

Scott Walker, Governor

John A. Scocos, Secretary



**STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

201 W. Washington Ave.  
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: [Headquarters@dva.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Headquarters@dva.wisconsin.gov)  
Website: [www.WisVets.com](http://www.WisVets.com)

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Contact: Carla Vigue, 608-266-0517

[carla.vigue@dva.wisconsin.gov](mailto:carla.vigue@dva.wisconsin.gov)

## **More Than 200 World War II Veterans Celebrated at Operation Greatest Generation in Green Bay**

GREEN BAY – The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) today honored more than 200 World War II veterans from across the state who attended Operation Greatest Generation. This historic, largest of its kind event in Wisconsin, brought together nearly 600 veterans as well as their families and friends for a day long celebration that included a recognition ceremony as well as World War II themed programs and events.

“Today, we celebrate and pay tribute to the men and women who served our country in a war that changed the course of history and brought pride and victory to our great nation,” WDVA Secretary John Scocos said. “Many received little glory or fame, but the men and women of the Greatest Generation made a contribution to humanity that will probably never be equaled. Today is our chance to remember their deeds, appreciate their sacrifices, and take a moment to honor the legacy of these heroes.”

There are more than 400,000 veterans living in Wisconsin and nearly 300,000 are wartime veterans. About 32,000 are World War II veterans.

A highlight of the recognition ceremony was an appearance by Hugh Ambrose, the author of *The Pacific*, a non-fiction account of World War II, and project consultant for the Emmy award-winning HBO miniseries produced by Tom Hanks, Steven Spielberg and Gary Goetzman.

Lt. Colonel James Megellas from Fond du Lac was a featured speaker. He is the most-decorated officer in the history of the 82nd Airborne Division having received a Distinguished Service Cross, a Silver Star, and been nominated for the Medal of Honor.

The day long celebration also included family-friendly activities such as a performance by the 132nd Army Band from Madison, living history demonstrations, WWII re-enactors, train rides and guided tours provided by the National Railroad Museum, a display of World War II vehicles and other WWII-themed programming.

Area World War II veterans acknowledged during today’s ceremony include:

- **Connie Allord**, Middleton, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1943. After boot camp and Control Tower School, Ms. Allord was 1 of 3,000 women Marines at Cherry Point, North Carolina, taking over most of the men’s station jobs. One of the first female Air Traffic Controllers at Cherry Point, she attained the rank of Staff Sergeant before being honorably discharged in 1945. Today, at age 92, she continues to support veterans through her involvement

with the American Legion, Marine Corps League, United Women Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, Women Marines Association, and Women in the Military Service to America.

- **Oscar C. Boldt**, Appleton, served in the Air Force from 1943-1945. He served as a 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force navigator on B-24 Liberators out of Italy. When the war ended, Mr. Boldt went to UW-Madison to complete his degree in engineering. Upon graduation in 1948, at age 23, he joined the family's small construction company in Appleton, which was then in its 59<sup>th</sup> year. Today, the Boldt Company has developed a large national presence and has been widely heralded due to Mr. Boldt's strong leadership and support for active-duty employees and the armed forces.
- **Robert Reeners**, Hobart, joined the Navy in 1943. On June 6, 1944, at age 19, he piloted a 36 foot LCVP, better known as a Higgins boat, with troops and supplies onto Utah Beach, Normandy as a part of the D-Day invasion. After being honorably discharged from the Navy in 1948, Mr. Reeners went on to serve in the Coast Guard from 1949-1966 when he retired as a Master Chief.
- **Warren R. Skenadore**, Oneida, enlisted in the Army in March 1943 at the age of 19. Serving as a medic in the Medical detachment of the 307th Engineer Battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division, he participated in several campaigns in Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe. For his gallantry in action Mr. Skenadore received the Silver Star Medal as well as other awards: the Medical Badge Victory Medal, American Theater Ribbon, European-African- Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon with three Bronze Battle Stars, Bronze Service Arrowhead, the Bronze Service Arrowhead, a Good Conduct Medal and the Victory Medal. In 2009, he was awarded the Legion of Honor, the highest distinction that France can bestow upon those who have achieved remarkable deeds for France.
- **Clyde Stephenson**, Appleton, joined the Marine Corps in January of 1940 at age 19. Following boot camp and other training he was assigned for duty on the battleship USS California, which he was assigned to when it was sunk at Pearl Harbor. After Pearl Harbor, Mr. Stephenson served as a Radio Repair Master Sergeant in a Marine Aviation VMF Corsair squadron in the Pacific until the War was over in 1945.

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs would like to give a special thank you to our sponsors Wisconsin Public Television and the Wisconsin Funeral Directors Association and our partners the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, National Railroad Museum, Radio Results Network, Bay Towel and the Old Glory Honor Flight.

Operation Greatest Generation is part of Year of the Veteran. Governor Walker declared 2012 the Year of the Veteran to honor the deeds of Wisconsin's veterans and provide them with the tools they need to reintegrate into civilian society such as education, health care and employment assistance. Lt. Governor Kleefisch and Secretary Scocos are overseeing the year-long Year of the Veteran initiative. For more information about Year of the Veteran visit [www.yearoftheveteran.com](http://www.yearoftheveteran.com).