

Rep. Kleefisch: Honors veteran who cleaned 425 veteran gravestones

Posted on Friday, Nov 10, 2017

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Madison – Today Representative Joel Kleefisch honored Veteran Dale Reich of Oconomowoc during the Assembly floor session. Dale is a combat veteran of the Vietnam War and since then has taught history classes at Gateway Technical College, authored books about history and is currently writing a play about World War I from the viewpoint of Oconomowoc residents.

A few months ago, Dale went to the Summit Cemetery in Oconomowoc to clean his grandparent's gravestones. As he looked around, he noticed many other gravestones that could benefit from a thorough cleaning so he got a bucket of water and some soap and started cleaning. He not only scoured the veteran's gravestones but also the gravestones of the veterans' wives.

Dale felt a sense of pride in accomplishing this project so he decided to take his efforts to nearby cemeteries and cleaned more gravestones at La Belle Cemetery and Saint Jerome Cemetery. His hard work and determination over a three week span lead to the polishing of 425 gravestones.

Dale's patriotic heart let him to previous admirable feats as well. In the early 2000's, he voluntarily enlisted to serve in both Iraq and Afghanistan to take the place of a younger soldier but was denied due to his age. And in 2005, Dale ran a mile in every county in the state while holding the Wisconsin and American flag.

"I'm humbled and honored to be recognized for the grave cleaning project and I hope others continue to make more gravestones presentable in the future" said Dale.

Representative Kleefisch states, “Veterans like Dale help remind us daily of the sacrifices veterans have made and continue to make for our freedoms.”