

Gillette News Record

Wyoming has a new national treasure. Many of you have probably heard of a “military museum” close to Dubois. Officially it is called the National Museum of Military Vehicles owned and privately funded by Dan and Cynthia Starks. I saw a TV interview of Mr. Starks some time ago about the museum and because I have a bit of a military background decided that it had to go on the “bucket list.”

On a recent weekend, my wife and I journeyed to Lander to visit some friends for the purpose of traveling on to the museum located about 10 miles south of Dubois. Our friends made reservations for the morning tour (a must if you go). Active duty and retired military are admitted for free.

It is simply an incredible place. One is greeted by a couple of tanks at the entrance off of the highway. It only gets better from there. The museum, as expected, is a huge structure holding not only tanks, but anything with wheels on it that have been used by the U.S. (and sometimes allied or opposition forces) during the wars in which it has engaged — Jeeps, howitzers, deuce and a halves, fire trucks, tow trucks for disabled vehicles, etc.

It also has some “one of a kind” displays such as a musket used by the colonists at the battle of Bunker/Breed’s Hill, one of

General Patton's ivory handled pistols and a bicycle used by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese to transport goods along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The tour guide talked to us for about 3.5 hours — it went too quickly. He provided a condensed history associated with many of the displays, including anecdotes surrounding individuals who participated in various wartime events. They are not confined to the Eisenhowers or the McArthurs, but includes stories about the “boots on the ground” GIs as well.

If you have seen Wyoming's other treasures — Devils Tower, Yellowstone, the Tetons — take a day or two to see a manmade one. You will not be disappointed. A treasure unto itself.

Jim Edwards

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