on a motorcycle. It was the third time he finished the world's longest continuous off-road race.



Contributed photos

Above: Competing as No. 715, Altoona native Jeff Benrud rode solo in the Ironman category of the Baja 1000 off-road endurance race in Mexico's Baja California Peninsula last month. Although Benrud, of Raeford, N.C., clocked the top time, he placed second in a disappointing turn of events.

An Altoona native who proved his toughness in the military recently took on another rough challenge — the Ironman event in the Baja 1000 off-road race

By BLYTHE WACHTER
 Leader-Telegram staff

Twenty-five hours. That's how long it took Altoona native Jeff Benrud to finish the grueling Ironman competition in the 2015 Baja 1000 — the world's longest continuous off-road race.

Riding solo on a Honda CRF 450X motorcycle, he completed the nearly 825-mile Ironman more than two hours ahead of the next racer, but a disappointing turn of events — controversial penalties added time to his finish — put him into second place.

Talking by cellphone while driving home to Raeford, N.C., afterward, the three-time Baja 1000 warrior said he can't complain.

"Just finishing is a valid accomplishment," he said.

The Baja 1000 is the flagship event of SCORE International, a sanctioning body in off-road desert racing. The 48th annual challenge powered up Nov. 20-21 on the Baja California Peninsula in northwestern Mexico.

Of 239 starters, only 124 finished the race, according to SCORE. Competitors represented 21 countries, Jeff said.

This year's course started and finished in Ensenada. Competitors zipped southward on the



Jeff posed with, from left, his sister Jennifer Rooney of Chippewa Falls; father, Michael Benrud of Altoona; and mother, Carol Benrud.

» **SEE RACE:** View video of the 2014 Baja 1000 and Team DSJ with Jeff Benrud at tinyurl.com/oplk5t9.

peninsula, bordered by the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of California, then crossed to the east coast and looped back to Ensenada.

"It's probably one of the more physically difficult things I've done," said Jeff, 46, who teaches riding in rugged terrain. The ride left him battered and bruised.

He is a highly decorated retired sergeant major with the U.S. Army's special operations unit with extensive combat experience, including in Iraq and

Riders, who use GPS to navigate, must deal with heavy silt, ruts, holes, ridges and whoops (a series of bumps).

Family members went to cheer on Jeff at the race, including his parents, Michael and Carol Benrud, longtime Altoona residents who are moving to Eau Claire, and his wife, Helen, and daughter, Hailey, 16, as well as Jeff's sister Jennifer Rooney and nephew Nicholas Rooney of Chippewa Falls.

Jeff also competed on motorcycle teams in the Baja 1000 in 2013 and 2014. The first year a crash took out the bike's high-power headlight, but the team still finished.

Last year one of the three riders on Jeff's team broke his leg, and another became ill. Jeff rode about 900 of the race's 1,275 miles, and the team placed fourth.

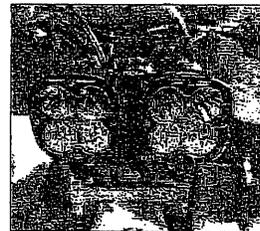
While a team switches riders so they get breaks, Ironman riders who race continually.

"They're out in the wilderness alone much of the time and going as fast as they can," Michael Benrud said in a phone interview.

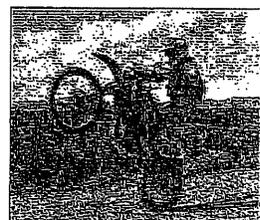
"The Ironman is so rigorous and so difficult that there's very few that undertake it. ... It's considered the ultimate challenge," he said.



Jeff shows the bruises, blisters and loose fingernails he got from working his bike's handlebars.



Because racers travel all night, they need special high-power lights to show them the way.



Jeff starts out races with a

ATTACHMENT 6

Scott Walker, Governor

John A. Scocos, Secretary



STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

201 West Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7843
Madison, WI 53707-7843

Phone: (608) 266-1311
Toll-free: 1-800-WIS-VETS (947-8387)
Fax: (608) 267-0403
Email: WisVets@dva.wisconsin.gov
Website: www.WisVets.com

April 14, 2016

Mr. David Schmidt
Chair of the Council on Veterans Programs
N16365 Lakeshore Drive
Butternut, WI 54514

Dear Mr. Schmidt:

Thank you for your letter of February 29, 2016, regarding administration of the Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant (ANVG). As you know, the ANVG is comprised of two grant programs, the subsistence aid grant (SAG) and the health care aid grant (HCAG). Specifically, you requested the Department review the policy that requires Veterans to first apply for Medical Assistance (MA) and Food Share in order to be eligible for ANVG, as required by Chapter VA 2.01(1)(e), Wisconsin Administrative Code.

The declaration of aid is required as part of the ANVG application under the provisions of VA 2.01(2), Wis. Admin. Code, and is intended to ensure compliance with the intent and limitations of s. 45.40, Wis. Statutes. As you will note from the enclosed declaration of aid (WDVA 2451), application for other aid is determined by the type of ANVG aid for which the Veteran is applying. For example, Veterans applying for the health care aid grant are not asked to apply for Food Share.

In an effort to increase the eligibility for ANVG, in 2014 the income threshold was increased from 130% to 180% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG). The WDVA has seen an increase in the number of ANVG applicants and the 2016 SAG budget allocation of \$100,000 has been exhausted. With an additional 12 SAG applications pending, \$36,000 was transferred from the HCAG to the SAG to cover the resulting potential expenditures.

The COVP is statutorily charged with advising the board and the department on solutions and policy alternatives relating to the problems of veterans. The department, as it enters into budget preparation, welcomes the informed suggestions of the COVP to help make the ANVG more accessible to Veterans in need.

Thank you for your continued service to our Veterans and their families.

Sincerely,
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Scocos". The signature is written over a horizontal line that extends across the page.

JOHN A. SCOCOS
Secretary



Wis. Stats. Chapter 45

DECLARATION OF AID

Personal information you provide may be used for secondary purposes [Privacy Law, s.15.04(1)(m)].

This form is designed to provide information about county-administered benefits to WDVA for the Assistance to Needy Veterans program. It is to be completed and signed by the County Veterans Service Officer or other person as designated by the County Board or Executive.

Applicant's Name: _____ County: _____

I certify that this applicant has applied for all federal, state, or county aid administered by the county. Aid is available as listed below:

Note: If aid is unavailable, enter a zero. Do not leave the line blank.

Subsistence or Health Care Aid

Veterans Service Commission Funds \$ _____

If zero, provide reason: Funds exhausted Other (please explain): _____

Health Care Aid Only

Medicaid (Medical Assistance) \$ _____ deductible

Badger Care \$ _____ deductible

Other (please list): _____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

Subsistence Aid Only

Food Share Benefits (formerly called Food Stamps) \$ _____

Emergency Assistance \$ _____

Medicare Premium Assistance (QMB, SLMB) \$ _____

Unemployment Insurance (also called Unemployment Compensation or UC) \$ _____

Worker's Compensation \$ _____

W2 (AFDC) \$ _____

Other (please list): _____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

County Agent's Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____