



# THE BUGLE

FALL 2020 | VOLUME 27:3

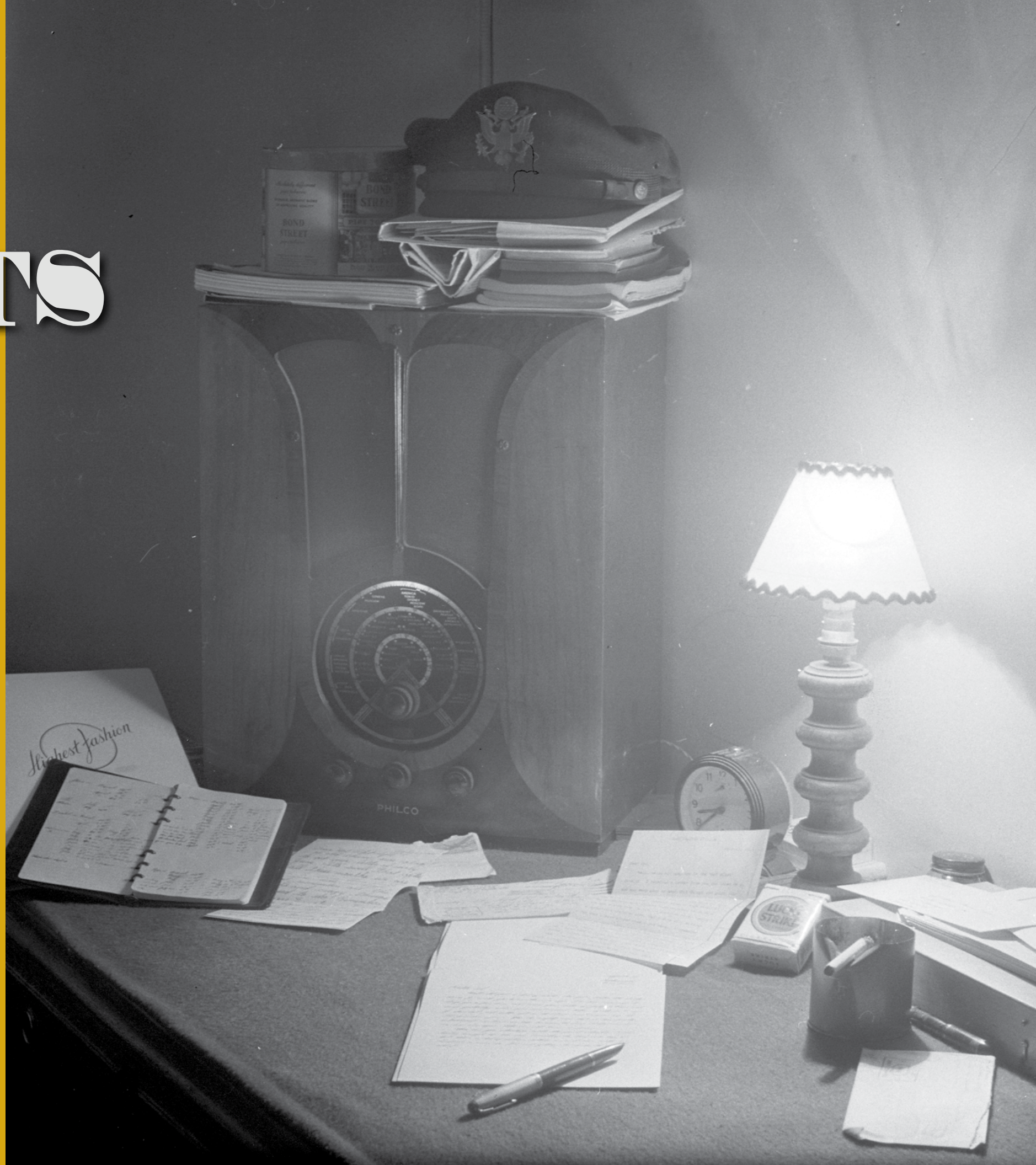


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This image is from the Sydney M. Wood collection, WVM Mss 1935. Wood, originally from West New York, New Jersey, served with the 327<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Squadron during World War II. During his service in Europe, Wood was sent to an air base in Norway on a top-secret mission. While stationed there, his correspondence was collected and censored, then stored for mailing until after Wood left Norway.

After the war, Wood moved to Illinois to study at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, eventually moving to Madison and then Fitchburg, Wisconsin with his family. Sydney Wood passed away in 2003.





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[www.wisvetmuseum.com](http://www.wisvetmuseum.com)

In the interest of the health and welfare of our guests, staff, and volunteers, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum remains closed.

Please continue to visit our website for updates on our re-opening plans and to experience our virtual museum content.

We are still open for phone or email inquiries at 608-267-1799 or [veterans.museum@dva.wisconsin.gov](mailto:veterans.museum@dva.wisconsin.gov).

We continue to closely monitor the status of COVID-19 in Wisconsin and will reopen to visitors as soon as practicable. Thank you for your understanding and for joining us to help prevent the spread of disease.

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## COLLECTION DONORS

5/5/20 – 9/8/20

A most sincere thank you to all who donated to our collection from May–September 2020. Thank you for your generosity and support of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

CHERYL BIRO  
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### COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

We welcome your comments and editorial submissions concerning The Bugle. Comments and submissions should be sent to [jennifer.stevenson@dva.wisconsin.gov](mailto:jennifer.stevenson@dva.wisconsin.gov).



### MUSEUM MISSION

The mission of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum is to commemorate, acknowledge, and affirm the role of Wisconsin veterans in America's military past and present.

**THE BUGLE** is published quarterly for our members and friends through the support of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation provides funds for the support of artifact acquisitions, exhibit production, and the development of educational programs.





Image from the Dorothy Dannies Alexander Collection. She served as an officer and company commander in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) during World War II from 1942 to 1944 and was active in the Milwaukee chapter of the WAC Veterans Association. WVM.0005.1077

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum,

Greetings! This is the second message I've addressed to you while the team is dispersed due to COVID-19. The pandemic has lasted longer and been more impactful than originally expected, with no end in sight. The only thing predictable about 2020 is that it is unpredictable.

Frankly, this is not what I or any of the team would prefer. We want to open the doors, host in-person programs, develop exhibits, and do what we do to showcase the stories of Wisconsin's veterans. But our priority has to be the safety of our visitors and staff, and so we will be closed and dispersed for the foreseeable future. We miss all of you, and look forward to the day we can welcome everyone back to the museum – a prospect that helps sustain us through this challenging time.

In addition, recent unrest in Madison damaged the exterior of the museum. The interior and its contents remained (and remain) untouched and safe. A tag on the building challenged, "Where is our museum?" and we answered, "Right here!" With this challenge came an opportunity for veteran artists, working with our landlord, to paint murals on the repaired exterior highlighting Wisconsin's diverse veteran population. The museum staff will be placing supporting exhibits in our windows fronting Capitol Square.

The elite team here continues to come up with creative methods and solutions to meet our mission of preserving and telling the stories of Wisconsin veterans. Some of those solutions are outlined in this issue. We're working hard to reach a broader audience by offering a diverse new line-up of virtual programming and experiences. All of this is being done with the critical help and support of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation.

Last, we continue to look to history for perspective and inspiration. I commend this thought to you from Lieutenant (later Lieutenant General) Samuel V. Wilson, a member of Merrill's Marauders: "I was once asked how I kept going...I found I had one ability—I could put one foot in front of the other; I could take the next step. And that is all that is required. One just has to take the next step."

Thank you for your support, and I hope to see you at the museum soon.

Best,

*Chris Kolakowski*





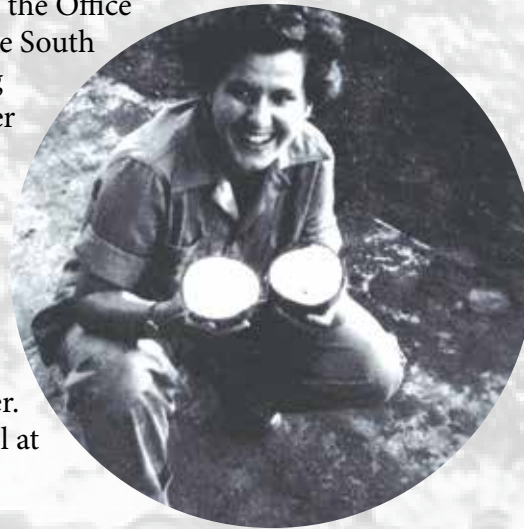
## ROBERTA WELLS: MOVING FORWARD IN SERVICE

By Brittany Strobel  
Processing Archivist

Roberta Ida Wells, originally from near Grand Rapids, Michigan, joined the United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve during World War II and initially worked in stateside recruiting offices. In 1944, when Women Marines were finally authorized to serve outside the continental United States, Wells was one of the first to be accepted for overseas service and shipped out for Hawaii.

While stationed in Hawaii, Wells worked with the Office of Public Information for the Marine Corps in the South Pacific, tasked with duties which included developing film for approval and official use by the Marine Corps. In her role there, she was the first person to see the developed image of the now famous "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima" photograph. So taken with the image, she kept a copy for herself.

After her service in the war, Wells took advantage of her veterans benefits and used the GI Bill to attend Olivet College in Michigan. During her studies there, she met fellow veteran and New York resident Milton Leidner, who served with the 8th Army Air Corps in the European Theater. The two married in 1949 and moved to Madison to attend graduate school at the University of Wisconsin.



Images shown are from the Roberta Ida Wells Collection at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

The Leidners stayed in Madison the rest of their lives where they opened and operated a photography studio on the east side for over 50 years. Wells became politically active in her community and served on the Dane County Board for 22 years and on the Dane County Transportation Committee for 21 years. During her time in public service, Wells advocated for her beliefs in a diverse transportation system for Madison and Dane County as well as environmental conservation. She was an outspoken advocate for the preservation and expansion of rail travel in Wisconsin and supported a commuter rail system as part of her environmental advocacy.

For Wells, public service was a natural extension of her military service. Throughout her time on the Dane County Board, she cited her upbringing and service in the Marine Corps, and strongly encouraged individual and community involvement in all levels of government — local, state, and federal. Referred to affectionately as Bert, Wells was for a time the only woman to chair a transportation committee in the United States. She lobbied the state legislature on many issues, helped pen state legislation, and was an important voice in the many committees on which she served, including the Dane County Women's Issues Committee and the Pay Equity Committee.



Roberta Ida Wells Leidner died at the age of 82 on July 2, 2004 after a battle with Alzheimer's disease. Often in her obituaries and memorials, Wells is described as a feisty fighter, who advocated for what she believed to be right and served her community and country most of her life.

In her collection at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, you can discover Wells' personal letters and photographs, training materials, the professional images she kept copies of from her time in the Marine Corps, as well as articles, letters, and images from her public service career.

There's more to her story. Make an appointment and get to know a veteran today.



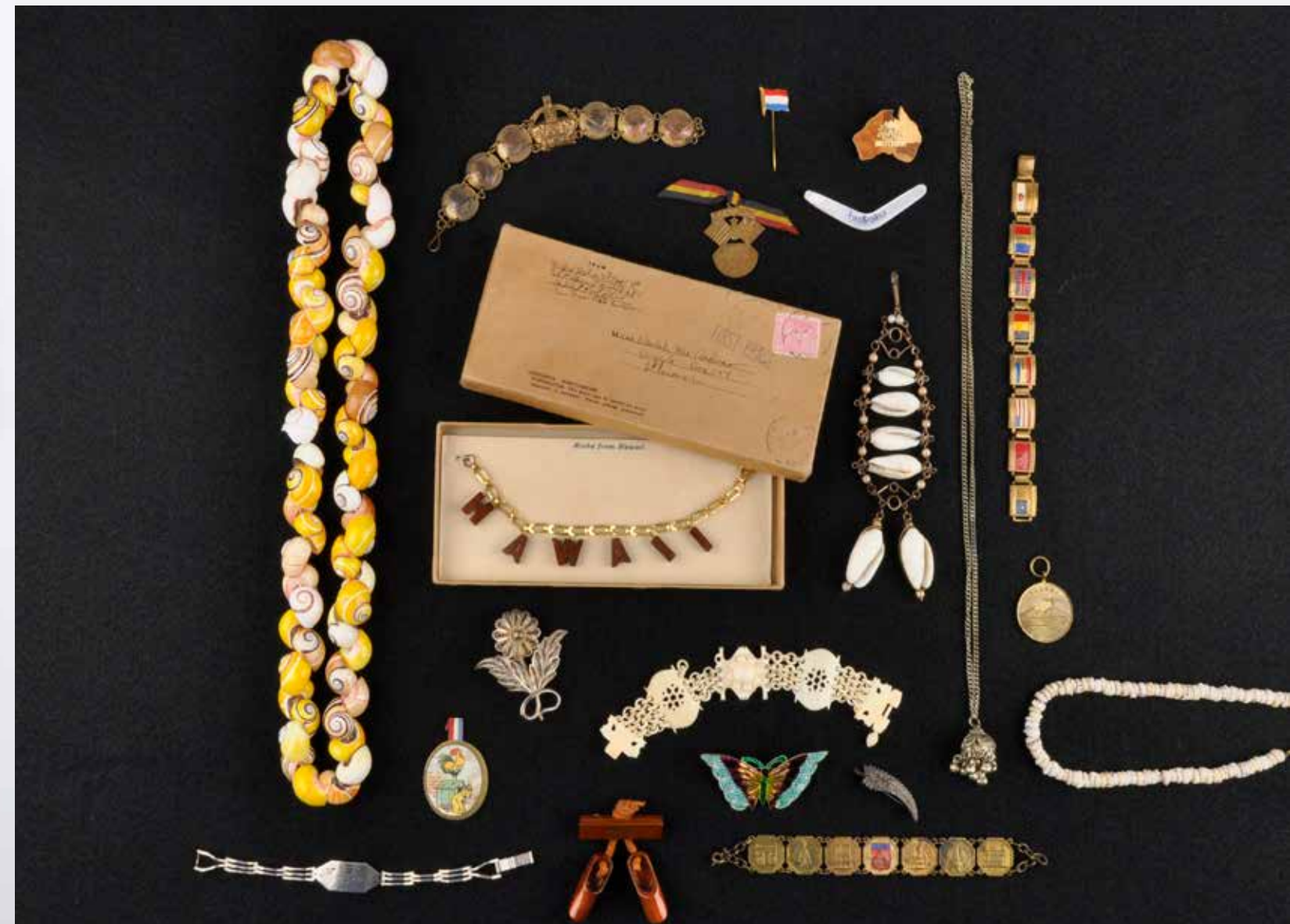
By Andrea Hoffman  
Collections Manager

Tourists may not be able to touch the original Star Spangled Banner, climb aboard the Spirit of St. Louis, or take home a piece of Plymouth Rock, but that has not stopped them from settling on the next best thing; collecting postcards, T-shirts, and other trinkets to document the fact that they were there. This desire to keep tangible reminders of our experiences is a phenomenon that spans both human history and the world. But how does the act of collecting mementos differ in the context of military service?

Coming soon, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum invites you to join us as we explore the stories behind 150 years' worth of souvenirs brought home by Wisconsin members of the U.S. military. From ashtrays to Zippos, we will share how the personal histories behind souvenirs of service resonate with civilians and veterans alike, connecting to us in ways both familiar and unexpected. You can learn more about the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's upcoming exhibit *Souvenirs of Service: The Things They Kept* by following us online.



This selection of lighters comes from members of every branch of U.S. military service, and date from World War I through the Vietnam War. Many were customized souvenirs picked up in places as far away as Bermuda, France, India and Japan, as well as just about every place in between.



This represents only a small sample of the diverse array of jewelry brought home by both servicemen and women in the 20th century, originating from across Europe, South and Eastern Asia and Oceania.





## IN THEIR OWN WORDS ORAL HISTORIES RECOUNT DISCRIMINATION

By Luke Sprague  
Oral Historian

In order for the military history of the United States to be understood, institutional racism must be a part of the fabric of the conversation. Considerations of race, racism, and its structures were part of the United States military from the beginning.

Addressing the issue of race often runs counter to metanarratives that ignore the racial barriers designed to deliberately maintain these narratives and European American power structures. Racism did not disappear after the United States military integrated in 1948, as you will read in the following accounts, but instead it was expressed in other forms.

Both Akira Toki, a Japanese American from Madison who served in the most highly decorated unit for its size in World War II, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and Marcia Anderson from Verona, the first female African American Major General in the United States Army, share the experience of being stopped by the police for their racial identities. Wisconsin's veterans of color did and do experience racism.

The purpose of this article is to spark new conversations about race, encourage listening, and build understanding. Keep in mind, race is one aspect of these veterans' honorable and distinguished military service and you will find their complete stories in the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Oral History Collection.

The following are what Wisconsin African American veterans had to say about their experience with race while serving in the United States military.

Diana Donald spoke about her Navy experience between 1985 to 1989 during a 2019 interview. Donald trained as a firefighter and worked on ship as a sheet metal fabricator on the USS Samuel Gompers.

[Diana Donald is relating her experience with gender and racial discrimination in the U.S. Navy.]

Interviewer: Male or female?

Donald: Male or female. And it was that way as far as racially, as well. They'd say whatever, and there's nothing you could say, nothing you could do.

And, it's just, as a woman, you're sitting here taking this, and then when you hear racial slurs being thrown out there, it was even harder, because you don't—there just wasn't anyone you could go to and say or report to. Because, after all, you're on this ship, and everybody knows everybody, so, you just—you don't want to get in that kind of trouble.

Interviewer: So, they didn't have any signs around that said equal opportunity, or anything like that?

Donald: Not at all.

Interviewer: Or where to report?

Donald: Not at all. Even—we had police on the ship, but even they weren't safe, because it was a ranking thing, you know. If you say something about someone, you'd have to prove it. And if you didn't have witnesses, you'd have to prove it. And then, if you had witnesses, and they don't want to talk, you still have to prove it. And you just didn't want to get caught up in that circle.

Excerpt from a 2019, interview with Angela Russell who served in the United States Army as an administrative specialist from 1990 to 1996. Her service included serving in Germany during the Gulf War.

How come we're not represented in the higher levels? What happened to us that we can't make the higher levels? You know, you've got people that spend a whole lifetime in the military and they never make it to the higher levels. Why is that? That was a question I had to ask. So, like I said, that's very rare that you see that. And that's what I mean when I talk about—like—systematic racism.

What's going on that we can't get higher? They're going to the schools. You know. I'm seeing it. I'm on this side now. I'm a civilian. And I'm seeing that we're sending people to these schools, but at some point, they either get out-processed of the military before they can make generals, or—why is that? It's not that we're not intelligent. We showed that. So what's the issue?

You know, when—we're underrepresented, completely, altogether. There's no one—I mean, if this—I don't know how many blacks that were in the military when I was in, but let's just say it was twenty percent altogether—can we get two four-star generals? Can we get two to represent the twenty percent [laughs] that's here? Can we get a—a one-star general? I mean, come on, now. Can we get three? [laughter] We're not represented in those higher echelons, period. It's a rarity you might hear. And then you hear, "She's the first black brigadier general in the reserve!" I'm talking about Marcia Anderson now.

Armstrong: They tried to treat him like, he was a major when he came, he was an ex-flier. And some of the things they tried to do to him. I straightened that out real quick.

Interviewer: And what was that about, why were they treating the major?

Armstrong: [Clearly indicating skin color with hand motions].

Interviewer: Skin color.

Armstrong: There is a lot of prejudice at the 440<sup>th</sup> and Little Rock Airforce Base and a couple other bases that I went to.

Background image by Robert J. Ellison taken at the March on Washington, August 28, 1963  
WVM.1947.14418

Violet Armstrong of Milwaukee served in the United States Air Force from 1974 to 1995 as a base services superintendent. In her 2019 interview, Violet shared her experience with race in the military.



# Souvenir of Service

By Kevin Hampton  
Curator of History

Lucius Fairchild is one of the “giants” of Wisconsin history, both in terms of his service in the Civil War and his political career following the war. Indeed, the Fairchild family name ranks among those well-known Wisconsin family names such as MacArthur and McCoy regarding the political and military history of Wisconsin.

The Fairchilds were a prominent and influential family even in their own time. Jairus Fairchild, Lucius’ father, served as the first mayor of Madison and the first state treasurer. Before the war, Cassius, Lucius’ older brother, held several political positions within the state. All three Fairchild sons served in the Civil War:



General Lucius Fairchild after his arm amputation at Gettysburg and promotion. WVM.0954.1080

Cassius with the 16<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry Regiment, Lucius primarily with 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin Infantry Regiment in the “Iron Brigade,” and Charles in the Navy. By the

## The Story of a Shoulder Strap

end of the war, the two elder sons, Cassius and Lucius, were brigadier generals and had been significantly wounded at the famous battles of Shiloh and Gettysburg.

Lucius’ place in Wisconsin history, like his post-war political career, only continued to rise with his reputation as the highly respected commander of a famed unit who had his arm amputated at Gettysburg. He held numerous public offices including Wisconsin secretary of state, three-term governor of Wisconsin, U.S. consul at Liverpool, the consul general in Paris, and ambassador to Spain. His dedication to his fellow veterans came with additional positions as well, serving as the Wisconsin state commander of and, later, national commander of the highly influential Grand Army of the Republic veterans organization, as well as the national commander of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the Fairchild collection is one of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum’s largest Civil War collections. Donated to the state by Lucius’ wife after he died, the collection includes material and mementos from all three brothers’ service during the Civil War. Among these souvenirs of service that were kept, there are what we would typically expect to find from someone of the Fairchilds’ status and position as prominent officers during such a monumental event as the Civil War: uniforms, rank insignia, reunion badges, and more. Of special note are the items that can be verified as worn and used by each man during his service. For Lucius, some of the most impactful and easily identifiable mementos that he kept were the items he wore that fateful morning at Gettysburg—much of it still stained with the blood from his wound. But there is one object that is probably one of the most personal and meaningful souvenirs he kept. Unassuming and slightly different from the others, it is a single, deteriorated shoulder strap for the rank of colonel.

For us to understand what could make this single piece of such a large collection potentially one of the most



Cap, blood-stained vest, and handkerchief worn by Lucius Fairchild when wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg. Note the cut across the shoulder of the vest that was done to facilitate the amputation of his arm. WVM Lucius Fairchild Collection

meaningful souvenirs of his service, we have to first look at it in relation to similar items in the collection. We know Lucius was not only proud of his military service but also understood the importance of it, his promotions, and the ranks he held. We can verify that he kept at least one set of shoulder straps for each rank he held—private, captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, and brigadier general. These straps include those still attached to his uniform coats as well as the unattached pairs. All of his rank insignia are in matching pairs and are in relatively good condition, except for one solitary colonel shoulder strap that has no match and is visibly more deteriorated than all the others. These conditions bring forth some questions. We know that the artifacts in his collection were well cared for and their original condition was stabilized as much as possible to preserve their historical

significance and integrity. We can see this even with the blood-stained artifacts from Gettysburg and the excellent condition of the other objects. With that consideration, we can assume that the shoulder strap is not deteriorated due to negligence. That single shoulder strap must have been maintained with as much care as the rest of the collection. So why is this shoulder strap without a mate and in poorer condition?

To help us solve this mystery, we must look at the historical record. For Lucius, that record is lengthy. Again due to his status and position in society, much was written about him in sources from his time and the family kept substantial amounts of his public and private paperwork, correspondence, and so forth.

*Continued on page 16*



To assist us in this case, we examine an article from the *National Tribune* published in Washington, DC on May 1, 1890—six years before Lucius died. The section titled Washington Gossip: The Week's Doings at the National Capital notes of particular interest that week was the transfer of the remains of Colonel Edgar O'Connor from the Congressional Cemetery to Arlington. Colonel O'Connor commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin for a year with Lucius by his side as lieutenant colonel. By all accounts, the two were friends and Lucius was deeply impacted by O'Connor's death at the Battle of Gainesville (colloquially known today as Brawner's Farm) both personally and professionally. Lucius assumed the mantle of colonel upon his death. In the letter Lucius wrote to O'Connor's father a few days after the battle, we can see a glimpse of the personal toll on him.



Colonel's shoulder strap,  
Lucius Fairchild Collection  
V1995.26.65

*"I am under the painful necessity of informing you that Edgar died on the night of Thursday last, August 28<sup>th</sup>, killed while in action with his regiment...He fought bravely, and was dearly beloved by all of us of his old regiment...I did not see him after he left the field... Edgar was a fine officer, and no man can fill his place in the 2d. The men speak of him with tears in their eyes, and wish they had their 'Little Colonel' back again. You may well be proud of him and of his memory...I have no time to write more, and but little heart to do it."*

O'Connor was buried on the battlefield where he fell until December 14, 1862, when his remains were recovered and reinterred at the Congressional Cemetery. Lucius never saw his friend again until April 23, 1890. On that day, as the *National Tribune* tells us, a delegation of former veterans of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin, "under the personal supervision of Gen. Lucius Fairchild," facilitated the transfer of O'Connor's remains to the National Cemetery at Arlington.



Colonel Edgar O'Connor of Beloit, Wisconsin served as colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin from August 1861 until he was killed in action on August 28, 1862. WVM.1502.1001

As they exhumed the remains from the Congressional Cemetery,

*"In the grave was found the handles of the coffin, one shoulder-strap, a pocket-comb, a pencil and some buttons. Gen. Fairchild remarked that he had borrowed that pencil from Col. O'Connor and used it a few hours before the Colonel was killed. Gen. Fairchild asked to keep the pencil, pocket-comb and shoulder-strap, and take them home to Wisconsin. Jerome F. Johnson kept the coffin handles and some buttons."*

These became mementos to remember a fallen commander and a cherished friend—for a friend who never got to say goodbye. Souvenirs of a service from nearly three decades before, but as fresh in Lucius' memory as if only a day had passed. Thus, we know that among Lucius Fairchild's possessions for the last six years of his life would have been a pocket comb, pencil, and a single colonel's shoulder strap that had been buried in Edgar O'Connor's grave for nearly 30 years. It is reasonable to assume that after Lucius' death a pencil and comb may have been misplaced or sorted with other things, while a badge of rank would be placed with all the other military artifacts. When it came time to donate parts of the estate, it's understandable that unless the story had been remembered by his wife or Lucius had left documentation of the stories associated with every piece, stories and connections undoubtedly were lost.

The story makes all the difference. Is it just a part of a collection of uniforms and rank insignia of a long and distinguished career? Or is it a deeply personal, cherished relic of a dear comrade lost in the heat of battle?

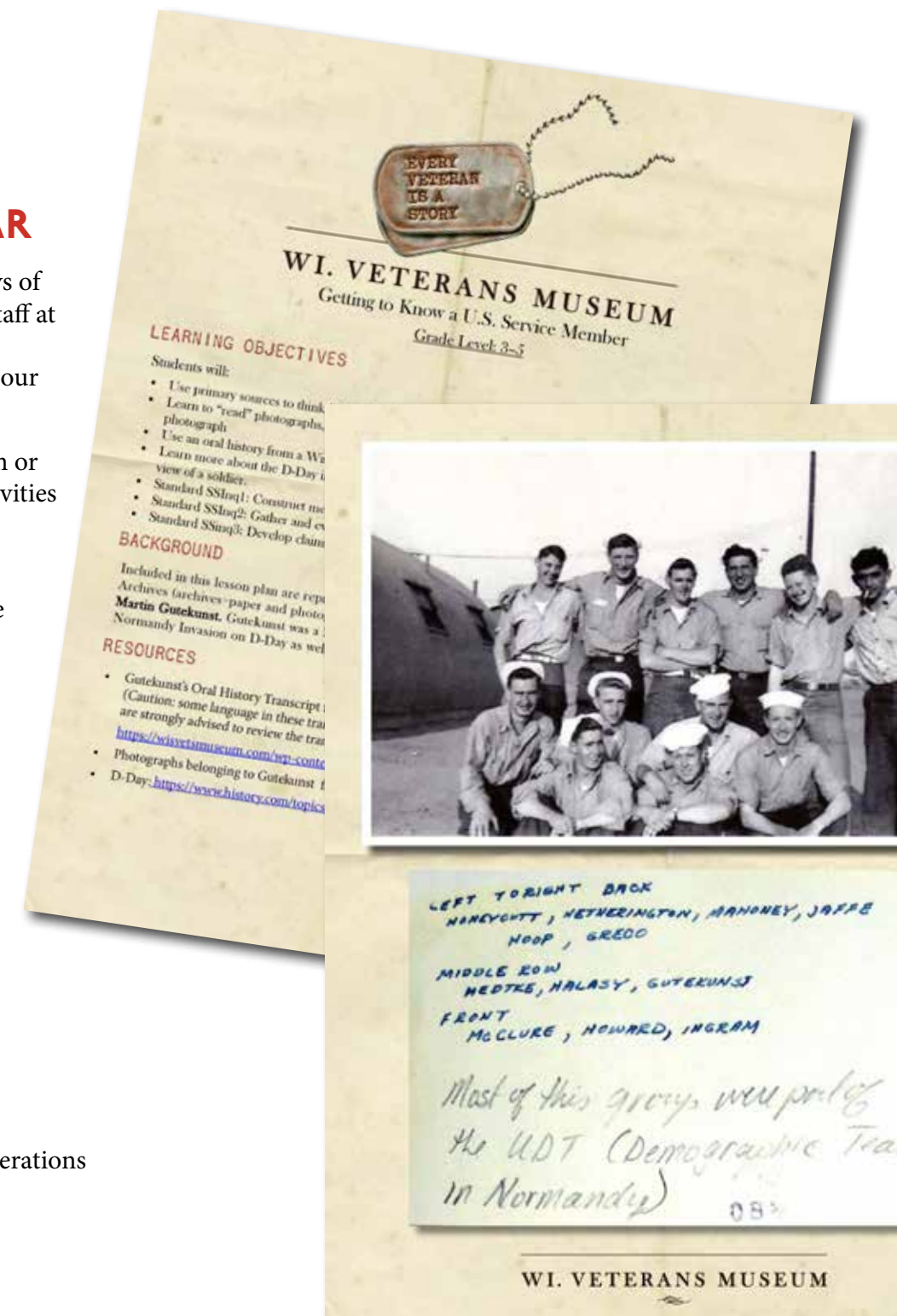
Every veteran has a story. Share your story so we can preserve it for generations to come.

## SCHOOL LOOKS DIFFERENT THIS YEAR

Everyone has had to adapt to new ways of learning and teaching. Likewise, the staff at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum has revamped how we share the stories of our Wisconsin veterans.

Visit our website, [wisvetsmuseum.com](http://wisvetsmuseum.com) or our YouTube channel for learning activities such as these:

- Lesson plans for grades 3-12
  - » Getting to Know a U.S. Service Member
  - » Interpreting Artifacts
  - » Untold Stories
- Virtual Tours of the Museum
  - » History of the Museum
  - » About Our UH-1 Helicopter
  - » History of the USS Wisconsin
  - » The Art of Harold F. Schmitz
- Curator Conversations
  - » The End of WWII
  - » Korean War Armistice
  - » The Battle of Gettysburg
  - » Behind the Scene of a Museum Exhibition
- How to Conduct Oral Histories
- Behind the Scenes of Museum Operations



### VETERANS DAY OBSERVANCE IDEA

The "Getting to Know a U.S. Service Member" is just one of the lesson plans available for educators to download from [wisvetsmuseum.com](http://wisvetsmuseum.com)





## VIRTUAL TOUR LAUNCHING OCTOBER 15 @ [MadisonCemeteryTours.com](https://MadisonCemeteryTours.com)

Due to the health and safety guidelines instituted by the Dane County Public Health Department and the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services, cemetery tours this year will be different. Although we are unable to offer in-person tours, this change has not deterred the museum staff from telling the stories of our veterans and our community through a different medium. In place of in-person tours, we will present a 360-degree virtual tour of the cemetery complete with video of professional actors and museum staff telling the stories from the far corners of this historic place.

Since 1998, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum has shared the rich history of Wisconsin and its veterans through the scenic and somber landscape of Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison. The Talking Spirits: Forest Hill

Cemetery Tours have been an annual highlight for schools from across the state, as well as an anticipated event for the general public.

Typically held during the first weekend of October, these tours feature an abundance of Wisconsin history, short vignettes that bring to life influential figures of the past, and expert tour guides conducting groups through one of Madison's most beautiful public parks. Attendees leave with a unique perspective on events and people that have shaped the history of Wisconsin.

The virtual tours will be available October 15<sup>th</sup> at [MadisonCemeteryTours.com](https://MadisonCemeteryTours.com)

By Erik Wright  
Education Specialist

### Thomas 'Bud' Truax

An athlete who lettered in golf at the University of Wisconsin while studying Economics, 'Bud' Truax was an unlikely candidate to be an Army Air Corps aviator. Nevertheless, he became one of their prized flyers.

### Hettie Pierce

Born into slavery in 1829, Hettie Starks worked the Gold Point plantation in Louisiana. After Emancipation, her family moved frequently to avoid lynch mobs. She settled in Madison and was known as its oldest resident.



### Harry Lovejoy

Harry Lovejoy fought in two wars and was wounded in both. During the War with Mexico, he was shot in the leg at the campaign in Puebla. While setting up a defensive position near Atlanta during the Civil War, he was shot numerous times. One bullet passed straight through his skull and he was left for dead.



### John Betz

John Betz served in the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment and the Veterans Reserve Corps during the Civil War. Although he had never been in the artillery, John was assigned to help fire a celebratory cannon on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1871. It was an honor and a curse.

*Thanks to our generous sponsors, you can access the tour beginning October 15th at [MadisonCemeteryTours.com](https://MadisonCemeteryTours.com)*



This project is supported by Dane County Arts with additional funds from the Endres Mfg. Company Foundation, The Evjue Foundation, Inc., charitable arm of The Capital Times, the W. Jerome Frautschi Foundation, and the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation. This project is also funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, with funds from the National Endowment for Humanities and the State of Wisconsin. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Wisconsin Humanities Council supports and creates programs that use history, culture, and discussion to strengthen community life for everyone in Wisconsin. This production was costumed in part with the assistance of Children's Theater of Madison and the Madison Arts Production Center.



# EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN DEFENSE

By: Russell Horton  
Reference Archivist

Among the many freedoms that our men and women in the military fight to preserve is the right to vote. Dating back to the Civil War, active-duty personnel have exercised that right at home and abroad. The collections of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) contain many examples of Wisconsin service people exercising their right to vote from afar. Acknowledging the high regard in which our servicemembers hold the right to vote reminds us of how important it is to ensure every voice is heard in elections.

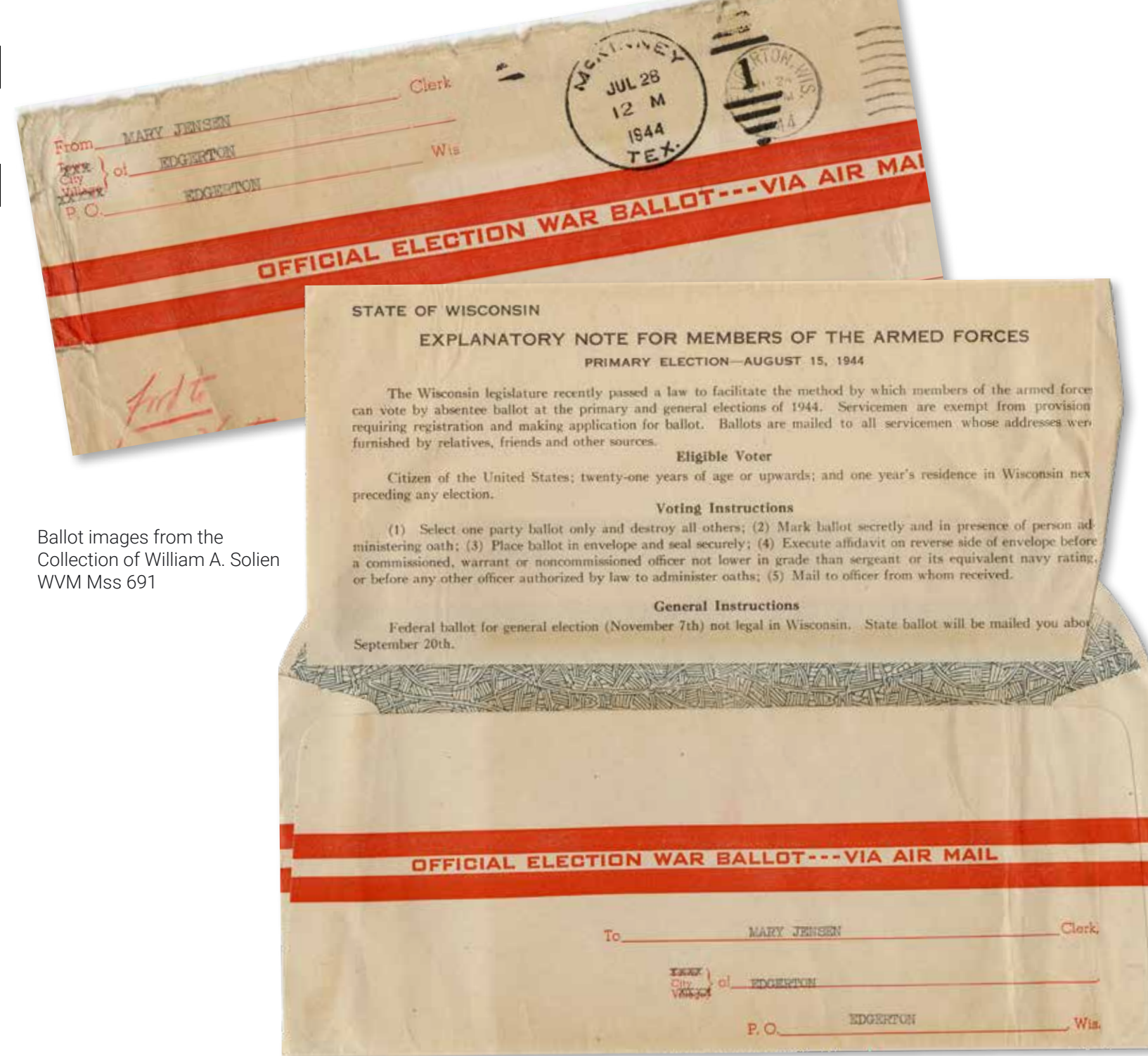
The presidential election of 1864 was of immense importance to the Wisconsin soldiers serving in the Civil War. While re-electing Abraham Lincoln would mean a continuation of the war and restoring the Union, the election of his opponent, George McClellan, would mean a negotiated peace and formal recognition of the Confederacy as a separate nation. William Goodhue, a member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Infantry from Brodhead, remembered the election in his memoirs.

*"Wisconsin troops were allowed to cast a legal vote in the field and the votes thus cast were counted in the State election. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Infantry Veteran Volunteers voted in Atlanta, Georgia, on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1864, with the following result: For Lincoln 324. For McClellan 21."*

Albert Striegl, a Rock County, Wisconsin native, was drafted into the Army in February 1918 and served overseas with the 26<sup>th</sup> Engineers during World War I. He felt so strongly about being able to vote in the 1918 elections that he took detailed notes on the state statutes regarding absentee voting. Toward the end of his notes, he wrote,

*"Ballot to be marked in presence of, but marking unseen by, officer who can administer oath."*

Image of page from "Some Experiences of a Soldier and Engineer" by William F. Goodhue  
WVM Mss 236



Ballot images from the  
Collection of William A. Solien  
WVM Mss 691

World War II scattered Wisconsin service people across the globe, but still they voted. Wilbur Berget, a Gratiot, Wisconsin native, served in Europe with the 12<sup>th</sup> Armored Division. From France, he wrote to his parents about the presidential election on November 1, 1944. "I received my ballot, voted and sent it right back... I mailed it on 30 September." WVM has an official war ballot application card from South Milwaukee sailor George Wanserski and ballots for the state's 1944 gubernatorial primary from Stoughton native William Solien, who served stateside at Camp Wolters, Texas.

Jerry Paul, a Vietnam-era Marine helicopter crew chief from Sparta, Wisconsin, summed it up best in a letter he wrote to his parents from Phu Bai, Vietnam on November 12, 1966. He wrote, "Well another birthday and another birthday of the Corps (10 Nov 1775). One more year and I can vote. The privilege I'm over here fighting for."

The ability to vote without being present at the polling place has been a cherished right of Wisconsin veterans for over 150 years.





**HELEN GURKOW**, a Lancaster, Wisconsin native, received a Ph.D. from UW-Madison, and an M.D. from Marquette University. She was the first woman to do a surgical residency at Madison General Hospital. She responded to a call for doctors in the Wisconsin National Guard in 1979 and served with the 147<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment and the 13<sup>th</sup> Evacuation Hospital. Gurkow and her unit were called up and sent to the Middle East in 1991 as part of Operation Desert Storm. She treated conditions ranging from asthma and sprains to severe combat injuries and attempted to treat Iraqi POWs, who generally refused to be seen by a female doctor. Gurkow suffered a hip injury as a result of a SCUD missile attack before returning to Wisconsin at the end of the conflict. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum proudly preserves her story through an oral history interview and photographs.



EVERY VETERAN IS A STORY

EVERY VETERAN IS A STORY



**ANGUS "GUS" LOOKAROUND**, a member of the Menominee Nation, was born in Keshena, Wisconsin in 1893. He was a star football player at Carlisle Indian Industrial School. When the US entered World War I, he was teaching music at the Tomah Indian Industrial School in Wisconsin. Lookaround volunteered for service in the Navy and served as a musician aboard the USS New Hampshire, a pre-dreadnaught battleship. He traveled to Paris in 1927 as a member of the American Legion band for their national convention held there. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum proudly preserves his story through his service record and his passport to the 1927 American Legion Convention in Paris.



**RACHELLE HALASKA** made contributions to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Oral History Program that will be difficult to match. She took us places that we have not been before as the project lead for the LGBTQA+ Do Tell project and I Am Not Invisible project. Even more miraculously, she was able to steer these projects safely into harbor, with limited guidance and workforce. Her credits also include working on the Real Life Library and Voices from Afghanistan oral history projects.

Rachelle had the courage to ask almost-strangers questions that opened doors into places less-found and that would otherwise be lost to the sands of history. She also had the patience to ask and then wait for the full answer, a skill not every interviewer has. Rachelle had the perseverance to ask the tough questions of veterans, knowing that the result could be difficult material even for her as a combat veteran, and the presence of mind to ask an appropriate follow up question.



Before working at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Rachelle served as a medic in the Army from August 2007 to August 2011. Her service included two tours in Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. She started active duty soon after her high school graduation and trained at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and in San Antonio, Texas.

She was then transferred to Fort Hood, Texas, with C Company, 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, for deployment to Iraq. In 2008, the 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team was then reassigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division.

She spent one month in Kuwait. In Iraq, Rachelle was attached to the 1/9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Squadron and the burn

clinic at Camp Scania where she treated locals and soldiers with injuries. She later moved on to Tallil Air Base and then Forward Operating Base (FOB) Hunter. Halaska had the opportunity to fly in a Chinook over Iraq and visit the ancient city of Tallil near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and got a tour of the Ziggurat pyramid.

Arriving back in the United States, Rachelle returned to Fort Hood. She was there on November 5, 2009, when a soldier killed thirteen others who were in-processing. She was on-base for President Obama's visit to the post soon after.

On her second tour in Mosul, Iraq at FOB Marez/FOB Diamondback that started around September 2010, Rachelle trained for potential rollovers in a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle. On November 29, 2010, she was in a MRAP that rolled multiple times. Although she had her harness on, her helmet came off and she suffered a concussion, as well as other injuries. After eight months, Rachelle returned to the United States for out-processing.

After discharge, Rachelle came back to Wisconsin and continued her education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and earned her bachelor's degree in 2015. In 2019, while serving as the oral history program assistant, Rachelle earned her master's in anthropology and graduate certificate in museum studies at UW-Milwaukee.

# In Memoriam

## Tony Brewster

One of the great joys of running the education program at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum was watching school groups from all across Wisconsin interact with the veterans who made up the docent corps of the museum. Each docent gave a unique and personal perspective of living through and participating in the history displayed in the exhibits. But, there was no docent who gave a more unique tour than Francis Anthony "Tony" Brewster. Whether he was assigning kids to take "point" and "rear" positions in their line, inquiring if they had good dry socks on to tackle the day, or speaking of his love of high school athletics, it was clear that he adored interacting with the students and they loved listening to him.

Tony passed away in July at the age of 91. This man was a force of nature. He would walk into the museum and burst out singing a show tune in his booming signature voice. It would immediately brighten your day. If he really liked you, and thought you were putting in the work, he would give you a Werther's Original. Receiving one always felt like a prize to my co-workers and me. Before every tour, Tony spoke to the kids about how important getting a good education was for their future, and made sure to thank the teachers and parents in the group for all their hard work instilling knowledge into the students.



Brewster with the youngest of his seven daughters

"Uncle Tony," as he was often referred to since his beloved nephew Bill was our co-worker and friend, left a mark on each of us. When we found out he passed away, we all shared our memories and all those memories were full of joy and laughter. Tony had an opinion on almost everything and happily shared them with us. We loved when he would stick around after his tours and talk Badger football, current events, or give us advice. While he retired as a docent a few years back, he gave hundreds of tours for over a decade helping to teach students that war was more than battles, it was people. He loved his country deeply, took great pride in his service, and liked to remind us all "Once a Marine, always a Marine!" Semper Fi, Tony Brewster!

Submitted by Jen Kollath, archivist at Temple Israel Memphis and former education specialist at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum



# A big thank you to everyone,

especially to all our sponsors, for making our 16<sup>th</sup> Annual WVMF Golf Outing, sponsored by WPS Health Solutions another huge success, especially given the restrictions we had on the course. Every year we are amazed by the strong support we receive from our golfers and sponsors.

We had 98 golfers come out for the event and together through registrations, donations, and sponsorships we were able to raise \$24,000. The funds from the golf outing this year will provide critical financial resources for new exhibits, education programming, and acquisitions.

We are so grateful for your support and extend a heart-felt thank you for your participation in our annual fundraiser. Thank you for supporting the telling of Wisconsin veterans' stories.

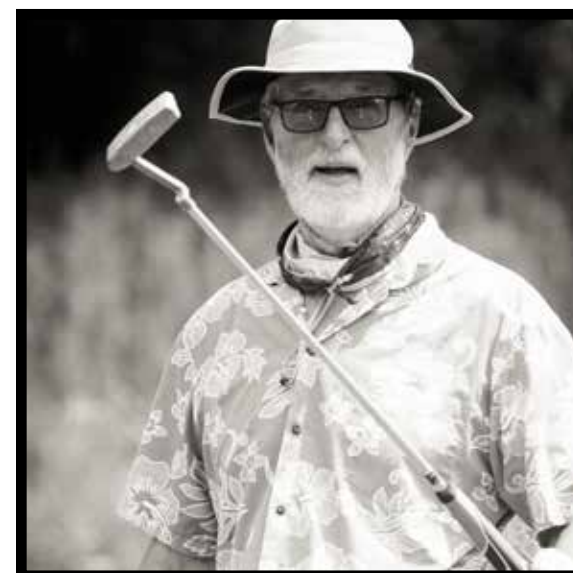
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- Proud, Dan  
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Mark Your Calendar

- OCT

05

VIRTUAL

Curator Conversations

Noon–1:00 PM

Join the Archives Department at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and find out how WVM staff can help you learn more about the veterans in your family. This is a free virtual panel discussion presented via Zoom.
- OCT

20

VIRTUAL

Trivia Night

7:00–8:00 PM

Test your historical knowledge. Sign up as individuals or as a team and go head to head with players from around the state. Four trivia rounds will focus on topics associated with Wisconsin military history, including history, pop culture, names and places, events, and fun facts. This is a free event presented via Zoom and Kahoot!
- OCT

30

VIRTUAL

Movie Night Virtual Discussion: Apocalypse Now

7:00–8:00 PM

Your mission is to watch *Apocalypse Now* while thinking about the discussion questions we will provide you. On October 30, at 7:00 pm we'll meet via Zoom for a discussion led by museum staff. We'll cover themes such as conflict, politics, pop culture, the military, and film.

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TOGETHER SAFELY ONCE  
AGAIN, MUSEUM  
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- NOV

17

VIRTUAL

Trivia Night

7:00–8:00 PM

Test your historical knowledge. Sign up as individuals or as a team and go head to head with players from around the state. Four trivia rounds will focus on topics associated with Wisconsin military history, including history, pop culture, names and places, events, and fun facts. This is a free event presented via Zoom and Kahoot!
- NOV

19

VIRTUAL

Mess Night: Honoring the Ho-Chunk Warrior

7:00–8:00 PM

While we can't all get together for a fantastic meal yet, we can welcome Professor Tom Jones from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Professor Jones will be speaking about his experiences with the Memorial Day celebrations of Ho-Chunk Veterans, a project that he has been involved with since 1998. Professor Jones is a Ho-Chunk member and his specialty lies in the photographic documenting of Native American Warriors, which he connects to their pride in home, family, and community. He joins a growing group of Native photographers who are expanding the portrayals of Native people with insider perspectives. This is a free event presented via Zoom.
- NOV

27

VIRTUAL

Movie Night Virtual Discussion: 1917

7:00–8:00 PM

Your mission is to watch *1917* while thinking about the discussion questions we will provide you. On Nov. 27, at 7:00 pm we'll all meet via Zoom for a discussion led by museum staff. We will cover themes such as conflict, politics, pop culture, the military, and film.



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\* Mr. Szymczak, of St. Francis, served in Company H of the 327<sup>th</sup> Glider Regiment first as part of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and later the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. He participated in the Normandy Campaign and Operation Market Garden earning the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and the French Croix de Guerre. He continued to serve in the US Army during the Korean War until he retired in 1961.

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