



# THE BUGLE



Newsletter of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation

## Mustang, Top Candidate for Best Fighter of World War II

*Richard H. Zeitlin*

In April 1940, British officials toured American aircraft plants seeking to purchase combat planes they could use to help defeat the Nazis. Engineers of the North American Aircraft Company in California suggested ideas for a new fighter plane that had yet to be designed. The British liked what they heard, and an initial design for a sleek low wing fighter was completed by North American engineers in twenty four hours. The British ordered 320 new planes, insisting that they be made available in record time.

The North American Company had its first version of the experimental fighter, the NA-73, 120 days later. Test flights were completed several months afterward. Innovative features such as very light weight as well as streamlining to improve speed and range were incorporated. The radiator functioned to increase speed rather than drag. The wing shape conformed to the latest aeronautical theory. In short, the new aircraft represented a significant breakthrough in fighter technology. The British nicknamed the new plane "Mustang" and ordered another 300. By the end of October 1941, Mustangs began reaching England and at altitudes lower than 15,000 ft. they proved to be faster and better performing than the famed British Spitfire.

Combat operations began immediately. British experience led to the mating of the Mustang airframe with the Rolls-Royce engine used in the Spitfire. This modification greatly improved Mustang performance at high altitudes and led to its adaptation as a long-range high-speed escort fighter/interceptor. The United States soon began to order Mustangs, convinced that the speedy little plane might actually turn out to be a key element in establishing air superiority over hostile skies. Rolls-Royce powered

Mustangs went on to become the best overall fighter aircraft of World War II. More than 15,000 were produced.

Americans modified the Mustang to suit the aircraft's major purpose of long range bomber escort. Mustangs eventually could escort American heavy bombers all

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George Doersch and the "Ole' Goat," England, 1944.

by  
Mark D.  
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# CORNER

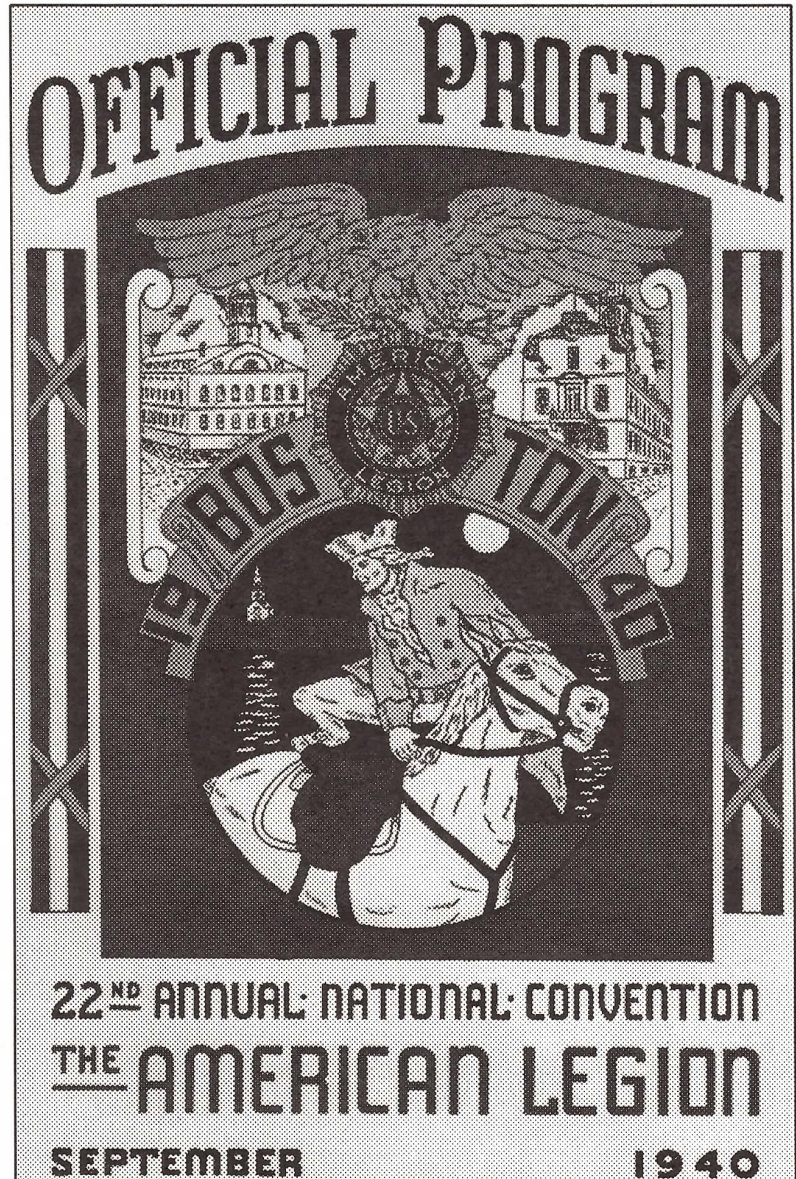
## ARCHIVIST'S

**O**n March 1, 1995, Mt. Horeb resident James R. Zeasman, a veteran of occupation duty in Korea following World War II, became the fiftieth state veteran interviewed by the Wisconsin Veterans Oral History Project. As of April 1, we had interviewed 59 Wisconsin veterans since the project began in June 1994, and 20 since January 1. Most interview subjects have been World War II veterans, but we have also spoken with servicemen and women from the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and even one who served in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia.

The Wisconsin Veterans Records Location Project has thus far yielded good results. Several agencies have reported their veteran-related manuscripts to us for entry into our database of Wisconsin veterans' archival collections. In particular, I'd like to thank Larry Danielson for showing me around the Wisconsin VFW records he maintains at their state headquarters. The museum has received many donations of organizational records as a result of the project. Special thanks go to Richard Isely of Kiel for donating records from American Legion Post 99, and Jim Reininger of Sun Prairie for rounding up Dane County American Legion records. The

records project is ongoing, so if you know of potential donations of veterans organization records, please contact me at the museum.

Archival donations seem to come in daily, and I thank all those who have provided us with manuscripts since January. Among the most historically significant new accessions include the Civil War letters of William N. Perry of the 44th Wisconsin Infantry (donated by Gwen P. Duffy of Troy, OH) and Vietnam War letters of Alan and Steven Piotrowski (donated by the latter, of Madison). Finally, the Kraak family of Madison donated the second installment of the Matthias J. Lynaugh papers. According to Mrs. Kraak, About half of Lynaugh's papers have been deposited thus far, and the second half will arrive this summer.



One of the many items of veterans' memorabilia found in the papers of Matthias J. Lynaugh, a World War I veteran from Madison.

# Curator's Chronicles

*by William Brewster, Curator of Collections*

In 1945 the United States Army Air Force dropped nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Japanese government sued for peace days after the second attack. It will never be known if the dropping of these two bombs resulted in the Japanese surrender, nor will it be known if an eventual invasion of the Japanese home islands would have resulted in the 1 million casualties estimated by the allied commanders. What is known is that the atomic bomb was technologically different from any weapon previously employed. The destructive force and after effects of radiation set atomic weapons apart from those using conventional explosives and ushered in a new era.

Welcome to the curator's chronicles. In this 50th anniversary year of the end of World War II, the National Museum of Air and Space Technology planned to commemorate the final act of the war with an exhibit featuring the restored B-29 Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. In addition to the restored aircraft, 10,000 square feet of supporting exhibits were planned to illustrate the development, implementation, and effects of "The Bomb." I'm sure that the reader is aware of the controversy surrounding the "historical" text that was developed to accompany this exhibit. Apparently it suggested that the Japanese were not responsible for the actions and direction their nation took during World War II and that the dropping of the atomic bombs was an unnecessary act resulting from an American desire for revenge. The furor that arose

after the content of this proposed text became public resulted in the elimination of the entire exhibit with the single exception of the Enola Gay.

In previous articles I have emphasized the importance of maintaining the historical integrity of the objects that are acquired by museums. In addition to collecting objects, museum's also bear the responsibility of developing exhibits that present materials in a historically accurate manner. Certainly museums with anthropological collections can argue that there is room for the broad interpretation of materials, especially when little or no historical information exists. A history museum on the other hand can present different points of view from the participants of a historical event and the facts of that event, but the staff should not assume the sole responsibility of reinterpreting that event. In this time when a "politically correct" presentation is often desired, it is the responsibility of historical museums to maintain an unbiased presentation that portrays events as they happened. If the staff at the Air and Space Museum had presented the historical facts and observations of the participants, both American and Japanese, I doubt that such a controversy would have arisen. Instead, the meaning and results of this momentous event will be left for another generation to interpret.

Until next time.....

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the way to Germany and, at the same time, act as air superiority interceptors. The early P-51B was replaced by the P-51D, which became the classic American fighter aircraft and most widely produced Mustang variant. The Mustang played a key role in both Europe and the Pacific.

While Dick Bong became the highest scoring allied ace, and America's Ace of Aces, flying the P-38 Lightning, most enemy aircraft during World War II were downed by Mustangs and the Navy's Hellcat fighter. Wisconsin's second top scoring ace flew the P-51. George Doersch grew up in Seymour, not far from

Green Bay. He served in the Wisconsin National Guard and volunteered for the Army Air Corps when the United States entered the war. Doersch was sent to England as a member of the Eighth Air Force, and was credited with downing 11 enemy aircraft during two tours of duty. Doersch's P-51 was nicknamed "Ole' Goat," and a full sized replica of that aircraft is displayed at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. George Doersch is presently retired and living in the Washington, D.C. area. He visited Madison during the Grand Opening of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum on June 6, 1993 and was interviewed by the local news media.

# MUSEUM INSTALLS NEW CIVIL WAR BATTLE FLAG EXHIBIT

*by Lynnette Wolfe, Operations Manager*

A new changing exhibit featuring conserved Civil War battle flags from Wisconsin units has opened at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

“The changing battle flag exhibit will allow the visitors to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to view conserved portions of the state’s priceless collection of silk Civil War banners.” says Museum Director Richard Zeitlin. “The 1995 exhibit schedule of banners will prominently feature colors from Wisconsin’s ethnic Civil War regiments, followed in 1996 with flags associated with the state’s Medal of Honor recipients and major battles.”

The flags led more than 91,379 Wisconsin residents to war in battles at Bull Run, Shiloh, Antietam, Perryville, Stone’s River, Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville, Petersburg, Richmond, and countless other Southern towns and hamlets. Although nearly all of the flags accompanying Wisconsin soldiers were returned to the state after the war, 11,000 men did not come back.

State government officials, politicians, military figures, and charitable workers recognized the importance of these flags well before the war ended in 1865. Some people believed that the battle flags symbolized the Union cause: artifacts to be forever associated with the sacrifices to maintain national unity. The flags became relics, emblematic of state and national pride. Even today, 130 years after those momentous events, the flags evoke an emotional response from those who view them.

Since 1865, the flags have been on exhibit at the Wisconsin State Capitol, narrowly escaping destruction in the Capitol fire of 1904. Between 1917 and 1989 the battle flag collection was again placed on display at the Capitol in the G.A.R. Memorial Hall Museum (later renamed the Wisconsin Veterans Museum). In early 1990, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum moved its entire collection into storage until the new facility was completed in 1993.

In 1981, the museum led the initiative to seek permission from the State Legislature to raise matching funds to conserve its 194 tattered banners. Some 110 have been preserved thus far. Many flags show the scars of the hard-fought campaigns of the 1860s, and each silk banner is unique. Individuals interested in contributing to the Wisconsin Battle Flag Conservation Project or to acquire photographs of conserved colors may contact: Richard Zeitlin or Lynnette Wolfe, Wisconsin Veterans Museums, 30 W. Mifflin St., Madison, WI 53703. Tel. 608-266-1680.



Edward P. Blake, carrying the colors of the 24th WI Infantry, c. 1865.

# PERMANENT BOOK WANTS

Many valuable and important historical works are out of print. The following is a list of works sought by the WVM library for its permanent research collection of military and veterans' history:

- Daniels, Roger, *The Bonus March: An Episode of the Great Depression*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971).
- Glasson, William H., *Federal Military Pensions in the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1918).
- Gray, J. Glenn, *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*, (New York: Perennial, 1970).
- Kahn, E.J., Jr., *G.I. Jungle: An American Soldier in Australia and New Guinea*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943).
- Mayo, Lida, *Bloody Buna*, (New York: Doubleday, 1974).
- Minott, Rodney G., *Peerless Patriots: Organized Veterans and the Spirit of Americanism*, (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1962).
- Olson, Keith W., *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1974).
- Robinson, Pat, *The Fight for New Guinea: General Douglas MacArthur's First Offensive*, (New York: Random House, 1943).
- Ross, Davis R.B., *Preparing for Ulysses: Politics and Veterans During World War Two*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).
- Stouffer, Samuel A., *The American Soldier*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949).
- Shukert, Elfrieda Berthiaume and Barbara Smith Scibetta, *War Brides of World War II*, (New York: Penguin, 1988).
- Ward, Stephen R., ed., *The War Generation: Veterans of the First World War*, (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975).
- Wecter, Dixon, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1944).
- Whalen, Robert Weldon, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War, 1914-1939*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).
- White, Osmar, *Green Armor*, (New York: Norton and Company, 1945).
- Willenz, June A., *Women Veterans: America's Forgotten Heroines*, (New York: Continuum, 1983).

## Schedule of Civil War Battle Flags

1995:	Jan - Mar	17th Wisconsin Infantry, "Irish Regiment"
	Apr - Jun	15th Wisconsin Infantry, "Norwegian Regiment"
	Jul - Sep	37th Wisconsin Infantry, "Native-American Units"
	Oct - Dec	26th Wisconsin Infantry, "German Regiment"
1996:	Jan - Mar	Medal of Honor Recipient: Mac Arthur, Arthur Jr., 24th Wisconsin Infantry
	Apr - Jun	Medal of Honor Recipient: Murphy, Dennis J.F., 14th Wisconsin Infantry
	Jul - Sep	Medal of Honor Recipient: Durham, John S., 1st Wisconsin Infantry
	Oct - Dec	Gettysburg Colors: 2nd Wisconsin Infantry
1997:	Jan - Feb	Gettysburg Colors: 6th Wisconsin Infantry
	Mar - Apr	Gettysburg Colors: 7th Wisconsin Infantry
	May - Jun	Gettysburg Colors: 3rd Wisconsin Infantry
	Jul - Aug	Gettysburg Colors: 5th Wisconsin Infantry
	Sep - Oct	Gettysburg Colors: 26th Wisconsin Infantry

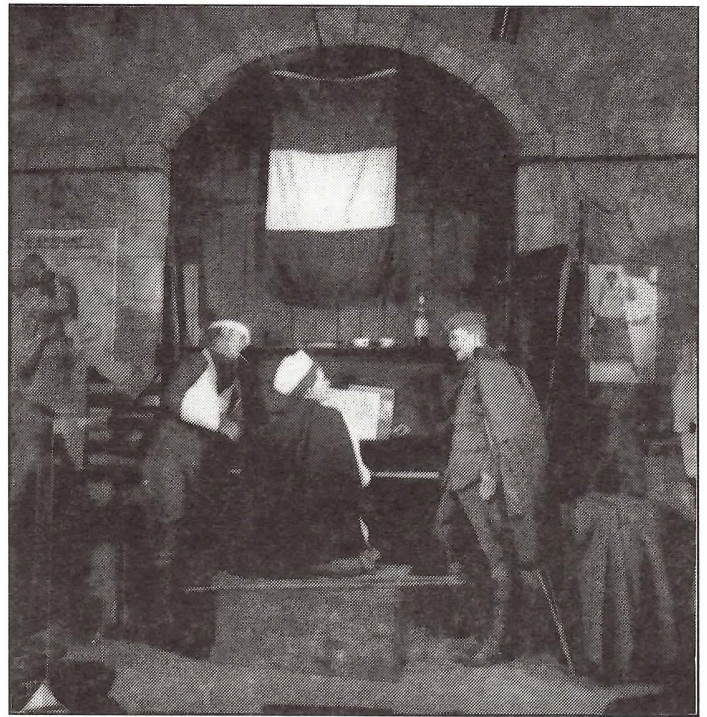
# Museum Postcards Available

*by Erin Landa, Store Manager*

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum Gift Shop is pleased to announce that as of May 1st, we will have postcards of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. The exhibits that will be showcased on the postcards are the Civil War's Antietam diorama, the World War I Armistice scene, World War II's Battle of the Bulge, and the Vietnam War exhibit.

We invite you to stop by the Gift Shop to see the new postcards or to call us at 608/267-1799 to place a mail order. The postcards will be priced at 25 cents a piece.

We would like to extend a special thanks to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation for their generous donation, which allowed us to produce the postcards.



WVM's World War I Armistice scene; one of the images available soon on postcard.

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