



MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA  
MINNESOTA MILITARY MUSEUM

# ALLIES

Newsletter for Members and Friends

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## Minnesota's Nat'l Guard has a history of response to civil disturbances

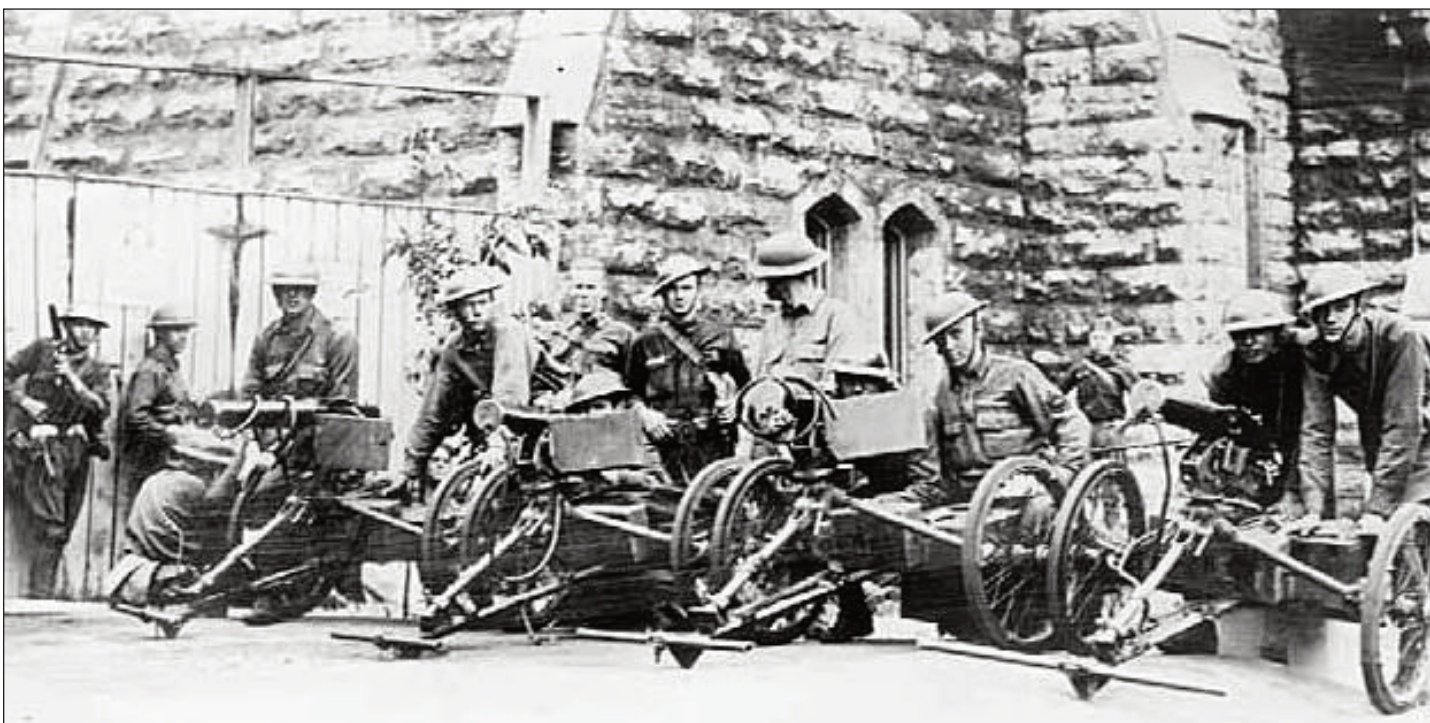
By Daniel R. Ewer

Since its formation in 1856, the Minnesota National Guard has been called upon to support the State of Minnesota more than 91 times<sup>1</sup> in response to a variety of civil disturbances. Minnesota has experienced a wide range of race, labor and other social conflict since its inception and these upheavals received varied responses from state government to include deployment of the National Guard.

The Governor of Minnesota has the option of activating Minnesota's National Guard to assist local civil authorities. "The National Guard is the only military force charged with both a state and federal mission. As such, it is the primary force used when state authorities require assistance over and beyond their normal resources in preserving law and order within a community or state," ac-

ording to the National Guard Association of the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

An overview of the Minnesota National Guard's response to the governor's call reveals a wide spectrum of support to local authorities. Of the estimated 91 civil support missions conducted by the Minnesota National Guard, 43 are well documented. Fourteen of these involved labor strikes; in at least three of these instances rioting was involved, and of these at least two, the 1934 Minneapolis Trucker's Strike and the 1936 Winona Cement Plant riot, involved fatalities prior to the arrival of the military. Non labor-related disturbances included three prison riots. Race played a prominent role in the 1967 riot in the Plymouth Avenue area of North Minneapolis and the 1920 Duluth riot which resulted in the lynching of three black male prisoners accused of raping a white woman. In the early 1960s and '70s, the National Guard responded to violent demonstrations and bomb threats at Saint Cloud



The Guard on duty with machine guns near strike headquarters during the Minneapolis truck drivers' strike, July 1934. (Minnesota Historical Society photo.)



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National Guard members formed a barricade outside the Hormel plant in Austin, January 1986. Strikers taunted the troops, but were nonviolent. (Minneapolis Star-Tribune / Rob Levine photo.)

State, Moorhead State College, Mankato State College and the University of Minnesota that were sparked by the Vietnam War. In a more recent example, National Guardsmen provided support during protests in conjunction with the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul.

Minnesota's changing socio-economic climate, and other factors causing civil unrest, have been in constant flux since 1856. In some cases of civil unrest, state and local politicians chose to utilize the Minnesota National Guard. Three examples in Minnesota's history serve to illustrate the spectrum of tactics used by the Guard under the direction of state government.

### Minneapolis Truckers Strike

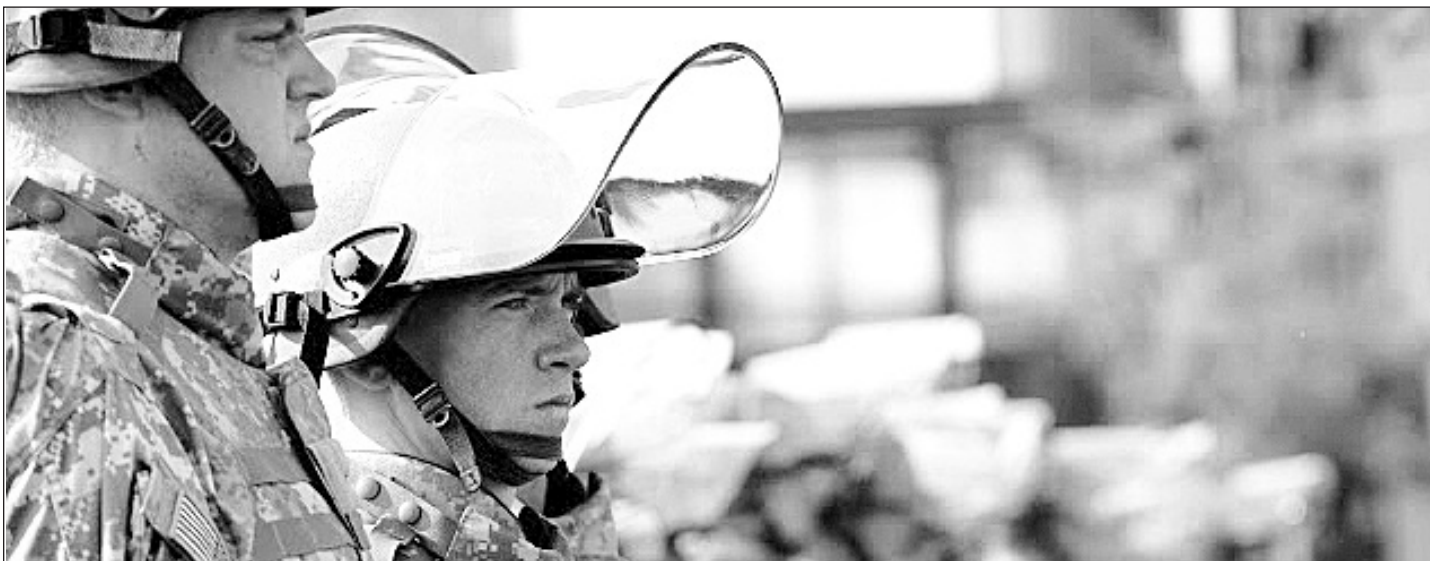
When the Guard deployed in response to the Minneapolis Truckers Strike in 1934, most Guard units had little or no experience with state active duty missions. "This was the biggest thing in mobilization that has been accomplished in years," said Capt. Sandy Brown, 135th Infantry.<sup>3</sup> In May, three men were killed in brutal street fighting that erupted as a result of a strike that brought most trucking operations in Minneapolis to a halt. The next day, responding to a request from civil authorities in Minneapolis and Hennepin County, the Commander-in-Chief of the Minnesota National Guard, Governor Floyd B. Olson, directed Adjutant General Ellard A. Walsh to "utilize such portions of the National Guard as was deemed advisable to aid and assist the civil authorities." About 2,500 soldiers, mostly 125th and 151st Field Artillery and 205th and 206th Infantry,

were called up. They were billeted at the Minneapolis armory and the State Fairgrounds, where they also set up a stockade for civilian prisoners. Although mobilized, they "stood by" in their billets and were not immediately deployed on the streets.

As part of their overall crisis response, the National Guard developed plans for defending their armories from attack by rioting mobs. According to an official directive, "In the event of an attack upon the armory ... infantry riflemen ... will proceed at once to the roof of the armory. Four men will be placed at windows on the second floor over the entrances, on each side of the building. The remainder of the guard battery will be held in reserve to counterattack at any point where weakness may develop, or to clear the enemy away from the building."<sup>5</sup> Fortunately, this defense was not tested.

One of the more significant tactical developments during this mission was the formation of a provisional Gas Platoon which was in charge of all riot control munitions. They came heavily equipped. The tear gas augmented equipment that included shields, rifles with fixed bayonets, 12-gauge shotguns, .30 caliber machine guns, and M-28 Thompson sub-machine guns with riot cartridges.

The initial state active duty mission in May lasted only a few days because a "truce" was negotiated between truck owners and drivers, but it didn't last. After sending the National Guard Soldiers home, the mission was reinsti-



Soldiers with the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor, stand guard to assist St. Paul Police in maintaining order during an aggressive demonstration, Sept. 1, 2008 in St. Paul. The demonstrators were protesting during day one of the Republican National Convention. (Minnesota National Guard photo.)

tuted with a larger force of 3,500 soldiers who were called back to Minneapolis in response to fierce street fighting that resulted in the death of two and injury to 61 persons on July 20. Minnesota Governor Olson declared martial law in the City of Minneapolis on July 26 and troops patrolled the streets to preserve law and order. When establishing martial law, according to the Supreme Court Case of *Luther v. Borden*, “a state may use its military power to put down an armed insurrection too strong to be controlled by civil authority. The state itself must determine what degree of force the crisis demands.”<sup>6</sup>

On the evening of July 31, the National Guard received a phone call from a strike leader who stated, “Get your God-damned troops off the streets or we will fight you.” Just ten hours later at 3:45 a.m., the National Guard raided the strike headquarters, took strike leaders into custody and impounded 37 vehicles. The National Guard continued to patrol city streets in military and police vehicles to protect trucking lanes. On August 21 the strike was settled and martial law was lifted, ending the most violent episode in Minnesota labor history. All troops were demobilized and returned to home stations by the evening of August 22.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Hormel Meatpacker Strike**

A second example of the National Guard’s response to a state need for support was the 1986 Hormel Meatpacker’s Strike in Austin, Minnesota. Gov. Rudy Perpich called out the National Guard on January 20 to maintain law and order in the wake of property damage and growing threats of violence at the strike-bound Hormel plant. The governor was contacted by the Austin mayor, police chief and the Mower County Sheriff, who claimed the sit-

uation was out of control and exceeded their capabilities. “There has been a complete loss of law and order at the ... plant,” said Plant Manager Deryl Arnold. “The police are powerless to control mob violence, mass picketing and wanton destruction or property. Mob psychology has taken over.”<sup>8</sup>

The Guard showed up equipped with riot shields, batons, gas masks and cold weather gear to face angry picketers. Armored personnel carriers were also available for traffic control. Over a period of four weeks, 1,000 soldiers, primarily from 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment, patrolled the streets and packing plant gates at an estimated state expense of \$60,000 per day. Few of these soldiers had ever served in state active duty status, much less in response to civil disorder, so when the order came down, the unit trained for a few days before reporting for duty in Austin. The bitter strike lasted six months—one of the longest in state history—and tore away the fabric of the community in ways that never fully healed. There were taunts, but no reports of physical violence against the National Guard or serious Guard injuries.

#### **Republican National Convention**

A more recent example occurred during the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul. The St. Paul Police Department requested National Guard personnel to assist with crowd control and Gov. Tim Pawlenty agreed.<sup>9</sup> Three hundred soldiers from the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor, a Minnesota Army National Guard battalion headquartered in Brainerd, were mobilized as a result.

The 1-194th was tasked to assist by using riot control tac-

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tics, as well as shields and batons, to keep crowds under control, if needed. “We trained for a couple days, learning how each squad has an assigned task,” said Spc. Ben Doran, an infantryman with the 1-194. Interviewed during his deployment, Doran pointed out that the shields and batons were for keeping crowds back. “We want to use the minimum amount of force necessary.”

For five days in early September, thousands of protesters with a variety of agendas and concerns took to the streets around the Capitol and downtown leading toward Xcel Energy Center, where the convention was being held. Some violence erupted and there were many arrests, but the Guard stood by primarily to provide back-up for the St. Paul and Minneapolis Police Departments and the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office. Fortunately, at no time did the Guard have to actively use force against marchers and demonstrators.

The equipment used for civil disturbances has not changed much since the Convention. Today’s National Guardsman responds to civil disturbances equipped with shields, shin guards, face shields, gas masks, hand-held radios and batons. Though they do not typically deploy with weapons, they all receive specialized training in the use of non-lethal ammunition, gas canisters, control holds and take down techniques. Military Police units also learn to use Tasers and pepper spray.

What the guard brings to the equation is well equipped and trained manpower. “We provide more manpower and the ability to work together in organized formations as one collective group,” said Sgt. 1st Class David Whaley, former National Guard Response Force (NGRF) Coordinator. Minnesota has four 100-member NGRF teams, composed of a North Team, South Team, Metro Team and a team in reserve. These team assignments are tasked to units on a rotating basis. Currently serving units are the 257th and 34th Military Police Companies, the 151st Field Artillery and the 834th Aviation Support Battalion.

“Minnesota is leading the way with our instructor training program and annual validation process. As an example, we use 800 MHz police-band radios that enable all forces to communicate. Other states copy our techniques,” Whaley points out. The request process has also been fine-tuned over time. Now, local sheriffs and mayors have a single point of contact in the National Guard. This Minnesota Duty Officer routes the request to the governor and the Adjutant General for approval and determines what type of unit would best meet the mission requirements.

The makeup of today’s National Guardsman is increasingly diverse. Soldier’s personal backgrounds and any biases based on race, gender and politics do not divert training or mission accomplishment. “We are all soldiers

and remain professional. The annual training we receive allows us to keep cool under duress,” said Whaley. “We demonstrate the highest qualities because we know we are in the public eye.”

Minnesota has experienced a wide range of race, labor and other social conflict since its inception, and its National Guard has an enviable record of success when it was needed to preserve order and protect lives and property.

*Master Sergeant Daniel R. Ewer is Command Historian for the Minnesota Army National Guard.*

*Our understanding of the National Guard’s response to civil disturbance would benefit from further research. If you wish to provide information or donate articles or other artifacts please contact the author at [daniel.r.ewer.mil@mail.mil](mailto:daniel.r.ewer.mil@mail.mil). All contributions will be archived at the Minnesota Military Museum Research Library.*

### Sources

<sup>1</sup>Fredric D. McCarthy, *The Military in Civil Disturbances*. State of Minnesota, 1934, 1, Minnesota Military Museum Archives. McCarthy claims there were 60 missions prior to 1934. I have documentation for 6 in that time period plus an additional 31 since 1934. Spreadsheet available upon request. Records for 1986 thru 2006 are very likely incomplete. The four documented missions are the 1986 Hormel Meatpacker’s Strike, a 1989 unknown civil disturbance in International Falls, the 1993 Metro Mobility Strike, and the 2001 State Nursing Assistant Strike.

<sup>2</sup>*Civil Disturbance Duty Army and Air National Guard since World War II*. Washington, D.C., National Guard Association of the U.S., 1969, 1.

<sup>3</sup>Sandy Brown, “Report on Mobilization,” Report on National Guard for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1935, 1, Minnesota Military Museum Archives.

<sup>4</sup>E.A. Walsh, sworn statement of events, 3-10, Minnesota Military Museum Archives.

<sup>5</sup>Cpt. John Reboh, “Field Order Number One: Plan for the defense of the armory,” July 18, 1934, Minnesota Military Museum Archives.

<sup>6</sup>McCarthy, “The Military in Civil Disturbances,” 3.

<sup>7</sup>Lt. Col. J.E. Nelson, “Report of Use of National Guard for Emergency Duty for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1935,” 1935, 2, Minnesota Military Museum Archives.

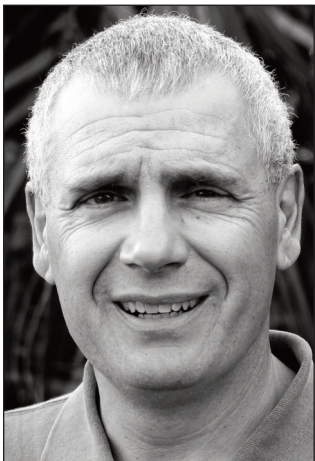
<sup>8</sup>Jacqui Banaszynski and Bill Salisbury, “Guard activated to keep peace,” *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 1986, 1.

<sup>9</sup>“Minnesota National Guard Soldiers assist St. Paul Police in Quelling Demonstrators,” last modified March 11, 2013.

[http://www.minnesotanationalguard.org/press\\_room/e-zine/articles/index.php?item=1585](http://www.minnesotanationalguard.org/press_room/e-zine/articles/index.php?item=1585)

## DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

By Jeff Thielen



We recently received a check at the museum for \$350 from Thrivent Financial from their Thrivent Choice program. I mention this because many of you may be members of Thrivent Financial and I wanted to make you aware the Military Historical Society of Minnesota is registered as one of the organizations in the Thrivent Financial Choice program. You may direct your "choice" dollars online or by phone. If you have questions on this

program, please contact your Thrivent representative.

If you are aware of similar programs where member contributions may be directed or matched for a non-profit, please drop me a note and give me a little information about the program so that I can register the MHSM and museum.

On a higher note, the MHSM and Minnesota Military Museum recently received full civilian museum certification to receive historical property from the United States Air Force. This process has taken over a year and involved the preparation of an extensive application package along with a site visit from the Air Force. The review team, which submitted a seven page report to accompany its recommendation for approval, was particularly impressed with the quality of our exhibits and for ". . . how much it [the museum] offers and how much it does right considering its size, location and limited resources. "

What this means to the museum is that we are now eligible to acquire historic Air Force equipment and property to display at the museum. At this point it has not been determined what type or how many aircraft we will display; however, initial inquiries have been made to secure a C-130 model so visitors to the museum could have a close up view of the most common fix winged aircraft utilizing the Camp Ripley airfield.

There will be many additional expenses with the acquisition and preservation of any aircraft we receive, so if you are aware of any hidden funding sources or would like to help support these efforts, please let me know.

## CURATOR'S NOTES

By Doug Bekke



On July 18th the museum opened its new exhibit, Minnesota Voices From the Vietnam War. The exhibit tells the story of Minnesota veterans in Vietnam through their own words.

Over the previous 18 months, veterans were interviewed or they sent to the museum their personal stories of service in Vietnam. These stories were edited down to a usable size, combined with their personal

photos and placed on the wall around the exhibit room.

There was fear that the exhibit would contain too much text and by general museum standards it does, but the exhibit works well, and has been very favorably received by the veterans, their families, and by others who have viewed it. Everyone has a story to tell. I hope that this exhibit has helped encourage veterans to continue (or start) to tell their stories.

Work continues on the WWI German and WWII Japanese cannons. Wooden wheels are being rebuilt or carefully scraped to remove the layers of old flaking paint. Damaged parts are being repaired and missing parts are being replaced. We hope to have everything ready for painting in the spring. We are seeking bored but experienced machinists and metal fabricators who would like some challenging projects remanufacturing parts missing from the guns.

The special Civil War exhibit, in place since 2011, has been closed. We intend to save quite a lot of the exhibit material and integrate it into the museum's permanent exhibit space. Once the Civil War has been removed we will start work on our World War I one hundredth anniversary exhibit. This exhibit will open in July of 2016.

I will retire from the museum at the end of December 2016 and I have many projects to complete before that date.

**ALLIES****OUT OF THE ARCHIVES**

By Chad Conrady



I have continued to process the Adjutant General's Office (AGO) Records, and assorted collections of movie film. Since June, I have been working on a number of series within the collection, but some of the largest series comprise state active duty carried out by the Minnesota National Guard, which include strikes starting with the Minneapolis Truckers strike in 1934 to the Hormel strike of the 1980s, flood duty, and use of the National Guard

to help locate missing persons.

In a similar, but separate, series I have organized AGO records concerning the Executive Council providing state and federal grants to Minnesota communities to help recover from natural disasters. These are in the collection because in the 1960s and into the 1970s Major General Chester J. Moeglein was a member of the Executive Council and helped to distribute funds.

The other two series I am currently working on are those regarding Camp Ripley and the Armory and Non-Armory Construction Program. Camp Ripley records include

correspondence on the initial construction and land acquisition that started in 1929 and up to 1942 when the W.P.A. program was stopped because of the start of World War Two. The other records included in this series include Camp Regulations and reports of Archeological Surveys completed around the military reservation. The Armory and Non-Armory Construction Program includes correspondence, contracts, and blueprints of the many National Guard construction projects that happened after the end of World War Two. These include records for the aluminum hutments at Ripley and the construction of various armories in Minnesota.

As of right now, there is about a cubic foot of correspondence in this series, and when possible I kept correspondence about a specific project together. The archives recently acquired additional records from the Guard that include materials on the Norwegian Exchange, Memorializations, and blueprints of buildings built at Camp Ripley in the 1930s.

I have started to switch gears a bit on processing motion picture film and am investigating and reaching out to my professional contacts regarding completing a National Film Preservation Foundation grant. After talking with the foundation's grant contact, my approach will be focus on specific film collections starting with the movies taken by Robert P. Miller of Camp Ripley in the 1930s, since these are among the oldest and most deteriorated films in the entire archive.

**Military Museum launches a Minnesota Veterans Registry**

The museum's new website now includes a Minnesota Veterans Registry, a statewide database containing information about the military service of individual Minnesota veterans.

A qualified veteran is anyone who once served or is serving in the US military and was either born in Minnesota or has lived in Minnesota. The website Registry is simple to use and anyone can submit a Minnesota veteran's story and photo. The general public can easily search the database. The service is free of charge as part of the museum's mission to preserve records of Minnesota veterans' service as well as the related artifacts.

"We are excited to have this tool to help us collect the stories of Minnesota veterans," said Chad Conrady, museum archivist. "An account of every veteran's service needs to be recorded, preserved, and made accessible. This is the perfect tool to do so."

Everyone—veterans themselves, family members, and

interested individuals—are strongly encouraged to gather and share veterans' stories by using the Registry. "This is a really important new initiative for the museum," said Jeff Thielen, museum director.

"Our goal is to build the largest, most inclusive online database of Minnesota veterans available to the public. I hope every member and friend of the museum will get involved by submitting veteran information by going to the museum website and clicking on 'Veterans Registry.'"

# DONOR HONOR ROLL, July-September, 2015

## Memorials

Given by:  
194th Tank Regiment Assn.  
Richard and Betty Hayes  
Sarah Lea  
Lyle C. Doerr  
Lyle C. Doerr

In Memory of:  
Jean O'Leary  
Jean O'Leary  
Delbert Kendrick  
Mark Crimmins  
Donald Wilson, Jr.

## Contributions

**Renewing Members:** Roger Avery ▪ Joseph Dudley ▪ Joe Forberg ▪ Alvin Guck ▪ Richard Kaasa ▪ Bernard Koskovich ▪ Eugene Leifeld ▪ Benton Murdock ▪ David Smith ▪ Robert Swetz ▪ Nancy Walsh

**New Members:** Glenn Boche ▪ Neal Gosman ▪ Marty Host ▪ Tony Nathe ▪ Tom Newman ▪ Gregory Oakland ▪ Tim and Mary Scanlan ▪ Mark Vargas ▪

**VFW:** Dept. of MN Ladies VFW Auxiliary ▪ VFW Post 1757 Auxiliary, Cook ▪ VFW Post 5039, Morris ▪

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## SPOTLIGHTED RECENT DONATIONS



From General Jack Vessey: his general officer's pistol and two other pistols, one from Argentina and one from Egypt.

From Mike Mykulic: the dress blue, dress green, and jungle fatigue uniform of Gary Pennebaker who served with the Special Forces MIKE Force in Vietnam.

From Wendell Affield: the US National Flag flown over his "Brown Water Navy" Riverboat during heavy combat operations in Vietnam in 1968, and a collection of photographs related to his service in Vietnam.

From Burt Swanson: two trunks containing all of the uniforms he used in Japan during the Korean War. Mr. Swanson also prepared a nice history of his life and service.

From Shirley Wise: a WWI German army trench knife with a stag handle.

## Museum's website has been completely rebuilt

If you haven't visited the museum's website lately, take a look by going to [www.mnmilitarymuseum.org](http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org). It's been completely rebuilt.

"The old website was pretty good," says Jack Johnson, the website's volunteer manager, "but it needed a fresh, more up-to-date look." Of biggest importance, the new website is compatible for easy use on smart phones and tablets.

"The web page layouts automatically adjust to the size of the user's screen," says Johnson, "which means that you no longer just get a hard-to-read miniaturized version of a web page if you access it on your smart phone or iPad." In addition to its new design, the website contains several other new features. A two-minute "Quick Look" video of a family visit has been added; there is an easy-to-use "Search" function; you can speedily subscribe to the museum's mailing list; and there is now a whole new category of items on the main menu that is for and about veterans.

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**Military Historical Society of Minnesota  
c/o Minnesota Military Museum  
Camp Ripley, 15000 Highway 115  
Little Falls, MN 56345**

Paul Monteen, president  
Jeff Thielen, executive director  
Doug Bekke, curator  
Chad Conrady, archivist  
Sandy Erickson, administrator  
Al Zdon, editor

Phone: 320-616-6050

DSN: 871-7374

Fax: 320-632-7797

Email: [connect@mnmilitarymuseum.org](mailto:connect@mnmilitarymuseum.org)

Website: [www.mnmilitarymuseum.org](http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org)

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Visitors crowd into the exhibit on opening day. (Doug Thompson photo.)

## New exhibit opens: 'Minnesota Voices from the Vietnam War'

A new special exhibit, "Minnesota Voices from the Vietnam War" shares the memories and feelings of participants in America's most divisive conflict. It officially opened on Saturday, July 18, commemorating 50 years since the start of major US combat operations in that country. Using artifacts, words, and photographs, a series of stories is told in the actual words of over 60 Minnesota veterans who were involved.

An estimated 425 people participated in activities during the July 18 opening, including guest speakers Gen.

John Vessey (USA Ret.), former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who received a Distinguished Service Cross in Vietnam, and Vietnam veteran Maj. Gen. Larry Shellito (USA Ret.), former Minnesota Adjutant General and current Minnesota Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. There was food, equipment displays, and period reenactors. Minnesota authors who have written books on their experiences in Vietnam were available for book signings, and a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Mobile Riverine Force Association was also on site.