



2018 ANNUAL REPORT
MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA
July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018



A Banner Year

It was a banner year for the Military Historical Society of Minnesota. The museum collaborated with communities across the state, in support of Vietnam veterans and their families, and moved forward with three major acquisitions.

2018 marked the 50th anniversary of many important Vietnam War milestones. In the spirit of remembering and honoring those who served, the museum developed a mobile exhibit experience and shared it with thousands of Minnesotans as part of a traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. These 3-day events took place in St Paul (State Capitol), Princeton and Mora. A fly-over of Vietnam War era aircraft is pictured above.

The museum was instrumental in providing Vietnam era artifacts, interpretation and even tours. To this end, the museum received financial support from the Minnesota Humanities Center and Twin Cities Public Television.



With great appreciation I extend our thanks to the Minnesota Military Museum.

As Commander of Woodcock Herbst post I experienced the full benefits of partnering and being supported by the fantastic efforts of their staff and the depth of the history they curate.

Hosting a major event in 2018 "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Moving Wall" required a huge network of supporters with experience, abilities and the desire to collaborate. We asked Executive Director Dietrich for a little help and we got so much more than was ever expected. His staff endeavored to give us the best of the best of what they had.

In addition the people of the Museum enthusiastically transported and displayed a truly expert collection right to our venue.

My community, civic groups and our Vietnam veteran population will be ever indebted to the Museum and will never forget.

Most respectfully,

Randy Hatch,
Commander Post 21
Princeton, MN





St Paul, Little Falls, Princeton, & Mora

Museum participation in these communities required extensive coordination with American Legions, VFWs, Veteran Service Organizations and elected officials and deepened relationships with residents.

More than 25,000 people are estimated to have participated in these events while attendance (10,424) at the museum was up slightly from FY17.

The museum also collaborated with the Morrison County Historical Society and the Charles Lindbergh Historic Site to host a series of Central Minnesota Remembers Vietnam public programs.

The Traveling Trunk program continued to be a valuable teaching tool and new funding enabled the museum to develop a Korean War trunk. The museum offers a Traveling Trunk Program to help bring history to life in schools, libraries, other museums, or youth groups. Each trunk focuses on a specific war and contains an assortment of items—original or reproduction—that would have been commonly used by soldiers during that time in our nation's history. The contents of these trunks can be used for research, exhibition, or as a hands-on educational resource that piques student interest in history by engaging them in object-based learning.



Camp Ripley: Education Center

The museum joined the Library of Congress and National WWI Museum in hosting an advance screening of a national PBS documentary entitled *Going to War*.

The documentary featured Sebastian Junger and Vietnam veteran Karl Marlantes.

It was the first time the museum has utilized this 200-seat auditorium at Camp Ripley.



Major Museum Acquisition #1: WWI America Mural

Twin Cities Public Television commissioned Minneapolis artists and Marine veteran David Geister (left) to complete a painting of the traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial while on display at the state capitol grounds in June.

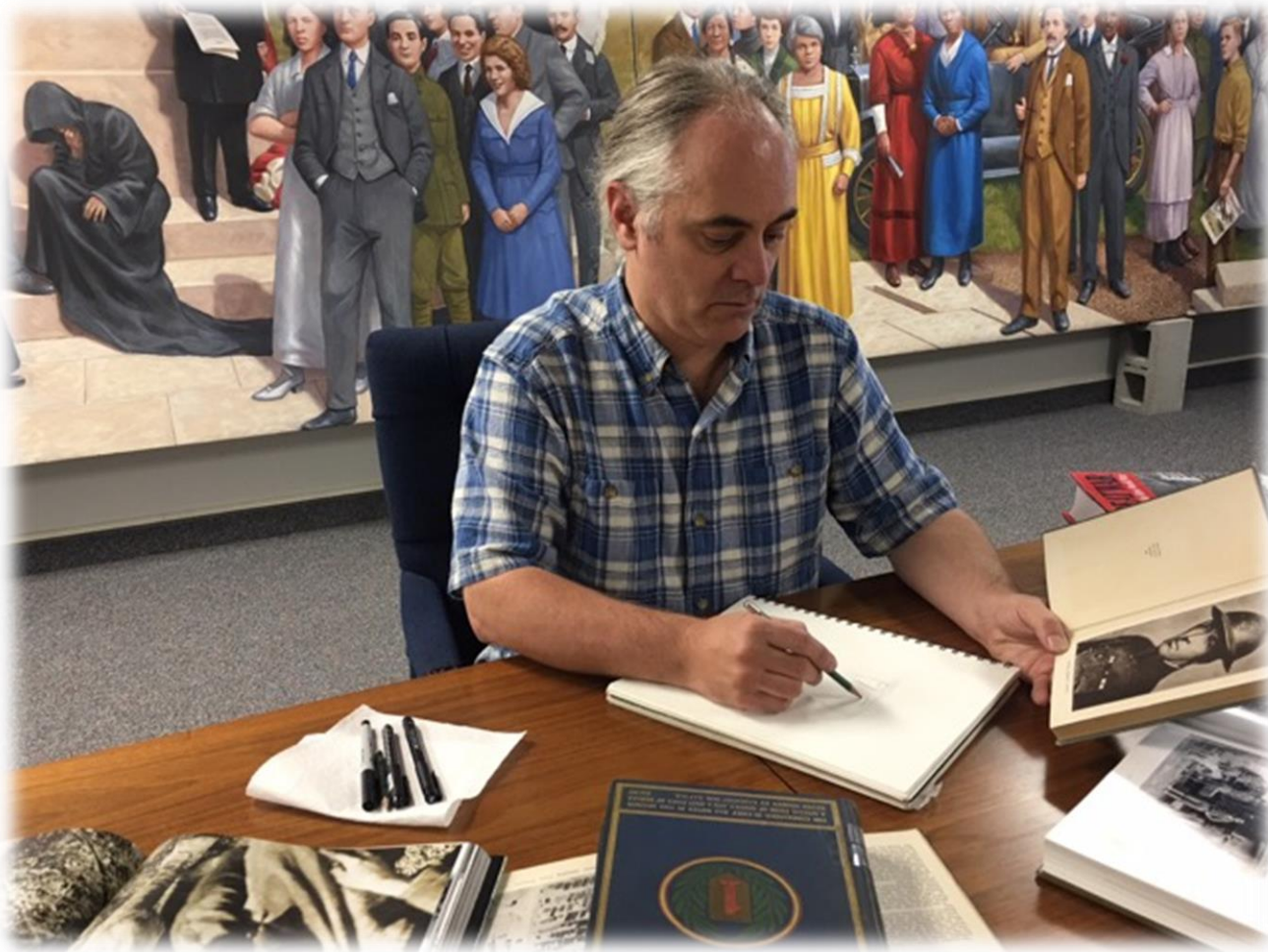
Mr. Geister also became the museum's first Artist-in-Residence as he continued work on his expansive WWI America Mural (right); now at the Minnesota Military Museum.

David's portfolio includes multiple depictions of the Civil War era. Many years ago he served as an interpreter at Fort Snelling. More recently he has been commissioned by the Minnesota Historical Society, Twin Cities Public Television and the Page Education Foundation. He's been invited to be an Artist-in-Residence at the Gettysburg National Military Park in 2019.



Major Museum Acquisition #1: WWI America Mural

The museum acquired the *WWI America* mural from the Minnesota Historical Society in the spring of 2018. Inspired by the *Pantheon de la Guerre* completed 100 years ago, This 30-ft mural depicts more than 100 specific individuals who helped shape, or were shaped by, the Great War and hand a hand in making modern America. The mural is 6 ½ ft high and includes several Minnesotans including Ellard Walsh, Lesley McNair, George Leach and Charles Lindbergh.



Major Museum Acquisition #2: 14,000 Volume Library

In completing his WWI America mural, David Geister referenced books from the museum's new library.

The 2018 opening of the museum's library was many years in the making and made possible by thousands of volunteer hours. Museum volunteer Diane DeVere (right) was recently honored with the *President's Volunteer Service Lifetime Achievement Award*.

Among the thousands of titles in our library collection:

War of the Rebellion Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies: 127 volumes, published in 1880-1900.

Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars: 2 volumes published in 1891 and 1899

The Full Official History of the War with Spain by Murat Halstead: Published in 1899

MN in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, Vol. 1: Edited by Franklin Holbrook. Published in 1923

Our Boys in the Spanish American War - Duluth Battalion

Division Summary of Operations in WWI: 27 volumes. Published 1944

History of the 1st Division, 1917-1919: Published 1922

Americans All - the Rainbow at war by Henry J. Reilly: History of the 42nd U.S. Infantry Division. Published in 1936.

The Naval History of the World War by Thomas G. Frothingham: 3 volumes. Published 1925-1927

Minnesota County (41 counties) Honor Rolls: Illustrated historical records 1917-1919.

The War Diary of George E. Leach: Published 1923

The "Green Book" series of the US Army in WWII: 75 volumes

The Army Air Forces in WWII: 5 volume set. Edited by W.F. Craven and J.L. Cate

U.S. Navy at War, 1941-1945: Official reports by Fleet Admiral E.J. King. Published 1946

U.S. Submarine Losses WWII by the Naval History Division: Published 1963

Combat Connected Naval Casualties in WWII by State: Two volumes. Published in 1946





Major Museum Acquisition #3: Vessey Collection

The museum serves as the principal repository for the extensive collection of General John W. Vessey, Jr., Minnesota's most decorated veteran. Vessey, born in 1922 in Lakeville and raised in Minneapolis, enlisted in 1939 in the Minnesota National Guard and served in the 34th Infantry Division, the first US Army division dispatched to Europe during World War II.

The Vessey collection covers the general's prestigious 46-year military career (1939-1985), spanning WWII through the 1980s Cold War, when he served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to President Ronald Reagan. From uniforms and military memorabilia to photographs, documents and personal correspondence, this unique set of items documents the life and contributions of a significant historical figure.

The Museum's exhibit gallery, Camp Ripley Education Center and anticipated Arden Hills Armory support the on-going commitment of the museum to make this collection accessible to the general public.

An in-depth oral history complements the Museum's Vessey holdings. In 37 individual interviews conducted between March 2012 and April 2013, historian and author Thomas Saylor of Concordia University, St. Paul, documents Vessey's long career in military and public service. Totalling 87 hours of digital audio, the interviews are fully transcribed, and also personally edited by General Vessey. A hardcover printed version features dozens of personal photos, some available nowhere else.



General Vessey and the Museum

John Vessey maintained a strong personal relationship with the Minnesota Military Museum for many years prior to his death in 2016, and personally delivered to the Museum many of the objects and papers currently housed here. The Museum is proud of its relationship with General Vessey, and dedicates itself to honoring his legacy by ensuring public access to items in the collection, and broad use of it.

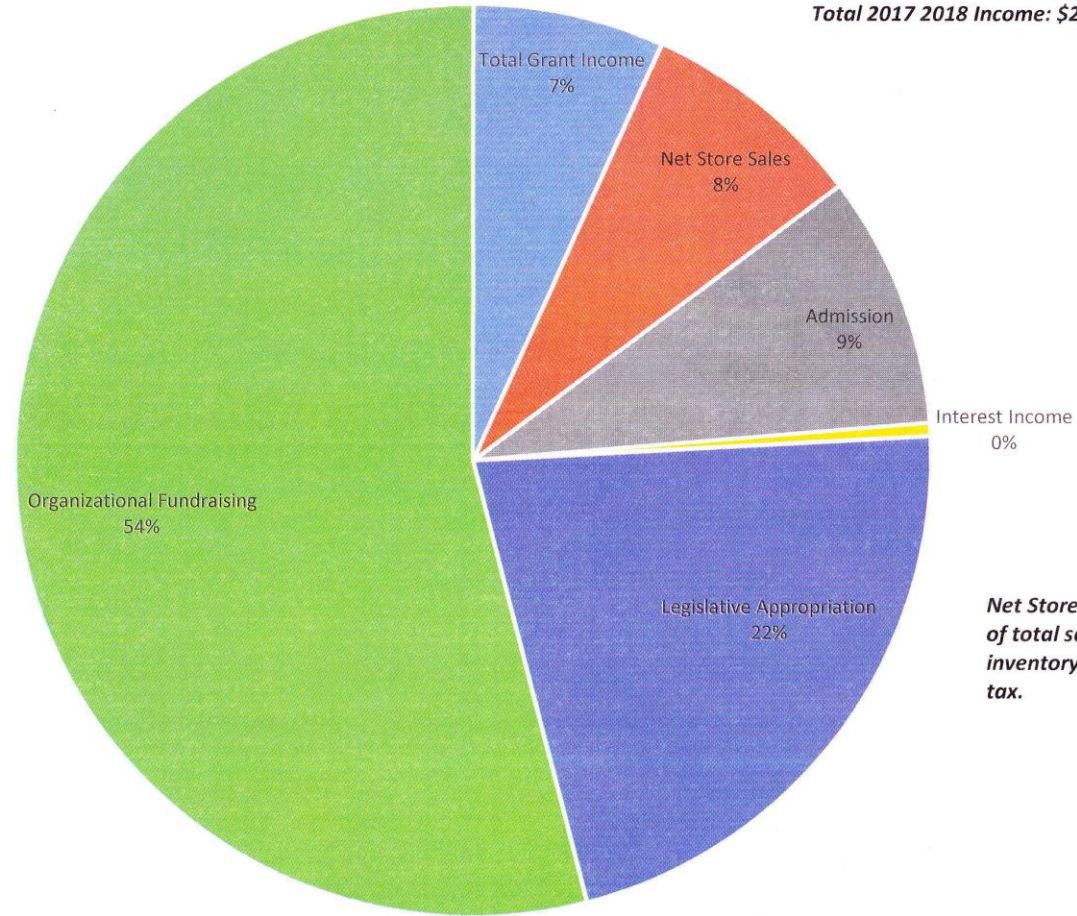
Vessey Collection Committee

To this end, the Museum Board has created a Vessey Collection Committee (VCC) to provide oversight of the collection, and guide future activities. Specifically, the VCC is charged with supervising the work of the Museum's professional archivist and curator; replying to inquiries regarding the use of items from the Vessey collection; creating loan agreements with institutions for artifacts; and developing pedagogical units for use in secondary education social studies curriculum, and university history and military studies education. Given General Vessey's position as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1982-1985, curriculum related to the Cold War is most appropriate, and will be the first unit developed. Additional units for use with World War II and the Vietnam War will follow.

Members of the VCC, which is led by Museum Director Randal Dietrich, are Sarah Vessey, the general's daughter; Lieutenant General (Ret) Richard C. Nash, past adjutant general of the MN National Guard; Dr. Thomas Saylor, Professor of History at Concordia University, St. Paul; Doug Bekke, Museum Curator (Ret); Ryan Welle, Museum Archivist and Librarian; and Doug Thompson, Museum Curator.

2017 2018 Income

Total 2017 2018 Income: \$229,178.63



Organizational Fundraising includes funds raised by the museum from many sources including corporate and fraternal organization donations as well as membership dues and donation box income.

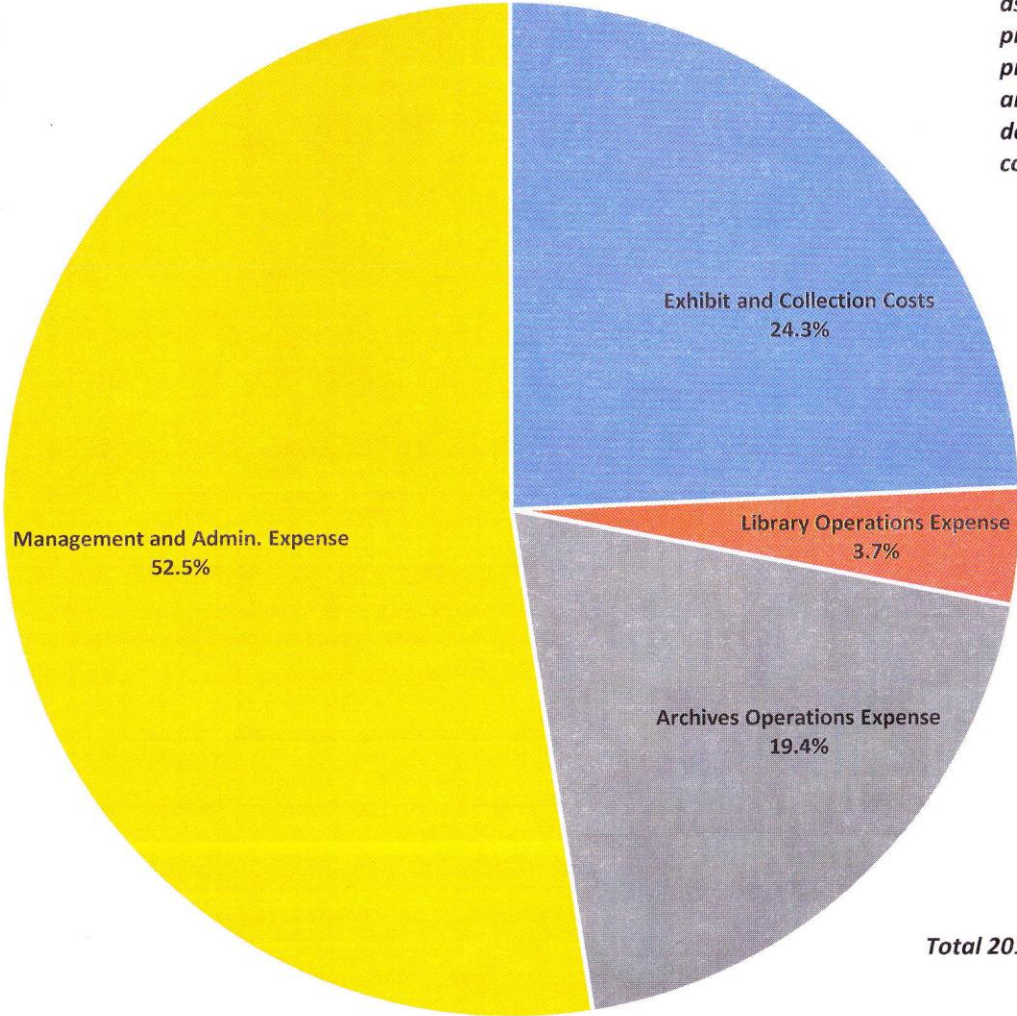
Further detail is available upon request. Our IRS Form 990 is also available for review at the National Charitable Statistics website: <http://nccs.urban.org>

Net Store Sales consists of total sales less inventory cost and sales tax.

2017 2018 Expenses

Program Costs are the essential costs associated with fulfilling the mission of the organization: to educate the public on the service of Minnesota's veterans.

Exhibit & Collection Costs include all expenses associated with acquiring, processing, restoring, preserving and storing artifacts as well as exhibit development and construction.



*Further detail is available upon request. Our IRS Form 990 is also available at the national Center for Charitable Statistics website:
<http://nccs.urban.org>*

Total 2017 2018 Expenses: \$250,848.85



Background, Beliefs & Mission

The Military Historical Society of Minnesota (MHSM) is an independent, non-profit, 501(c)3 educational corporation organized in 1976 for the purpose of interpreting and preserving Minnesota's military history. The Minnesota Military Museum (MMM) is the Society's principal activity. The museum is also a major repository in Minnesota for military artifacts and records.

The Minnesota Military Museum seeks to strengthen public understanding of how armed conflicts and military institutions have shaped our state and national experience. We do this by documenting, preserving, and explaining military history as it was lived by the people of Minnesota.

We are committed to

1. identifying, documenting, preserving, and depicting the stories and contributions of Minnesotans who served in all branches of service or on the home front – in time of peace and war – from Minnesota's early frontier years to the present.
2. Acquiring artifacts and records from the public and other sources that help us to better tell those stories
3. Functioning as an important resource center for the benefit of the general public as well as Minnesota veterans.
4. Providing the opportunity for all people to utilize the museum, regardless of ability to pay.

The mission of the Military Historical Society of Minnesota is to be the state's premier educational resource for military history through exhibits and outreach efforts of the Minnesota Military Museum.

Minnesota Military Museum by the Numbers

100,000 Artifacts
15,000 Photographs
14,000 Books
10,424 Visitors
15 Buildings



Museum Tour Groups

While there was a special effort in FY2018 to reach out to as many communities as possible and meet people where they were, tour groups of all kinds (schools, scouts, retirees, service groups and alike) and sizes continued to be an important driver of museum attendance.

This effort will increase in FY2019.

Board of Directors

President of the Board: A. Paul Monteen: Retired Law Enforcement administrator

V.P. Personnel: Robert L. Boone: Retired School Administrator and retired C.S.M MNARNG

V.P. Finance: Tim Meininger: Retired Bank V.P. & Past President & chair Duluth C of C

V.P. Programs: Jon Van der Hagen: Emergency Room physician and avid history enthusiast

Secretary: Dean Ascheman: Retired IBM executive and veteran advocate

Member: Richard Nash: Major General, Adjutant General, State of Minnesota

Member: Nicholas Ostapenko: Attorney, & retired Brigadier General, MNARNG

Member: Mark Ritchie: Former Secretary of State, Minnesota

Member: Frank A. Messina: Realtor & owner, Messina & Associates, Duluth, MN

Member: Vern Smith: Retired bank executive

Member: Stephen E. Osman—Retired director Ft Snelling Historic Site, MHS

Member: Larry Herke, COL, Retired, U.S. Army/MNARNG, Dir. of Office of Enterprise Sustainability

Harry Wisdom, Jr., LTC, US Army, Retired, veterans advocate

Ex Officio Member: Doug Thompson, Curator

Ex Officio Member: Randal Dietrich, Executive Director

Contact Information

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