



THE BUGLE

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COVER IMAGE

Rodney D. Williams, a Delafield, Wisconsin resident, served in the 17th Aero Squadron during World War I. Williams trained in Canada and Texas before being deployed to Europe, where he flew a Sopwith Camel fighter in combat. In 1918, he downed four planes and one balloon, qualifying as Wisconsin's first and only World War I combat Ace. While flying his last mission, Williams was wounded, and his gas tank was punctured by bullets. Williams managed to land his plane in an aerodome and was hospitalized for the remainder of the war. After the war, Williams returned to Wisconsin. He died in 1972 and is buried in Salem Cemetery in Delafield. WVM.1070.1031



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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.

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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A most sincere thank you to all who donated to our collection from November 2020–March 2021. Thank you for your generosity and support of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

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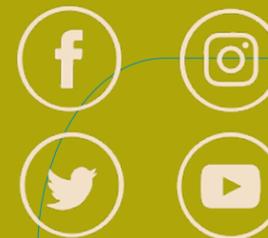
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MUSEUM MISSION

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.

WWI - WWII

WELCOME HOME

DESERT STORM



'OLD TIMER'

Elmer E. Wells
Name
1917 - 1979



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS PARADE

'OLD TIMER'

Harold D. Steinmetz
Name
1940 - 1945



PARK FALLS, WISCONSIN-1991



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum,

Greetings! I hope this finds all of you well and safe. The staff and I are pleased to bring you yet another informative issue of *The Bugle*. Despite still being closed, we are working hard behind the scenes to continue our mission of preserving, interpreting, and presenting the stories of Wisconsin veterans. We all look forward to the day we can re-open and welcome you back in person.

This year we are focusing on three primary themes or story arcs. One relates to the 30th anniversary of the Persian Gulf War and 20th anniversary of 9/11 and the start of the Global War on Terror. This important period was the military's transition out of the Cold War posture and structure, while grappling with the challenges of a world in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. Alongside these strategic transformations came social changes in the force, driven by events like Tailhook '91 and the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy, among others.

The other two story arcs tie to centennials coming this year. In the summer of 1921, Billy Mitchell proved that warships of all types could be sunk solely from the air—an event that changed warfare and foreshadowed much of what followed in military aviation. We are exploring this important event in Wisconsin's aviation history, and how it reverberates through the decades to today. In the same year, on Memorial Day, the Unknown Soldier from World War I was selected in France and transported to Arlington National Cemetery, where the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated November 11, 1921. These somber anniversaries provide opportunities to explore service, sacrifice, and connections between veterans over time.

We continue our extensive online offerings, with all three story arcs represented. I encourage everyone to see what is available at our website. We continue to get a good response and very much appreciate everyone's interest and support. The programs are provided with the critical help and support of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation.

History continues to provide perspective and inspiration. Rather than offer a quote as I have in the past, I'll simply suggest taking a look at the stories of the Guadalcanal Campaign, the Battle of the Bulge, the Siege of Khe Sanh, or the defenders of Bataan and Corregidor. All of these are represented in our collection and offer excellent examples of steadfastness, determination, and stamina over many months of challenging times.

Best wishes to all of you and thank you for your continuing support. Hope to see you at the museum soon.

Best,

Chris Kalakowski

BEYOND STONE:

STORIES BEHIND THE MEMORIAL

By: Brittany Strobel
Processing Archivist

Memorial Day, originally known as Decoration Day, began after the end of the Civil War. From that very first commemoration, citizens have gone to cemeteries to decorated graves of those who were killed in the war and those who had died since, held patriotic pageants and concerts, and remembered the lives of those who had died. Often, when thinking of Memorial Day, we think of long rows of white marble headstones laid out with military precision, across fields of green grass. We don't normally reflect upon how those bodies actually reached their final resting place, and the decisions families had to make.

In the Civil War, the federal government created the first national cemeteries, but lacked the resources to identify and bury the fallen efficiently. If they wanted their loved ones returned, families had to pay for embalming and transportation of remains, and many undertakers and embalmers took advantage of soldier's desire to be returned home. They sold insurance to ensure the soldier's remains would be returned to their families. Other families had to gather funds on short notice, or leave their fallen loved one in a far-away place.

Although the Graves Registration Service was in place before the United States entered into World War I, during World War I and II, immediately shipping home the fallen was not possible. The deceased were buried in temporary graves. After the end of the war, the Graves Registration Services, who documented temporary and unofficial cemeteries, offered families the choice of having the body of their loved one returned, or reinterred in American cemeteries around the world. This, of course, only happens when the body of a loved one can be located. For servicemembers whose bodies cannot be identified, are not located, or cannot be recovered, families are left to mourn at cenotaphs and memorials.

Charles Stone, a Massachusetts resident, served with Company I, 13th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment during the Civil War. While Stone's family moved to Wisconsin early in the Civil War, he elected to remain in Massachusetts and enlist. During the course of his service, Stone wrote to his family, mostly his mother, in Wisconsin. He updated her on the progress of the war, his hopes for the future, and the possibility of moving to Wisconsin at the end of the war.

At the Battle of Gettysburg, Stone was wounded in the knee and moved to a hospital for treatment. Stone was optimistic about his recovery. The surgery went well and he was feeling cheerful. In the subsequent weeks, his health began to decline as infection set into the wound, and he was transferred to a different hospital. On October 8, 1863, Stone succumbed to the injury and died at the hospital.

Knowing that it was his mother's wish that he be returned to her for burial, nursing staff at the hospital had Stone's body embalmed, awaiting instructions for the transfer of his remains for burial.

Nurse Lizzie Burton wrote to his mother: *"He spoke several times of his approaching death, was fully aware of his situation not seeming to desire, nor fearing the change, though he said it seemed hard for him to die, so young just on the verge of manhood. It does indeed look hard to us, that so many of the brave and noble of our land should be cut off just as they were entering into usefulness, we cannot help ourselves now, we can only sorrow at their loss [. . .]"*

While Stone's mother wished for her son's return, the cost of transporting him home was \$60 dollars, and too costly for the family. Charles Stone was one of the first men laid to rest in the Gettysburg National Cemetery.

His surgeon wrote to Mrs. Stone: *"You are doubtless aware that a 'national cemetery' for the burial of all the union dead who fell here in July + have since died of their wounds is about to be consecrated here. It is situated in a lovely spot and is being handsomely laid out, each state having a portion of ground allotted to it and it will be one of the most beautiful cemeteries in the land.*

If it were my own care I would as soon have a friend who fell here buried in that lovely place as in my own home, + it is very gratifying to us who have seen these men in their suffering to know that they will have so beautiful a resting place.

I am sorry we could do no more for your poor boy. But all our wounds of the knee joint proved fatal as far as I am able to learn. He came from the Seminary Hospital in a very reduced state + seemed marked for the grave from the first."



Eternal Light Peace Monument at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania WVM.1273.I003e

John A. Olien, a New Richmond, Wisconsin resident served with Company B, 6th Engineers, 3rd Division in World War I. On October, 20, 1918, Olien was severely wounded and taken prisoner with other wounded men, as they were unable to move any injured off the field. Olien and another captured man died while being taken to German first aid, and were buried in the Clair Chene Woods, where they had been fighting. When the war ended on November 11, 1918, Olien's family did not yet know that he had been killed, and wouldn't find out until December.

In 1921, Olien's family chose to have him disinterred and returned to Wisconsin. Olien is buried at the highest point in Oakland Cemetery in Huntington, Wisconsin. His brother, in an act of devotion, placed a large flagpole near Olien's grave, and would raise



This image, taken in his brother Oscar's home, features Olien's casket draped with a flag, a portrait, and a floral arrangement above it. WVM.2164.I001

the flag in the morning, lowering it in the evening, accompanied by one of his children or grandchildren. The family specially marked Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and Olien's birth and death dates.

Robert Alexander Bonin, a resident of Milwaukee, Wisconsin attended the Naval Academy in Annapolis. He graduated in 1936. Bonin met Regis Barbara Tracy, and the two married in Milwaukee in 1938. Following his graduation, Bonin served on the USS *Mississippi*, after which he attended Naval Submarine School in the spring of 1939. Robert and Regis welcomed their first child, Jean Marie Bonin, on June 5, 1940.

Continued on page 10



Bonin then served aboard an experimental submarine, S-20, and the USS *Grayling* from 1940–43. Bonin assumed command of the submarine USS *Gudgeon* in March 1944. On March 14, 1944, Bonin penned what would be his last letter to his family informing them of his new command. He closed with “All my love to you, Jean Marie and the little one. Goodnight, hon. I love you. Bob.”

On June 7, 1944, Mrs. Bonin received a telegram informing her that her husband went missing “in the course of his duty and in the service of his country.” On June 14th, a letter of confirmation of the fact was sent, along with a pamphlet, titled “Reported Missing,” that explained the process of being reported missing, the future steps, and status of allotments and payroll for the family. Robert Alexander Bonin Jr., was born four months after the death of his father, in August 1944.

A year later, on June 19, 1945, Mrs. Bonin received a letter which updated her on the status of her husband. The letter explained that while Public Law 490 enabled the U.S. Navy to declare Robert A. Bonin dead, in the absence of his body, the navy had insufficient



Regis, Jean, and Robert were presented with a Samurai sword by the United States Navy in honor of his service, WVM.1696.1151

proof to do so, as it is possible he and his crew were unreported prisoners of war, especially with the lack of information about the circumstances under which the *Gudgeon* was lost, and that he would continue in the missing status.

On January 24, 1946, Mrs. Bonin received a letter from the Secretary of the Navy explaining that while no evidence of the destruction of the *Gudgeon* had been discovered, the lack of information about Bonin or any of the other crew possibly being held as prisoners of war or being located elsewhere had led the U.S. Navy to declare all crewmembers of the *Gudgeon* deceased as of January 15, 1946. Lieutenant Commander Robert Alexander Bonin was the only submarine commander from the state of Wisconsin killed in World War II.

In 1978, Regis had a chance encounter with submariner veterans, and was invited to become involved with the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II and its Auxiliary organization. Submariner veterans shared images and memories of Bonin, and photographs of themselves with memorials across the country. Bonin’s brother, Dan, visited memorials to the *Gudgeon* at the Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii. Bonin’s family, including his children, researched his service, the submarines he served on, and submarine warfare.

Through their research, they uncovered reports that a Japanese plane reported bombing a submarine in the area the *Gudgeon* would have been on April 18, which is now presumed to be the date the submarine was destroyed, all hands lost.

These three stories from our archives illustrate the nuances of what a “final resting place” means, and the realities for the families left behind. As we approach Memorial Day, we encourage you to consider the meaning behind the stories of the people memorialized in those graves, cenotaphs, and memorials.



Memorial Day is about remembering those service members that have died while serving their country. As this year marks the 30th anniversary of the Persian Gulf War, those lost during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm will be especially on the minds of all of us. In Wisconsin, of the over 10,000 estimated service members that served in the war at least 11 did not return home.

Sgt. Brian P. Scott, of Park Falls, Wisconsin served in the 27th Engineer Battalion and was assigned to support the French on the far left of the coalition line of advance. As a combat engineer, Scott and his unit were tasked with clearing the airfield at As Salman, Iraq, as soon as the French had secured their objective.

On February 26, 1991, while clearing the airfield of cluster munitions, a large explosion killed Scott and several others in his unit. According to a local newspaper article after his death, Scott was married the day before he left for his deployment to Saudi Arabia. His first child was born two days before he was killed. The Red Cross was unable to make contact and notify him of the good news.



SGT. BRIAN PATRICK SCOTT
26 MARCH 1968–26 FEBRUARY 1991



By: Russell Horton
Reference Archivist

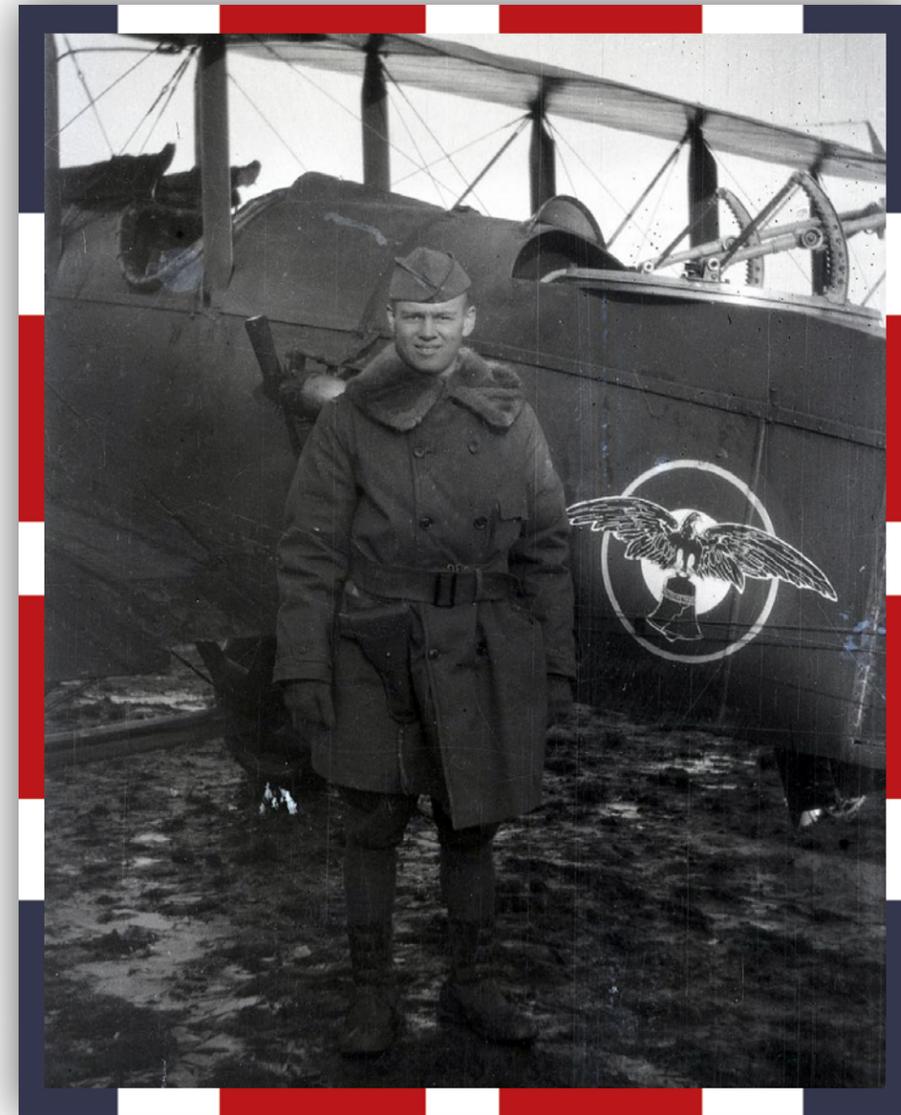
Jacqueline “Jackie” Mulhern

A resident of Peshtigo, Wisconsin and later Madison, Mulhern worked as a nurse in her civilian life when she joined the Wisconsin National Guard in 1981. In her 13 years of service with the guard, she acted as a medical/surgical nurse, a field nurse, and a mental health nurse. Part of the 13th Evacuation Hospital, she deployed to the Middle East in 1991 and served in Operation Desert Storm. Working in the 400 bed hospital, she assisted the unit in treating more than 400 inpatients and almost 4,000 outpatients in the three months they were there. After retiring from the guard and her civilian nursing career, Jackie also volunteered in the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Research Center.

The Wisconsin Veteran Museum proudly preserves her story through the uniform and other objects, papers, and photographs that she donated.



Jackie is pictured front row, second from left.



Paul Chase

A Magnolia, Wisconsin native, Chase was teaching agricultural classes at a public school when he joined the U.S. Army in 1917. He attended the School of Military Aeronautics at Berkeley, California and received flight training at fields in four different states before deploying to Europe in July 1918. A pilot in the 8th Aero Squadron, Chase and his observer/gunner partner took aerial photographs of German lines and helped direct Allied artillery for the final four months of World War I. They also received credit for shooting down a German plane.

The Wisconsin Veteran Museum proudly preserves his story through his objects, papers, and photographs.

EVERY VETERAN IS A STORY

The Admirals Wept:

Billy Mitchell and the Atlantic Bombing Tests of 1921

By: Chris Kolakowski
Museum Director



Brig. Gen. William "Billy" Mitchell standing by a V.E. 7 at Bolling Field, D.C. Air Tournament, May 14 -16, 1920. The Vought VE-7 Bluebird was an advanced military trainer, observer and fighter of World War I. U.S. Air Force photo

fleet modernization program with many battleships on the drawing boards. These plans and debates progressed against a backdrop of defense budget cuts and retrenchment, which meant air forces had to compete with ground and sea forces for shrinking resources. The outcome of these debates would have real-world consequences for the American military for years, if not decades, to come.

In the fall of 1920, the navy quietly tested aerial bombing on the obsolete battleship USS *Indiana*, anchored in Chesapeake Bay. The navy and marine aviators failed to sink her. "The entire experiment," Wisconsin-raised Captain William D. Leahy reported, "pointed to the improbability of a modern battleship being either destroyed or completely put out of action by aerial bombs."

A furor arose when word leaked that the fliers were not using real bombs, rather sand and rock packages dropped on targets painted on deck. Congress got involved, and ordered the navy to prepare more realistic bombing tests in the Atlantic. These would use live ordnance and involve fliers from the navy, marine corps, and the army – a true exploration of air power's potential effects on surface ships.

Ground crew loading ordnance on a Martin MB-2 Bomber, circa 1921, likely in support of aerial bombing exercises in conjunction with the navy. A.W. Smith Collection Naval History and Heritage Command photo.



One hundred years ago powered flight turned eighteen years old. In 1921 the U.S. Air Force did not exist, rather it was a part of the U.S. Army as the U.S. Army Air Service. The Royal Air Force was three years old. Aircraft carriers were few in number and experimental, while planes had ranges of only a few hundred miles. As it had for centuries, naval strategy centered around the battleship as the core of a fleet. A century later airpower is an important part of the U.S. Armed Forces, and aircraft carriers have replaced battleships as rulers of the waves. This transformation began in significant measure because of the actions of aviators, led by Wisconsin's General William L. "Billy" Mitchell, over a few weeks in the summer of 1921.

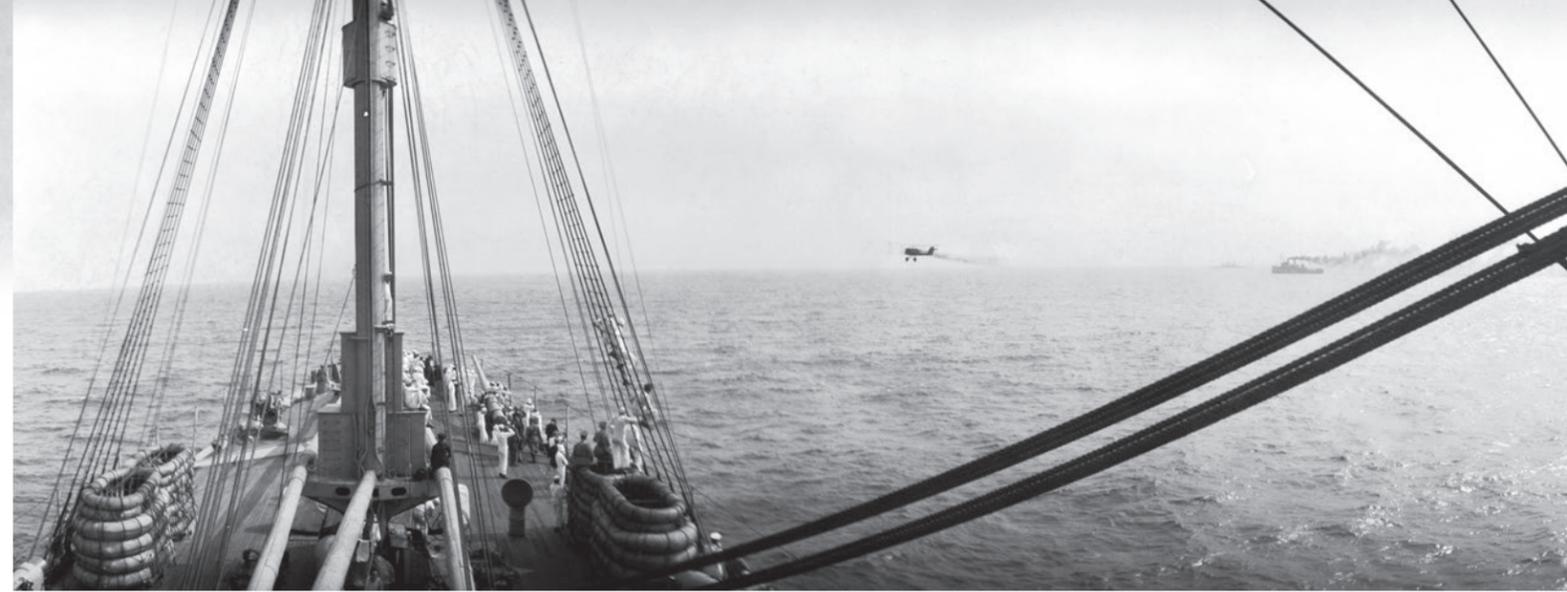
As the United States demobilized after World War I, it was clear that the airplane had introduced a new dimension of warfare. Some air power advocates, of which Mitchell became a leading light, argued for an independent U.S. Air Force which would render surface ships and land forces obsolete or irrelevant.

At the same time, the U.S. Navy was undergoing a fleet modernization program with many battleships on the drawing boards. These plans and debates progressed against a backdrop of defense budget cuts and retrenchment, which meant air forces had to compete with ground and sea forces for shrinking resources. The outcome of these debates would have real-world consequences for the American military for years, if not decades, to come.

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Ground crew loading ordnance on a Martin MB-2 Bomber, circa 1921, likely in support of aerial bombing exercises in conjunction with the navy. A.W. Smith Collection Naval History and Heritage Command photo.



A DH-4 bomber flies low, past the starboard side of USS *Henderson* (AP-1). *Henderson* hosted press reporters, military officers, and foreign observers as they observed the 1921 Army-Navy bombing experiments off the Virginia capes. A.W. Smith Collection Naval History and Heritage Command photo.

To take part in the tests, Mitchell assembled 1,000 men and 125 planes of the Army Air Service into the 1st Provisional Air Brigade at Langley Field (today Langley Air Force Base) near Hampton, Virginia. A period of intense training perfected his men in both level and dive-bombing techniques. Mitchell and his fliers also learned that near-misses could be as effective as direct hits, because of the resulting water pressure wave, which the fliers called a "water hammer." Mitchell led from the front, and announced he would accompany all missions to the targets. He emphasized to his pilots that the test results would determine "the whole future of our force [the Air Service]."

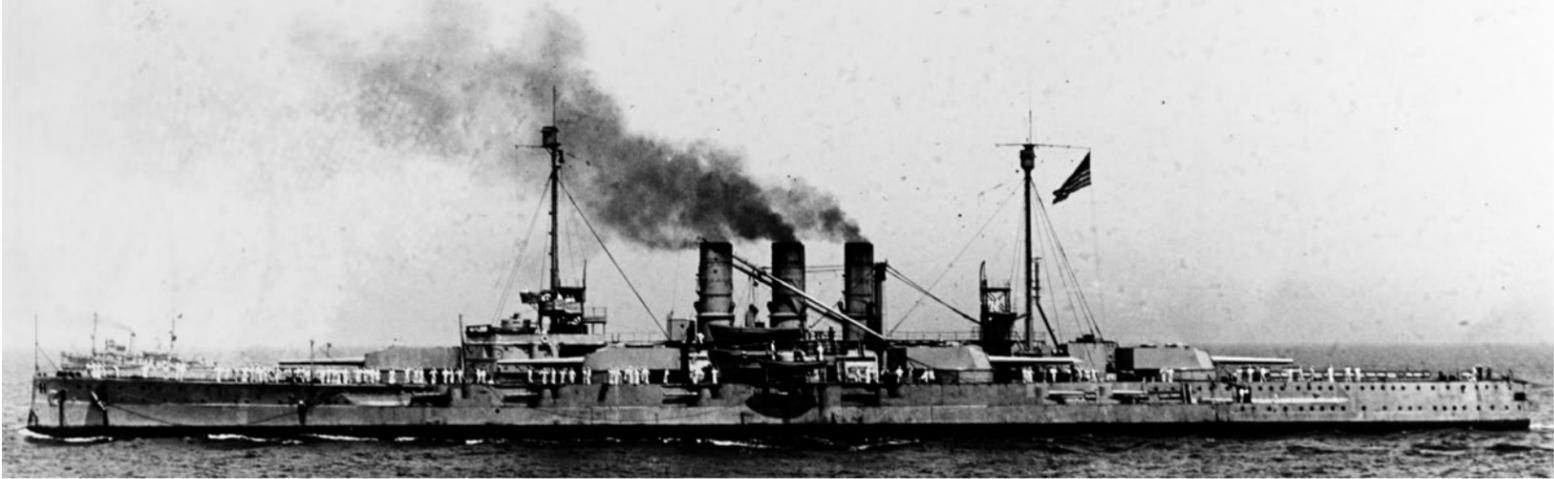
For targets, the navy provided German ships surrendered after World War I: submarine U-117, destroyer G 102, cruiser *Frankfurt*, and battleship *Ostfriesland*. They would be anchored fifty miles off the Virginia coast, a two-hour flight time from Langley. All were modern ships and combat veterans. *Ostfriesland* in particular was ten years old and exceptionally well-designed to take damage and stay afloat. The army and navy senior leaders negotiated rules for the tests, limiting the size of bombs and tactics that could be used. A control party aboard USS *Shawmut* would direct the tests, while VIPs aboard transport *Henderson* and the rest of the Atlantic Fleet looked on. Naval parties would board the ships after a certain number of hits to assess damage, and if needed, the Atlantic Fleet would finish off any target ships that failed to sink.

The first test was U-117 on June 2. Two passes by three navy seaplanes sent her to the bottom in minutes, the speed of destruction surprising all observers. A few days later Mitchell's flyers went after G 102, which they had been allowed to attack with a fairly free hand.

Continued on page 16

Shawmut (CM-4) 1907 at left, photographed off the Virginia capes during aerial bombing experiments in which the *Ostfriesland* was sunk as a target. *Shawmut*, renamed *Oglala* in 1928, served as a control ship in the tests. This photo was taken on 21 July 1921. Naval History and Heritage Command photo.





Former German battleship (1911-1920), photographed after it was taken over by the U.S. Navy. The USS *Ostfriesland* was commissioned 7 April 1920 and decommissioned 20 September 1920. Photo credit: Naval History and Heritage Command.

“We wanted to destroy her from the air, but when it was actually accomplished, it was a very serious and awesome sight.”

— General Billy Mitchell

a huge boost. Mitchell repeated his performance in nearby waters against USS *Alabama* in September 1921, and two years later against USS *Virginia* and USS *New Jersey*. Soon aircraft and air power assumed larger roles in U.S. strategy. Mitchell regarded these tests as definitive and said that “aircraft constitute a positive defense of our country against invasion.”

Many of the participants in the tests went on to have prominent careers. Streett later commanded bomber operations in World War II and was instrumental in forming Strategic Air Command. Henry H. “Hap” Arnold flew a plane in the tests and later was commander of the U.S. Army Air Forces in World War II. Clayton Bissell helped develop air doctrine and commanded Tenth Air Force in World War II. Among the navy and marine corps participants, Roy Geiger and Francis Mulcahy pioneered Marine Corps aviation, holding prominent commands in the Pacific, while Felix Stump did the same for the Navy. For all of these men, participation in the bombing tests of 1921 was a major professional milestone.

For Billy Mitchell, the sinkings off Virginia in 1921 proved a zenith of his career. His achievement reinforced the case for aviation’s future promise. Naval aviators successfully pressed for development of aircraft carriers and air units for the fleet, while army pilots used Mitchell as a guide and inspiration for their doctrine and organization through the World War II years and beyond. The effects of both of these efforts are still apparent in the navy and air force today.

The lessons of the bombing tests remained open for some debate in naval circles, chiefly because the ships were stationary and not defending themselves. Mitchell’s feat was partly replicated in 1940 by the British raid on Taranto and in December 1941 by the Japanese raid at Pearl Harbor, but in both cases the target ships were stationary in harbor. The sinkings of HMS *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* by Japanese aircraft off Malaya on December 10, 1941, made it clear the age of the battleship as dominant naval vessel was closing. The destruction by American planes of *Musashi* in October 1944 and *Yamato* in April 1945, the most powerful battleships afloat, removed any final doubt on that score. What Mitchell’s successes in 1921 foreshadowed had come to pass.

A century ago this summer, Wisconsin’s Billy Mitchell changed military aviation forever. In the process he inspired generations of fliers of all services, and left a lasting mark on warfare still visible today.



After strafing and topside damage by pursuit planes, Mitchell’s bombers dropped accurate strikes on and around the ship, including a bomb down the stack. G 102 broke in half and sank quickly. On July 18, *Frankfurt* succumbed to similar tactics, with the initial waves provided by navy and marine corps flyers. The first two targets were lightly-armored, whereas *Frankfurt* was much better protected. Nonetheless, the fact remained that planes alone had sunk three modern ships.

Despite these successes, the biggest prize still needed bagging. “This was our real test,” recalled Mitchell in 1925. “If we could not sink this great ship the efforts against the other smaller vessels would be minimized and the development of air power against shipping might be arrested, at least for the time being.” On July 20 the strikes against *Ostfriesland* commenced. Navy and marine planes raked *Ostfriesland*’s decks with smaller bombs and were just flying away when Mitchell and his planes arrived in the afternoon. After circling for almost an hour while damage was assessed, the Army fliers were allowed to attack. Thousand-pound bombs struck on and around the ship, leaving her wounded but afloat. Damage parties went aboard and found her listing and down by the stern, with flooding.

Mitchell’s planes returned the next morning, July 21. At 8:32 Lieutenant Clayton Bissell led a string of six planes into an attack, scoring several hits with thousand-pound bombs and leaving *Ostfriesland* a wreck. Damage parties went aboard again and confirmed that in wartime, the battleship may have been able to make it home, but was almost certainly combat ineffective. Three hours later Mitchell returned with ten planes each carrying two-thousand-pound bombs. They dove in succession and struck accurate hits around the ship, which created the “water hammer” effect and broke open *Ostfriesland*’s hull. After six bombs it was clear no more were needed. “When a death blow has been dealt by a bomb to a vessel,” recalled Mitchell, “there is no mistaking it.” Captain St. Clair Streett, Mitchell’s rear-seat observer, stood up with waving arms and yelled, “She is gone!”

The wounded battleship listed further to port. Her stern dipped lower, and sluggishly she rolled onto her port side. Within a few minutes she was upside down. Her stern sank and the bow clawed at the sky before descending. A minute later *Ostfriesland* was gone, leaving a bubbling spot of water on the surface. A plane dropped a bomb into the bubbles to punctuate the victory. Several admirals wept as *Ostfriesland* slid beneath the waves.

The news of the sinking shocked military circles. For airpower advocates, it was



An American plane drops a phosphorus bomb on USS *Alabama*, September 1921. Photo credit: Naval History and Heritage Command



Images of the USS *Ostfriesland* sinking off Hampton Roads, Virginia after being used as a bombing target. Photo credit: Naval History and Heritage Command.

THE DESERT STORM DOC

STEVEN L. ORECK

By Andrea Hoffman
Collections Manager



Navy Fleet Hospital 15 challenge coin owned by Oreck (V2007.57.35)



Oreck was born in New York City, and was raised there and in New Orleans, Louisiana before entering service in December 1969 while attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Following his graduation in 1970, Oreck reported for active duty in July and was commissioned as an intelligence officer through the Aviation Officer Candidate School at Naval Air Station Pensacola in November. After release from active duty in 1973, he returned to MIT for graduate work in chemical engineering followed by Louisiana State University for medical school. After receiving his MD in 1979 Oreck transferred to the Navy Medical Corps and was serving



as chief of orthopedics at a field hospital in New Jersey when Kuwait was invaded in August 1990.

At that point, Oreck was told it was not a question of if, but rather when he would be called up. The logistics of moving all the necessary hospital equipment—including medical supplies, food, and the structure itself—delayed his deployment for several months.

In the first of two oral history interviews Oreck completed with the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, he explained that after their arrival, "...the equipment was there and we just sort of fell on the equipment... [it] is in all of these boxes, these steel containers, and then you go ahead and open them up and build a hospital... it's got six OR beds and eighty ICU beds and 420 regular beds... It was all modular like Legos."

He went on to explain, "The way these things were designed is you'd open them up out of the can, and the only thing you need to get going was water and fuel and blood. Other than that, you had enough medical supplies and food and everything to run this for the 950 people of the crew plus 500 patients for sixty days. It was all prepackaged."

Over the next month, Fleet Hospital 15 treated about 85% of the marines that were wounded as well as U.S. soldiers and airmen and foreign servicemembers from England, France, and Senegal. After the ground war ended in February and other U.S. Navy medical facilities covered Saudi Arabia, Oreck was asked to stay on as doctor for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) group in Kuwait City. The British, American and Australian EOD dive team was charged with removing unexploded ordnance and mines from the harbor, and due to the inherent hazards of their work, required continued access to medical care.

This British two-tone Disruptive Pattern Material (DPM) bush hat was acquired through trade with a doctor at a nearby Collective Protection (COLPRO) field hospital. It is shown along with a French Ration de Combat and Australian Combat Ration Pack (CRP) Oreck traded for while in Kuwait City. V2007.57.2, V2008.78.10, V2008.78.11

While in Saudi Arabia, FH15 traded medical supplies with a British hospital for this much-needed external fixator. Oreck brought it home as a souvenir. V2004.49.5



It was during this period Oreck traded for some of his more interesting keepsakes from his tour, including a British bush hat and Australian and French rations, the latter the result of him being the only naval officer in Kuwait who spoke French. Perhaps the most unusual souvenir is an external fixator kit used to stabilize broken bones that he traded medical equipment for with a British hospital while in Saudi Arabia.

After his return stateside at the end of April, Oreck's civilian career as an orthopedic surgeon led him to Madison, where he went on to work as a professor

of orthopedics and plastic surgery at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine until his retirement in 2008. He also remained in the Naval Reserve for another 16 years, amongst other assignments serving as regimental surgeon for the 23rd Marine Regiment and as a medical watch officer at the Combat Operations Center at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps in Washington, D.C. during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Oreck retired as a captain on January 1, 2007.

Afterward, Oreck earned his M.A. in History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and was pursuing his doctorate, writing his dissertation on the history of military medicine when he passed away on August 11, 2019. We are grateful for all Oreck's many contributions to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.



Desert Battle Dress Uniform (DBUD) coat and hat shown with boots Oreck wore while in the Persian Gulf. V2004.49.1.1, V2004.49.1.3, V2004.49.2

1991 "Welcome Home Troops" bumper sticker printed by Desert Emblems Company. V2008.78.12



The Legacy of General Billy Mitchell from the Words of WWII Wisconsin Aviators

By Luke Sprague
Oral Historian

Although General Billy Mitchell passed before World War II began—and well before the creation of an independent air force in 1947—the essence of Mitchell's ideas for an air force can be distilled into five actions: reconnaissance, air superiority, unified command, offensive action, and mass. Following here are oral histories from World War II aviators whose wartime experiences give voice to Mitchell's ideas.

RECONNAISSANCE

Kermit E. Bliss, reconnaissance pilot on taking photos:
There was a railroad intersection behind Cannes that they wanted pictures of. That was the first

one, as I recall, that I flew. After that first one then you got settled pretty much into the regular routine, taking your turn to fly when it came up and you eventually developed target areas. Mine eventually became Frankfurt in Germany and so when Frankfurt would come up, I usually was sent because I had flown it a number of times and knew what it looked like.

AIR SUPERIORITY



Harold C. Brown, P-51 pilot recalls the night before D-Day:
So, we had no sleep. At midnight, we were briefing, and the pilots were

there, and they had a big map on the wall with all the yarns all over the place. And our job was to go over Omaha Beach at 3,000 feet and circle it, so that if enemy fighters came in to strafe the beach, we'd shoot them down. And then there was other groups that would be at 5,000, 8,000, 12,000, they were just stacked all over that..



A-2 flight jacket of Rupert Cornelius

UNIFIED COMMAND

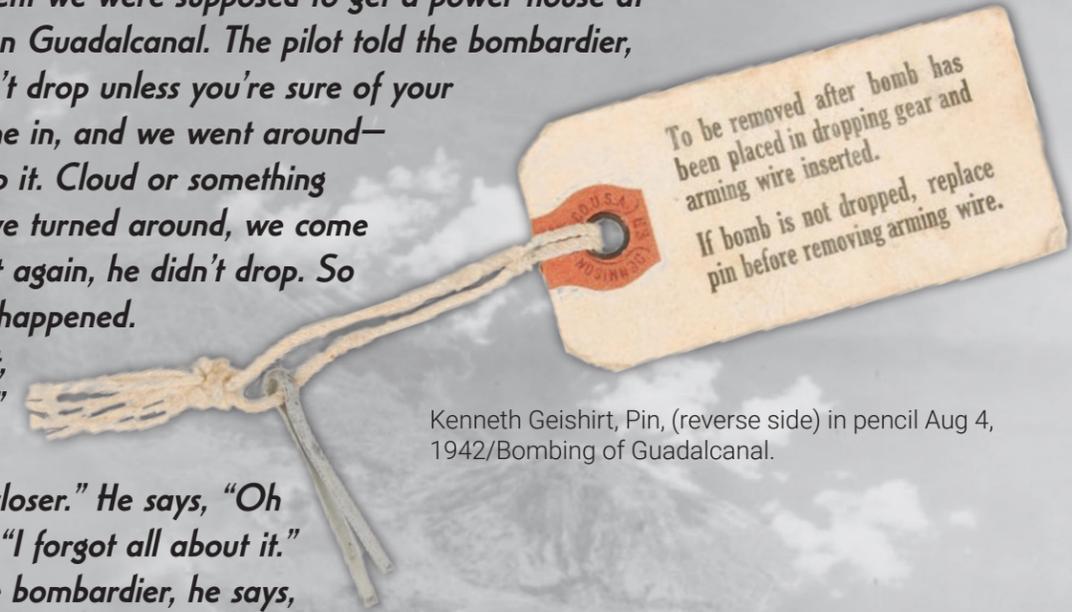
Rupert G. Cornelius, B-17 Pilot, talking about the role of fighters in a formation:
Fighter cover, basically. Because the flak was more intense later than it was earlier. But it was the fighters being held in check by our 51's that helped tremendously.

OFFENSIVE ACTION

Kenneth W. Geishirt, B-17 tail gunner and mechanic, on bombing Guadalcanal:

The first raid we went we were supposed to get a power house at a dam on a river on Guadalcanal. The pilot told the bombardier, he said, "Now, don't drop unless you're sure of your target." So we come in, and we went around—oops, he didn't drop it. Cloud or something drifted across, so we turned around, we come back in, started out again, he didn't drop. So I don't know what happened.

I called up the pilot, I says, "Hey, listen," I says, "that damn ack-ack is getting closer." He says, "Oh my God," he says, "I forgot all about it." So then he told the bombardier, he says, "Drop it." So after that, every first run, zoom, boom, it was gone.



Kenneth Geishirt, Pin, (reverse side) in pencil Aug 4, 1942/Bombing of Guadalcanal.

MASS

Thomas J. Cullen, B-24 Gunner, on missions over Japan:

The other Air Forces had them, but we got there first, and we were the prime B24 attack force. I believe. I think we had the largest number, and we had fairly good success. We struck the, of course the heavy work on much of the industrial power of Japan was done by those earlier raids, B29's with massed fleets of two to three hundred B29's going over at a time with those larger bombs and so forth. So, there was a tremendous amount of damage done . . .



This is Thomas Cullen's blood chit. A blood chit is a communication directed to anyone who found a downed flier. They were were bona fide government IOUs promising to reward those who assisted Allied airmen.

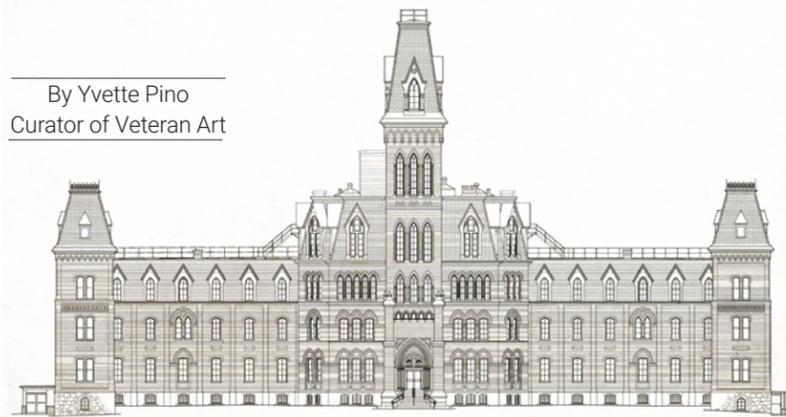
Museum Staff Draws Out Creative Veteran Voice for Soldiers Home Renovation

This spring the renovated Milwaukee VA Soldiers Home, located on the campus of the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center, will once again house veterans. The home first opened in 1869 to Civil War veterans and continued to house veterans until it closed in 1989. As part of an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) agreement with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, The Alexander Company and Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee are leading a team to rehabilitate six of the district's vacant buildings. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is pleased to be part of the team that has selected artwork for the interior of the Old Main and Administration Buildings.

For the last five months Yvette Pino, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Curator of Veteran Art, has reviewed the museum's collections to find imagery that hints to the military experience but does not overtly disclose it. For this project, it was important to remember that the artwork would be displayed in a residence, not in a museum or a gallery. Therefore, Pino sought pieces that were aesthetically pleasing and also represented the Wisconsin veteran experience. Some images chosen are literal representations of military comradery, and yet most offer a more abstract approach to the documentation of place while in military service. Many of the images would likely never be seen in



By Yvette Pino
Curator of Veteran Art



Drawings of the Old Main building, Library of Congress

a military history exhibit because they may not offer anything beyond capturing a moment in time without a specific story attached.

The visual translation of the veteran experience contains imagery that reveals two separate stories. The first identifies the environment in which a military mission takes place and often it acknowledges the passage of time. The second is a unique slant on the tourist experience. Deployments, often in areas of conflict, transport service members to places of the world they never would have visited. The visuals contain images of curiosity, sometimes seen through an anthropological lens.

Trained artists in military service must master mediums of convenience and use supplies they have at hand. They embrace color palettes from their surroundings, provide portraits of exotic cultures, and acknowledge architectural wonders. Frequently seeking solace from living in a conflict zone, veteran artists document of the beauty of war revealed when human nature guides the spirit to elements of calm, whether in a literal visualization or in a serene compositional hand. Sometimes the lens points toward areas of escape; sometimes it drifts toward humor; other times settles on restful slumber, capturing a rare moment of relaxation.

Within the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's collection, the creative lens can be focused beyond the confines of a trained artist's hand to the depths of service member's scrap book. For years Pino has sourced through these images and saved a list of what she calls "unintentional art." These selections include improperly cropped photos that make beautiful abstract compositions, mission-based photography that captures surreal landscapes as well as beautifully composed atmospheres from a surveillance and reconnaissance lens, and finally, images

with bursts of color amidst the uniformity of camouflage. Choosing from this list and from the veteran art within the collection, the most difficult part was narrowing her choices.

Pino feels privileged to have collaborated with the Alexander Company, the Interior Designers at Ramlow/Stein, and the history panel designer Mark Kuehn. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum looks forward to sharing the images of the final space this summer after the grand re-opening of the beautifully renovated and historic Milwaukee Soldiers Home.

Mark Your Calendar

APRIL

5 **Workshop: Indexing Oral Histories Using the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer**
Noon–2:00PM

This beginner-level workshop will focus on using the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) for quickly providing access to oral histories utilizing the index function.

9 **Drink & Draw**
7–8:00PM

Come draw with us. We'll use objects and stories from the museum collection to inspire you. All skill levels are welcome.

20 **Trivia Night**
7–8:00PM

Bust out the big brains for this virtual Trivia Night. Play as an individual or teams in a 3-round game covering topics of history, pop culture, names, places, events, and fun facts.

22 **Mess Night: Combat & Trust with Adam Holton**
7–8:00PM

In 2004 Holton took Madison-based Golf Company to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Challenged with a mission in an area of operation that was almost 50% Shia and 50% Sunni, Holton and the members of Golf Company learned to build trust.

30 **Movie Night and Virtual Discussion: *Bridge on the River Kwai***
7–8:00PM

Join the museum staff for a discussion of the 1957 classic WWII drama. We will cover themes such as conflict, politics, pop culture, the military, and movie-making.

MAY

14 **Drink & Draw**
7–8:00PM

20 **Trivia Night**
7–8:00PM

28 **Movie Night and Virtual Discussion: *The Sand Pebbles***
7–8:00PM

Join the museum staff for a discussion of the 1966 film set in the 1920s. It tells the story of a naval gunboat crew on the Yangtze River facing upheaval in China. We will cover themes such as conflict, politics, pop culture, the military, and movie-making.

JUNE

11 **Drink & Draw**
7–8:00PM

15 **Trivia Night**
7–8:00PM

25 **Movie Night and Virtual Discussion: *Fury***
7–8:00PM

Join the museum staff for a discussion of the 2014 film, *Fury*. This film looks at a young rookie assigned to a veteran sergeant's tank crew as they push through Germany to deliver the final blow to Nazis. We will cover themes such as conflict, politics, pop culture, the military, and movie-making.

***All programs currently are offered virtually via ZOOM unless otherwise specified. For detailed information and additional events visit: wisvetmuseum.com/events**

There is no doubt 2020 was a challenging year for all. Even though the museum was closed to the public most of 2020, museum and foundation staff quickly adapted. They worked together from their homes to produce online content and programming to safely deliver to our members and public in their homes. The foundation was able to sponsor the programs, making it free to attendees, thanks to your donations to cover the virtual platform fees. This would not have been possible without your support. We recognize you, the challenges you all face and want you to know how much we appreciate you.

Because of you, we were able to host more than 40 free online events last year, with over 15,300 individuals who signed up across the country and world, as far away as Singapore. Participants enjoyed a wide range of programs from Curator Conversations, Drink and Draw, Trivia Night, Movie Night discussions, to events like our virtual 360 degree Talking Spirits Cemetery Tour, which takes you to places at Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison and shows you interesting photos and objects from the museum's collection, which are not normally available to the public. For those of you who missed it, you can still take the tour here: wisvetmuseum.com/madison-cemetery-tours/.

Like you, we continue to keep a close eye on the quickly changing landscape of how best to promote health and safety, both for ourselves and for our community. We expect to be virtual for some time yet and have numerous exciting events lined up for 2021, including some special member-only events. Stay tuned to the museum events page at wisvetmuseum.com/events/ for updates. If you missed any of the virtual programs, visit [youtube.com/user/wisvetmuseum1](https://www.youtube.com/user/wisvetmuseum1) to watch.

Again, thank you for helping us continue our mission in preserving the legacies of our veterans and sharing more of their stories with the public. We hope to see you at one of the events in 2021.

Save the Date



The Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation Gala Is Friday, September 24, 2021

Join us on Friday, September 24th for our annual gala at the beautiful Concourse Hotel & Governor's Club in Madison. The event will feature keynote speaker General Vince Brooks. A 1980 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, he led 4,000 cadets as the cadet brigade commander or "First Captain."

A history-maker, Brooks is the first African American to have been chosen for this paramount position, and he was the first cadet to lead the students when women were in all four classes (freshman or "plebe" to senior or "first classman"). He is also the eighth African American in history to attain the military's top rank – four-star general in the United States Army.

All proceeds support educational programs and exhibits at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. Registration opens in June.



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THANK YOU DONORS

A most sincere thank you to all who donated from December 2020 through the end of February 2021. You are the reason we can provide quality programming and award-winning exhibits.



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