

★★ THE BUGGLE ★★

Volume IV:I

Newsletter of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation

March 1997

Museum Acquires Diary of General Charles King

by Richard H. Zeitlin

State Senator Robert Jauch donated a valuable manuscript diary written by General Charles King to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in February of 1994. The diary was in the possession of one of his ancestors. This donation is an important find since the diary is now available for research and public use. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum gratefully acknowledges Senator Jauch's contribution.

General Charles King played an interesting part in national and state military affairs during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. King had a remarkably lengthy career. He served in five wars—the Civil War, Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, Philippine Insurrection, and World War I. By the time he retired in 1922, King had amassed seventy years of active duty—the longest term of military service in American history. In addition, King played an active role in organizing and reforming the Wisconsin National Guard, became the first Professor of Military Science at the University of Wisconsin, and contributed time and energy to political matters as an ally of Governor Jeremiah M. Rusk. King's enduring importance, however, came as a result of his tremendous literary outpourings.

King authored sixty books and at least 250 articles. His writings deal with life in the frontier army and related human interest stories. King's *Campaigning with Crook*, published in 1890, remains the classic account of the Apache Wars. Historians sometimes rely on King's books for their own recent works.

Charles King, 1907.



Born in Albany, New York into a wealthy and well-known family, Charles came to Milwaukee in 1845. His father Rufus King established the *Milwaukee Sentinel* and turned the journal into a leading anti-slavery publication and supporter of the infant Republican Party. When Rufus King went off to the Civil War, Charles went to West Point. He became an artillery officer and remained in the Army after the Civil War.

King transferred to the Fifth U.S. Cavalry in 1871. The Fifth Cavalry was an elite unit and King spent the next eight years actively campaigning against various Indian groups. He met Buffalo Bill Cody when the latter scouted for the regiment in Nebraska. Under the command of General George Crook, the Fifth Cavalry participated in five major engagements against the Apaches. King was wounded twice. In 1876,

King rode against the Sioux and Cheyenne after they defeated General George Custer. The next year, the Fifth Cavalry pursued Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians through Idaho and Montana. Army officials promoted King to captain shortly before discharging him for wounds in 1879.

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Curator's Chronicles

by William Brewster

Welcome to the Curator's Chronicles. The new year is upon us and it is time to look at where we have been and where we are going. Taking a cue from our nation's president, I will now present the first annual State of the Collections Address.

For the Veterans Museum collection, 1996 was an exceptional year. It was a year of unprecedented growth with the transfer of a large portion of the State Historical Society's military collection and the continuing receipt of historically significant private donations. The dream of a temporary exhibits program was realized, and a plan for a new large exhibit in the changing gallery hall was started. It was also a year of improvement for the gallery at King—new lighting, fresh paint, and carpeted walls.

The transfer of objects from the Historical Society has taken several years and thousands of hours of work. In 1996, over one thousand objects found their new home at the Veterans Museum where they were duly cataloged and stored. We expect continued cooperation between the parties involved.

The objects donated to the Veterans Museum during 1996 represent the diversity of time periods, personal experience, and gender that is crucial to our historical mission. We were fortunate to receive several objects relating to Wisconsin in the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. It is increasingly difficult to obtain material from these time periods, which makes it all the more unusual to receive multiple donations in a single year. In addition to the 19th century materials, we collected objects from World War I, World War II, and Vietnam.

We look forward to the opening of our new exhibit "They Also Served"

in August, 1997. In 1996, the museum installed two temporary exhibits—the Civil War watercolors of John Gaddis and the World War II drawings by Santos Zingale. "Zingale: Artist Turned Sailor," was installed at King creating a traveling component to our exhibit program. New exhibits present new material to the public, generating interest for first-time visitors and encouraging the return of old friends.



Randy Klemm, curatorial assistant, processes a Civil War uniform sash, one of the objects transferred to the museum by the State Historical Society.

Work continues on the King gallery as we move toward the goal of all new exhibits. The first step in this process involved upgrading the physical components in the gallery and storage areas. Now that this work is near completion, we look toward the creation of new exhibits covering Wisconsin's military past as well as the history of the veterans' home.

I would like to enlist your help for the coming year. We are still in need of *identified* field material from Vietnam. Tropical combat uniforms and equipment are very difficult to obtain, and so I ask you to point Vietnam veterans in our direction before

those items gathering dust in the attic end up in the landfill. We can only preserve what we have, and what we have creates the exhibits. Yes, 1996 was a good year, and we all must work to make 1997 even better. Until next time, thank you for your effort and support.

Museum Offices Move Upstairs

On January 28, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's administrative offices moved from the basement to an office suite on the second floor of the 30 West Mifflin building. The offices of the museum director, Richard Zeitlin; operations manager, Lynnette Wolfe; curator of programs, Karen Gulbrandsen; curator of collections, William Brewster; and registrar, Jason Josvai are now located in Suite 200. Erin Landa, the museum sales shop manager will move to the second floor when space for the store inventory becomes available.

The 1,769 square feet being evacuated in the basement will be transformed into a research center with a public reading room for the library and archives. Mark Van Ells, the museum's archivist/historian, will manage the new research center. And, the basement offices will house more storage units to maintain the large numbers of artifacts and other materials the museum has received.

The museum would like to acquire the remainder of the second floor to create a large meeting room to accommodate programs for schoolchildren, veterans' organizations, and others. The plan is well advanced. However, the start of construction relates to the state's capital budget process.

King returned to Wisconsin where he joined the staff of the University of Wisconsin as a drill instructor. He worked with the adjutant general's office to upgrade the state's National Guard system, particularly in the area of training. Governor Rusk, King's patron, received national acclaim when Wisconsin Guard members suppressed a violent labor riot in Milwaukee during 1886.

Returning to active duty in 1898, King went to the Philippines. He served in action against the insurrectionist natives during 1899 and was commended for bravery. King returned again to his native Wisconsin at the turn of the century.

Federal reforms of the nation's military system and the role of the National Guard occupied General King for the next decade. The Wisconsin National Guard became a nationally respected model of efficiency during these years and the enviable record established by the Thirty-second Division (which was created from the Wisconsin Guard) in World War I furthered King's standing in Guard circles. Although 79 years of age, King remained on duty until the end of the World War. He retired in 1922 and died in 1933. The village of King in west-central Wisconsin was named in his honor.



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Excerpts from the Charles King Diary

Feb. 16, 1898

News of the destruction of the *Maine* in Havana harbor at once....

Feb. 17, 1898

Letter from Boardman promising to do all in his power to ensure me the command of the first regiment from Wisconsin in event of war....

Feb. 20, 1898

I had conference with Gov. Scofield at Pfister concerning command of the first regiment to be sent from Wisconsin in event of war....

March 12, 1898

Met the Governor at Pfister & he renewed his promise about the commission....

March 28, 1898

No excitement over the *Maine* report....

March 31, 1898

Saw Laird & Turner. Told latter in confidence about mobilization of Nat. Guard being probable....

April 2, 1898

Ominous news in papers. War likely....

April 9, 1898

Evening Journal announces that I am to command Wis. Guard in the event of War—the dispatch hails from Madison.

April 12, 1898

Saw Boardman & the Governor at once. The latter much disturbed by War prospect as he is emphatically a peace man. In afternoon we drove to Armory. President Adams met us. The inspection of the regt. was made by Solliday. Then with [?] & Solliday I served as judge of competition drills.

April 13, 1898

Several letters All applications for service with me in case of War & I may not get a command: many letters to answer....

April 15, 1898

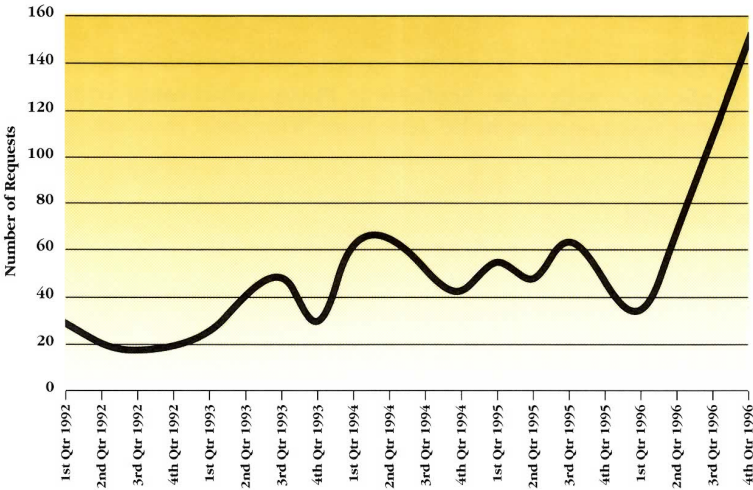
Papers full of new sensations....Army ordered to the South....

April 16, 1898

Orders in detail concerning Army. Gen. Merritt given no command in south. Letters from him & others....Evening long talks with Guardsman—with Dr. Brown etc. Home midnight. News from Senate at 10. War.

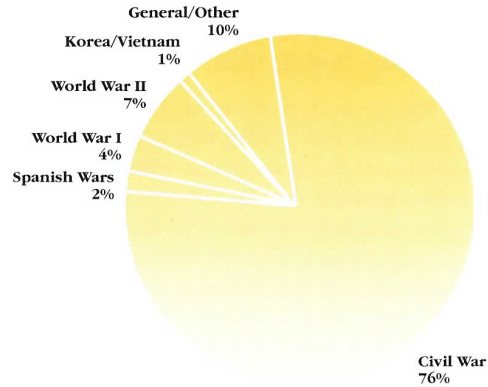
It's a cliché that "a picture is worth a thousand words," but it is often true. In that spirit, rather than use a thousand words to describe some of the activities and trends in the WVM library and archives during 1996, I have decided to provide some charts instead. Thanks to all who helped make 1996 another successful year for the museum's archives and library program. An even busier 1997 is anticipated.

Information Requests (Answered), 1992-1996



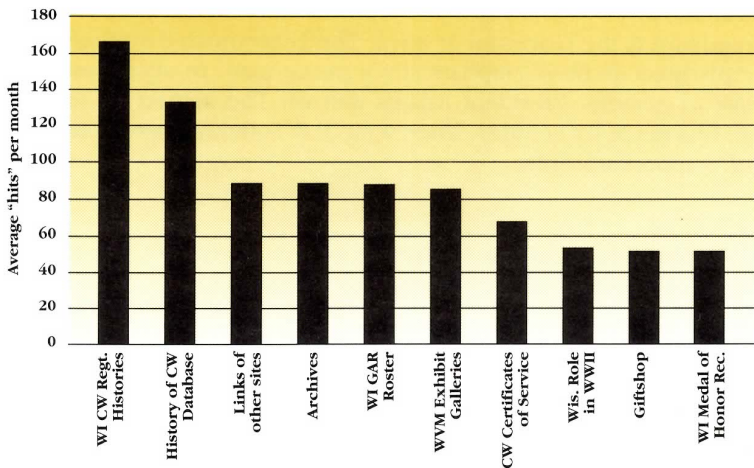
Requests for historical information rose dramatically in 1996. As this chart shows, much of the increase occurred in the second half of the year. This was due largely, I suspect, to the museum's presence on the Internet. By the end of the year, more than half of all information requests came via electronic mail.

Information Requests by Topic, 1992-1996



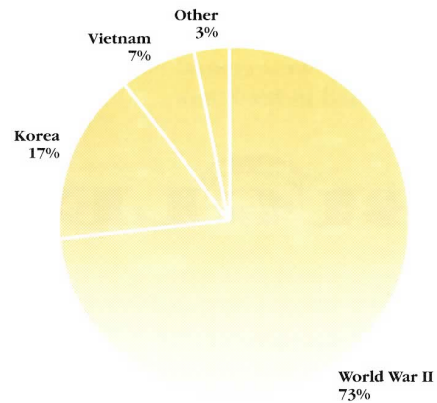
The main interest of researchers contacting the museum is the Civil War. Civil War-related requests made up more than three fourths of all information requests over the past five years.

Information Requests by Topic, 1992-1996



The museum has had its World Wide Web site for just over a year now. The following chart shows the most popular sections of our web site, based on the average monthly visitation to a particular page. The "homepage," or main contact point, is not included on this chart. As the chart once again indicates, interest in Civil War topics predominates.

Oral History Interviews, by Era



The Wisconsin Veterans Oral History Project continued in 1996. By the end of the year, the museum had interviewed more than 160 veterans. World War II veterans continued to dominate, but efforts to recruit more Korean War veterans have been paying off.

What is a Registrar?

by Jason Josvai

Many people ask me what does a Registrar do? As the Registrar for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, I maintain the paper work generated by the museum's collection. Included are: temporary receipts/deed of gifts for incoming donations, short term/long-term loans, insurance forms, shipping/receiving, inventory, and monitoring climate control levels, including temperature, relative humidity, and light.

Every month, I schedule a collections meeting with the director, the operations manager, the curators, and the archivist to review recent donations to the museum. Space restrictions have prompted the museum to establish criterion for acceptance of artifacts into the museum's collection. Each piece has to be identified to a person who lives or has lived in the state of Wisconsin, and each piece should be unique as well as the best example of its type. When a donation is accepted, I assign it a permanent accessions number so that it is always

identified to the museum and can be tracked from storage, to display, to loan, and back. Next it is photographed, cataloged, and stored. If a donation does not fit within the scope of the museum's collections, we will return it to the donor. If the donor does not want the item returned, we will send it to another museum or use it for other educational purposes.

In 1996, the museum purchased the collections data system SNAP by Willoughby, a digital camera, and a flat bed scanner to computerize its 22,000 collections records. The museum is also processing the transfer of 5,000 military artifacts from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Both projects will be ongoing for a number of years and could not be done without the help of part-time staff members such as Mike Telzrow, Randy Klemm, and George Habriga. They are an important part of the curatorial/registrarial team and I wish to recognize their contributions.



Re-enactors from the Wisconsin Volunteers present donations of \$200 towards the museum's program to conserve the Civil War battleflags.

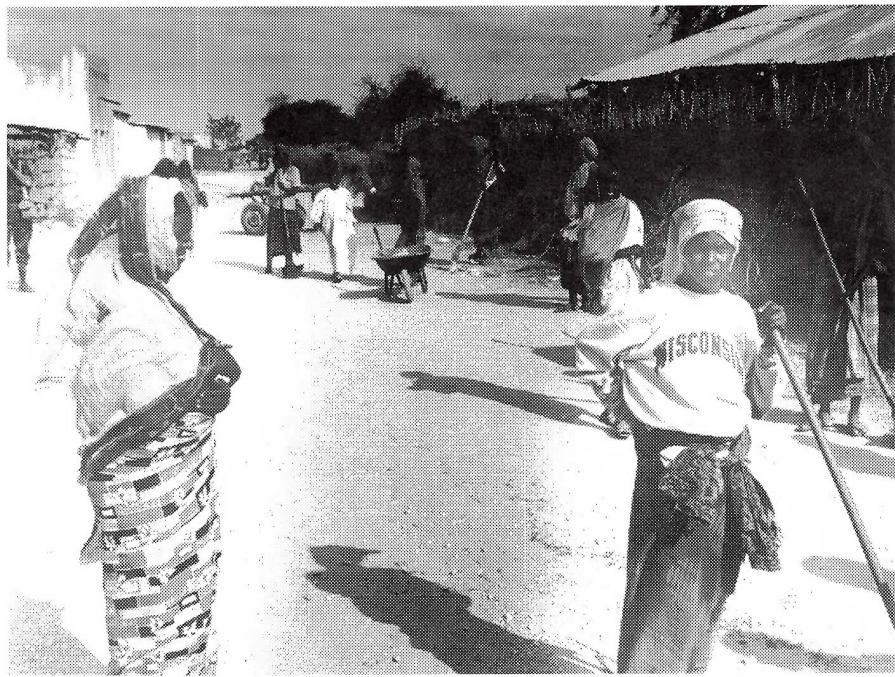
In Memoriam

Frank Freese

Frank Freese, Wisconsin Veterans Museum volunteer, died November 9, 1996. Frank was born in 1922 in New York state. He was a statistician for U.S. Forest Service in Alabama for 31 years, retiring in 1977. He served in World War II starting out in the Army Specialized Training Program and was then placed in the 333rd Infantry Regiment, 84th Division (the "Railsplitters"). Frank was a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge and earned a Silver Star for heroism. Frank began volunteering in 1995 for the Veterans Museum as a tour guide, and he attended many of the museum's programs. We will miss him.

William J. Koelpin, Sr.

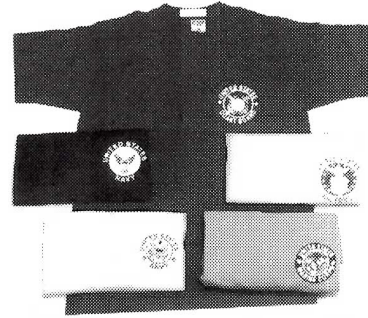
William J. Koelpin, Sr., Wisconsin maritime artist, died December 27, 1996 at his home in Delafield. Born in Milwaukee in 1938, Koelpin started painting at a young age. He became recognized as one of the leading sculptors and painters of wildlife in the United States. However, his talents also lended to his work as a maritime artist. At the Wisconsin Maritime Museum, Manitowoc and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point, Michigan, he completed many maritime paintings. His reputation as a maritime artist eventually secured his commission to paint the official portrait of the USS *Wisconsin*, BB-64. Koelpin's battleship portraits are on display in the Department of Veterans Affairs board room and in the Governor's office.



Operation Restore Hope was a controversial military endeavor to stop mass starvation in Somalia from 1992 to 1994. At a lecture sponsored by the Wisconsin Veterans Museum on December 9, 1996, U.S. Navy Captain John Peterson, a professor of naval science at the UW-Madison, spoke about his experiences as commander of the Marine Expeditionary Force, which launched military operations in Somalia. LTC Thomas Christianson, a professor of military science at the UW-Madison, also presented a lecture in February on "Operations other than War: The Future of the U.S. Military?"

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