



ALLIES

Newsletter for Members and Friends of the Military Historical Society of Minnesota

Allies

Spring, 2011

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Civil War exhibit to open July 9



The public can tour the exhibit. There will be period music, picnic lunches, and re-enactors.

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Mannequins represent Minnesota Civil War soldiers in the exhibit.

A special exhibit commemorating the 150th anniversary of Minnesota's two Civil Wars: Minnesota's role in the War between the North and the South, and Minnesota's internal Civil War, the 1862 Dakota War.

**Exhibit opening -- July 9, 2011
11 a.m. Ceremony**



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Change of Command

Jeff Thielen takes over as director replacing David Hanson who retires after 17 years

Thielen

Jeff Thielen has undertaken some extraordinary challenges in the past few years. He has canoed down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico, and he has walked the entire length of

Hanson

After 17 years at the helm of the Minnesota Military Historical Society, Dave Hanson is stepping down.

The Minnesota Military Museum has undergone extraordinary changes during Hanson's watch, grow-

Stories continue on next page



New Executive Director Jeff Thielen, right, purchased a lifetime membership for himself to the Military Historical Society of Minnesota. He presents the paperwork to outgoing Executive Director Dave Hanson. The change of command happened on May 1, 2011.

Change of Command

Thielen

the Appalachian Trail.

His newest challenge is that of executive director of the Minnesota Military Historical Society and its museum at Camp Ripley.

Thielen took over the reins of the organization at the beginning of May after the retirement of Dave Hanson, who had directed the museum for 17 years.

Thielen is a Little Falls native and graduated from Bemidji State University with a degree in criminal justice. He worked in the Little Falls Police Department before taking a job in enforcement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

His career in the DNR took him around the state and he rose to the post of district supervisor at St. Cloud. He later worked in special projects, including education in snowmobile safety, and with numerous outdoor-related nonprofit organizations. He has been a board member for the U.S. Biathlon

Hanson

ing from a small operation to one that occupies many buildings and is considered one of the best state military museums in the country.

Hanson grew up in Rochester and at age 16 joined the Minnesota State Guard, a state defense force organized during the Korean War to handle local emergencies such as floods because the Minnesota National Guard had been federalized. A year later in 1953, he joined the Minnesota National Guard, launching a 37 year career in the Guard. Starting as a private, he advanced through the ranks and was commissioned in 1960, beginning a series of leadership positions that ended with his retirement as a colonel.

His other career was at IBM in Rochester where he started as a carpenter and assembly person, and later got into quality engineering management. He retired from IBM in 1987.

Hanson said, "I knew I couldn't go home

Thielen

Association and Minnesota Nordic Ski Association.

His parallel career was in the Minnesota National Guard, which he joined in 1974. He later went to officer training, spent much time at Camp Ripley, and was a company commander.

One of his main jobs in the military was to coach the Guard's national biathlon team, including at the Olympic level. In 2003, he retired from the Guard after 30 years. He retired from the DNR three years later.

Since then, Thielen has occupied his time with some adventures he always wanted to do. After the paddle down the Mississippi, he and his wife walked the entire 2,300-mile length of the Appalachian Trail. He also volunteered at national parks in Alaska and Hawaii, and this past winter he was a volunteer at Everglades National Park in Florida.

He has also been involved in the Veterans Deer Hunt at Camp Ripley, an outing for disabled veterans for over 20 years. He was a co-founder of the event.

And he has some prior museum experience. He helped found a small DNR museum at Camp Ripley in 1994-95.

Jack Johnson, who chaired the search committee, said that while Jeff has had limited experience with museums, "we were impressed with his proven track record as a leader and manager. He is familiar with Camp Ripley and already knows many of the people he will be working with on post. We liked Jeff's energy and enthusiasm, outgoing personality, goal orientation, and determination. We think he will be a persuasive advocate for the museum and a good fund raiser."

"One of my first goals is to promote the museum," said Thielen. "I think it's Camp Ripley's best kept secret. We would like to increase the number of visitors and the support, and I have lots of ideas on how to do that."

Thielen said he is inheriting a great asset.

"Dave played an important role in building it. The next phase: we have to promote it."

Hanson

and sit in a rocking chair." Instead he bought land near Camp Ripley and built his own cabin. In 1991, he and his wife, Pam, moved full time to the Little Falls area.

The house project was finished in 1993. "I spent two months watching soap operas and I was bored to death. Dick Hayes, the museum's executive director, asked me if I'd like to get involved in the museum."

In 1994, after Hayes' retirement, Hanson took over as executive director. "When I started, the museum was really having a tough time financially. We were so poor that Dick Hayes had to take \$50 of his own money to buy a beater lawn mower so we could cut the grass."

Since then, Camp Ripley's support for the museum has grown, and the museum "complex" now includes 15 buildings. In addition to interior exhibits, there were six static displays – tanks and artillery and aircraft – when Hanson arrived, and today there are over 50.

Profit from sales at the gift shop has increased from about \$5,000 annually to about \$35,000.

"The major change has been that the relations between the National Guard and the museum have improved significantly," he said. "We fully realize that without the support of the Adjutant General and the post, the museum could not exist," Hanson said.

It hasn't all been a smooth ride, he said. "There have been times when it was very, very frustrating. But you just stick with it. Fortunately there were many more times that were very good. I'm proud to see the growth over the years. It's been very rewarding and satisfying."

Hanson said he will miss it. "I've always had an interest in history and a strong interest in the military. This gave me a chance to indulge both. The museum has been one great cause of all time for me."

Hanson said he's been blessed to work with great staff though the years, including Sandy Erickson and Marge and Merl Fletcher.

Hanson plans to stay involved as a volunteer. "If Jeff (new executive director Jeff Thielen) wants help, he can give me a call and I'll be there. But I'll be very careful not to get under his toes."

ALLIES



Civil War Exhibit to delve into two wars

Minnesota's input into the U.S. Civil War has been well documented. The newly-created state sent over 22,000 troops to fight for the Union. The First Minnesota's charge at Gettysburg is part of Civil War lore.

The other civil war, fought within the boundaries of the state, is less known. The Dakota Indian War broke out in August, 1862, when a small band of Dakota killed several settlers in western Minnesota. The Dakota had sold most of their lands in treaties signed in 1851 and 1858, but government payments were slow and unfair, white settlers were encroaching on the reservations, and people were hungry.

Warriors destroyed the Lower Sioux Agency at Redwood and killed hundreds of civilians across southern Minnesota. In the end, the Dakota were defeated and 38 were hanged. Over half of Minnesota's Civil War soldiers fought the Dakota before they fought the Confederates.

The new Civil War exhibit, opening July 9, looks in depth at both of Minnesota's Civil Wars.

MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA - Application for New or Renewed Membership

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

If you have had military experience, in which branch of service? Check all that apply:

US Army US Navy US Marine Corps US Air Force US Coast Guard
 Other Highest rank achieved _____ Circle one: Active Former Retired

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Individual/Household

Regular (\$25/yr.)
 Sustaining (\$50/yr.)
 Life (\$350. May be paid in four installments of \$90 each. Tell us if you want this option.)

Organization

Regular (\$500)
 Sustaining (\$1,000)

Corporate

Regular (\$1,000)
 Sustaining (\$3,000)

Individual memberships are annual except Life memberships. All contributions of \$500 or more in a single year and all Life memberships are recognized on a plaque in the museum lobby.

PROCEDURE

Pay by check or credit card: Download this form and mail with your check (payable to the Military Historical Society of Minnesota) to Minnesota Military Museum, Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy 115, Little Falls, MN 56345. You can also mail this form without payment and follow up by calling the museum at 320-632-7374 with your credit card information. **Pay online:** GiveMN.org is a simple, secure way to become a member by paying online. Go to www.givemn.razoo.com/story/Military-Historical-Society-Of-Minnesota and follow the prompts.

Your membership is fully tax deductible. We salute and thank you for your support!

Curator's Notes By Doug Bekke

On March 21, the museum and I lost a good friend. Ken Buettner from Avon, Minn., passed away unexpectedly just before his 60th birthday. I first met Ken when he was the recruiting sergeant for my reserve unit at Ft. Snelling in the 1980s.

Ken and I shared a strong interest in military history, and we had many good conversations on various history topics. Shortly after I started working at the museum, Ken started volunteering, and many of the museum's projects could not have been completed without his assistance. Ken was an excellent wood-worker and he assisted me in making all of the exhibit cabinets for the 2001 Pearl Harbor exhibit, the 2003 Airborne exhibit, and since last summer, the soon-to-open Civil War exhibit.



Ken Buettner

He was especially proud of the C-47 door we made for the Airborne exhibit which museum visitors continue to think is a real door cut from a WWII airplane, not a wood and cardboard mock-up.

Ken had a hand in many other projects ranging from preparing hat mounts for storage, cleaning and cataloging guns, helping sort artifacts, and mounting photographs for exhibit. Last year Ken was busy working on the new exhibit of service medals in the museum's Honors Room. Ken was a good friend to me and to the Minnesota Military Museum. His work and friendship were greatly appreciated. He will be missed.



For the past three years, the museum has been working on its new exhibit, "Minnesota's Two Civil Wars," marking the 150th anniversary. This will be the largest exhibit in the museum's history, dealing both with Minnesota's role in the national civil war with the south, and for Minnesota, the bloodier and more traumatic internal Civil War, the 1862 Dakota War.

A large opening event is being planned for 11 a.m. on July 9th with Civil War reenactors doing living history demonstrations -- both military and civilian -- period music, the firing of an original Civil War cannon and other events and activities. A picnic lunch will be available from the Camp Ripley snack bar on the museum grounds.

Several other exhibits on the 1862 Dakota War are planned in the Minnesota River Valley and at the Minnesota Historical Society but this will probably be Minnesota's major exhibit dealing with both conflicts. I hope you can tour the exhibit and attend the opening event.

The museum's exhibit on the Vietnam War is currently undergoing some revisions. We continue to seek combat uniforms worn by Minnesotans in Vietnam. They must be complete with original insignia, as worn in Vietnam, unmodified after the war. They should come with documentation, photographs etc.

We are also seeking items used by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in the wars in Southeast Asia. In the past 20 years, a large number of surplus or reproduction military items have been imported from China and from Vietnam. While these things are very similar to items used by Communist forces in Vietnam, we are only interested in items actually used in the war and brought home as war souvenirs by Minnesotans. We especially need pith helmets, uniform items, and equipment.

The Minnesota Military Museum is dedicated to honoring all Minnesotans who have served in the military defense of the state and the nation. This is a big job. This is very important work. This is a responsibility that continues to expand. The museum needs your support. Please consider donating your time and/or becoming a financial supporter of the museum's mission to honor all of Minnesota's veterans.

Artifact Donation Honor Roll (January 1 through April 30, 2011)

The museum gratefully acknowledges donations of artifacts from the following:

Aitkin County Historical Society ▪ Roger E. Anderson ▪ Alan R. Berger ▪ Vern Berning ▪ Stanley and Adrienne Davis ▪ Jim and Carol Drake ▪ Charlotte Fritz ▪ Eugene Henrickson ▪ Patricia Gustafson ▪ Jack Lambert ▪ Albert Larson ▪ Thorsten Lindquist ▪ Paul V. Meyer ▪ Richard Nash ▪ James Newman ▪ Daniel Ojeda, Jr. ▪ Peter Reis ▪ Kevin Rofidal ▪ Terue Salvigsen ▪ Richard Vosika ▪ James Williamson ▪

Artifact Donations (Jan. 1 through April 30, 2011)

Uniforms: Boots, Jefferson Brogans (CW) (repro) ▪ Blouse, USA uniform WWII ▪ Blouse, USN female (6) ▪ Cap, ACU combat ▪ Cap, BDU ▪ Cap cover, USN female summer (2) ▪ Cap, garrison ▪ Jacket, ACU combat ▪ Necktie, USN female ▪ Purse, black leather USN ▪ Shirt, SS khaki ▪ Shoes, pair (2) ▪ Skirt, USN summer (2) ▪ Sweater, USN female ▪ T-shirt ▪ Trousers, ACU combat ▪ Trousers, SS khaki ▪

Equipment: Bag, barracks ▪ Canteen ▪ Canteen shell, M-1858 ▪ Cup, tin (repro) (2) ▪ Dinner plate, tin ▪ First aid kit ▪ Haversack, tarred (repro) ▪ Mirror, signal ▪ Oats sack (repro) ▪ Personnel marker light, Coast Guard ▪ Pouch, Coast Guard orange nylon ▪ Spurs, pair ▪ Strap, canteen ▪ Strap, leather (CW repro) ▪ Strobe light, Coast Guard survival ▪ Whistle, Coast Guard survival ▪

Miscellaneous: Badges, German WWII ▪ Belt buckle, German WWII ▪ Belt buckle, Hitler youth ▪ Books ▪ C-rations ▪ Collar brass ▪ Documents ▪ Dog tags ▪ Doll, paratrooper ▪ Drill ▪ Flag, Nazi party (3) ▪ Insignia, German WWII ▪ Insignia, U.S. ▪ Magazines ▪ Manuals ▪ Medals, German WWII ▪ Medals, U.S. ▪ MREs ▪ Name tags ▪ Patches, German WWII ▪ Patches, U.S. ▪ Photographs ▪ Pins ▪ Rank ▪ Tinnies (German WWII) ▪

Weapons and related items: Bayonet ▪ Fuses, 25 second (1864) ▪ Holster ▪ Knife, bowie ▪ Knife, Coast Guard survival ▪ Pistol, Belgian Model 1922 ▪ Rifle sling ▪

Memorials (January 1 through April 30)

Given by:

Sidney K. Schmuckler
Richard and Betty Hayes
Paul V. Meyer
Raymond H. Lunde
Richard and Betty Hayes
Paul V. Meyer
Nancy Walsh
Cindi Grunloh
Doug Bekke
Merl and Marge Fletcher
J. Robert Egan
Jim Nygaard
Doug Bekke
Doug Bekke

In Memory of:

Donald J. McMahon
Henry Peck
Henry Peck
MG (Ret.) Ray Bonnabeau
William Heishman
MG (Ret.) Robert Walker
COL Richard A. Walsh
Kenneth L. Buettner
Kenneth L. Buettner
Kenneth L. Buettner
Benita Quinlen Egan
Randy Becker
Carolyn Frederick
Bill Howell

In Memoriam

In Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

**Please indicate here name and address of
member of family to whom we can send
notice of your gift:**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Make checks payable to:
 Minnesota Military Museum
 15000 Hwy. 115, Camp Ripley
 Little Falls MN 56345

Gifts are deductible for income tax purposes

Contributions Honor Roll (Jan. 1 -- April 30, 2011)

Renewing Members: Ron Andreen ▪ Douglas Bekke ▪ Louis O. Bode ▪ Newell Chester ▪ Donald Jensen ▪ Walter J. Kosel ▪ Howard Larsen ▪ Lois Luker ▪ Jean McDonald ▪ Ron Miller ▪ Richard Morey ▪ Andrew Ostapenko ▪ Donald M. Ritchie ▪ John Sjogren ▪ LaVon M. Skoog ▪ Kenneth R. Swanson

New Members: Bernard Boone ▪ Roger & Kate Davis ▪ Douglas J. Jenniges ▪ Janelle Johnson ▪ Terry Johnson ▪ Julie Kryzsko ▪ Mike Kryzsko ▪ Thomas Pesta ▪ Richard A. Pomrenke ▪ Steve Rannenberg ▪ Steve Serie ▪ Harry Sieben ▪ Keith Silbernack ▪ Larry Swenson ▪ Marvin L. Tenhoff ▪ Dennis Thoma ▪ Dale A. Towle ▪ Lois Vosen ▪

American Legion: Post 102, Anoka ▪ Post 455, Cold Spring ▪ Post 334, Coon Rapids ▪ Post 20 Auxiliary, Crookston ▪ Post 15 Auxiliary, Detroit Lakes ▪ Post 12, Long Prairie ▪ Post 59, Montevideo ▪ Post 398, Mound ▪ Post 328, St. Joseph ▪ Post 98, St. Paul Park

VFW: Post 936, Alexandria ▪ Post 1647, Brainerd ▪ Post 4210 Auxiliary, Forest Lake ▪ Post 9713 Auxiliary, Mankato ▪ Post 9073, Randall ▪ Post 800 Auxiliary, Sleepy Eye

Donations: Bank of the West ▪ Browerville Lions ▪ Cragun's Conference & Golf Resort ▪ Janese Evans ▪ Mark Haidet ▪ James Hovda ▪ IBM ▪ Lafayette Lions ▪ Lakewood Bank ▪ Long Prairie Lions ▪ Marshall Eagles ▪ Betty Masoner ▪ Mills Fleet Farm ▪ The Office Shop ▪ Richard A. Pomrenke ▪ Randall State Bank ▪ Rochester Eagles ▪ Susan J. Shelton ▪ Ken Simurdiak ▪ St. Gabriel's Hospital ▪ Kenneth R. Swanson ▪ Willmar Eagles

Please Notify Us of Address Changes

Please notify the museum if your mailing address changes so we can keep our mailing lists current. Changes in mailing rules recently enacted by the U.S. Postal Service require that any of our newsletters with incorrect addresses be returned and we must pay the postage. In order to keep mailing costs down, we must make every effort to maintain our mailing lists properly.

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Allies is published for the members and friends of the Minnesota Military Museum.

Nicholas Ostapenko, **President**
David L. Hanson, **Executive Director**
Doug Bekke, **Curator**
Leland P. Smith, **Archivist**
Sandy Erickson, **Administrator**
Al Zdon, **Editor**

The **Military Historical Society of Minnesota** is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization, registered with the federal and state governments. Donations are tax deductible.

Museum contact information:

Telephone: 320-632-7374
DSN: 871-7374
Fax: 320-632-7797
Email: connect@mnmilitarymuseum.org
Website: www.mnmilitarymuseum.org

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Museum lends support for a documentary film set in Germany during World War II

In January and February, Minnesota Military Museum staff members were involved in the filming of a documentary set in Germany during World War Two. Award-winning documentary film-maker Louise Woehrle (Grandfather's Birthday, Pride of Lions) contacted curator Doug Bekke and asked if the museum could suggest locations, provide uniforms, and line up extras that could be used in several historical scenes for her film *Stalag Luft III: One Man's Story*.

The film is about her uncle, Eighth Air Force Lt. Charles Woehrle, and his two-year plight as a POW at the hands of his German captors.

The scenes filmed in central Minnesota recreated a 70-mile forced march during the harsh winter of 1945 when Woehrle and other prisoners were moved from Stalag Luft III to Moosburg, Germany, away from the advancing Russians, in sub-zero temperatures.

The museum's loaner collection, along with Bekke and assistants Doug Thompson and Charlie Pautler, provided uniforms and props. Pautler recruited eight local men to portray prisoners and was himself cast as a German guard. He also scouted locations for the outdoor sequences, most of which were filmed in rural Cushing.

The museum's World War One-era "40 and 8" box-car was used to "transport" prisoners in one of the scenes.

The museum's World War One-era "40 and 8" box-car was used to "transport" prisoners in one of the scenes.

After the filming, Woehrle told museum staff, "we could not have done it without you—words could never express my gratitude for all you did."

The film is expected to be released this summer.

