



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 18, 2020

Contact: (608) 266-0517  
Carla.Vigue@dva.wisconsin.gov

## **WDVA Launches Virtual Memorial Day Commemoration** **[www.WisVetsMemorialDay2020.com](http://www.WisVetsMemorialDay2020.com)**

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 **Memorial Day 2020: Wisconsin’s Virtual Commemoration**, a state-wide Memorial Day observance. The Commemoration is available at [www.WisVetsMemorialDay2020.com](http://www.WisVetsMemorialDay2020.com).

“Every citizen across this nation owes a debt to those who, in President Lincoln’s words, ‘gave their last full measure of devotion.’ We will still honor and express our sincerest gratitude to the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coastguardsmen who died in defense of our nation and our values with a beautiful online ceremony,” said WDVA Secretary Mary Kolar. “Be assured that while we cannot gather, we will honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in a worthy manner.”

In this time of social distancing and safer-at-home, the WDVA is bringing Memorial Day to people in their own home. The Commemoration includes a virtual ceremony, educational and other 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 25, 2020 with a virtual Memorial Day ceremony at 9:00 a.m. followed by the observance of the National Moment of Remembrance at 3:00 p.m. Secretary Kolar will lead the Moment of Remembrance Live on *Facebook*.

### **Memorial Day 2020: Wisconsin’s Virtual Commemoration includes the following:**

#### **Virtual Ceremony and Tribute Gallery**

On Monday, May 25, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., the WDVA will host a state-wide Memorial Day observance online featuring speakers, music, and history so we can remember and honor those who have gone before us. As a nod toward our public ceremonies, like we always do, the 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.

#### **National Moment of Remembrance**

The WDVA is calling on people across Wisconsin to join us in playing Taps on Memorial Day at 3:00 p.m. as part of the National Moment of Remembrance, an annual event that asks Americans to pause for a duration of one minute to remember those who have died in military service to the United States. We encourage all to participate by sounding Taps from their home, porch, or front yard. A video of Taps is available to play on [www.WisVetsMemorialDay2020.com](http://www.WisVetsMemorialDay2020.com).

-MORE-

### **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. In the same vein as the “Happy Heart Hunt” effort, the WDVA is providing a printable American flag for coloring. We encourage individuals to color the flag or draw their own and post it in a window or draw a flag with chalk on a sidewalk or driveway. Educational resources include the lyrics and history of Taps, proper flag etiquette, and information about the Missing Man Table.

### **Social Media**

Memorial Day has been a time for gathering with friends and family. While spending time apart this year, our online community can join together, remember, and honor Wisconsin’s veterans and their families. A Wisconsin Memorial Day profile frame is available for download on Facebook. The flag and flowers of the Facebook frame represent the flags and flowers traditionally placed on a fallen hero’s headstone. We also encourage the use of #WIRemember to tag any Memorial Day related posts.

### **A NOTE ABOUT THE WISCONSIN VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERIES**

Each year the WDVA welcomes hundreds of community members to Memorial Day ceremonies at the Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemeteries. This year, in the interest of the health and safety of the community, there will be **no** public ceremonies. In addition, there will not be a large public event to place flags. However, arrangements have been made to ensure that there are flags on the graves for Memorial Day.

The cemeteries are open and accessible to the public from sunrise to sunset every day. The WDVA encourages visitors to observe social distancing guidelines when visiting. Families and friends should also consider visiting on another day when there are likely to be fewer visitors.