



# WDVA REMEMBERS FALLEN MILITARY AT MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

**T**housands of people joined together to reflect, remember and honor those who died while defending our freedom in a series of emotional Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs-organized ceremonies over Memorial Day weekend.

The WDVA's three Veterans cemeteries hosted many of the events, with speakers emphasizing the meaning of the day, and formal military honors paying tribute to those who died while serving. Despite high temperatures, the events, which took place over the span of four days, were attended by thousands of military, Veterans, families, lawmakers and members of the public.

The weekend of remembrance started Friday, with a ceremony being held at the WDVA's Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls. The event was led by Harold "Hal" Radke, a

Vietnam War Veteran who is a member at the five-star rated Veterans Home. Radke gave the Pledge of Allegiance and invited fellow members at the home to join in singing "America the Beautiful," "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "The Star Spangled Banner." Secretary Daniel Zimmerman was a featured speaker at the ceremony along with former Secretary Ray Boland, both who gave remarks about the meaning of the day.

On Saturday (May 26), the WDVA's Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Spooner held its annual Memorial Day ceremony. The event started with a ceremonial flyover and the posting of colors and branch of service flags. A Missing Man Remembrance ceremony was held before Secretary Zimmerman gave the keynote speech. A ceremonial rifle salute followed by the sounding of "TAPS" concluded the event, which brought around

1,000 people to the cemetery.

The next day on Sunday (May 27), Secretary Zimmerman spoke at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Union Grove, which was holding its annual ceremony.

"Each day I thank God for what I have, and I think of those who gave their all," Zimmerman said during his speech. "Without their sacrifice, our safety and security would not be possible."

The event included traditional military honors and featured speaker Leah Vukmir, a Wisconsin State Senator serving the 5th district.

On Memorial Day, May 28, hundreds of members at the WDVA's Veterans Home at King and people from the community attended a ceremony at the Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The WDVA's Gary Dierks spoke at the ceremony along with Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin.