

THE BUGLE

NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Frontline

FIRSTHAND LESSONS HEARING, SEEING AND TOUCHING HISTORY AT WVM

INSIDE:

- Remembering a Friend/
Flood Clean-up
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- Missing Soldier
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- and more...

Maybe it was the stories of soldiers told by Vietnam veterans that captivated ninth grade students from Waunakee High School. Or perhaps it was the texture of the soldiers' uniforms or even the songs of the Vietnam era that kept their attention on a morning in late February. Either way, they were fascinated—and their one day of class at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) left them wanting to come back, again and again.

English teacher Melissa Hanson brought her students to WVM for a day of research and programs focusing on the

Laura Kocum



Waunakee students learn real-life lessons from veterans Bob Clampitt and Jim Kurtz.

Vietnam War. State requirements mandate that ninth grade students undergo a research training process and complete a research paper as part of the English curriculum. Hanson knew of the tremendous resources available at WVM, and was quick to schedule a visit.

According to Hanson, the objective of her visit was "...to give my students a greater understanding of what was happening in American history during this time period. In the spring, they will be reading the Vietnam era novel *Fallen*

Angels by Walter Dean Meyers. By completing this program at the Museum, the students can obtain a greater connection to the novel's themes and characters."

In an effort to meet Hanson's curriculum needs, WVM scheduled two U.S. Army veterans, Bob Clampitt and Jim Kurtz, to share their memories of Vietnam. One student asked,

"What was it like staying in a foreign country for an extended period of time?" Kurtz and Clampitt each told their stories, filling the students' ears with what these soldiers heard, saw

and felt.

Next, the Museum staff guided the students to primary sources in the Museum's Research Center. The students viewed and reflected upon documents relating to their research topic.

During the research process, some of the students took the opportunity to speak with another veteran, Jim Erwin, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps in North China. Erwin

The Bugle

The purpose of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum is to commemorate, acknowledge, and affirm the role of Wisconsin veterans in America's military past by means of instructive exhibits and other educational programs.

The Bugle is a publication of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation which serves to further the museum's mission by providing funds for the acquisition of artifacts, exhibit production, and development of educational programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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30 W. Mifflin St.,
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- On the Capitol Square
HOURS
Mon. - Sat.
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
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(April-August only)

Director's Corner

HE LEFT A LEGACY

WVM PAYS TRIBUTE TO TOM JOHNSON



Photo Courtesy SUVVCW, Dept. of Wisconsin

Tom Johnson, WVMF's friend and Board member

A long time supporter and member of the Museum Foundation Board of Directors, Tom Johnson, died on January 1, 2005, at the age of 72. Johnson strongly backed the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's (WVM) publications activities, Civil War database creation, encampments, public programs, Civil War flag restoration, collections acquisition efforts, as well as its major Sesquicentennial project. Johnson's association with WVM began well before the opening of the new facility and stemmed from his keen interest in Civil War history. Johnson also served on the Foundation's special events committee.

Johnson worked as the commander of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, both of which are patriotic organizations that trace their roots to the Civil War, as well as the Lincoln Memorial Association. His activities as a member of the G.A.R. Memorial Association of Dane County also linked Johnson to WVM through the Museum's long identification with the Grand Army of the Republic. In fact, Johnson encour-

aged the research, writing, and publication of WVM's new book *Grand Army of the Republic: Department of Wisconsin*, by Tom McCrory.

Johnson spent his professional career at the Office of the Registrar of the University of Wisconsin. After completing a term of service in the U.S. Army and a Master's degree from Kansas State University, he began working for the UW in 1959. He retired forty-four years later as Executive Assistant Registrar with Emeritus status. Johnson remained a consultant to the Registrar's Office until he died.

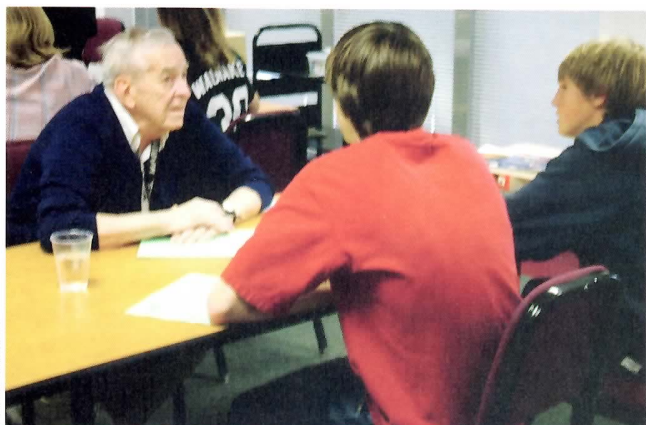
Johnson had great ability as a public speaker. He wrote succinctly and well. A pleasure to work with and a true friend, he enthusiastically participated in the work of the Museum when it was known as the G.A.R. Memorial Hall, situated in the State Capitol. As a Foundation Board member, his keen analysis of business matters helped the Museum Board frame issues and make wise decisions. Johnson was also an early backer of the Museum Gala, the Foundation's most successful—and ongoing—fund raising event. Tom Johnson was a great person—supportive, kind, intelligent, committed, active, generous, and persistent. His absence leaves a tremendous vacancy.

By Richard Zeitlin



Tom Johnson (left) and others at WVMF's Annual Gala Tribute

Continued - Frontline



approach to learning gives students an idea of how veterans lived and worked during the war.

Hanson concluded, "Both the panel of veterans and the lecture about artifacts allowed my students to make connections to people who actually fought in this war. It was a very powerful experience for all of us. All of my students felt as though they took away something from this experience that they could use in their research paper. They also felt as though they learned a great deal about the men and women who served their country for this war."

By Jennifer R. Dahl

Veteran Jim Erwin brings history to life for interested students.

explained the many different types of weapons used during Vietnam. Hanson recounts, "One of my students, while working with primary documents on a topic about the media, was so entranced by Jim Erwin, a weapons expert, that he just sat there two tables away, straining to listen. When I asked him if he would like to move closer to better hear what this man was saying, he told me, 'Yes! He is so interesting.' That made my day."

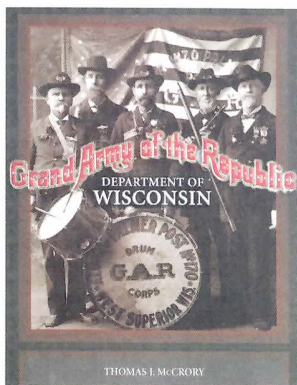
Afterward, the students viewed the Museum's Vietnam collections with Curator Bill Brewster. Objects donated by Vietnam veterans were passed around the room as Brewster made each item's history come to life. This hands-on



WVM's archival collections provide letters and other research documents.

Museum News

G.A.R. BOOK PUBLISHED



Available at WVM's Gift Shop

thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor.

The book is authored by Oshkosh native Thomas J. McCrory. McCrory spent numerous hours examining original G.A.R. records, documents, and photographs held in the WVM

Perhaps the most complete collection of information on Wisconsin's Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) has just landed on the shelves of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) Gift Shop. *Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Wisconsin* is published by the Wisconsin Veterans

Museum Foundation

Research Center. The information proved invaluable in helping to flesh-out the scattered and fragmented history of this once vital organization.

Readers will discover how Union Army veterans rose to achieve substantial influence on the national, state and local levels. Encyclopedic in nature, the book contains information on each post, including the names of listing officers, charter members and membership numbers for each year. In addition, beautiful photographs of post badges and related materials are printed throughout.

Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Wisconsin can be ordered on the back page of this *Bugle*, or online at <http://museum.dva.state.wi.us>, by clicking on "Gift Shop."

By Laura Kocum

Museum Staff

Director
Dr. Richard H. Zeitlin
608.266.1009

Curator of Collections
William Brewster
608.264.6099

Store Manager
George Christensen
608.261.0535

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608.264.6086

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608.264.7663

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Russ Horton
608.266.2320

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Gayle Martinson
608.261.0536

Reference Archivist
Abbie Miller
608.261.5408

Operations Manager
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608.266.1680

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Wisconsin National Guard
Museum Site Curator
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608.427.1280

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608.267.1799

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Museum News

Upcoming Programs

CHINA, THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE VIETNAM WAR
Thursday, March 31
Noon
Lecture

Learn about recent developments in Vietnam War scholarship with distinguished UW History Professor Jeremi Suri. In recent years, the opening of archives in the People's Republic of China and the former Soviet Union has allowed scholars to assess the "communist side" of the Vietnam War in more depth. New evidence reveals that Beijing and Moscow offered even more aid to their Vietnamese allies than previously assumed. Ho Chi Minh and his associates appear to have operated out of ideological, as well as nationalist motives, further complicating our judgments of this tragic war.

STEAK NIGHT AT VFW POST 1318
Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation fundraiser featuring Dennis W. Shepherd
Friday, April 9
5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Support our future programs and exhibits at this fundraiser for WVMF.

(Continued on facing page)

FLOOD CLEAN-UP

BEHIND-THE-SCENES REPAIRS

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) received much press following a flood that occurred December 23. Though the Museum's galleries received some damage, thankfully, the damage was not severe enough to close the Museum. Clean-up efforts are underway, and are happening mainly behind-the-scenes.



Lynne Wolfe

The floor of an exhibit was destroyed by a water leak two floors above.

The flood was caused by Madison's sudden cold snap in December, which caused a hot water pipe to burst in the third floor Research Center. Tens of thousands of gallons of water cascaded into Museum spaces, damaging all three floors and the basement of the Museum.

The water was first spotted by a pedestrian from the street. He alerted janitorial staff in the building. At the same time, the Museum's electronic "water bugs" alerted Capitol Police, who contacted Operations Manager Lynne Wolfe. Due to recent surgery, I was unable to participate in the clean-up, but Wolfe, Collections Manager Bill Brewster and six other members of the Department of Veterans Affairs staff were able to contain the catastrophe and prevent it from becoming worse. They were assisted by the building engineer, janitors and a professional disaster recovery crew.

Although final assessment of damages has yet to be completed, damage to the building was moderately high.

Walls, ceilings, and floors suffered. Collections damages are still being assessed. At this time, thirty-three boxes of paper archival materials, mostly serials, have been taken to Dryco in Chicago to be frozen and examined for restoration processing. In addition, 84 firearms and fourteen non-firearm accessories were soaked. Other materials may have been damaged and are in the process of being identified.

Two insurance companies, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Administration, and the private landlord, Executive Management Inc. are involved in the rebuilding effort. Costs for damages will amount to more than \$108,000. Work on the Museum's public spaces in the Temporary Exhibit Gallery on the first floor and the Archives area on the third floor will be completed by April 1. The Education Center on the second floor has been fully repaired. Cracked windows will be replaced when the weather

allows. Firearm restoration proposals by professional gunsmiths have been received. A new wood floor in the Temporary Exhibit Gallery will be installed by the time *The Bugle* reaches the press. All work is carefully monitored and all controlling authorities are working cooperatively. WVM

expects to minimize public inconvenience and be operational throughout the restoration process. While the flood was a disappointing occurrence, we are grateful to staff for their quick response, and we are committed to a thorough and successful clean-up.

By Richard Zeitlin



Lynne Wolfe

Wet ceiling tiles and archival materials splashed with water are part of the clean-up and preservation effort.

Curator's Chronicles

A QUICK RESPONSE FLOOD DAMAGE MINIMIZED

Bill, there's been a pretty big leak at the museum... So came the words from Museum Director Richard Zeitlin. Though a disaster is the last thing you want to imagine, you must remain prepared for its occurrence. On the evening of December 23, when I received the call from Dr. Zeitlin, my family was comfortably watching a Christmas movie. "We've had a leak at the Museum and I've gotta go in." No one asked any questions as even four-year-old Flannery understands when papa is serious. After getting an update from Lynne Wolfe, who was already on site, and then notifying Registrar Kris Zickuhr, I headed into the Museum. As I drove I thought through procedures learned several years ago during a disaster training seminar. Assess the area, locate the most threatened objects, note all objects in danger and prepare an area to receive objects away from the disaster. Anticipation of the worst filled my forty-minute drive to the Museum.

Upon arriving, I found recovery efforts in full swing. Lynne and Kris were working to deal with the situation as best possible while volunteers called in from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs pitched in to help move threatened materials. The gun vault suffered the worst damage for object collections. This was fortunate because firearms are steel and wood. These materials are more able to survive exposure to water than fabrics. Soon after my arrival, staffers from the emergency response team,

employed by the building owners, came on the scene. They determined an immediate need to set up an isolation chamber that had limited incoming moisture. Locating a secure room in the basement that provides the necessary conditions, the staff moved all weapons suffering water damage. The room was set up with high volume dehumidifiers and air circulators that promoted the drying and removal of moisture. This allowed for a rapid stabilization of the objects, thus reducing the effects of the water.

Despite our efforts, many of the weapons exposed to moisture suffered some damage. This ranges from minor surface darkening to some relatively serious corrosion. A professional gunsmith will determine the real extent of the damage on an individual basis. However, the restoration process will take time. Once the examination of a weapon is complete, the gunsmith will recommend a course of action. Various cleaning processes can be pursued that will restore the weapons to their former appearance while having a minimal impact on the objects themselves.

As we continue the clean-up effort, we are grateful for the quick response that avoided an even greater disaster.

By Bill Brewster



Medals and other artifacts were removed from the galleries. Quick action saved the items from water damage.

Lynne Wolfe

Upcoming Programs (cont.'d)

Held at VFW Post 1318, located at 133 E. Lakeside Street at John Nolen Drive in Madison, this program features a book signing by Vietnam veteran, former Air Force JAG, and author Dennis W. Shepherd. Shepherd has just written a book entitled *Returning Son: From Baghdad, Kentucky to Baghdad, Iraq (and back)*, highlighting the experiences of Sean Cassidy, a young man who left his rural Kentucky farm to serve his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Dinner features high quality, locally produced Neesvig steaks. For more information, contact Gundel Metz at 608.698.8825.

SUMMER FAMILY ACTIVITIES Saturdays, 9 a.m. to Noon

Join WVM for family activities- including a visit from the Bus Museum on May 7, a chance to create your own insignia on June 23, a chance to experience life as a photojournalist on July 21 and a celebration of D-Day on August 18.

All activities are provided free-of-charge, and are intended to educate families, honor veterans and invite new visitors to experience the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

Exhibit Schedule

SPRING 2005

TRAVELING

**BEHIND BARBED WIRE:
MIDWEST POWs IN
NAZI GERMANY**
Saturday, May 7
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of V-E Day with a special exhibit highlighting the POW experience during World War II. Located on the Museum side of the Capitol Square, the exhibit is housed in a full-size, converted school bus featuring dozens of photos, oral history excerpts, and interactives. A multimedia presentation, *The Fritz Ritz: German POWs in the Midwest* will begin at 10:30 a.m. in the Museum gallery. This event is for the entire family. Children can participate in a variety of craft projects including planting their very own Victory Garden, insignia design, and other fun activities. For more information, contact Jeff Kollath at 608.261.0541.

From the Archives

LETTERS WITH STYLE

CANVAS, PIN-UPS AND MRE BOXES USED AS STATIONERY

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) manuscript collection contains many letters from soldiers to their loved ones, most composed on writing paper or stationery. The stationery may be related to a place visited by the soldier, issued



WVM Mss 700

Charles Stuvengen used a piece of airplane canvas to write to his sister.

by a service organization such as the Red Cross or USO, or patriotic or humorous in approach.

Picture postcards are also frequently found in the collections preserved at the WVM

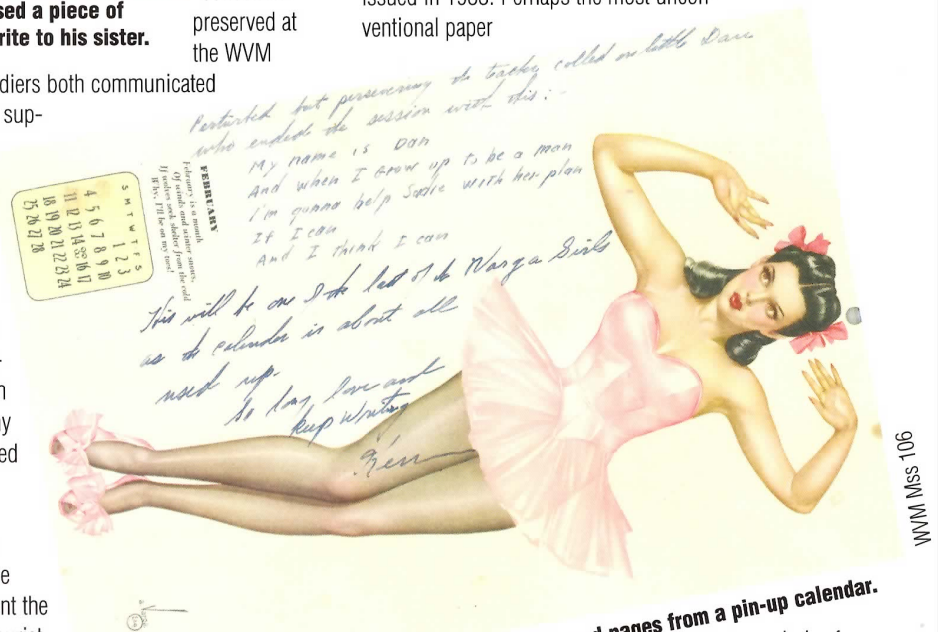
Research Center as soldiers both communicated with their families, and supplied them with souvenirs. Soldiers serving during both world wars and in Korea and Vietnam sent souvenir postcards showing images of where they were stationed and the sights in various countries. Many soldiers simply collected postcards and mailed them, blank, to family members. WVM has a large collection of these postcards that document the role of the soldier as tourist.

However, some soldiers combined creativity with communication and came up with dis-

tinctive materials on which to write. The following three soldiers did just that, and in doing so, captured the "flavor" of their military experience in ways not found with the usual writing paper and postcard.

Airplane canvas was the medium chosen by Charles Stuvengen (WVM Mss 700) when he wrote to his sister. A native of Orfordville, Stuvengen was a corporal in the Army Air Service at Love Field, Texas. He got the piece of canvas from an aircraft that crashed in training. According to Stuvengen, the practice of writing on aircraft canvas was common at Love Field. The Museum is fortunate that this letter was kept intact since Stuvengen encouraged his sister to "touch a match to it" in order to see how quickly it burns!

Kenneth Zerwick (WVM Mss 106) wrote letters using a variety of unique materials. He used stationery scavenged from German businesses, the reverse side of forms, and even composed a letter on what appears to have been a certificate issued in 1933. Perhaps the most unconventional paper



WVM Mss 106

"It was the only paper available." Kenneth Zerwick used pages from a pin-up calendar.

choice for Zerwick were the letters written to his wife, Evelyn, on pages taken from a Vargas pin-up calendar. Zerwick wrote letters on the pin-ups with the claim that there was no other paper available.

From the Archives - Continued

A Meal Ready to Eat (MRE) box was the medium of choice for Corporal Rick McCoy when he wrote to his friend and fellow soldier, Corporal Jason Geise. McCoy was stationed in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm, while Geise was at Camp LeJune (North Carolina). The letter discussed the heat in Saudi Arabia and threat of SCUD missile attacks, but made no comment on the choice of writing material.

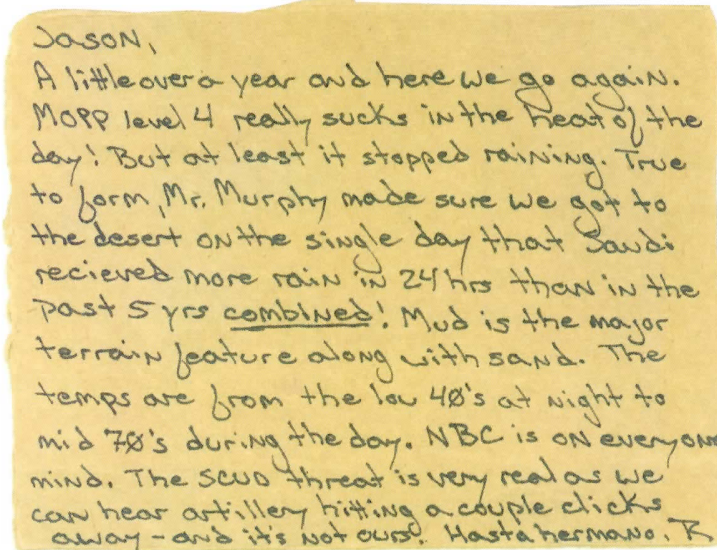
The above letters have been in the collections of WVM for a number of years, but were recently made available for public use through the funding of a two-year National Historic Publications and Records Commission grant. The grant was received in July of 2003 and, with its help, many invaluable collections have been made ready for public access.

WVM Research Center collects all types of letters received or sent by soldiers, not just those written on unusual objects. Also collected are photographs, diaries, training materials, military papers, newsletters, and other documents related to military service and later veteran activities. Those interested in donating should contact Gayle Martinson at 608.261.0536 or e-mail Gayle.Martinson@dva.state.wi.us. WVM is also interested in preserving email letters sent

or received by soldiers serving in Afghanistan or Iraq. Soldiers are encouraged to print off all their email messages (those received and those sent) and consider donating them to the Museum.

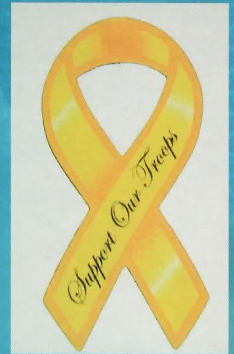
The collections mentioned in this article and others like them are available for public use from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. weekdays, and by appointment.

By Abigail Miller



A unique use for "leftovers," Rick McCoy used an MRE box as stationery.

WVM Mss 173



Support Our Troops Car Magnet

Now Available at WVM Gift Shop

Show your support with this yellow ribbon car magnet.

Other varieties are also available at the gift shop.

Cost is \$5.95 each plus 5.5% tax and \$2.00 shipping. To order, mail payment

and request to:

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Gift Shop
30 West Mifflin Street
Madison, WI 53703

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

of magnets: _____

Museum News

LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS



The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) is teaming up with the CTM Madison Family Theatre Company to bring "Loose Lips Sink Ships" to Madison April 8- May 1, 2005. The musical draws themes from the women who worked in Sturgeon Bay's shipyards during World War II.

The script is written by Jacinda Duffin and Laurie Flanigan, and the music is by James Kaplan.

The authors used oral histories to create the program, and CTM Madison Family Theatre Company, along with WVM will be promoting the importance of oral history to its audiences.

WVM will also host a few of the actors on April 8. The actors will perform a vignette from the show, as part of the scheduled tours for the day.

Additional programming is in the works for this cooperative event. For tickets or additional information, call the Overture Ticket Office at 608.258.4141, or call WVM at 608.267.1799.

By Laura Kocum

WVM Outreach

GAINING FRESH IDEAS

VIETNAM TEACHER IN-SERVICE ENCOURAGES NEW PERSPECTIVES



Charlotte Deleste

Sarah Streed shares a personal side of the Vietnam War.

encouraging them to handle primary sources and artifacts. Robert Bloom, a retired social studies teacher from Eau Claire and Vietnam veteran, focused on the popular music of the Vietnam era and years subsequent, grabbing the audience's attention with some late afternoon rock 'n roll. Local author Sarah Streed discussed the effect of the Vietnam War on native Southeast Asian populations, emphasizing her family's history as detailed in her book, *Leaving the House of Ghosts*. Streed's family adopted and raised two young boys, Cambodian refugees who fled the genocide and torture of the Khmer Rouge, a group that came to power as a result of the Vietnam War.

On January 21, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) hosted nearly forty educators from around

the state for a teacher in-service program on the Vietnam War. "New Perspectives on the Vietnam War" brought to light new ways of teaching the war, includ-

ing an emphasis on teaching the Vietnam War using the consumption and production of popular music, the use of film, and, most importantly, primary source documents. Each educator received a curriculum guide filled with lesson plans and primary sources culled from government archives and presidential paper collections. These resources will help the student better understand and interpret this troubling and multi-faceted conflict.

In-service attendees heard four outstanding lectures, including an enthralling presentation by University of Wisconsin History Professor Jeremi Suri on the political and diplomatic history of the Vietnam War. Vietnam veteran and education professor Dr. Greg Walsko took a hands-on approach, putting the teachers into discussion groups and

WVM is pleased to provide teacher-training sessions, as part of our outreach to schools across the state. The in-services are an effective way to share WVM's many educational resources and they fulfill the Museum's mission to affirm, commemorate and acknowledge the achievements of Wisconsin veterans.



Dr. Greg Walsko discusses incorporating diaries and letters into the classroom.

Charlotte Deleste

By Jeff Kollath



Roughly 40 teachers attended the Vietnam in-service.

Charlotte Deleste

Personalized Dog Tags

Now Available at WVM Gift Shop

Order authentic dog tags, engraved by the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. You choose what the engraving says (Name, address, past battalion, favorite sports team). **Cost is \$5.00 each**

plus 5.5% tax and \$2.00 shipping. To order, mail payment and request to:

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Gift Shop
30 West Mifflin Street
Madison, WI 53703

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____



WVM Outreach

VIETNAM AND AMERICA

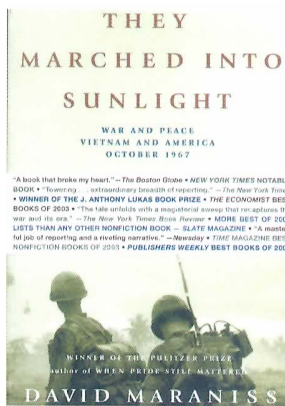
A BOOK REVIEW

One of the goals of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's (WVM) new series of Vietnam-related programs is to highlight new scholarship showing the effects of the war on both Wisconsin citizens and soldiers.

Madison native David Maraniss' new book, *They Marched Into Sunlight* is a multi-faceted book which succeeds in bringing together the story of three related events that transpired on October 17th and 18th, 1967. Maraniss takes the reader inside the units of the 2/28 Black Lions Battalion of the 1st Infantry Division, telling the stories of its men and commanders as they arrive in Vietnam, train, and prepare for war. Next, Maraniss visits the University of Wisconsin campus, where student activists are making plans to protest the upcoming Dow Chemical recruiting visit. Finally, the story turns to the White House, where President Lyndon B. Johnson struggles with the changing face of the war, finding himself fighting increasingly on the home front as much as abroad. Extensively researched, *They Marched Into Sunlight* is a first-class history that reads like a novel, engrossing the reader in the experiences of the characters.

One of the key characters in *They Marched Into Sunlight* is James E. Shelton, a former operations officer of the 2/28 Black Lions around the time of the October 17th Battle. His book, *The Beast Was Out There*, is another recent account

of the fierce battle that devastated the Black Lions Battalion. Shelton weaves together his personal experiences as a former operations officer of the battalion with a rich narrative to reconstruct the battle in great detail.



Available at WVM's Gift Shop

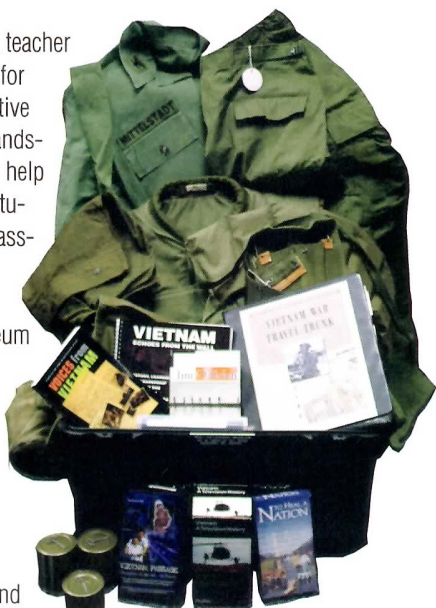
WVM is proud to have David Maraniss and James Shelton scheduled to take part in the Vietnam program series with an October 6th discussion and book signing. A best-selling author, Maraniss is currently an associate editor at *The Washington Post* and is teaching at Princeton University. Shelton was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant of Infantry in 1957 and went on to a distinguished 27-year Army career before retiring as a Brigadier General. *They Marched Into Sunlight* can be ordered on the back of this *Bugle*, and both books will be available at the October program.

By Jake Hubbard

NEW TRAVEL TRUNK!

Are you a teacher looking for new and inventive ways to use hands-on activities to help educate your students in the classroom? The Wisconsin Veterans Museum has what you need!

In addition to our American Civil War, World War I, World War II and



Korean travel trunks, the Vietnam trunk has now arrived. The trunk incorporates all subject areas, such as, Geography, History, English and Music in correlation with artifacts from the Museum's archives and collections. It includes uniforms, equipment, letters and photographs from soldiers, maps, music, videos and books.

Teachers can choose from a variety of activities to educate their students. A few examples of activities include how to conduct an oral history report, a project on the geography of Vietnam and comparing/contrasting Hmong and American cultures. These trunks help students learn by incorporating all subject areas through a hands-on experience. For cost, rental information, or if you would like to donate artifacts to this program, please call 608.264.6086 or e-mail Jennifer.Dahl@dva.state.wi.us.

By Jennifer Dahl



Support Our Troops Awareness Bracelet

Now Available at the WVM Gift Shop

Wearing one of these popular and fashionable yellow bracelets is an easy and inexpensive way to show your support!

Cost is \$3.00 each plus 5.5% tax. Shipping is included.

*A portion of sales supports non-profit veterans' organizations.

To order, mail payment and request to:
 Wisconsin Veterans Museum
 Gift Shop
 30 West Mifflin Street
 Madison, WI 53703

Name _____
 Address _____

 City _____
 State _____
 Zip _____
 # of bracelets: _____

From the Archives

SOLDIER LOST!

UNION HOSPITAL DISAPPEARANCE

Letters, a journal, and photographs relating to a Wisconsin Civil War soldier who literally disappeared at the end of the war were recently made available to researchers at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Research Center. James W. Skeels survived a prisoner of war experience and made it to a Union hospital in March 1865, but his family never heard from him after that. The arrangement of the Skeels papers was made possible by a two-year processing grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).



WWM Mss 679

James Skeels' family never learned the reason for his disappearance.

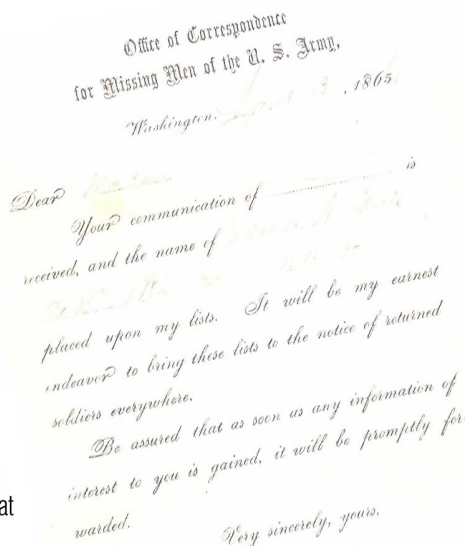
Skeels, who lived in Rosendale at the beginning of the war, enlisted into Company B, 1st Wisconsin Cavalry in September 1861. His unit saw minor action in Missouri and Arkansas before transferring into the Army of the Cumberland. They took part in the Chattanooga campaign in September 1863, playing an important role in the battle of Chickamauga. Skeels was promoted to corporal in March 1864, but two months later he was captured at the battle of Varnell's Station in Georgia. He was held at the Confederate prison in Florence, South Carolina for nine months. Paroled in February 1865, he was admitted to the Union hospital at Wilmington, North Carolina in March but all record of him ended there.

The Skeels collection contains letters that he wrote home to his family during his service. These letters described camp conditions and his role in the regiment, and conveyed information about other local men in his company. The collection contains one letter that Skeels wrote to his family from

prison; it is a request for clothing and food, and was the last they heard from him. Skeels' 1862 journal provides some additional information about his service, though it mostly contains observations about the weather and the distance his company traveled in a day.

The other materials in the collection document the search for Skeels' whereabouts. Several letters written to Skeels' parents detail his release from prison and transfer to a hospital. There are official responses from the Adjutant General of Wisconsin and the Office of Correspondence for Missing Men of the U.S. Army (signed by Clara Barton), neither of which provide closure. A letter transcribed in some genealogical materials show that there was record of Skeels being admitted into the Wilmington hospital, but there was no record of his discharge or death. Officially, Skeels was classified as missing in action and his fate remains unknown.

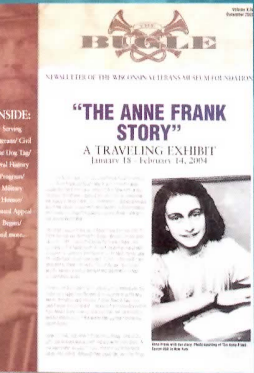
WWM Mss 679



A letter requesting information to help find Skeels

In addition to the James Skeels papers, WVM holds the records of many other veterans organizations and the papers and photographs of hundreds of individual veterans, as well as an extensive book, map, and video library. Anyone interested in Wisconsin's military history should visit the Research Center to view our holdings. The Research Center is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and by appointment.

By Russell Horton



Stay informed on WVM programs and exhibits

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE BUGLE ARE FREE!

Please send your name and address to:

The Bugle
30 W. Mifflin St.,
Ste. 200
Madison, WI
53703

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Address: _____

City: _____
State: _____
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Preserving History

GOLF, ANYONE?

Are you ready to dust off your golf clubs and start swinging again? Well dream no more!

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation is planning a golf outing fundraiser scheduled for July 18 at Cherokee Country Club in Madison. All monies raised will benefit the educational programs and exhibits at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

The Foundation and Museum staff have been busy planning the event since last fall and are currently working to secure sponsors from across the state.



Courtesy: Cherokee Country Club

Cherokee Country Club will host the event.

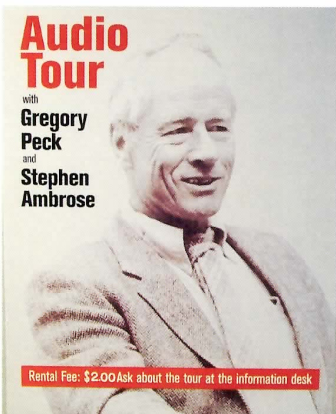
shot gun start at Noon, rain or shine, and limited to the first 88 players who register.

The cost is \$125/person or \$500/foursome. Not only will it be a time show off your talents to fellow golfers but you'll also have a chance to win yourself a new car! Dinner is also included. If you want to come but not play there's plenty to do. A Blackhawk helicopter will be just one of many military objects on display. More details will come soon, but in the meantime, if you are interested in playing or volunteering, please contact Jennifer Dahl at 608.264.6086.

It will be a "best ball" tournament with a howitzer cannon

By Charlotte Deleste

TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES AUDIO TOUR TO REACH SPANISH AND HMONG VISITORS

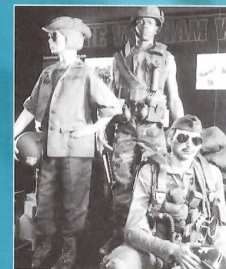


When the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) created an audio tour in 1997, Academy award winner Gregory Peck and Pulitzer Prize winning historian Stephen Ambrose narrated the program. Produced by Acoustiguide of New York, the audio tour served WVM well. Since then, however, new digital electronic formats have become available. At the same time, the production costs for digitized audio tours has diminished. Unfortunately, both Gregory Peck and Stephen Ambrose have passed away, so

re-recording the tours is not possible. A Canadian firm named Tour Mate Systems can now digitize from existing tape programs and transfer information to a modern audio wand. The company has expressed interest in working with WVM to update the Gregory Peck—Stephen Ambrose audio tour. In addition, Tour Mate Systems will translate the audio tour into different languages to improve educational outreach to local minority populations. The audio tour could be made into a Spanish language version and possibly into Hmong, in light of the significant numbers of Hmong immigrants who now call Wisconsin home.

Costs to produce the new digital audio tour are reasonable. The WVM Foundation seeks gifts and donations to assist in the raising of some \$15,000 to make the project into a reality. To donate to this project, or other WVM Foundation projects, clip the form on this page and mail it in, or donate on-line at www.wvmfoundation.com.

By Richard Zeitlin



Commemorate Those Who Served

Help keep the history of Wisconsin's veterans alive by contributing to the educational programs and exhibits of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

SUPPORT THE WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM FOUNDATION

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

Please send your contributions along with your name and address to:

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Museum Foundation**
P.O. Box 2657
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53701-2657

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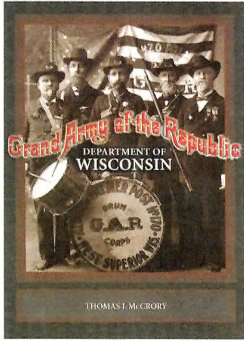
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In Honor of: _____

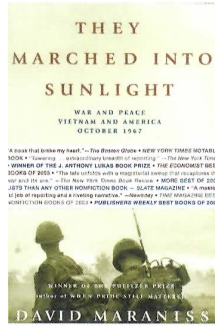


From the Gift Shop



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