

# Army movie van captivates students

By **LINDA McALPINE**  
Of the Tribune staff

ONALASKA, Wis. — The U.S. Army rolled into the parking lot at Onalaska High School on Monday — not with tanks, but with an 18-wheel semi-tractor trailer truck.

The glossy black trailer, decorated with images of helicopters and soldiers, is the U.S. Army Cinema Van, a theater on wheels.

The van's sides extend out about two and half feet, creating space to seat about 40 in climate-controlled comfort.

"This is the first time the Cinema Van has been to Onalaska High School," said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kenneth Kuhns Jr., an Army recruiter from La Crosse. "It's quite a vehicle."

Teachers at the high school could choose from a number of professionally produced videos, Kuhns said.

Students from Darin Shepardson's American history class saw "We the People."

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— **Darin Shepardson,**  
history teacher

"It wasn't boring," said freshman Casey Schams as he returned to class.

Shepardson said he thought the video was well done. "It really gave a good overview of our country's history and how the Army was a part of that," he said. "I think it's good for the students to understand that the military is a part of history."

Part of the history lesson was a video showing Army soldiers fighting in Iraq as part of the Gulf War a dozen years ago.

Although soldiers are again fighting on Iraqi soil, Kuhns said the current war hasn't been a topic during a brief question and answer period after the video.

As to enlistments, Kuhns said he "hasn't really seen a change."

But Schorns and a fellow classmate, Joey Pollex, both said they were considering Army careers. Pollex said the Army is somewhat of a family tradition, as his grandfather and an uncle are veterans.

The U.S. Army Mission Support Battalion, home of the Cinema Van, began in 1986 when the Secretary of the Army asked a small group of soldiers to develop an Army exhibit for the World's Fair in New York City.

Today, it has an array of exhibits that showcase professionally produced educational films on a number of subjects. All are manned by Army recruiters to build Army awareness among high school and college-age students.