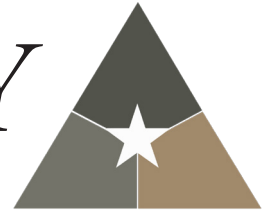




THE QUARTERLY DISPATCH



Featuring articles about our collection, captivating stories from our Nation's military history, and information on upcoming events at the National Museum of Military Vehicles.



U.S. soldier armed with an M79 grenade launcher and Vietnamese civilians take cover from a Viet Cong sniper in a canal. Bao Trai, Vietnam, January 1, 1966.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Word From the Founder	3
Curatorial Department	5
Education Department	6
Tank Restoration Facility	7
The Last Flights Out: Evacuation Operations of April 1975	10
The 81mm Mortar .50 Caliber M-2 Heavy Barrel (HB) Machine Gun “Piggyback”	13
Artifact Highlight: 91st Aero Squadron Tunic and Jerkin	16
Book Review: <i>To Hell and Back</i> by Audie Murphy	19
Join the Conversation	21
Upcoming Events	22
Directory	23

A WORD FROM THE FOUNDER

Help Us Honor Vietnam Veterans, March 28

The Vietnam Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 made March 29th of each year National Vietnam Veterans Day. Wyoming designates March 30 of each year Wyoming Veterans Welcome Home Day.

The National Museum of Military Vehicles is celebrating both of these events at the museum with a full day program Saturday, March 28.

It is an understatement to say American Vietnam Veterans did not receive the recognition they deserved when they returned home from the Vietnam War. No group of American veterans ever have been treated so poorly.

Americans who were not alive during the Vietnam War will find this hard to believe, but Vietnam veterans returning home from the war were regularly ambushed at airports in San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, and Los Angeles by anti-war protestors rushing up to them, literally spitting on them, and calling them baby killers.

During the Vietnam War era, Americans serving in the military were often warned not to appear in public in their uniforms for their own safety. This is only the tip of the iceberg of what our Vietnam veterans endured and how our country failed them.

Most of our Vietnam veterans have passed away but more than 600,000 are still alive in their 70s or older. This adds urgency to this year's National Vietnam Veterans Day. We are losing more Vietnam veterans every day. Who agrees that we should make it a priority now to honor our remaining Vietnam veterans the way they should have been honored more than 50 years ago? Next year may be too late.



Dan Starks, Founder of the National Museum of Military Vehicles.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

We will begin our National Vietnam Veterans Day celebration March 28 with a special in-depth tour of our Vietnam War gallery beginning at 10:00 a.m. to set the stage for the remainder of the day.

At noon, a Blackhawk helicopter piloted by the Wyoming Army National Guard will land at the museum to deliver Wyoming's Governor and First Lady, Adjutant General Porter, Chairman of the Wyoming Veterans Commission, and Director of the Wyoming Veterans Commission.

The helicopter will be on display for the public to see throughout the afternoon.

A Wyoming Veterans Welcome Home Day ceremony will begin at 1:00 p.m. in the Museum's Cowboy Guard Hall. The Governor, the Adjutant General, and the Chairman of the Veterans Commission all will speak and give special recognition to several Wyoming Veterans.

The museum has collaborated with the Wyoming Department of Education to create lesson plans on American military history for teachers throughout Wyoming to use during the current school year. A video from one of these lesson plans about the Vietnam War entitled “Victory on the Battlefield and in Peace” will be shown next.

This 14-minute video gives a concise overview of the history of Vietnam beginning with it becoming a French colony in 1858 through WWII, the French Indochina War, and the impact and consequences of the Vietnam War.

The main event of the day will be the community’s first look at the WyoPBS documentary *Home from the Vietnam War* featuring Wyoming Vietnam veteran Lt. (Ret.) Lee Alley and Vietnam War refugee John Nguyen.

Lt. Alley provided a one-man-last-stand when his platoon was overrun during the battle to give survivors a chance to escape. The film focuses on his experiences when he came home to the U.S.

A highlight of the film is Lt. Alley’s return to Vietnam in 2025 for the first time since the war ended to revisit the Firebase Cudgel battlefield and meet Vietnamese veterans who fought against him in that battle.

After the showing, the film’s director, Lt. Alley, his wife Ellen, and Mr. Nguyen all will participate in a panel discussion and public Q&A moderated by WyoPBS CEO Joanna Kail. The film is in the running for several film festival awards.

Most schools in the U.S. do not teach students about the Vietnam War or the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam veterans and their families. Can you imagine what it must feel like to be a Vietnam veteran in your 70s, 80s, or 90s to find out that what you did on behalf of your country at great cost in the prime of your life is now deemed not important enough to teach in schools?

Please help us fix this on March 28. A huge public turnout will show our Vietnam veterans that their stories, valor, and sacrifice did count, have not been forgotten, and will be remembered forever by the American people.

If you can’t attend our event at the museum, please attend another National Vietnam Veterans Day event around the country. If you can’t attend an event, please honor our Vietnam veterans in your own way before it is too late.

Thank you Vietnam veterans. Welcome home.

Thank you and welcome home all U.S. veterans. Never before have so many owed so much to so few (with apologies to Winston Churchill).

—Dan Starks, Founder, National Museum of Military Vehicles



a film by Mat Hames

Home From^{the} Vietnam War

WYOMING PBS PRESENTS A FILM BY MAT HAMES. DIRECTOR PRODUCERS: JOANNA KAIL, ...WITH NAMES PRODUCED BY ANNETTE NGUYEN, LAURA LITT. CREDITS: LINDA DAN NGUYEN PHAM. PRODUCTION MANAGER: KRISTEN KARANNA LUNA. EDITED BY: MATT WILSON. CAMERA: BRUCE WAGGONER, JOAN KAMRACH, JOEL FORD. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: LEE WY THOMAS. MUSIC: JASON BY DILLAN HALEY. ANIMATION BY GENE BOESCHEN. AN ALPHAS MEDIA FILM. "HOME FROM THE VIETNAM WAR"

WY PBS ALPHAS MEDIA

JOIN US FOR A VIETNAM VETERANS DAY EVENT

Saturday, March 28th | Dubois, WY | National Museum of Military Vehicles
(Museum open 9:30am - 5:00pm)

Governor Gordon's Welcome Home Event	Community First Look of Home From the Vietnam War
10am - Tour of the Vietnam War Gallery	2:15pm - Eagle Society Drum Group from the Wind River Indian Reservation
12pm - Gov. Mark Gordon arrives by Blackhawk to the museum	2:30pm - <i>Victory on the Battlefield and in Peace</i> screening
1pm - Governor's Welcome Home Ceremony	2:45pm - <i>Home From the Vietnam War</i> community first look, panel discussion to follow
2pm - Welcome Home Ceremony concludes	

For more information visit: wyomingpbs.org/vietnam or scan the QR code.



CURATORIAL DEPARTMENT



Rae Whitley, Curator of the National Museum of Military Vehicles

Spring is a very busy season for our Curatorial Department, as we gear up for new exhibits and prepare for the 2026 summer season.

The Curatorial Department's biggest project this Spring will be the installation of multiple new exhibits in the Museum's General Lewis Puller Gallery and General George Patton Gallery. This refresh will expand our existing Vietnam War and World War I displays. 160 newly acquired artifacts will be added, covering exhibit themes such as Trench Warfare, the Motor Transport Corps in WWI, and Special Forces during the Vietnam War.

This is just a small sample of the new exhibits being installed, so plan your summer visit to NMMV!

The Museum will be hosting a special Vietnam Veterans Day Event March 28, including the community premier of *Home From Vietnam*, a film honoring Vietnam War Veteran Lee Alley. Additionally, we have updated an existing interactive display in the Puller Gallery's Firebase to include Lee Alley's story to honor his service.

We are also planning several "Hands-On History" classes in collaboration with Central Wyoming College Dubois. A popular event in the past, "Hands-On History" gives attendees the opportunity to examine artifacts at NMMV before they go on display and learn their historical significance. Dates have been set for March 10, 20, 21, April 16, 17, 18, and May 14, 15, 16. Each class will begin at 6:00PM in the Museum's Dan Daly and Roy Benavidez meeting room.

We look forward to a busy summer season, including America's 250th Anniversary, or semiquincentennial, Celebration. The Museum is planning a special event to celebrate this occasion in addition to our participation in the Dubois 4th of July Parade. More to come on this event in the next issue of *The Quarterly Dispatch*!

For now, enjoy the thoughtfully included articles, artifact highlight, book review, and more. As always, we welcome your feedback. Let us know what topics you want to see in the next issue!

— Rae Whitley, Curator of National Museum of Military Vehicles



Service ribbons on a Navy SEAL dress uniform from the Vietnam War.



WWI Motor Transport Corps Collar Device.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



*Erica Harris, Director of Education,
National Museum of Military Vehicles*

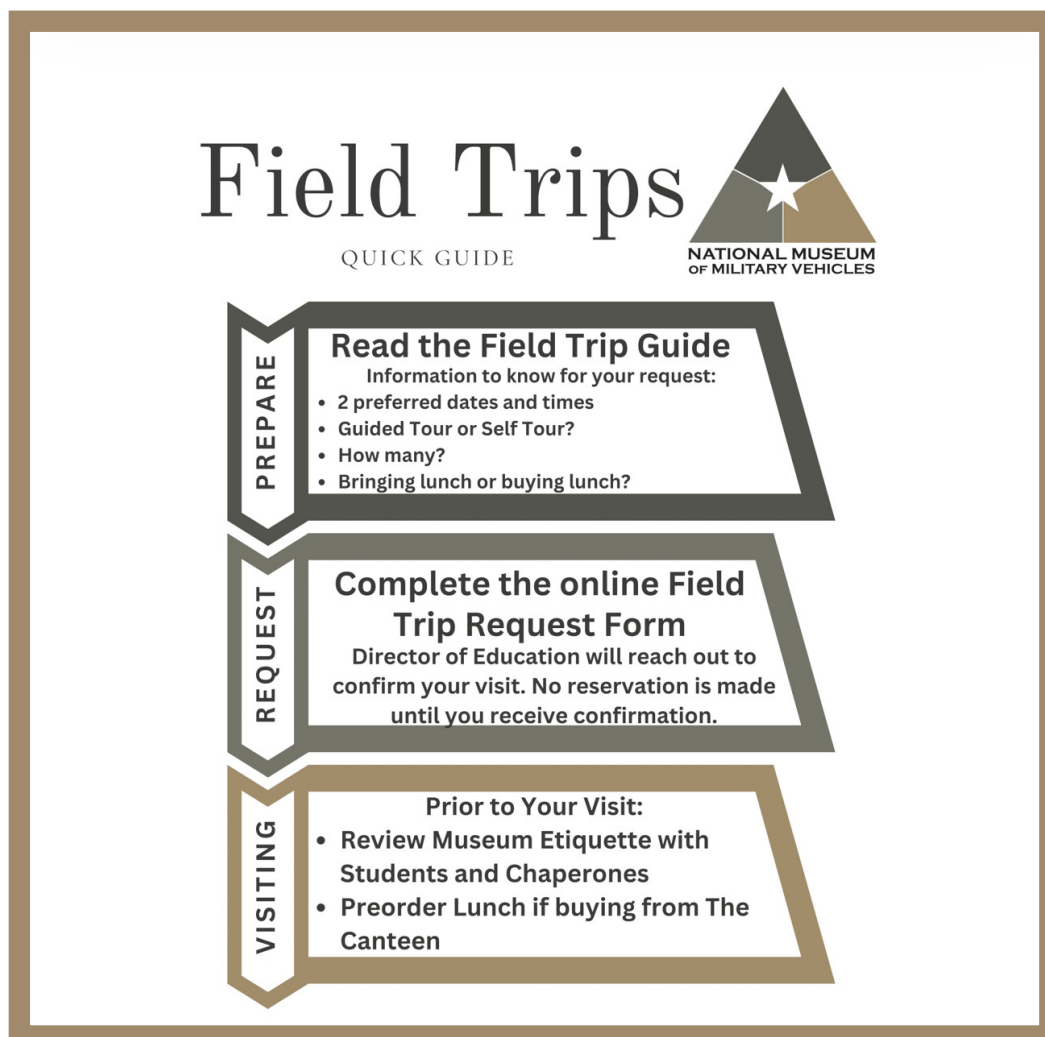
A new year always brings renewed energy to our educational mission at the National Museum of Military Vehicles, and this quarter has been no exception. We've welcomed new schools, new students, and returning partners from across Wyoming, each eager to dive into hands-on learning that connects our nation's military history to the world they know today.

Our winter field trips have continued to blend gallery exploration with meaningful tours. Students from elementary through high school engaged in guided discussions, artifact investigations, and interactive activities tailored to Wyoming's social studies standards.

We also have new lesson plans focused on manufacturing during World War II. These lessons introduce students to the massive industrial mobilization that transformed the American workforce and reshaped communities nationwide. Students examine how factories adapted, how workers contributed to the war effort, and how innovation on the home front helped secure Allied victory.

With each new quarter, we remain committed to providing transformative learning experiences that inspire curiosity, deepen understanding, and empower the next generation of historians, leaders, and changemakers.

— Erica, Director of Education
National Museum of Military Vehicles



TANK RESTORATION FACILITY



Mike Lamb, Tank Restoration Facility Supervisor

The Tank Restoration Facility has been busy this winter with many projects. Our maintenance and winter upkeep for our fleet of vehicles used for parades and events are always underway and looking pretty good for the spring activities. Besides that, we have our ongoing full restoration projects like the M36 Tank Destroyer and M4A2 Sherman.

The M36 effort has had a jump in progress concentrated on the rear of the hull and engine compartment. What was once a V-12 out of a Russian T55 powering this tank while in the hands of the Yugoslavian Military will now be powered by the Ford GAA V-8, which was what this tank originally had coming off the assembly line at the General Motors' Fisher Tank Arsenal.



V12 out of M36 Tank.



Ford GAA Engine for M36



M36 Tools & Exhaust



M36 Old tool Hangers

Going from the V-12 to the V-8 version has required many extensive modifications to get it back to the American standard.

The M4A2 project found a snag once we determined that the original engines supplied were unusable. However, we were lucky enough to find a set of engines close by to replace the bad ones...fingers crossed!



Bad M4A2 Engines

Mixed with all that we're nearly finished with our M48A2 AVLB paint refresh. The last half of the bridge platform has been moved to the sandblast booth making it the last component to paint before reassembly. Be on the lookout for our 3-part series of our progress on the museum's YouTube channel.



AVLB Bridge Half in blast booth

Another great accomplishment the restoration shop experienced was bringing the M88A1 Tank Recovery Vehicle from the front of the Poolaw building to the restoration shop. It is the ultimate workhorse when it comes to moving and maintaining our tank fleet. I'm especially excited to have the M88 not only for its tremendous capabilities around the shop, but that type of vehicle was a big part of my early years in the Marine Corps.



M88A1

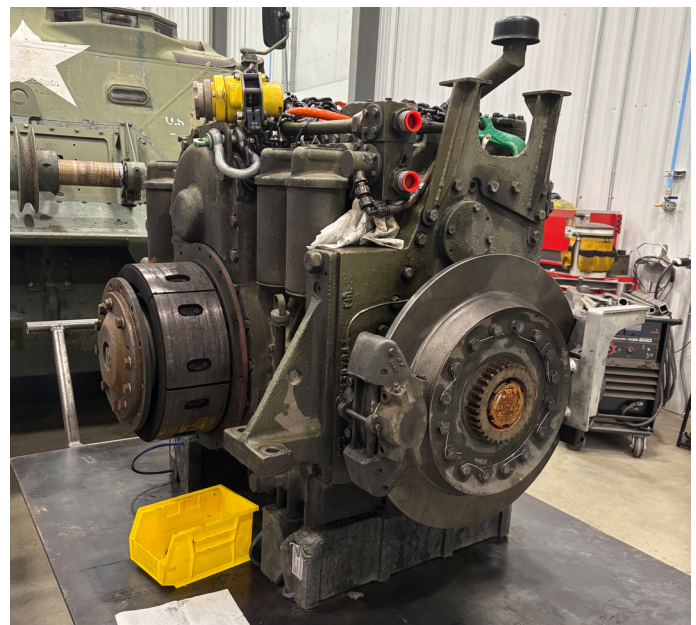
We are also working on a MK11 Chieftain, with problems in the "whoa and go" area. After finding steer and brake pads with discs to take care of the "whoa" portion we found our problem with the "go"!



M48A2 AVLB New Paint

We had to separate the engine from the transmission to get them both out of the tank to replace the brake components on the transmission and that's what exposed the engine to transmission centrifugal clutch assembly.

It became obvious to us that the pads needed replacement and the drum needed resurfaced. Now we're doing what we always do in a case like this.... search the world high and low for what we like to call "un-obtainium" parts!



MK11 Transmission

Oh and there's always a handful of smaller projects not mentioned here for space reasons in the newsletter. If you're in town stop by and see us for a full run-down on all the fun we have here every day!

— **Mike Lamb, Tank Restoration Facility Supervisor**



Subscribe to our Youtube Channel for original content created and produced by the National Museum of Military Vehicles!

@NMMV_USA



M110A2 Howitzer: A Legacy of Firepower



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SUBSCRIBE



THE LAST FLIGHTS OUT: EVACUATION OPERATIONS OF APRIL 1975

By Libby Andrews

In spring 1975, a series of operations were executed to remove U.S. personnel and South Vietnamese civilians whose lives were at risk due to their association with the United States. The Vietnamese refugee airlift was among the largest aerial evacuations in history. The U.S. Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and private contractors evacuated thousands of refugees to islands in the Pacific Ocean, and eventually to the United States. These operations were filled with chaos, fear, and hope, and impacted the lives of all who were involved.

OPERATION EAGLE PULL: THE CAMBODIAN EVACUATION

Before the Vietnam evacuations began, the first major signal of the coming crisis was Operation Eagle Pull. This operation was the evacuation of U.S. personnel and allied Cambodian civilians from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on April 12, 1975. Phnom Penh was one of the last remaining strongholds of the Khmer Republic, and it was clear that air evacuation by helicopter was the only viable option in the region. Operation Eagle Pull was a tactical success carried out without any loss of life. Five days later, the Khmer Republic collapsed, and the Communist Party of Kampuchea, or Khmer Rouge, occupied Phnom Penh. As North Vietnamese forces closed on Saigon later that month, similar plans were activated for South Vietnam.



U.S. Marine provides cover during Operation Eagle Pull.

OPERATION BABYLIFT: GIVING CHILDREN A SECOND CHANCE

Operation Babylift was announced by President Gerald R. Ford on April 3, 1975. The operation's goal was to evacuate orphans and vulnerable children from South Vietnam to the United States and other allied nations before Saigon fell. On April 4, the first Babylift flight ended in tragedy when a U.S. Air Force C-5 Galaxy experienced explosive decompression shortly after takeoff and crashed near Saigon. 138 people were killed, including 78 children. The mission continued despite this disaster, and over the following weeks, more than 2,500 children were evacuated by April 26. However, even as Babylift flights carried children out of the war zone, the North Vietnamese were steadily closing in on South Vietnam's capital, accelerating the broader evacuation of Saigon.



Children onboard Operation Babylift look out windows as the aircraft flies to the U.S.

"I just want to thank those who were involved during Operation Babylift in 1975. I was born in Vietnam in 1975 and was told that I was likely an orphan at the time. I was 3 months old when I was adopted by my parents in the U.S. I have served in the U.S. Army for almost 14 years and thought it was the least I could do for a country that brought me over and accepted me." -Jacob Swartout, Babylift adoptee, expressing his gratitude in a letter to Adopt Vietnam.

OPERATION FREQUENT WIND AND THE FALL OF SAIGON

By late April 1975, refugees were flooding into Saigon from surrounding provinces, overwhelming the city's infrastructure. Fear heightened among civilians as the imminent fall of the capital became evident. Families listened anxiously as radio broadcasts began signaling the final stages of evacuation. They scanned rooftops for helicopters and gathered their essential belongings while sounds of artillery and rocket fire filled the air. Many South Vietnamese who had worked with U.S. military units, government agencies, or media organizations would likely face imprisonment or execution if they were left behind.



A helicopter evacuating Vietnamese officials and their families from the roof of an apartment building in Saigon, South Vietnam, April 29, 1975.

“The signal to evacuate was ‘White Christmas.’ I remember waking up at 3:00 in the morning and hearing ‘White Christmas’ and wondering what the hell it was going to be like trying to walk out of this place.” -Roy Rowan, journalist in Saigon, quoted in Time Magazine.

The final evacuation, Operation Frequent Wind, began on April 29, 1975. A coded radio message signaling the start of the operation included Bing Crosby's "White Christmas," alerting U.S. personnel and designated evacuees that a helicopter evacuation was underway. Due to rocket fire, the use of Saigon's airport and fixed-wing aircraft were no longer a viable option. The evacuation shifted entirely to helicopters operating from the U.S. Embassy and the Defense Attaché Office (DAO) compound. Civilians gathered outside the embassy and compound, clutching their documents and children, hoping for the chance to evacuate. As the crowds grew, U.S. Marines did their best to maintain order while under constant pressure from time limits, aircraft capacity, and growing panic.



Civilians waiting in front of the U.S. Embassy.

Over an eighteen-hour period, U.S. Marine and Navy helicopters flew continuous evacuation missions to ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet stationed offshore. That night, the U.S. Marines providing security were withdrawing and arranging the demolition of the DAO, U.S. equipment, files, and cash. In total, more than 7,000 people were evacuated by helicopter during Operation Frequent Wind.

By mid-morning on April 30, 1975, South Vietnamese President Duong Van Minh had announced the surrender of the Republic of Vietnam. For those who escaped, this was the beginning of their exile from home and the start of their new life in the United States.



An RVNAF UH-1H loaded with Vietnamese evacuees on the deck of the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Midway during Operation Frequent Wind.

“There was the elation of now being out of there and out of danger. Then I reflected on it and I thought this was the most exciting thing that ever happened to me. And I was glad at last that I felt safe again, the safest I felt in 18 hours. But it was such an intense time, at the same time, I felt sad that it was over. I would have liked to get those 450 people out. But those decisions were so much bigger than me, there was nothing I could do.”
-1st Lt Thomas Ochala on the difficulty of leaving behind 450 Vietnamese at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.

THE LASTING IMPACT

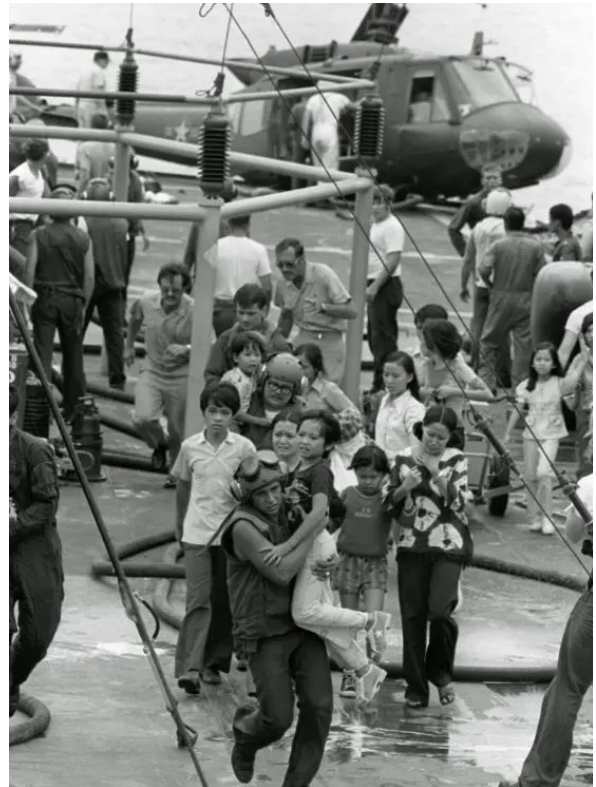
In total, more than 100,000 Vietnamese refugees were evacuated by U.S. forces in April 1975 through air and sea operations. Many arrived in the United States with little more than identification papers and memories of a home they would never see again.

Adjusting to life in the U.S. often required overcoming language barriers, economic hardship, and discrimination. In an already emotionally charged political climate, some people who had lost friends or loved ones in the Vietnam War displayed bitterness toward Vietnamese immigrants. Despite this, many persevered and went on to build families, businesses, and communities across the United States.

“I faced uncertainty and death to have lived this long. My family and I have been blessed, and I am grateful to have lived this life to pay back for all the blessings.” - Manh Nguyen, who was nine years old when evacuated from Saigon. Nguyen went on to serve in the U.S. Army, and is now a Defense Logistics Agency employee with DLA Weapons Support.

The evacuation of Saigon required coordination from members of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force who operated under extreme pressure and made rapid judgment calls to safely evacuate as many people as possible. The difficulty of maintaining order amid chaos, the guilt of leaving people behind, and the responsibility of safeguarding civilians left a lasting impact on the service members involved. This evacuation is not remembered as a victory or defeat, but rather a duty fulfilled under extreme circumstances and the knowledge that their actions saved lives. Reflecting on these operations serves as a reminder that despite the politics and controversy surrounding the Vietnam War, these operations undoubtedly made a difference in the lives of thousands of Vietnamese civilians who entrusted their safety to the U.S. military.

“Every time I see the ship [USS MIDWAY] I kind of relive that day when it was out there waiting for us. I don’t look back. This is my country. I move forward, and I repay what they have given me.” -Stephanie Dinh, an evacuee aboard the USS Midway during Operation Frequent Wind now volunteers at the USS Midway Museum in San Diego, California.



U.S. Marines Vietnamese civilians to safety aboard the USS Blue Ridge, after their evacuation helicopter crashed on the deck of the amphibious command ship.



Vietnamese refugees evacuated by helicopter arrive on board the USS Midway ahead of the fall of Saigon on April 29, 1975.

THE 81MM MORTAR .50 CALIBER M-2 HEAVY BARREL (HB) MACHINE GUN “PIGGYBACK”

Including Including never before published photos of Vietnam War Coast Guard Combat Veteran Tom Davis!

By Jeff Milton

On display in the Patton Gallery of NMMV is an 81mm Mortar Mk 2 Mod 1, Serial Number 1005.

In 1947, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) started deploying cutters known as “weather ships” in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Their main mission was to collect meteorological data, then report it to the U.S. Weather Bureau. Additionally, when an aircraft needed to make an emergency landing at sea, Coast Guard personnel used either mortar-fired parachute flares or deck guns to fire flares into the sky to illuminate the surrounding area for landing.

The existing deck guns and mortar launching parachute flares at the time did not perform well. In most cases the light they provided either burned too bright, blinding pilots, or it ignited at too low an elevation to be useful. Also, the black powder propellant used to launch the illumination flare required cleaning the bore and action after firing only 4-5 rounds. These issues caused the Coast Guard to investigate a different solution for the at-sea illumination mission.

In 1962, the Coast Guard found a potential solution in an existing system that the U.S. Navy was developing. The Navy took an existing 81mm mortar used by both the Army and Marine Corps and developed what was designated the Mk 2 Mod 0 81mm mortar, capable of firing at both high-angle and direct-fire targets. The muzzle-loaded mortar could be fired by either drop fire, like a traditional mortar, or by a trigger mechanism.

In 1963, the USCG received two mounts from the U.S. Navy and began a testing and evaluation process off the coast of Bermuda. Mounting the Mk 2 Mod 0 81mm mortar aboard a 311-foot former seaplane tender, several rounds were fired. The results were considered successful. The Coast Guard pilots participating in the tests reported the illumination provided by the new system was more than adequate, even illuminating their instrument



81mm Mortar Mk 2 Mod 1 on display in the Patton Gallery. panels. In addition, the faster rate of fire that the system provided was an advantage over the Coast Guard’s existing systems.

After successful testing, the Coast Guard Office of Gunnery and Readiness approved the installation of the 81mm mortars for deployment on their ocean station cutters and was also under consideration to replace the aging 20mm Oerlikon machine guns mounted on its 82-foot Point Class and 95-foot Cape Class patrol boats. These cutters’ primary mission was law enforcement, but they were frequently called to conduct search and rescue missions. The thought process was that the new weapon, with some modifications, could support both missions, so the Coast Guard set out to improve on the mortar’s offensive capabilities.

This mission fell to the only ordnance man in the Coast Guard, Chief Warrant Officer Elmer L. Hicks. Hicks, a former fire control technician, undertook the development of the multi-use weapons system. By mid-1964, he came up with the idea of mounting a .50 caliber M-2 HB machine gun on top of the 81mm mortar, and it seemed likely that this weapons system would satisfy all requirements.

At the Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay, Maryland, Hicks, working with three other personnel, interpreted the sketch of the weapon system. Within eight hours, they had developed the prototype of the Piggyback arrangement. Because all Coast Guard weapons of .50 caliber and above were owned by the Navy, Hicks had to ask the Navy Bureau of Ordnance for permission to adapt the mortar to dual purpose use. The Navy granted this permission, and within two days the first mount was fabricated. In 1964, the system was successfully test-fired at Dahlgren Proving Grounds, Virginia. Testing showed that added weight from the mortar improved the accuracy of the machine gun, in spite of the roll and pitch of the boat. In Vietnam, it was reported that crews were able to make hits on moving sampans at more than 1,000 yards.

Unless fitted with no fire zone mechanical stops, the mortar had 360 degrees of traverse and -30 degrees of depression and +71.5 degrees of elevation. Rate of fire was 18 rounds per minute at 45 degrees elevation in drop fire mode and 10 rounds/minute in trigger fire mode. Sights for the mortar were attached to the left side of the elevation arc. Weight of the Mk 2 Mod 0 was 593 pounds; the weight increased to 677 pounds in the Mk 2 Mod 1 (with machine gun). The direct range of the 81mm was 1,000+ yards; high angle, indirect range was 3,940 yards. Maximum effective range of the .50 Browning machine gun was 2,000 yards; maximum range was 7,440 yards.

In the event of a misfire the NAVWEPS OP 1742 (Naval Weapons Operating Procedures) states “Keeping clear of the barrel, kick the barrel with heel, cock mechanism and pull trigger to fire.”



Piggyback system “Pink Lady” seen on the bow of the 82 foot “Point Partridge”, on patrol in Vietnam 1969.



USCG Veteran, Tom Davis in Vietnam with his “Pink Lady” Piggyback 81mm Mortar / .50-cal Machine Gun.

Modifications to the system included a counterweight spring made from an Mk.22 breechblock closing spring that gave the gunner better control of the whole mount while firing the machine gun.

There were two variations of counterweight springs: The original was mounted horizontally on the right side of the mount and a later, vertical version was mounted on the left side. The latter modification was made to make room for the 400-round ammunition boxes used by the patrol craft, fast (PCF), also known as the Swift boat.

In 1965, needing another resource to patrol the coastal and inland waterways of Vietnam, the Navy requested the Coast Guard to supply 17 82-foot Point Class patrol boats outfitted with the 81mm Piggyback system for use in Vietnam.

The original request was for the craft only, as the Navy intended to man them with Navy personnel. However, the Coast Guard pushed back, stating that its experienced crews were available for immediate deployment.

During the first two years the Piggyback-equipped patrol boats were used in Vietnam, the Coast Guard carried the weight of patrols.



G.Q. General Quarter Mount #51 "Just Putting on Some Protection".

Hicks' invention gave the patrol craft 360 degrees of machine-gun coverage. He requisitioned enough .50 caliber machine gun mounts that the Coast Guard yard could manufacture the first 200 adaptors for patrol craft.

Two fleetwide sanctioned modifications were made to the gun during the war. Coast Guard gunner's mates added an extended handle to make it easier to control the mortar when firing. They also cut out the bottom of the basketlike protective guard for the mortar's recoiling parts. Prior to that alteration, the guard filled with expended .50 caliber cases that kept the mortar from fully recoiling. Other unsanctioned experiments adapting the mount to other weapons did occur, however, none were officially adopted.

The USCG successfully utilized the Piggyback system throughout the Vietnam War. The willingness of officers and enlisted men to explore options and weapons innovation was in keeping with the Coast Guard motto "Semper Paratus", always prepared.



Setting the fuse of an 81mm mortar round before sending through "Miss Joan" the Piggyback system on the "Point Comfort", in Vietnam, 1969.



Tom Davis with his Piggyback system "Miss Joan" in Vietnam.

ARTIFACT HIGHLIGHT: 91ST AERO SQUADRON

TUNIC AND JERKIN

By Rae Whitley



This World War I Jerkin, identified to 91st Aero Squadron Veteran Fred C. Boyd, was made with a cowhide leather shell and wool blanket lining.



The right shoulder sleeve of the wool tunic has the patches for the 91st Aero Squadron: "91" above the black and white circular propeller patch for aviation mechanic. Below those patches is the circular winged propeller insignia patch for Private First Class of Aviation.



U.S. Wool M1917 Service Coat was worn by Fred Boyd during his World War I U.S. Army service.



The Jerkin was personalized by PFC Fred Boyd and commemorates his duty in Coblentz, Germany.

The 91st Aero Squadron was stationed in postwar Germany and assigned to the 3rd Army as part of the Occupation Army of the Rhineland.



On Fred's left sleeve shoulder are the World War I era patches for the U.S. 3rd Army (top), and the "bullseye" patch (below) for the U.S. Army Air Service.



Above the left side breast pocket of Fred Boyd's Service Coat is the World War I Victory Medal, Ribbon. This service medal was created in 1919 and presented to

members of the U.S. military who served in World War I. The World War I Victory Medal was awarded for service between April 6, 1917, and November 11, 1918, or with either of the following expeditions:

- (1) American Expeditionary Forces in European Russia, between November 12, 1918, and August 5, 1919.
- (2) American Expeditionary Forces Siberia, between November 23, 1918, and April 1, 1920.



The "subdued" devices on the standing collar of Fred's M1917 Service Coat or Tunic were standard for enlisted personnel to denote service in the United States Army and the Aviation branch.



Boyd's service coat was made at The Philadelphia Depot, which manufactured supplies for the U.S. military during WW1. The need to equip millions of service members in the span of a year stressed the need for a larger facility. The depot expanded its complex by 61 acres during the war.

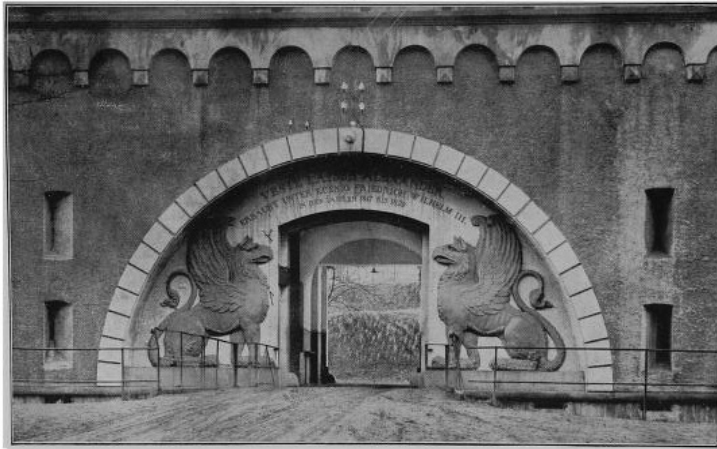
Sewn on the cuff of the left sleeve are two service chevrons for one year of service overseas.

On January 6, 1918, War Department General Orders No. 6 authorized the officers and enlisted men of the U.S. Army, Navy and Marine Corps to wear a War Service Chevron or what collectors today call an "Overseas Stripe". The 'V' shaped chevron was initially issued in one color... gold. Its purpose was to signify that the wearer had served in the "Zone of Advance", overseas in France during WW1. One gold War Service Chevron was awarded for each six-month period that a soldier, sailor or Marine served in the Zone of Advance.

The Zone of Advance was considered by the AEF to be where a line soldier could expect to be either under direct fire from the enemy in an opposing trench line or within range of the opponent's large caliber artillery and gas shells. Typically, this area included the front-line trenches and the twelve or so miles of territory directly behind them.



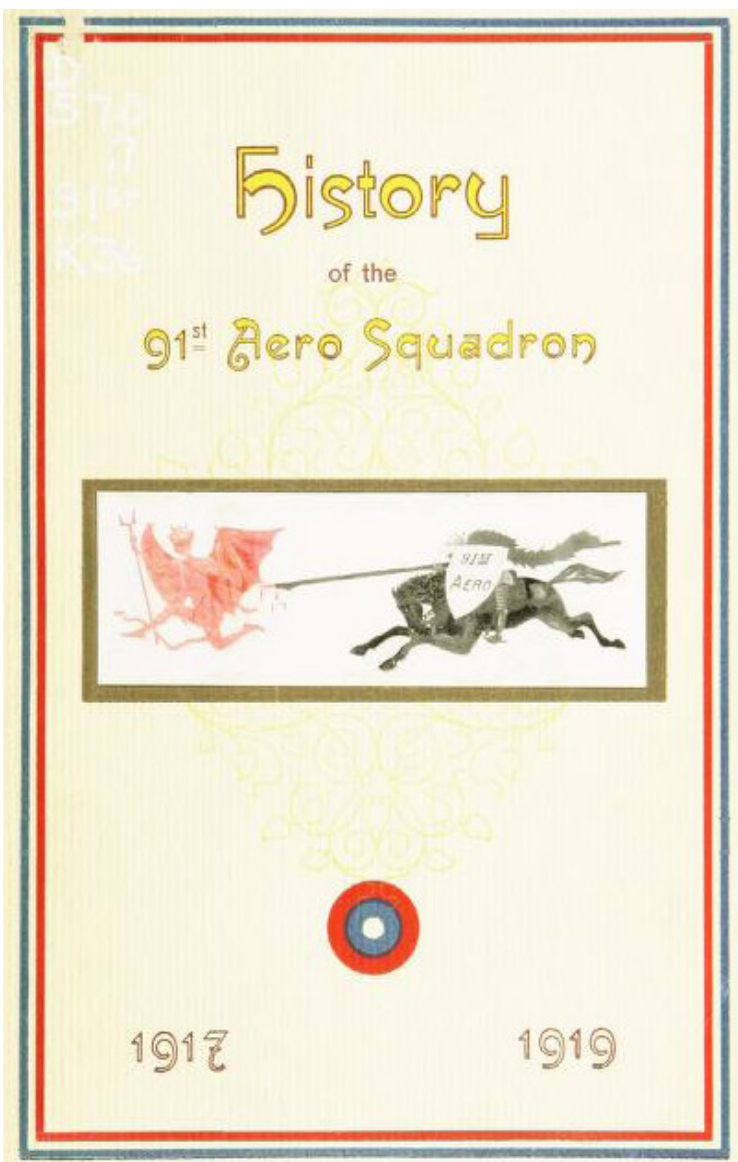
Page 1 of a 1918 issue of *The Stars and Stripes*, which announced the new War Service Gold Chevron.



Entrance to Coblenz Airdrome.



"The Queen of the Air".



30 HISTORY OF THE 91st AERO SQUADRON.

Weisbach, Arthur H.
Westover, Bernard G.
White, William A.
Whitaker, John H.
Wienges, Paul C.
Wilbur, F. Vaughn.
Williamson, Joseph F.
Wise, John E.
Withstandley, Victor
Young, Clyde

24 Bradley Road
Killed in action
140 College Ave.
314 Telfair St.
1312 Maryland Ave.
—
270 Clinton Ave.
621 West Paradise

Tacoma, Wash.
Rushville, Neb.
Davenport, Iowa.
Augusta, Ga.
Los Angeles, Cal.
Sebastopol, Cal.
Durand, Wis.
Brooklyn N. Y.
Vernon, Tex.

□ □ □

LIST OF MEN.

Airey, Harold L.
• Anderson, Ralph R.
Angle, John S.
Bernardini, Stanislas
• Blain, Samuel R.
Blair, Charles E.
Bletsch, Charles E.
• Boardman, John A.
Boyd, Fred C.
• Bretz, John C.
• Brittain, Robert A.
• Broderick, Martin A.
• Brown, Murdock.
Brown, Willis J.
• Bryan, George D.
• Butler, Cleus N.
• Carpenter, Julien G.
• Carrigan, Scott E.
(Avi. Mech.)
• Church, Charles J.
• Clark, Howard L.
Coombs, Leslie B.
• Creviston, Clyde C.
Cottier, William F.
Daly, Edward A.
• Dantrey, Attely E.
Davidson, Samuel
• Dempsey, Charles G.
• Dimmit, Rex U.
Dolan, Thomas J.
Dowd, Patrick J.
Ebeltoft, Carl T.
Eberhart, Albert L.
• Ellis, James H.
Erickson, August L.
Farley, Arthur C.
Fedder, Gus J.
Fisher, Milo M.
Fox, Paul G.
Fraser, Thomas E.
• Frey, Robert M.

Pvt. 1st Cl.
M. E.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Sgt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Cpl.
Chfr.
Pvt.
Cpl.
Pvt. 1st Cl.
Chfr.
Pvt. 1st Cl.
Pvt.
Sgt. 1st Cl.
Pvt. 1st Cl.
Pvt. 1st Cl.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt. 1st Cl.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt. 1st Cl.
Cpl.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Pvt.
Chfr. 1st Cl.

New Haven, Conn.
Little Rock, Ark.
Pittsburg, Pa.
Auburn, N. Y.
Sweet Springs, Mo.
Kingsville, Md.
Highland Park, Ill.
Toledo, Ohio.
Christiana, Pa.
Morrison, Ill.
St. Joseph, Mo.
Frankford, Philadelphia, Pa.
Corpus Christi, Texas.
Cleveland, Ohio.
West Point, Miss.
Attawa, Ill.
Newman, Ga.
Fort Dodge, Iowa.
Minneapolis, Minn.
Windsor, Mo.
Chicago, Ill.
Mattoon, Ill.
Passaic, N. J.
Brooklyn, N. Y.
Cecil, Pa.
New York City.
Wilmington, Del.
Ottumwa, Iowa.
Providence, R. I.
Holyoke, Mass.
Luke Park, Minn.
Norden, Nebr.
Chester, Mass.
Parkers Prairie, Minn.
Newark, N. J.
West Haven, Conn.
Owatonna, Minn.
Bucyrus, Ohio.
Fall River, Mass.
Chambersburg, Pa.

Fred Boyd's name listed in *History of the 91st Aero Squadron*

TO HELL AND BACK: THE CLASSIC MEMOIR OF WORLD WAR II BY AMERICA'S MOST DECORATED SOLDIER

AUDIE MURPHY

Review by Libby Andrews

Despite being rejected by the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps for being underweight and underage, Audie Murphy was determined to serve his country in World War II. After his sister provided an affidavit that falsified his date of birth, he was accepted by the Army on June 30, 1942.

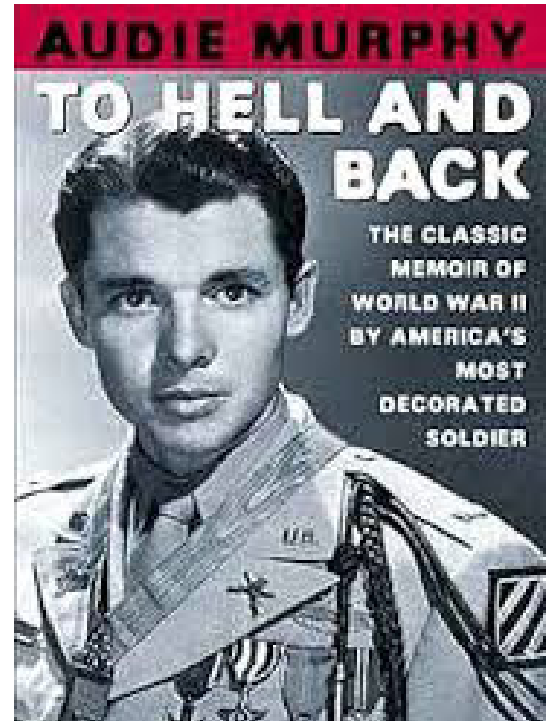
He primarily fought with the 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany, and became the most decorated U.S. Soldier of World War II.

Murphy participated in major campaigns including the invasion of Sicily, the Italian Campaign, Operation Dragoon in southern France, and the push into Germany. He earned the Medal of Honor for his actions on January 26, 1945, near Holtzwihr, France, where he held off an enemy attack despite being wounded. By the end of the war, Murphy had received every U.S. combat award for valor available at the time, along with several foreign decorations.

To Hell and Back is Audie Murphy's personal account of his service. First published in 1949, the book follows Murphy from enlistment through the end of the war. He describes patrols, firefights, ambushes, and the daily risks faced by front-line soldiers without exaggeration or dramatic language.



Audie Murphy's medals. He received every military combat award for valor available from the United States Army, as well as French and Belgian awards for heroism.



His actions in combat, including those that led to the Medal of Honor, are presented briefly, with the emphasis placed on the events that occurred rather than on personal recognition.

A central theme of the book is the cost of combat. Murphy details the physical strain, constant fatigue, and fear experienced by infantrymen, as well as the impact of losing fellow soldiers. He makes it clear that survival often depended on circumstance as much as skill. The final sections of the book address the difficulty of leaving the war behind and adjusting to life afterward, a challenge faced by many veterans today.

“Now I have shed my first blood. I feel no qualms; no pride; no remorse. There is only a weary indifference that will follow me throughout the war.”

-Audie Murphy, To Hell and Back.

To Hell and Back was adapted into a feature film released in 1955, in which Murphy portrayed himself on screen. The film followed the broad outline of the book while simplifying events and compressing timelines. Murphy's performance reflected his personal experience and avoided dramatic exaggeration, adding to the film's credibility. The film introduced Murphy's story to a wider audience, establishing his career in Hollywood.



Audie Murphy portraying himself in the movie adaptation of To Hell and Back.



As a firsthand account, To Hell and Back is a concise and honest memoir that presents World War II from the perspective of a combat soldier. Murphy describes movement under fire, use of terrain, and coordination between soldiers, rather than analyzing strategy or command decisions.

This book is a useful resource for readers interested in ground combat, infantry service, and the realities of war experienced by those on the front lines.



Capt. Audie Murphy in uniform standing next to a framed display case of the medals he earned during World War II.

“My country. America! That is it. We have been so intent on death that we have forgotten life. And now suddenly life faces us. I swear to myself that I will measure up to it. I may be branded by war, but I will not be defeated by it.” -Audie Murphy, To Hell and Back

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

In the Museum's Patton Gallery, you have the opportunity to "Share Your Thoughts." With prompt cards, guests often reflect on their visit to the Museum, Veterans' service and sacrifice, and the price of American freedom.



Here's what guests are saying...

REFLECTION

What thoughts or feelings did your visit today inspire?

"My visit today inspired feelings of pride. Reading about the women and people of color who wanted to serve our military despite, through, and in spite of the social norms and political limitations of the time. Thank you for making their place and part in history known."

PATRIOTISM

What does patriotism mean to you?

"Loving your country and serving your country in any capacity. Thank you so much for this beautiful Museum. We brought our 7 & 8 year olds here, and it prompted conversations about freedom, service, and loyalty."

FREEDOM

How do we preserve American freedom?

"Through places like this. Educating all of those who benefit from the sacrifices made by those who died to keep freedom preserved. This means learning and teaching this to the younger generations. Thank you for a great place to visit!"

2026

Upcoming Events.



MARCH

19, 20, 21

**HANDS-ON HISTORY:
SPECIAL FORCES AND
TRIBAL ALLIES IN THE
VIETNAM WAR**

Handle rare artifacts
and learn their
historical significance!

JULY

3 & 5

AMERICA'S 250TH

Join us for special
events as we
celebrate America's
250th!

MARCH

28

**VIETNAM
VETERANS DAY**

Commemorate
National Vietnam
Veterans Day and
Wyoming's "Veterans
Welcome Home Day."

JULY

4

**4TH OF JULY
PARADE**

The Dubois 4th of July
Parade features
dozens of our
restored vehicles

APRIL

16, 17, 18

**HANDS-ON HISTORY:
WORLD WAR II AXIS
ARTIFACTS**

Handle rare artifacts
and learn their
historical significance!

JULY

20

**MILITARY MONDAY
AT CFD**

NMMV participates
Military Monday at
Cheyenne Frontier
Days

MAY

14, 15, 16

**HANDS-ON HISTORY:
WORLD WAR I
ARTIFACTS**

Handle rare artifacts
and learn their
historical significance!

AUGUST

1 & 2

VETERANS FAIR

An annual event
dedicated to veterans'
health, careers,
education, recreation,
and community.

JUNE

29

67TH ARMY BAND

Welcome the 67th
Army Band of the
Wyoming Army
National Guard for a
special performance!

**To stay informed on
all upcoming events,
visit our website,
nmmv.org**



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MILITARY VEHICLES



6419 US Highway 26
Dubois, Wyoming 82513
307-455-3802
NMMV.ORG

Thank you for reading *The Quarterly Dispatch* and for your continued support of NMMV!

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The National Museum of Military Vehicles is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization.

Donate to NMMV

If you or your family has a historic artifact for which you are seeking a permanent home, the National Museum of Military Vehicles accepts a limited number of appropriate artifacts for donation.

Please fill out the form available on our website, and the correct staff member may contact you directly. This is required so the curatorial department may review your potential donation.

SUBMISSIONS AND COMMENTS

We accept and appreciate your feedback and submissions regarding *The Quarterly Dispatch*. Suggestions and submissions should be sent to libby@nmmv.org.

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MUSEUM HOURS

Wednesday–Sunday

9:30 AM–5:00 PM

Closed Monday–Tuesday.

THE CANTEN HOURS

Wednesday–Sunday:

11:00 AM–5:00 PM.

Closed Monday–Tuesday.

OUR MISSION

TO HONOR THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN FREEDOM.

TO PRESERVE AND SHARE HISTORIC MILITARY VEHICLES.

