



April, May and June 2025

**IN THIS ISSUE**

- ◆ Volunteer Spotlight
- ◆ Camp Dodge Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution
- ◆ Museum Movie Nights
- ◆ Curator Corner
- ◆ Test Your Knowledge
- ◆ and so much more!

**LOOK WHAT IS HAPPENING**

**AT THE MUSEUM**

- ◆ **Movie Nights 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm:**
  - ⇒ April 14th - "Go For Broke" (1951)
  - ⇒ May 12th - "The Hunters" (1958)
  - ⇒ June 9th - "Hamburger Hill" (1987)

**MUSEUM HOURS**

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

**EVENTS**

- ◆ Memorial Day Event - Monday, May 26th, 5AM - 1PM
- ◆ Vietnam Living History Event - June 7th and 8th
- ◆ Guest Speaker Historian and Author: Jeff Kluever will discuss his new book "*Civil War and Freedom of the Enslaved.*" on Saturday, June 21st at 11AM
- ◆ Army and the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum Anniversaries - June 14th

**THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED THE FOLLOWING DATES**

- ◆ **Saturday April 19th and April 20th** - In honor of the Easter Holiday
- ◆ **Saturday, May 24th** - Set up and final prep for Memorial Day Event (May 26th)



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

**MUSEUM STAFF**

State Quartermaster..... Colonel Michael Harris  
 Museum Director .....Sherrie Colbert  
 Museum Curator .....Michael W. Vogt  
 Volunteer Coordinator..... Ben Elliott

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



## Meet Museum Volunteer Larry Ferguson

Larry Ferguson is celebrating his 15th year as a volunteer at the museum! Larry (like all of our volunteers) is one of the

volunteers we can call on short notice and he is there to help out from answering the phone, assist with a tour groups or building a new display.

On Memorial Day, Larry brings his wife Jane (who hands out flowers for our Plant A Flower For A Veteran Program) and they stay all day! Larry is the person who assist with the golf cart rides for visitors between the attractions. Larry assists visitors on and of the carts and greets visitors entering the museum with a warm welcome, directions and a big smile.

Larry wears his museum hat wherever he goes. Larry says it is a good way to promote the museum and great way to talk to people about all the museum has to offer!

Larry has also been instrumental in recruiting veterans to tell their stories for our Oral History Program, booking group tours and being the friendly face when visitor arrive at the entrance.

Larry never forgets about the staff - bringing donuts to help us get off to a good start in the morning!! The museum could not fulfill its mission without volunteers like Larry Ferguson.

**Larry we salute you!**



# 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 Ben Elliott at [benjamin.elliott@iowa.gov](mailto:benjamin.elliott@iowa.gov) to express interest and learn more.





*At the museum*

# MOVIE NIGHT

## Movie Line Up for 2025

APRIL 14 - GO FOR BROKE (1951)

MAY 12 - THE HUNTERS (1958)

JUNE 9 - HAMBURGER HILL (1987)

JULY 14 - STALINGARD (1993)

AUGUST - NO MOVIE

SEPTEMBER 8 - BAT 21 (1988)

OCTOBER 13 - TAE GOK GOI (2004)

NOVEMBER 10 - M\*A\*S\*H (1970)

DECEMBER 8 - CROSS OF IRON (1977)

DOORS OPEN AT 5:30 PM.

FEEL FREE TO BRING YOUR OWN SNACKS  
( YOU MUST CLEAN UP YOUR AREA!)

\*SPACE IS LIMITED



*Free Admission*





# Around the Community

## Remains of Iowa WWII soldier killed on D-Day identified

By Larry Wright, IGSMV Volunteer

WASHINGTON - The remains of an Iowa soldier who was killed in World War II have been accounted for, according to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

U.S. Army Pvt. James L. Harrington, 21, of Cincinnati, Iowa, was part of operations to land on Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944, in Normandy, France. Harrington, a member of Company A, 149th Engineer Combat Battalion, was on a Landing Craft Infantry 92 headed for the beach when it struck an underwater mine, causing the craft to burst into flames. Enemy artillery fire also struck the craft, causing an explosion that ignited the ship's fuel supply, immediately killing everyone in the troop compartment.

The burnt remains of servicemen were found in the troop compartment and recovered on June 10, 1944. They were first buried at the United States Military Cemetery St. Laurent-sur-Mer. In 1946, the American Graves



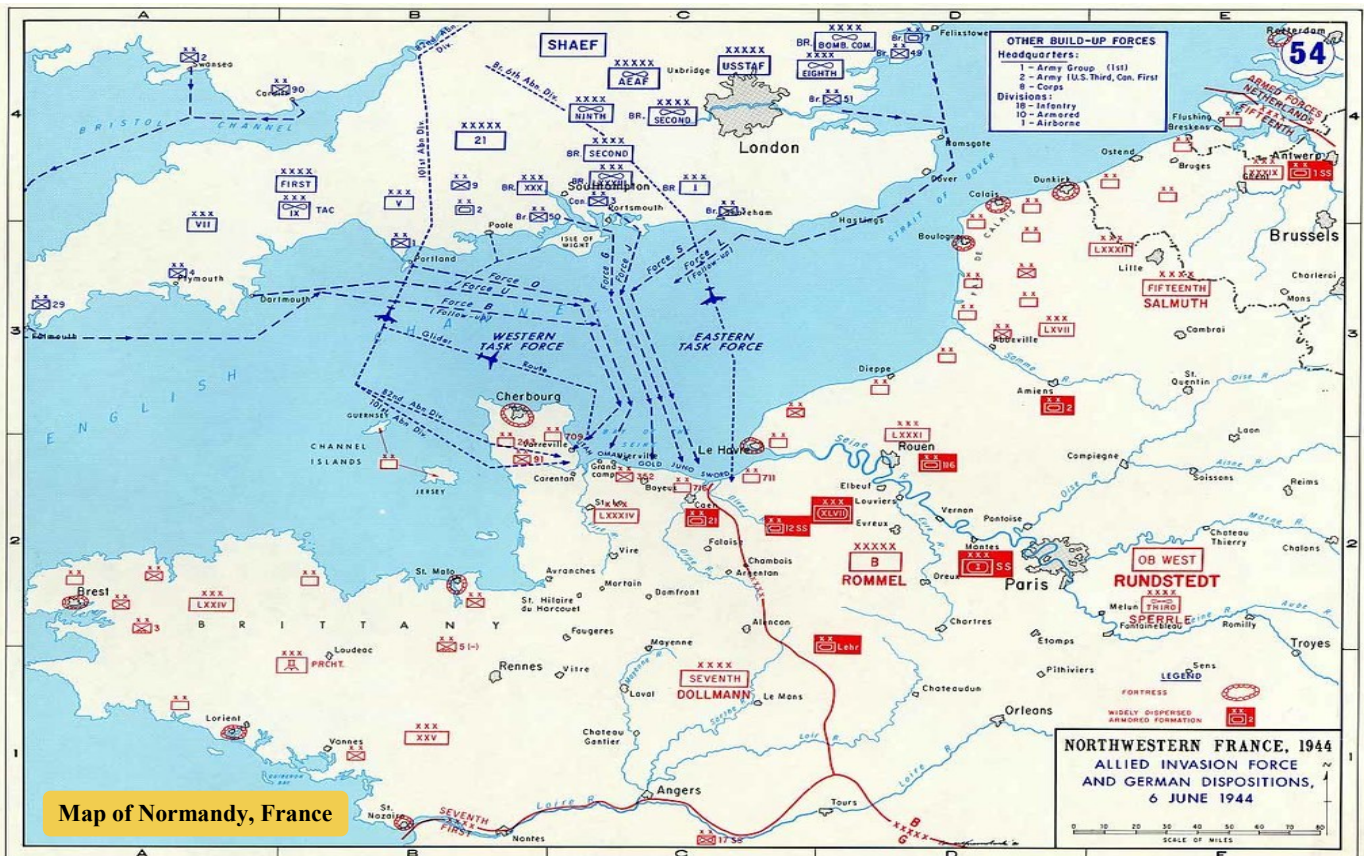
U.S. Army Pvt. James L. Harrington

Registration Command examined the remains and separated them into four separate Unknowns. Efforts to identify

the Unknowns were unsuccessful and they were interred in the Normandy American Cemetery, in France.

The DPAA and officials with the American Battle Monuments Commission exhumed the remains in 2021 and scientists from the DPAA laboratory conducted anthropological analysis. The mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosome DNA were further analyzed by scientists with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System in order to identify Harrington's remains. The DOD says he was accounted for on August 21, 2023.

Harrington will be buried in his hometown of Cincinnati, Iowa, at a later date. The U.S. Army Casualty Office, Fort Knox, KY, will notify Iowa Gold Star Military Museum Volunteer Larry Wright of the full military funeral services when they are known.



Map of Normandy, France

NORTHWESTERN FRANCE, 1944  
ALLIED INVASION FORCE  
AND GERMAN DISPOSITIONS,  
6 JUNE 1944



# Daughters of the American Revolution

## Who is Margaret Cochran Corbin?

Article provided by:  
Kathy Sells, Regent  
Camp Dodge Chapter, NSDAR



Margaret Cochran Corbin is celebrated as one of the first women to serve in combat in the defense of our nation, having taken over her husband's cannon during the Battle of Fort Mifflin in 1776. This act resulted in her becoming the first woman to receive a pension from the United States and being forever immortalized by her nickname "Captain Molly."

Margaret Cochran was born in Franklin County, Pa., November 12, 1751, but by the age of five she was orphaned when her father was killed during an Indian raid and her mother taken captive. Margaret and her brother were away from home when the raid occurred and afterwards were raised by an uncle. She married John Corbin, originally from the colony of Virginia, in 1772, and he joined the Pennsylvania militia three years later as an artilleryman.

When John left for war, Margaret accompanied his regiment as a camp follower, as many wives of soldiers did during the time, likely helping to cook, do laundry and nurse wounded soldiers. But her duties soon exceeded those common tasks of the camp wives. While they were stationed in Fort Mifflin on Manhattan Island, N.Y., on November 16, 1776, the fort was attacked by British and Hessian troops. During the battle, as others were dying around them, Margaret assisted her husband as he

helped to repel ferocious British attacks. When John died in action by her side, Margaret took his place on the firing line and continued to work the artillery without any time to mourn, until she too was severely wounded. She was captured by the British following the battle but was soon paroled and assigned to the Corps of Invalids at West Point.

We know of Margaret's significant action at the battle as a combatant based on details from a Congressional resolution dated July 6, 1779. It was at that time that officers from her regiment successfully petitioned Continental Congress on her behalf, and it was resolved that Margaret receive compensation for her service, making

her the first woman to be awarded a lifelong pension from the United States for her military service. Her wounds were so severe that she likely lost use of her arm and had to live with caregivers for the rest of her life due to her debilitating injuries. Margaret died at the age of 48 in the year 1800 in Highland Falls, N.Y., about three miles south of West Point.

DAR also highlights her enduring legacy every year during Continental Congress when presenting the Margaret Cochran Corbin Award to a distinguished woman in military service. The award honors both historic efforts of this female patriot and a contemporary woman whose own military service carries on the selfless spirit of Margaret Corbin. (Information provided by nsdar.org)

The Camp Dodge Chapter, NSDAR, is proud of our member **Katie Lunning** who received the prestigious **Margaret Cochran Corbin award** in the summer of 2023 from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Katie was recognized for her heroic work as a

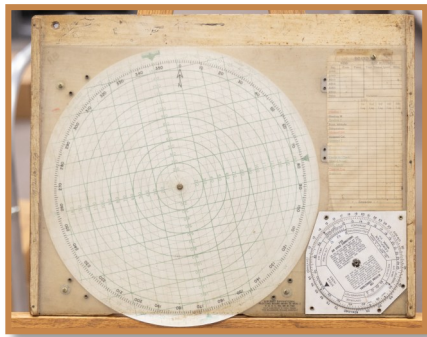


critical care nurse saving lives in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021. In addition, Maj. Katie Lunning became the first Air National Guard flight nurse to receive the **Distinguished Flying Cross**.



Learn more about DAR go to [DAR.org](https://www.dar.org).  
To learn more about the Camp Dodge Chapter, contact us at  
[CampDodgeDAR@gmail.com](mailto:CampDodgeDAR@gmail.com).

## CURATOR CORNER



### U.S. Navy Mark III Model I Aircraft Navigational Plotting Board

Written by:  
**Michael W. Vogt**  
Museum Curator

With the launch of a Curtiss pusher aircraft flown by Eugene B. Ely, of rural Washington, Iowa, from a temporary flight deck built upon the bow of the U.S. Navy cruiser *Birmingham* anchored near Hampton Roads, Virginia, on November 14, 1910, the age of naval aviation was born.

The concept of naval aviation resulted in the U.S. Navy's first aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. *Langley*, joining the fleet in 1922. Deployment of aircraft at sea posed a unique navigational problem for naval aviators flying over ocean areas without landmarks. In addition, after launching planes while turned into the wind, the carrier would return to its original course leaving naval aviators to calculate the carrier's position at sea upon their return flight.

To aid their carrier pilots with overwater flights the U.S. Navy developed the "Aircraft Navigational Plotting Board" designed to be carried aboard an airplane. When used by the pilot of a single seat plane the plotting board was held in a metal frame and slid into tracks under the instrument panel providing a stable platform for its use. The example

shown here is a World War II era Mark III Model I consisting of a plastic see-through cover displaying a compass template attached to a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick laminated  $11 \frac{1}{2} \times 16 \frac{1}{2}$  inch board. Data was marked on the plastic cover with a lead or grease pencil. The pivoting circular wheel underneath allowed Navy and Marine Corps aviators to draw course vector diagrams for bearing and distance, calculate latitude and longitude positions, and adjust their courses for magnetic compass variation and winds aloft. Speed, course, time and distance calculations were solved with the Mark VIII Aircraft Navigational Computer mounted on the lower right corner of the plotting board.



U.S.S. Langley - Almay 1924 Photo



### NEW USS IOWA SSN 797

#### Commissioning Watch Party!

**When: Saturday, April 5th at 8:45 Central Standard Time**

The museum will be the host site for this event. Please come out and watch this historic event!

For questions call the museum at 515-252-4531

## Just A Little Funny!

How do you change tires on a duck?

WITH A QUACKER JACK!

How do scientists freshen their breath?

WITH EXPERI-MINTS.

Which geometric figure represents a lost parrot?

A POLYGON!





## DID YOU KNOW

Our visitors know the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum for our exhibits and extensive collection of artifacts, but many may not realize that we have even more to offer. The museum is brimming with historical resources for students, historians, and the general public.

There's no better place to start than the BG Edward W. Bird Memorial Library, with its extensive collection of books and documents covering all eras and subjects of American military history. The library also highlights the experiences of Iowa veterans through memoirs and interviews.

We're particularly excited about a new addition to this section, *Young Heroes Who Changed Korean History*. This six-volume set consists of interviews with Korean War veterans, including our long-time volunteer, Jake Chapman, who generously donated the set. Firsthand accounts like this are the best way to connect with Iowa's heroes and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences.

Whether you're working on a research project or just want to delve deeper into military history, the BG Edward W. Bird Memorial Library is a must-visit. Call or email the museum today to set up an appointment for assistance with your research.

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### USED BOOKS STORE GETS A FACELIFT!

The museum book store just received a new look with new shelving and new carpet was installed on March 31st!.

We have several books on the Civil War and World War II. We also have books on other conflicts from Korea to the Gulf Wars. The prices range from, hard covered books \$2 and softcover books are \$1 or as marked.

A BIG Thank You to our museum supporters for your generous donation of books!!

## 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).



## ROAD TO SURRENDER BY EVAN THOMAS

Reviewed by William Fanter

Military history is so dependent upon access to records, diaries, letters, media publications, and other time sensitive documents that one has to wonder if the door to a researcher's Eldorado doesn't swing open a little wider with the passage of time. With the passage of time government imposed mandatory seals are lifted, relationships between belligerents are cooled, privacy concerns over personal diaries diminish, and the work of other scholars may create insight to guide research. Moreover, sometimes simple luck intervenes to assist the writer in his research. Evan Thomas benefitted from all these tools in writing a riveting account of the last six months of the Pacific War culminating with the first use of nuclear weapons in warfare. While the headlines covered the war from the front lines with stories of the battles and the boys, an equally intense story existed behind the scenes acted out by the decision makers far from the front who controlled the direction of the big picture from centers in Guam, Hawaii, Tokyo, and Washington. This is the story of those high-ranking decision makers who dealt with the development and delivery of the Atomic Bomb as a primary weapon to bring the Pacific War to an end.

Evan Thomas makes a strong case for the conclusion that the use of a doomsday weapon was absolutely necessary to bring the Japanese to the fantail of the USS Missouri in Tokyo harbor in September of 1945. Even the second bomb was required, albeit regrettably, to seal the deal. This book provides an intensity to the very final stages of the negotiations to convince the reader that the "unconditional surrender" was absolutely necessary and was achieved under very fragile conditions. The celebrations in New York City and Piccadilly Square were premature as the scribes crafted the language of closure before the young Japanese officers mounted a coup to assassinate the advisers to the Emperor and perhaps even the man/god himself.

While Thomas selects three principal figures to tell the story of the finale, I believe the story could include two or three times that number with little confusion. He begins with the secretary of War, Henry Stimson, as the leading figure we will follow and adds Admiral Carl "Tooie" Spaatz, the top Army Air Corps officer and director of bombing operations in the

Pacific War. The third player is Shigenori Togo, the Japanese Foreign Minister, through whose eyes and ears we learn of the thinking going on with the Japanese supreme military council controlling the war defense. These were the principal decision makers involved in the last six months of the war. While President Truman is not included he was certainly involved and in no way let himself be omitted from calling the shots. "The Buck Stops Here" ...and it did!

Recent scholars have begun to call the war with Japan the "Asia-Pacific War" separating it from the war in Europe brought by Hitler and his Nazi ethos. Clearly the wars were very different from both a geographical and cultural position. The Japanese were driven more by a 2300-year-old Samurai Warrior tradition than the Nazi ethos and absolute fiat required by Hitler. That is not to say Hitler was a humanitarian by any means, but rather to emphasize that the Japanese was a warrior culture through and through driven by the military's duty to protect the god-like emperor and follow his orders at all cost. In fact, Thomas explains that the military really controlled Hirohito because he exhibited great deference to their decisions. He said very little contrary to the consensus of the six-man military council and was more of a figurehead than a contributor to decision making.

The six-person council were all military people except Togo who was a civilian Foreign Minister and the only one of an impure Japanese race. His father was Korean while his mother was German. They married when both worked at the Japanese embassy in Berlin. Togo's father bought the surname, "Togo", from an ancient Samurai family, the hereditary warrior caste.

The politics of the military council changed as the war began to go badly for the Japanese. The Battle of Midway and the loss of the carrier fleet certainly impacted the future conduct of the war for Japan. As American air power became stronger and Japanese air power was overcome by both equipment and aviation skill, Japanese confidence deteriorated. The island nation began to suffer immensely from the Allied navy cutting supply lines and isolating both the military and civilians. The six-person council no doubt recognized the end was near but became resolute that their Samurai culture and spirit would overcome the Allies

superior war production machine. They were wrong.

As the Marines' island hopping crept closer to Japan the council leaned towards a recognition that they would be defeated but that they could "bleed" the Allies and fatigue them by causing unacceptable losses. They developed a plan for one great final battle awaiting the Allies if they tried to come ashore at Kyushu, the South Island in the Japanese chain. Japan had begun to harden the beachside bunkers and fortify the firing positions to repel bombardment. In addition to their five million man fighting army they had built a one-million-man resistance army to defend the beaches, and repaired over 7000 aircraft to use as Kamikazes to target troopships and large landing craft anticipated in the final assault. They realized the Americans had paid a terrible price to take Okinawa when Japan had sent over 2000 Kamikaze aircraft into battle. The pilots they had trained for this final battle were only trained in how to take off not how to land the torpedo-armed, patched up aircraft.

They also planned to use small motorboats with Kamikaze operators and frogmen to mine the waters off shore. They had trained and equipped women and children with pikes, scythes, and pitchforks to fight to the death. The council realized this was a battle they would lose, but that they could obtain some favorable terms in negotiating peace.

In the meantime, Truman and Stimson had been informed the Atomic Bomb was ready and available. While the full details of its power were uncertain it was certain to deliver a huge impact. Here is where the full weight of the responsibility for incredible power burdens the decision makers to decide what to do and how to do it. How should the bomb be used knowing it was likely to kill thousands of civilians along with military victims? The bomb was not a bullet. Precision delivery was really not possible.

Stimson and Spaatz were of the opinion that it should be used to strike only military targets lest America be known as the same heartless monster Hitler and his Nazis had become.

Others counseled the bomb had to deliver shocking destruction to impress the Japanese that their resistance was hopeless.

*(continued on page 9)*



## BOOK REVIEW - CONTINUED

(continued from page 8)

Others counseled the bomb had to deliver shocking destruction to impress the Japanese that their resistance was hopeless. They argued over the three cities to be targeted with General Leslie Groves, the architect of the Manhattan Project, who advocated for Kyoto as the number one target. Hiroshima was on the list. Stimson put his foot down and pulled rank saying, Kyoto, the cultural center of Japan, would not be hit. General Marshall concurred yet Groves continued to push unsuccessfully for Kyoto as a target for the rest of the war. Kyoto was never bombed.

It was finally decided to pick a city with both a military presence and lots of wooden houses to produce fires. Of course, that meant many civilians would be swept into the mix, but the Japanese were mixing war production centers with civilian populations so the resulting civilian casualties were inevitable. While the Air Corps attempted to use precision bombing it is doubtful that such precision targeting would be effective. Unlike the European theater, Japan was beset by the Gulf Stream making visual bombing difficult even with the Norden bombsite as frequent cloudy conditions interfered. Moreover, because of the power of the A-bomb it had to be dropped from B-29's flying at 30,000 feet to protect planes. Hiroshima generated 85,000 casualties and delivered the shock effect Stimson and Spaatz wanted. America opened discussions for surrender through back door channels in Switzerland and Sweden but were rebuffed when half of the Japanese committee of six felt the spirit of the Samurai. Now the debate among the Allied deciders moved quickly to select and deliver a second bomb on another city/

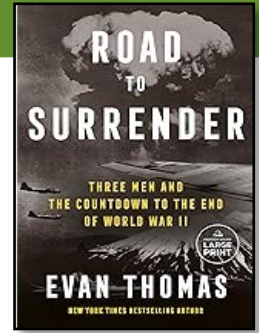
military target within days so Japan would believe America had the capacity to sustain the elevated power. To make matters worse for Japan, Russia now invaded Manchuria where Japan had long controlled this Chinese territory. Russia was soon to establish troops on some of the outlying Japanese islands foretelling its aggressive overreach similar to its grasp of Poland in Europe.

The committee was deadlocked and had to appeal to Emperor Hirohito to break the tie. The Emperor wanted peace for his people and the survival of his dynasty. He instructed the committee to make peace and preserve the imperial government. They delayed executing the order still confounded by disagreement. Senior Japanese officials were being assassinated and committing *seppuku* in the Halls of the Palace when word leaked that Hirohito favored peace. In fact, he was so fearful that he would not survive that he made a recording to his people telling them it was necessary to end the fighting and that they should stand down. The speech was recorded with two copies hidden for days in a women's cloak room until the message had sunk in with the people and the military had complied. Still, details had to be worked out as elated people celebrated in Times Square and elsewhere. They were premature, but appropriate within a few days later. Language crafted by Stimson's aid, McLory, preserved the imperial government for Japan while requiring the Emperor to seek approval from the occupying General, Douglas MacArthur, for all substantive decisions later made.

In the epilogue we find out how this book came to have the title augmented with the

phrase: "Three Men and the Countdown to the end of World War II". In the course of his research into the historical end of the war Evan Thomas had the unique opportunity to be introduced to the twin grandsons of Togo and the granddaughter of Tooy Spaatz. Each of them had written papers about their grandfathers fortified by access to personal diaries and many conversations with their grandfathers. One has to imagine that this is an example of the door opening to an author's Eldorado, setting the stage for sharing of these riches.

I would have titled the book "The Agony of the Deciders" to emphasize the burden the makers of such great decisions must have experienced. Ironically, Togo was the only one of the three protagonists to die at peace with himself in 1950 while serving a 20-year prison sentence imposed by war tribunals. He knew his efforts to be the single voice advocating for peace had likely saved thousands, if not millions, of lives and retained the Japanese Imperial dynasty to live on. Spaatz and Stimson were tormented for the rest of their lives with the knowledge of the orders they had given causing thousands of deaths and denying them the peace of mind they wished for. It's hard to imagine senior officers, indeed senior civilian cabinet members suffering from PTSD but perhaps they did. I missed this book when it was released in 2023 but fortunately, we caught up with each other.



## Valentines for Veterans Project



This year the museum set up a valentine station for visitors to craft cards for veterans at the VA Medical Center in Des Moines. The project was a big hit with our young visitors and their parents. We made 60 valentines that were delivered to the VA Medical Center on Valentines Day (February 14th).

**Thank you** Janice Jensen for her crafting skills by cutting and making all the decorations for the cards and cutting all the card stock!

**Thank you** for everyone who participated!

Museum Volunteer Jay Hommer assisted with packing up the valentines for delivery.  
**Thanks Jay!**



## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### VIETNAM WAR

1. What was the defoliant used to clear vegetation to expose enemy positions?
2. The name for the major route for supplies to the enemy was called the?
3. What were local insurgents in the south called?
4. The most common enemy assault rifle?
5. Nickname for the Bell UH-1D Iroquois helicopter?
6. What were the colors of the North Vietnam flag?
7. What were “punji” sticks used for?
8. What is a “blood chit”?

### SPRING EVENTS

- Memorial Day, Monday, May 26th, 5 AM - 1 PM
- Vietnam Living History Event, June 7th and 8th 9AM to 5 PM
- Guest Speaker Historian and Author: Jeff Kluever will discuss his new book “Civil War and Freedom of the Enslaved.” on Saturday, June 21st – at 11AM
- Army and the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum Anniversaries - June 14th



### **Don't Forget....**

Iowa Dept. of Veteran Affairs will Honor Vietnam Veterans on May 14th at the Vietnam Memorial Wall on Wednesday May 14th at 11 AM (south of the State Capitol grounds)

If you missed Author Enfy's McMurry's Presentation “Disaster at 39,000 Ft. How Small Town America Came Together at a Time of Crisis”

OR

William Morris's new book presentation: IN DEFENSE OF THE NATION, Black Iowans At War, you can catch them on our Facebook Page and our YouTube Channel.

**We add events all the time. Make sure you Like Us on Facebook and check out our web page.**

Answers: 1. Agent Orange; 2. Ho Chi Minh Trail; 3. Viet Cong; 4. AK-47; 5. Huey; 6. Red, Blue, Yellow; 7. Pointed stakes in boobytrap pits; 8. A cloth panel inside airmen's jackets with U.S. flag and multiple languages soliciting aid if they were found