

Kind makes plea for war stories from veterans

National program is preserving oral, paper histories of veterans

By MARK JOHNSON
of the Journal Sentinel staff

Peter J. Brown, a 67-year-old Army veteran from Oklahoma City, thought of his two brothers, especially the one who fought in Vietnam and won't talk about it.

"We've tried and tried and tried," Brown said. "He just sits there and cries. He says, 'You people just don't know.'"

Brown may just have to try again.

He listened with great interest as U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-La Crosse) told the Veterans of Foreign Wars meeting this week in Milwaukee about the Veterans History Project. The project, which Kind sponsored and President Clinton signed into law last October, would create a national repository for the memories and oral histories of veterans. The program would also preserve letters, diaries, photographs and films.

Congress is giving the project \$250,000 for the fiscal year 2002, which starts this October. The

"Instead of just reading about it, the kids will be able to hear

project is to be developed by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

"We are call-

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Three viruses ruled out as girl's killer

Researchers to continue to search for type of encephalitis

By TOM HELD
of the Journal Sentinel staff

Three different mosquito-borne viruses, including one that killed more than two dozen horses in the state, have been ruled out as the pathogen that killed a 17-year-old Fox Point girl last week, state health officials said Wednesday.

Tests eliminated Eastern equine encephalitis, the West Nile virus and La Crosse encephalitis in the death of Brittney Gigl, who died after returning

from the Interlaken Camp near Eagle River. Further tests are being conducted to determine whether she was infected with St. Louis encephalitis, said Linda Glaser, an epidemiologist in the state Bureau of Communicable Diseases.

The various strains of viral encephalitis being screened in Gigl's death fall under the category of arboviral infections, or viruses spread by bugs, mosquitoes and ticks.

Viral encephalitis, a rare condition that can lead to fatal swelling of the brain, can be caused by a large number of viruses, including those contracted through ingestion or breathing, Glaser said. In about half of the cases, health officials are unable to determine the exact virus that



Gigl

Gigl spent a week at Interlaken training to be a sixth-grade girls' counselor, and returned home early last week. She developed symptoms of encephalitis — headache, disorientation and slurred speech — early on Aug. 15 and was taken to Columbia Hospital. She was transferred to Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

caused the illness or death, she said.

In Gigl's case, the test results so far "don't give us a virus that we know she died of," Glaser said.

and died there late that night.

The viral encephalitis that killed her is rare, affecting about 1,500 people each year in the U.S., according to the National Institutes of Health. Cases of mosquito-borne encephalitis in Wisconsin are even more unusual.

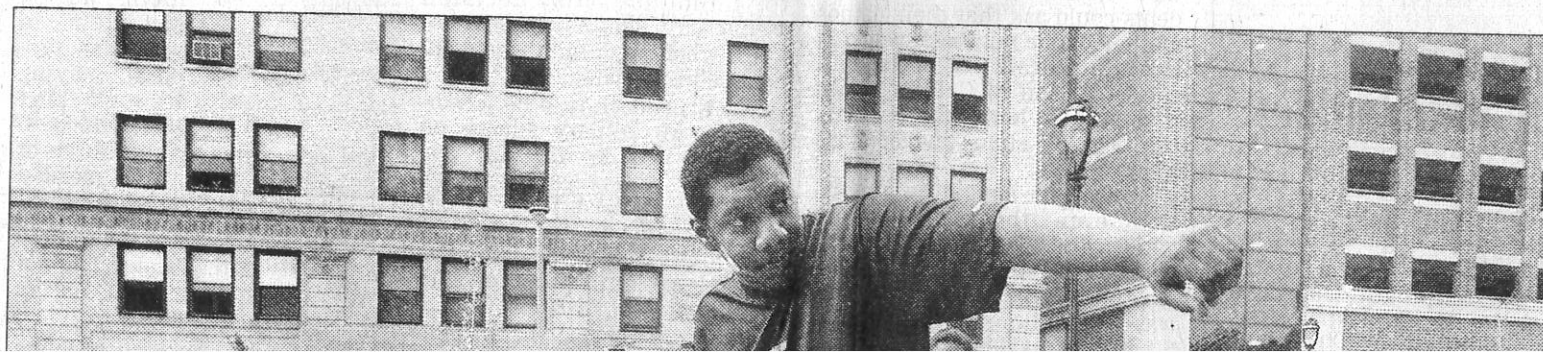
The West Nile virus, which first appeared in New York two years ago, has spread only as far west as Ohio, and there have been no cases of humans being infected with Eastern equine encephalitis since 1984, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The state Bureau of Communicable Diseases reports that the last case of St. Louis encephalitis in the state was documented in 1981. There have been 12 cases re-

corded since the state started keeping such records in 1964.

Mosquito-borne viruses, however, have shown increasing virulence in Wisconsin and across the country this summer. Twenty-eight horses in the northwestern part of the state have died of suspected Eastern equine encephalitis, and more than a dozen people in northeastern Louisiana and Houston have been affected by forms of mosquito-borne encephalitis. In addition, a woman in Atlanta died Aug. 11 of the West Nile virus, which also has been found in birds near Toronto, Canada, and in Indiana.

Birds are the primary carriers of the various arboviral infections, which are transferred to humans and animals through insect bites.



Ament, courts dispute