



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Military Appreciation Month

A recent piece put together by the USO (United Service Organizations) shared some information about Military Appreciation Month and when specific military holidays are recognized in the month of May. Officially designated by Congress in 1999, Military Appreciation Month takes place every year throughout the entire month of May. Every year, the president issues an annual proclamation reminding Americans to celebrate this patriotic month that pays tribute to those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. Although the entire month is designated to honoring past and present military members and their families, there are several, specific military holidays sprinkled throughout Military Appreciation Month itself, including Loyalty Day (May 1, 2021), VE/Victory in Europe Day (May 8, 2021), Military Spouse Appreciation Day (The Friday before Mother's Day - May 7, 2021), Armed Forces Day (The Third Saturday in May - May 15, 2021), and Memorial Day (The last Monday in May - May 31, 2021), which honors service members who have died in military service to the nation.

Close to home, it's hard to not appreciate service members and the military every day of the year. Between Fort McCoy in Tomah and Volk Field in Camp Douglas, those of us in and around Monroe County are constantly reminded of the positive contributions of our service members, not only through their service to our country, but also their contributions to communities at large. According to data compiled by the Fort McCoy Plans, Analysis and Integration Office, Fort McCoy's total economic impact for fiscal year 2020 was an estimated \$1.479 billion, more than the \$1.184 billion reported for fiscal year 2019. The Air National Guard Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) at Volk Field Air National Guard Base (ANGB), in Camp Douglas, Wisconsin, is one of four CRTCs located in the United States (the others are located in Michigan, Mississippi, and Georgia). Dated information pertaining to the economic impact of Volk Field estimated it at around \$25 million a number of years ago.

The economic impact of Fort McCoy and Volk Field can quantitatively be measured in dollar figures, taking into account service members stationed on the base, the first class year-round training that takes place at both facilities, payroll, construction, supplies, equipment, contracts, and more. However, as many of us are familiar with, as meaningful as the economic impact is to local communities in our part of the state, just as, and probably more meaningful, are the people involved and the positive impact they have on our country, our state, and our local communities.

Maybe more so than some others, I think many of us locally are fortunate to understand that a service member doesn't serve alone, meaning that their whole family, in a way, also serves. Not only current and former service members themselves, but their spouses, children, and family members are integral parts of the fabric that comprises our communities. That's one of the reasons I was pleased to author and pass legislation during the last legislative session that makes it easier for service members and their spouses to obtain professional licensure credentials when residing in the state, and I continue to constantly look for ways to support and empower service members and their families throughout the 70th Assembly District and the state.



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There are a number of ways to support military personnel this month and throughout the year, and a number of worthy local, state, and national non-profit or governmental organizations exist for that reason. That said, our state has a Service Member Support Division that exists within our State Department of Military Affairs. In addition to providing resources for military personnel and families, there are a variety of volunteer and deployment support resources available, including the Badger Yellow Ribbon Program, which, among other efforts, facilitates access to support services, information, education, and outreach opportunities as a way to continuously support the health and well-being of Soldiers and Airmen throughout the entire deployment cycle. Web links for more information can be found below, and if there's anything my office can assist with pertaining to individual, group or community efforts to support service members, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs: www.dma.wi.gov

Service Member Support Division: www.wisconsinmilitary.org

Badger Yellow Ribbon Program: www.wisconsinmilitary.org/byr

Nancy VanderMeer represents the 70th Wisconsin State Assembly District, which includes portions of Monroe, Jackson, Portage and Wood counties and serves as the Chairperson of the Assembly Committee on Rural Development and Vice-Chairperson of the Assembly Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs.