

Honoring All Who Served



The Wisconsin Veterans Home at King

September 8-9 Veteran Centric training coming to King:

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs King is modifying their educational programs for staff. "We are committed to providing a veteran-centric environment for our residents," says Amber Nikolai, Public Relations Director. "Veterans have different needs than civilians, especially as they age. Our programs now highlight those differences."

Many veterans have served in dangerous-duty assignments – assignments that sometimes leave an indelible mark of trauma on their souls. These scars are often covered up with a stoic facade that keeps the wound hidden as veterans resume civilian lives. However, as veterans age, traumatic memories often surface unbidden. "When veterans leave careers and family to move into our facility, thoughts and feelings arise that need skilled support within the veteran context," Nikolai explains.

New educational programs are now in place to enhance understanding. For example, two programs, Code Red White and Blue and Code Amazing Grace, were recently implemented. When a veteran who lives at King dies, "Code Red White and Blue" is announced notifying residents, family members, and staff. The veteran's body is draped with an American flag and escorted by staff, family, and volunteers rendering a final salute. When a loved one of a veteran dies, "Code Amazing Grace" is announced; he/she is donned with a dignified mourning blanket, and escorted to their memorial service as a final goodbye is given. "We now realize the damage unmourned grief can cause. We don't want to abandon veterans in their grief. We want to help them connect to the part of themselves carrying that kind of pain," Nikolai says. She adds that the deaths of loved ones or the deaths of other residents sometimes cause memories of fallen comrades from decades earlier to surface. "On the battlefield, there was no time to grieve. Those memories were stored in these veterans' bodies, minds, and spirits. Now, we are learning how to use these Codes as an opportunity to heal those memories."

September 11 – Patriots Day and Day of Remembrance:

In honor and recognition of 9/11 Deborah Grassman and her team are coming to the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King to teach about Soul / Moral Injuries. Deborah and her team will be leading a Fallen Comrade Ceremony on September 9 for the members and staff of King.

September is a month steeped in military tradition – a time to reflect on the service and sacrifice of our armed forces, police and firefighters.

PATRIOT DAY AND NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBRANCE, 2015 – Never Forget (below words borrowed from a Patriot Day Ceremony at the White House).

Fourteen years ago this month, nearly three thousand innocent men, women, and children lost their lives in attacks meant to terrorize our Nation. They had been going about their day, harming no one, when sudden violence struck. We will never undo the pain and injustice borne that terrible morning, nor will we ever forget those we lost.

On September 11, 2001, amid shattered glass, twisted steel, and clouds of dust, the spirit of America shone through. We remember the sacrifice of strangers and first responders who rushed into darkness to carry others from danger. We remember the unbreakable bonds of unity we felt in the long days that followed -- how we held each other, how we came to our neighbors' aid, how we prayed for one another. We recall how Americans of every station joined together to support the survivors in their hour of need and to heal our Nation in the years that followed.

Today, we can honor those we lost by building a Nation worthy of their memories. Let us also live up to the selfless example of the heroes who gave of themselves in the face of such great evil. As we mark the anniversary of September 11, I invite all Americans to observe a National Day of Service and Remembrance by uniting in the same extraordinary way we came together after the attacks. Like the Americans who chose compassion when confronted with cruelty, we can show our love for one another by devoting our time and talents to those in need.

September 18 - United States Air Force / King is Home to 82 members who are Air Force veterans:

Birthdays are all about celebrating the birth of those we love and respect. That is why we take time out to invite friends over, plan parties, bake birthday cakes, and sing loudly to the guest of honor.

It is certainly no different with a military birthday. We celebrate each branch and its birthday because we are proud of our military members and what they represent.

Air Force Birthday - September 18, 1947

Known as the most recent branch of the U.S. military to be formed, the Air Force is also the largest and most technologically advanced military group in the world. Initially part of the United States Army, the USAF was formed as a separate branch of the military on 18 September 1947 under the National Security Act of 1947.

September 19 - POW- MIA Recognition Day:

Today King is home to two WWII POWs

1971, Mrs. Michael Hoff, the wife of a U.S. military officer listed as missing in action during the Vietnam War, developed the idea for a national flag to remind every American of the U.S. service members whose fates were never accounted for during the war.

The black and white image of a gaunt silhouette, a strand of barbed wire and an ominous watchtower was designed by Newt Heisley, a former World War II pilot. Some claim the silhouette is a profile of Heisley's son, who contracted hepatitis while training to go to Vietnam. The virus ravaged his body, leaving his features hollow and emaciated. They suggest that while staring at his son's sunken features, Heisley saw the stark image of American service members held captive under harsh conditions. Using a pencil, he sketched his son's profile, creating the basis for a symbol that would come to have a powerful impact on the national conscience.

By the end of the Vietnam War, more than 2,500 servicemembers were listed by the Department of Defense as Prisoners of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA). In 1979, as families of the missing pressed for full accountability, Congress and the President proclaimed the first National POW/MIA Recognition Day to acknowledge the families' concerns and symbolize the steadfast resolve of the American people to never forget the men and women who gave up their freedom protecting ours. Three years later, in 1982, the POW/MIA flag became the only flag other than the Stars and Stripes to fly over the White House in Washington, D.C. On August 10, 1990, Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, designating the POW/MIA flags.

September 11 and 12 - American Veterans (AMVETS) and Auxiliary King Weekend:

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Home at King would like to recognize the AMVETS and AMVETS Auxiliary for the special King weekend they are sponsoring on September 11 and 12. The AMVETS and AMVETS Auxiliary will begin their King weekend with a gathering and a tour of King on Friday, September 11. On Saturday, September 12 they will be sponsoring a golf tournament in the morning starting at 8am in Quadrangle Park with casino games starting at 1pm in Ainsworth Hall. Founded in the midst of World War II, the AMVETS and Ladies Auxiliary have dedicated themselves to promoting world peace, preserving the American way of life and helping veterans. Join the AMVETS and Auxiliary in their mission to fulfill our country's promise to the men and women who served our country. All AMVETS members are invited to attend.

September 12 - WI Veterans Home King Singers sing the National Anthem at the Waupaca High School Football game:

The King Singers formed in November of 2014 as several of our members enjoyed singing and wanted to perform for special occasions. The King Singers have performed for the Veterans Day program at WVH, the WVH Open House and in each building for the Work Therapy Program.

The King Singers also incorporate American Sign Language for some of their songs. They are learning sign language for the Star Spangled Banner to perform at the Alzheimer's Walk in Waupaca on September 12th. One of the members in Ainsworth Hall asked if they could take a trip to the local football game so the ideas were put together. The date we could get a bus to go to the Waupaca Comets football game was 9/11, a special REMEMBRANCE DAY. The King Singers and veterans really want to perform the Star Spangled Banner on 9/11 for the Waupaca High School and surrounding community.

Approximately 15 Wisconsin Veterans Home members will perform the National Anthem along with the Waupaca High School Choir. Jeanne Trombla and Amy Formella, Music Therapists at WVH, will lead the group. The VFW Honor Guard organized by Dick Morey will present the Colors before the game.

"I am extremely proud of the Wisconsin Veterans Home King Singers and their desire to remember 9/11 along with the community by performing at the local Waupaca High School football game." (Amy Formella, MS, MT-BC Activities Therapist Ainsworth Hall 3 & 4)

"It started as just an ordinary day. Then all of America was stunned and in awe of what happened later that morning. America was attacked, and we felt and saw another atrocity like Pearl Harbor. But, just as then, we the nation of the USA came together. We all became one voice, one country and said we may be down but only for so long, and we will rebuild and prove again that we are the greatest nation in the world. All of the military (active duty and veterans), and citizens showed what makes this country great. I am a 22 year retired veteran who loves my country and I along with everyone can stand and proclaim GOD BLESS AMERICA." ~ Russell Frehlich.

September 12: WI Veterans Home at King Honor Guard to post Colors at the Wisconsin Badger Game

The King Honor Guard will participate in the veterans welcome ceremony during the Badgers Football Annual Salute to Veterans at Camp Randall in Madison on Saturday, September 12, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. The Honor Guard will also join their fellow veterans to watch the Wisconsin Badgers take on the Miami University Redhawks.

September 23-27 - Traveling Vietnam Wall - Edgar celebrates veterans

As a tribute to all veterans, the town of Edgar, Wisconsin, will host the Traveling Vietnam Wall this September. To honor the bravery and sacrifice men and women of the armed forces make every day to keep our country free, the Traveling Vietnam Wall will come from Washington, D.C. to be displayed at Edgar's school grounds, 203 E. Birch Street, from September 23rd through September 27th.

Having the Traveling Vietnam Wall, which has traveled across the United States, in Edgar allows citizens, who may not have the opportunity to travel to the nation's capitol, to see a replica of this moving national monument and pay their respects to friends, loved ones, and the citizen soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice. Hosting the Wall on school grounds will allow students a unique learning experience.