



GOLD STAR GAZETTE

Iowa Gold Star Military Museum Newsletter

Summer Issue 2026

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LOOK WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE MUSEUM

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THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED THE FOLLOWING DATES

- July 3rd and 4th for Independence Day!

OTHER HOLIDAYS/OBSERVANCES

- June 6th - D-Day Anniversary
- June 14th - Flag Day
- June 21st - Father's Day
- July 4th - Independence Day
- August 4th - U.S. Coast Guard Birthday
- August 7th - Purple Heart Day
- August 14th - Navajo Code Talkers Day
- August 29th - Marine Forces Reserve Birthday

★ DID YOU KNOW? ★



The **Purple Heart** is the oldest military decoration still awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Originally created by General George Washington on August 7, 1782, as the Badge of Military Merit. The award was revived in 1932 to honor service members wounded or killed in combat.

***Purple Heart Day**
is observed each year on August 7.*



Iowa Gold Star Military Museum

Museum Staff

State Quartermaster — Brigadier General William F. McClintock

Museum Director — Sherrie Colbert

Museum Curator — Michael W. Vogt

Museum Guide — Elizabeth "Beth" Burrow



7105 Northwest 70th Avenue
Johnston Iowa 50131

Phone (515) 252-4531

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday – Friday
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Saturday
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Sunday – Monday
Closed

Veterans Retiree Coffee Group

Wednesday would not be Wednesday without our Veterans Coffee Group! The smell of coffee brewing, story telling and the laughter that fills the air is tremendous!

(We do have donuts!)

We would love for you to come out and participate in an informal gathering where you can build connections and share experiences with other veterans and retirees.

Coffee starts at 0830 until about 1000.



OUR GIFT SHOP

The Museum Gift Shop

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

We have something for everyone!



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 to express interest and learn more.

Iowa Gold Star Military Museum
Volunteer Interest Form



SUMMER OUTREACH

Curator in the Park 2026

By Beth Burrow

This summer, we once again have the opportunity to bring the museum to the public. Intern Aidan and I will visit six different parks in the Des Moines metro area. These programs are geared towards children and are made possible from monies that we received from BRAVO of Greater Des Moines.

Our theme this year is “Camouflage.” In an effort to make the learning enjoyable, we have included hidden object activities, brought along artifacts for a tactile experience and distributed a small goody bag of additional educational activities. Our first session was held on Tuesday, June 16th, and we had 59 kids and 12 adults in attendance!

Many of the participants have veterans in their family and still have never even heard of the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum. Many families took the brochures, including the new Spanish flyer. Our hope is that more families visit the museum and learn that it is a great source of information and admission is FREE. We would love to welcome them into the museum!

Photos from Columbus Park, Des Moines, IA



AROUND THE MUSEUM

MOVIE NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM



Monday, 13 July
“Band of Brothers” #3 & #4 (2001)”

Monday, 10 August
NO MOVIE

Monday, 14 September
“Lone Survivor” (2013)”

Movies will begin at 6:00 pm.
Bring your own snacks & clean your area before you leave.

A Little Bit Funny

What do you call a lonely cheese? PROV-ALONE! Or BLUE CHEESE!

What did the fish say when it swam into a concrete wall? DAM

How do fish always know how much they weigh? THEY ALL HAVE SCALES!

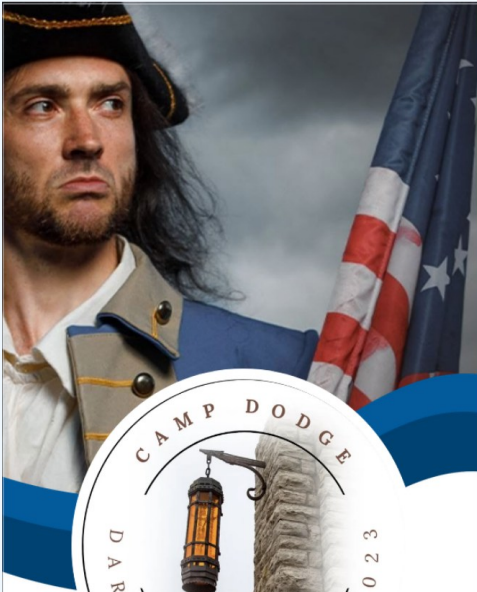
Why are fish so gullible? THEY FALL FOR THINGS HOOK LINE AND SINKER!

What is a baker's favorite Beatles song? LOAF IS ALL YOU KNEAD! Or, HERE COMES THE BUN!

Where do sheep go on vacation? BAAA-HAAAMAAAS!



Daughters of the American Revolution



**Historic Preservation
Education | Patriotism**
Camp Dodge Chapter, NSDAR
CampDodgeDAR@gmail.com



THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION ORGANIZATION WAS FOUNDED IN 1890 WITH THE MISSION OF PROMOTING HISTORIC PRESERVATION, EDUCATION, AND PATRIOTISM. MEMBERS ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT COMMUNITY SERVICE, AS WELL AS HONORING AND SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SERVE OUR NATION.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DAR, VISIT DAR.ORG.

THE CAMP DODGE CHAPTER, NSDAR WAS ORGANIZED MARCH 21, 2023.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CAMP DODGE CHAPTER, CONTACT US AT CAMPDODGEDAR@GMAIL.COM.

Celebrating America 250

There has been a lot of great America 250 celebrations in Iowa.

Here are a few of the remaining events:

- ◆ Iowa State Fair (Des Moines) - August 13 - 23
- ◆ Iowa State Fair Veterans Parade, Monday, August 17th at 11am
- ◆ American Revolution Experience Traveling Exhibit, Living History Farms; August 1st - August 11th.
Call for times.
- ◆ Grain Harvest +Tractor Wars 2, Living History Farms: Saturday, July 25th 9am - 4pm
- ◆ Freedom 250 Mobile Museum, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site: August 5, 2026 - August 9, 2026
- ◆ 2026 Fly Iowa Festival at the Winterset Airport Authority, Saturday, September 19, 2026, 2pm - 9pm

CURATOR CORNER

2027 Vietnam War Living History Event

Michael W, Vogt, Curator

The 5th annual Vietnam War Living History event occurred on May 30-31, 2026 and hosted a unique feature for this year's attendees on Saturday. A U.S. Marine Corps UH-34D helicopter arrived by air near the museum and was available for tours until its departure at 5:00pm.

Manufactured at Bridgeport, Connecticut, by the Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation in 1961, it served in South Vietnam during 1965-1968 with Marine Squadron HHM-362 "Ugly Angels" from aircraft carriers, hospital ships, and Marine bases. During combat operations the helicopter was repeatedly hit by enemy fire and carries 54 patches on its aluminum fuselage.

This example, numbered YL-37, is the only airworthy helicopter of this type with documented combat history in Vietnam. It is maintained by the non-profit Ugly Angels Memorial Foundation based in rural State Center, Iowa.



OTHER NEWS:

Colonel (Ret) Michael Harris has retired as the State Quartermaster. Colonel Harris will continue to serve the museum as a board member. **Colonel Harris thank you for your dedication to the museum!**

The new State Quartermaster beginning June 10th is BG William McClintock. ***Welcome General McClintock!***

SAVE THE DATE!

WORLD WAR II LIVING HISTORY EVENT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th, 2026

FROM 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

WORLD WAR II DANCE 7:00 PM TO 11:00 PM



Book Review: RIPCORDER - Creaming Eagles Under Siege, VIETNAM 1970

Author: Keith W. Nolan

Reviewed by William Fanter

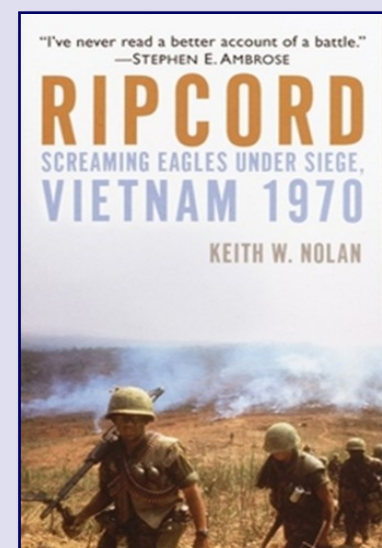
This will be my 16th review for the Gold Star Newsletter. As I reviewed my inventory, I have written about the Civil War, Korea, the War of the Future, a Novel - 2034, and WW II. If these books were my children I would have spoiled WW II and ignored my stepchild, Vietnam, even though I took my turn to personally serve in that event. So I have picked RIPCORDER by way of providing tribute to a forgotten and overlooked child. RIPCORDER is the story of one of the last major engagements between U.S. military forces in the Republic of Vietnam and elements of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The story shows how much the war changed between 1962 and 1970. Readers should not be surprised if this battle is unknown to them. Astonishingly, it went virtually unreported by the media at the time largely because of the close wraps imposed by the MACV Command Vietnam HQ in Saigon which feared that the heavy U.S. casualty lists might touch off a second 'Hamburger Hill' debate in Congress. Ironically, the 101st had been involved in, nearby, Hamburger Hill, in May of 1969 about a year prior to RIPCORDER. Thus, even thirty years after the event, this is not a battle that will be recalled by many, save the participants themselves, their families, and the few who may have laid eyes on an after-action report. Keith Nolan decided to tell this story which first appeared in print to the mass media in June 2003.

FSB Ripcord was originally opened in the Spring of 1970 by the 2d of the 506th, a line infantry battalion of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) to support an offensive into an enemy base area near the A Shau Valley of Thua Thien Province, RVN. It was not far from Khe Sanh and supported out of Camp Evans just 25 kilometers, a fifteen minute flight away. RIPCORDER was closer to Laos than to its own forward base camp. It was totally dependent on helicopters for logistical support. The A Shau was known by grunts as "the valley of death". President Nixon had begun his Vietnamization campaign to hand off the primary task of prosecuting the war to the ARVN troops but wanted to establish a reasonable margin of safety around the northern Provinces so as to avoid an appearance of being run out of the country. The plan was to push for clear margins into the A Shau Valley before leaving. It was not to be.

Ripcord began receiving probing fire in early April, 1970 which increased daily until it came under sustained recoilless rifle fire for the first time on July 2. The fire was coming from Hill 1000, the first high ground to RIPCORDER'S west. The firebase also came under attack by 120mm mortars - the first known enemy use of 120s south of the DMZ. These were weapons that could be sighted and walked across targets with devastating accuracy. It represented a major logistic success by the NVA. Clearly, trucks or tracked vehicles had been used to transport those very heavy mortar tubes, base plates, and

ammunition into position. The NVA regular army was bringing an improved performance to the war. On July 18, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter carrying a sling load of 105mm howitzer ammunition toward RIPCORDER was shot down in flames by anti-aircraft machine-gun fire. It fell straight down into the ammunition storage area, where it set off a series of explosions. Six 105mm howitzers were destroyed as thousands of shells exploded in the fire. The brigade commander was flying over the area at the time and recalled that it looked like the entire mountaintop was erupting. On July 20 a patrol from the firebase reported that a tap had been made on a land line between an NVA Division HQ and an artillery regiment on the valley floor below RIPCORDER. Americans learned that they were surrounded by four NVA regiments with up to 12,000 men. They intended to destroy RIPCORDER. It was time to leave.

Continued on page 8



BOOK REVIEW: THE MATHEWS MEN - CONTINUED

Continued from page 7

Thus began the largest hot extraction from a firebase under siege in the history of the Vietnam conflict. When another Chinook was shot down falling onto and blocking the large helipad it became necessary to evacuate by Bell UH-1 Hueys which could only carry six men at a time. All available Hueys in the 101st Airborne were detailed to head for the beleaguered firebase. They would dart in and out one at a time, dodging continuous anti-aircraft and artillery fire. Moreover, it turned out that the NVA and some of their Chinese advisers had managed to deny the Americans use of the radio frequencies by jamming them. So in they came and out they went. One by one, the Hueys touched down on two small, remaining landing pads to pick up five or six passengers while under fire from .51 caliber anti-aircraft fire and AK-47s. Mortar fire was fierce. The pilots were the great heroes of the entire war but certainly at RIPCORD. Eventually, the NVA started shelling with tear gas to obstruct vision and hinder maneuvering by aircraft. Many

choppers took hits and almost all suffered injuries to crew. All the pilots who participated in the evacuation earned Distinguished Flying Crosses. The crew chiefs and door gunners received Air Medals with a "V" for valor. The enemy was left in control of the jungle but after taking a pounding by B-52s and tactical air support the mountains were left flattened and defoliated. The after-action report lists US losses at 75 KIA, 443 WIA. Aircraft losses on or near the firebase included:

Hueys damaged or destroyed - 26
OH6A damaged or destroyed - 8
CH47 damaged or destroyed - 10

Sadly, it was impossible to evacuate all troops from the firebase. Some troops had taken refuge deep in tunnels and separated from contact with the extraction. Remarkable and successful as it was, the evacuation was not without exceptions. The book is a remarkable piece of work by Keith Nolan with a tribute by Stephen E. Ambrose who described it by saying "I've never read a better account of a battle."

VIETNAM PHOTOS



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

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

THANK YOU to everyone that volunteered and visited the museum in May for our Memorial Day Observance and the Vietnam Living History event. Here are a few photos from both events.

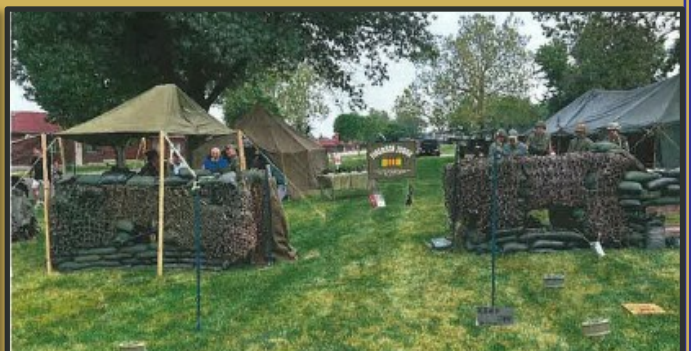
MEMORIAL DAY 2026

Memorial Day Observance Visitors 1,371 Served over 664 breakfast meals and 68 donors for the Blood Drive Collected 72 units Saving 216 LIVES!



VIETNAM LIVING HISTORY EVENT 2026

1961 USMC Vietnam War veteran UH-34 Helicopter had 246 Visitors for this two day event.



America 250 Trivia

1. Born in Waterloo, Iowa, these five siblings famously enlisted in the Navy together during World War II with the condition that they serve on the same ship. What was there name?
2. Which Iowa native and U.S. Senator proposed the creation of the Medal of Honor?
3. What major military training camp opened in Iowa in 1917 to train over 1,250 Black college graduates as Army officers?
4. How many Iowans went into military service during World War II?
5. What was George Washington's Rank?
6. What is the name of the first military aircraft to break the sound barrier?
7. Name of the largest military base in the United States?

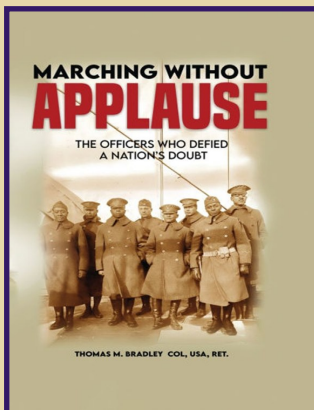
Did You Know.... The famous bell-bottomed trousers worn in the Navy were introduced in 1817. they were originally designed to easily roll up above the knees when sailors were washing the deck, and to make it easier to kick off boots if a sailor fell overboard.

HISTORY MOMENT - FT. DES MOINES

Author Colonel (Ret) Thomas Bradley

On Saturday, June 13th we had the privilege to listen and engage with Col. (Ret) Thomas Bradley about his new book "*Marching without Applause.*"

Set in 1917 as America prepared to enter into World War I, Black men were barred from becoming Army Officers. This historical fiction account honors the real-life struggle and triumph of those who answered the call, endured prejudice and emerged as commission officers.

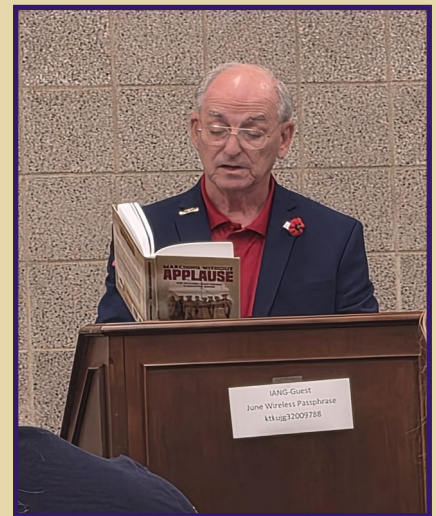


History Moment

In 1917, Fort Des Moines made history as the site of the U.S. military first officer candidate class for African Americans.

The book is for sale at the museum's gift shop.

Copies available are all signed by the author.



Col. (Ret) Thomas Bradley

Trivia Answers: 1. The Sullivans; 2.Senator James W Grimes; 3. Fort Des Moines; 4. Over 276,000; 5. Six- Star General, posthumously in 1976; 6. Bell X1; 7.Fort Bragg.