



# GOLD STAR GAZETTE

## Iowa Gold Star Military Museum Newsletter

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Winter Issue 2026

### LOOK WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE MUSEUM

- Movie Nights—See Page 4
- Collection of Cards for the families of Staff Sgts William Howard and Edgar Torres-Tovar until January 31st
- Museum is a collection site for Care Packages for the Blue Star Mothers. Your donations are appreciated!!

### THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED THE FOLLOWING DATES

- January 19. 2026: Martin Luther King, Dr. Day

### OTHER HOLIDAYS/OBSERVANCES

- Presidents Day. February 16th
- March 5th—Seabee Birthday (est. 1942)
- St. Patrick's Day, March 17th
- March 21st - Rosie the Riveter Day
- March 25th –National Medal of Honor Day
- March 29th—Vietnam Veterans Day (honoring those who served 1955—1975)

### MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday - Friday	9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Sunday - Monday	Closed



Iowa Gold Star Military Museum  
7105 Northwest 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Johnston, Iowa 50131  
Phone: (515) 252-4531

### MUSEUM STAFF

State Quartermaster .....	COL. (Ret.) Michael J. Harris
Museum Director .....	Sherrie Colbert
Museum Curator .....	Michael W. Vogt
Museum Guide .....	Elizabeth ‘Beth’ Burrow

## Meet Our Intern

# Meet College Intern **Brennan Severidt**

My name is Brennan Severidt. I am from a small town in southern Iowa called New Virginia.

My father has served in the National Guard for nearly seventeen years.

I love being able to learn from veterans and being able to share the fascinating, crazy, and sometimes tragic stories of the men and women who have served and still serve our country.

I have been a volunteer at the museum for two years during my summer and winter breaks. While volunteering at the museum, I have worked on a variety of projects like, artifact research, assisting with archival inventory, assisting with events, assisting visitors with the flight simulator and assisting

with guided tours of the exhibit gallery.

I attend the University of Hannibal LaGrange working towards my bachelor of arts degree in history. Consequently, history, especially military history, has always fascinated me.

Brennan has been an asset to the museum during his time as an intern. Brennan is always willing to pitch in and has written several articles for this newsletter. We are looking forward to Brennan interning during the summer at the museum before he moves on to new adventures.



## **Museum Intern: Brennan Severidt**

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Every year, thousands of people visit the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum to learn about Iowa's heroes. The first person they see when they come through the door is a volunteer stationed at the front desk. This person will make sure each visitor leaves the museum with a greater understanding of military history and an appreciation for Iowa veterans. This is just one way our volunteers help us achieve our mission.

There are over seventy volunteers active at the Gold Star Museum, helping with everything we do. Besides manning the front desk, they work on exhibits, give tours, help run events, and maintain our collections behind the scenes. No matter where you look in the Gold Star Museum, you'll see a volunteer's impact.

If any of this interests you we encourage you to join us! Volunteering is a great and fulfilling way to give back to your community and meet new people. You can scan the QR code below to fill out a short application and get the ball rolling. You can also email [elizabeth.burrow@iowa.gov](mailto:elizabeth.burrow@iowa.gov) to express interest and learn more.



# Save the Date!

## Great Events Coming Up at the Museum in 2026!

**Trivia Night and Silent Auction—TBA** Follow US on Facebook and view our Website for the announcement of date & time

**Memorial Day—Monday, May 25th 5 Am to Noon** (Simon Conway will broadcast “live!”) Free Breakfast Blood Drive, live music and much more!

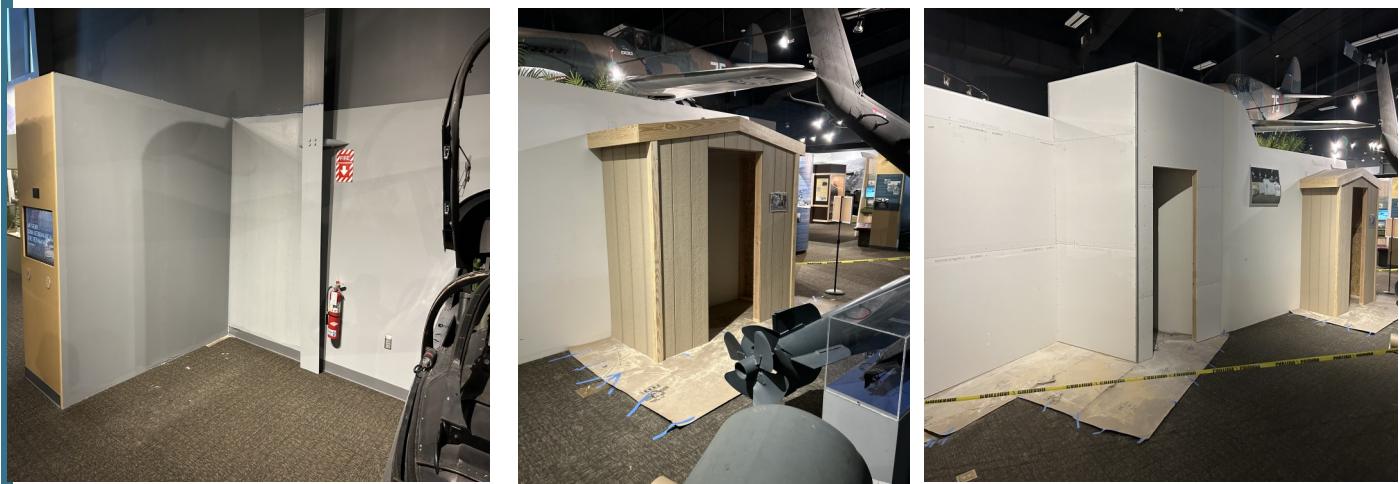
**Vietnam Living History Event—TBA** Follow US on Facebook and the Web Page for the announcement of date & time



2025 EVENT Photos



**We have an Exciting New Exhibit Coming in April 2026...**



## AROUND THE MUSEUM

### MOVIE NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM



*Monday, 12 January*  
“U 571 (2000)”

*Monday, 9 February*  
“Stalag 17 (1953)”

*Monday, 9 March*  
“Last Full Measure (2019) “

**Movies will begin at 6:00 pm.  
Bring your own snacks**

# Daughters of the American Revolution

## A Glimpse into America's Fight for Independence

*Gold Star Museum Hosts the American Revolution Experience Traveling Exhibit*  
Article by Kathy Sells  
Chapter Regent

In late October, the Gold Star Museum had the honor of hosting the **American Revolution Experience Traveling Exhibit**, a national collaboration between the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the American Battlefield Trust. The Camp Dodge Chapter, NSDAR, served as the official host for this Iowa stop on the exhibit's nationwide tour.

Over 500 museum patrons viewed the exhibit, including local service groups, veterans, families, and many students. Visitors engaged with the exhibit's twelve interpretive panels and three interactive kiosks, each drawing on the DAR's extensive historical collections and the American Battlefield Trust's exceptional digital resources. Vivid illustrations by artist Dale Watson helped bring the Revolutionary era to life through the stories of everyday individuals who shaped America's fight for independence.

A special Open House on October 18 expanded the educational experience with hands-on activities, opportunities to meet historical fiction authors, and conversations with local dignitaries, service leaders, and museum board members. Events like this demonstrate how traveling exhibits unite communities in recognizing and reflecting upon America's most significant historical moments.

The exhibit was funded through a \$200,000 National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program grant, matched by DAR and generous donors.

### About the Camp Dodge Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution

The Camp Dodge Chapter was organized in 2023 and welcomes women 18 and older who can document direct lineage to an American Revolutionary Patriot. Members express their patriotism through historic preservation, education, community service, and meaningful friendships. The chapter also proudly sponsors a Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.) society—the **Captain Peter Ankeny Society**. The Society manages a free Children's History Library located at the Ankeny Area Historical Society Museum, helping inspire the next

generation of young historians.

### About the American Battlefield Trust

The nonprofit Trust has preserved more than 57,000 acres across 155 historic sites nationwide. Learn more at [battlefields.org](http://battlefields.org).



Local students arrived in busloads to learn more about the American Revolution.



Daughters of the American Revolution



Camp Dodge Chapter of DAR members donned mop caps and aprons to host an open house for museum patrons.



Learn more about DAR go to [DAR.org](http://DAR.org).

To learn more about the Camp Dodge Chapter, contact us at  
[CampDodgeDAR@gmail.com](mailto:CampDodgeDAR@gmail.com).

## CURATOR CORNER

### C-47 Partial Aircraft Propeller

On October 14, 1947, an Iowa Air National Guard C-47 transport aircraft, (Tail number 42-23503) assigned to the 132nd Tactical Fighter Group, was lost while returning from annual training at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. While on approach in overcast conditions the aircraft crashed on the northeast side of Pike's Peak, Colorado, outside of Lowry Air Force Base. Three of the seven aboard were killed. Master Sergeant John W. Knight, the least injured, walked 6 miles to reach help for the severely injured survivors. The propeller pictured was recovered from the crash site.

Years later, while hiking on family vacation in Colorado, Carl, Bernice, and Ray Parker encountered the C-47 crash site wreckage that was never removed from Pike's Peak. Ray salvaged this propeller blade and later sawed pieces from it to create knives. The propeller blade was later obtained by John Dollar from De Soto, Iowa. It was later given to Bill Knight and donated to the Iowa Air National Guard in Des Moines subsequently donated to the museum and exhibited from 1996 to 2009.



C-47 Partial Aircraft Propeller; Douglas C-47 WWII



### RESEARCH YOUR ANCESTRY AT THE MUSEUM

If you want to know more about your family's military history? The museum has information from the Civil War to World War I.

We have the enlistment and induction cards for Iowans from World War I and have the muster rolls and payroll records for Civil War veterans.

If you want to know more or schedule a time to meet with the curator, call 515-252-4531 or email us at: [www.goldstarmuseum.iowa.gov](http://www.goldstarmuseum.iowa.gov).

### A Little Bit Funny.....

1. What did the icy road say to the car? Wanna go for a spin?
2. What do you call a snapshot from the North Pole? A POLAR-OID!
3. Do you know what they say about a clean desk?
4. What do you get when you cross a vampire with a snowman?
5. "Knock, Knock! "Who's there?" Lettuce." "Lettuce who?" "Lettuce in, it's cold outside!"



1. Wanna go for a spin; 2. A POLAR-OID; 3. Sign of a cluttered mind; 4. Frostbite.

## HAROLD “PIE” KELLER

*February 23, 1945: Anniversary of the Famous Photo from World War II*

**Harold “Pie” Keller** is a man that Iowans should know.. Born in Brooklyn, Iowa and except for his service, live his entire life there. Keller worked as a telephone company lineman before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Harold enlisted January 2, 1942, training at Camp Elliott in San Diego and in Honolulu.

In less than eight months, Keller went from an 18 year old from an Iowa town to landing at Guadalcanal at the beginning of the Allied offensive in the Pacific. Keller fought at Midway Island and Bougainville. At Bougainville, Keller engaged in a sniper duel with a Japanese soldier and was shot through his right shoulder. In a 1944 article for the Des Moines Tribune, Keller stated he was up a tree and was looking for him (Japanese soldier). “I had fired eight rounds and was firing again when he hit me. I never did see him” Keller stated that he dropped to the ground and laid low until the fighting paused. He was out of commission for some time. Keller took a furlough and married Ruby O’Halloran who was a county sale supervisor for the Des Moines Register and Tribune.

Keller was part of a 40-man platoon that earned 26 medals in 45 minutes—most of them Purple hearts on Iwo Jima at the base of Mount Suribachi. Iwo Jima was one of the fiercest and bloodiest in the Pacific with over 6,800 U.S. forces killed and another 19, 217 wounded. It is estimated that the Japanese causalities were over 18,000.

Photographer Joe Rosenthal captured the image on Feb. 23, 1945 of the six Marines raising the flagpole with the American flag whipping in the wind. The photograph was one of the most famous of the war and a symbol of the U.S. armed forces.’ When Rosenthal took the picture he did not get the names of the Marines.

Novice historian Brent Westemeyer from Johnston, IA worked with Marine archivists and others to identify the error. Harold Keller was one of three men who were misidentified in the famous photo. It took 74 years to identify Harold Keller, formerly identified as Cpl. Rene Gagon in the famous photo. The other two men were: Cpl Harlon Block and Cpl. Harold Schultz. The other men in the photo are Pfc. Franklin Sousley and Sgt. Michael Strank.

Harold Keller rarely spoke with family about the war and when he did it was in general terms about a buddy or a military term from his daughter Kay.

We honor Harold “Pie” Keller for his bravery.



Harold “Pie” Keller; Statue in Brooklyn, IA honoring his service; Famous Iwo Jima Photo; and Memorial in Arlington, VA.

## The Sledge Patrol: A WWII Epic of Escape, Survival and Victory

**Author:** David Howarth

**Reviewed by William Fanter**

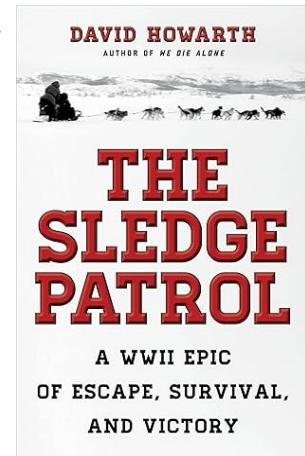
This book has been in the public domain for quite a while but has escaped my observation. So it is with thanks to Gold Star Researcher Jerome Thompson that it came into my possession and this review should make it known to many readers. Let me introduce you to Greenland in 1942 where the story unfolds. Think of the face of a clock. The area in question is a 500 mile shoreline which runs along the Northeast coast of Greenland from about 12 o'clock to 3 o'clock. This is an arctic area inaccessible by sea for the entire year because of ice conditions. Greenland is the largest island in the world and in 1942 was a Danish colony with a population of about 22,000. The inhabitants lived mostly on the west side of the island and consisted almost totally of indigenous people, Eskimos and Inuits, assisted by the Danish administration and a mix of a few international scientists. Eske Brun was the Danish consulate and lived in the Capitol of Greenland, Godthaab or Nuuk, which was located on the west side at about 8 o'clock on our island map. By the fall of 1942 Germany had occupied Denmark and controlled the government. A small Danish unit of 3 men had been sent to Greenland to establish and maintain weather stations along the Northeast coast. They did so by patrolling 500 miles of coastline with dog sleds driven by Arctic hunters of seal, Polar bear, and muskox. Named by Brun, The Greenland Sledge Patrol, they

maintained a lookout for interlopers over a territory which could not be monitored from the air or sea. Greenland itself had not been occupied by either Axis or Allied powers but its strategic value had become obvious to both America and Germany with the deployment of naval convoys of war materials to Britain in 1940 and 1941. The United States declared war against Germany in 1941 shortly after the Nazis allied with Japan following Pearl Harbor. A Danish officer, Poulson, led the small Danish unit dispatched to establish and transmit weather reports to occupied Denmark. Initially these were not encrypted and became available to anyone who could monitor the signals. Brun was a bright and independent man who realized the scourge of the Nazi invasion and sought to help the United States. He arranged to encrypt the weather broadcasts for British and American use and cut off the information to Germany. This triggered Germany to send a patrol of about 25 men to Greenland to shut down the Allied transmissions and establish a German weather station. The ability to collect and distribute weather information was a tiny but mighty factor impacting WWII in 1942 and early 1943. It was a strategic game changer in the Battle of the Atlantic and in the war in Europe. May of 1943 was the turning point in the Battle of the Atlantic, during which the Third Reich lost 40 U-boats which constituted 25% of its operational strength at the time. This month has been called "Stalingrad of the U-boat

arm" by some. For a period of time Brun and Poulson had no knowledge that the relative peace of their realm was about to be shattered by the presence of Nazis ordered to destroy weather station and communication network. The Germans arrived just before the annual ice freeze of the Northeast coastline closed access to that area in October of 1942.

The stage was set for a contest between the Germans equipped with machine guns and grenades operating

in unknown territory against the small Greenland Sledge Patrol made up of about 8 hunters equipped with hunting rifles, dog teams, a few Danes and one Norwegian. But most importantly, the Sledge Patrol knew the territory and they knew how to live in the Arctic in winter conditions. The cat and mouse game of winter guerrilla warfare began and occupied the winter of 1942/43. This became a story about a gang fight not a large military battle. It is indeed a story of escape, survival, and victory and is based on a true story emerging from the thousands which lie in the rubble of WW II. It is intense. The book may be found in the IA Gold Star Military Museum library.



## Test Your Knowledge

### Famous Military Quotes



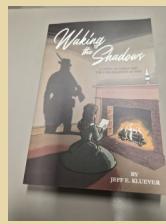
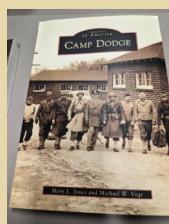
1. Who said “Lead me, follow me or get out of my way!”
2. Which General said, “In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.”
3. “People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf.”
4. “We make war that we may live in peace.”
5. “I came I saw I conquered!”
6. “The battle, sir, is not the strong alone: it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave...”
7. “The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it.”
8. A ship without Marines is like a garment without buttons.”
9. “Always forgive your enemies—nothing annoys them so much”
10. “In war there is no substitute for victory.”

#### BONUS QUESTION

1. Name the ship at the top of this page?

Winter is the time for warm blankets, a warm cup of coca and a good book. We have a few good books that you might enjoy!

1. Camp Dodge by Mary L. Jones & Michael Vogt
2. Walking the Shadows AND Marching Home by Jeff Kluever
3. Brothers in Arms, *Remembering Brothers Buried Side by Side in American WWII Cemeteries*: by Kevin Callahan



Answers: 1. General George S. Patton, Jr. 2. General Dwight D. Eisenhower; 3. George Orwell; 4. Aristotle; 5. Julius Caesar  
6. Patrick Henry; 7. General Norman Schwarzkopf; 8. Admiral David D. Porter; 9. Oscar Wilde; 10. General Douglas MacArthur; 11. USS Iowa

## Gifts or Experiences?

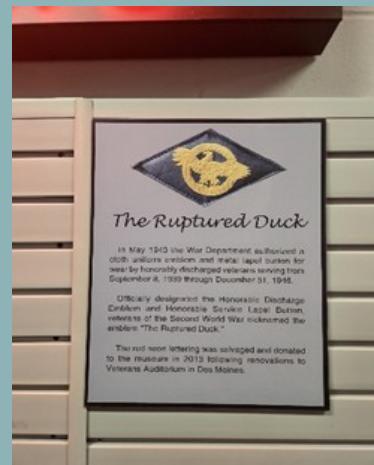
By Beth Burrow  
Museum Guide/Volunteer Coordinator

I have found that one of the most interesting roles of my job revolves around the gift store. It is always enjoyable to see kids' eyes light up when they see the airplanes or army men. Nothing beats, active or retired 34<sup>th</sup> division members, buying their third or fourth 34<sup>th</sup> hat since they are consistently wearing their old hats past usefulness. The gift store serves as a place to get important mementos.

There is however, a constant evaluation process, that we must undertake: does the gift store distract from the mission of the museum? There is a trend in several national museums, to do away with any form of gift store. These establishments have raised concerns that shopping overtook the museum experience. For a zoo or a science center, the merchandise can easily support their

mission. This is not always as seamless for a military museum.

Currently, we aim at providing enriching, military themed merchandise for children. Apparel to commemorate their visit or hon-



*Plaque in the gift shop*

or the 34<sup>th</sup> division. Are we missing anything? What suggestions do you, as our stakeholders have for the gift store? I have always coveted others' ideas, as they are usually better than my own.

Please feel free to contact me at [Elizabeth.burrow@dpd.iowa.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.burrow@dpd.iowa.gov) (please note my new email address).

## DID YOU KNOW.....

In November 1944, the Honorable Discharge Emblem was established for wear over the right uniform pocket of all returning World War II personnel.



## The Museum Gift Shop

Looking for gifts for the military person in your life? Come visit the Our Gift Shop!

We have something for everyone!

