



New Construction Concept



As the MN Military & Veterans Museum (est. 1977) had long outgrown an outdated 1931 facility at Camp Ripley and as no new construction was permitted at this site, the Museum acquired 32-acres (appraised at \$130,000) between the Little Falls State Veterans Cemetery and Highway 371 in 2019. In 2021, ownership of this property was transferred to Camp Ripley / MN Department of Military Affairs (DMA) as the future home of the Museum.

This new site will represent a dramatic increase in public awareness of and accessibility to the Museum & the veteran stories therein.

HF 2672 & SF 2574

SUPPORT

The Minnesota Commanders' Task Force is comprised of nine congressionally chartered veterans service organizations. As the elected leaders of these respective organizations, we appreciate their decision to make funding for a new museum a top legislative priority.



RESOLUTIONS



Joseph Votel
General, US Army (Retired)
Lake Elmo, MN

When speaking with many audiences throughout my 39-year military career, I have often tried to highlight the importance of support from the American public. I believe it is an essential motivational ingredient for our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen. Fortunately, despite politics and other opinions, the American people have sustained this support for our uniformed men and women as they have done the Nation's work in many locations. I saw it prominently during my service in Afghanistan and Iraq, and I continue to see it after my return to Minnesota following my 2019 retirement. It is powerful and, perhaps more than anything else, sends an unambiguous signal to our men and women that we value their efforts.

This support is, of course, essential during times of conflict --- but I would also highlight that this support for our veterans and their families is equally important as they return to our communities. Return to our communities is often a difficult transition --- mainly when our Veterans come with the visible and invisible scars of combat. There is a multitude of ways to address these challenges. One fundamental and tangible way is through public recognition and honor to their service.

I am writing to ask for your financial support for an initiative to recognize our Minnesota Veterans with a world-class museum worthy of their service and sacrifice.

Your support will help us realize this dream of properly honoring generations of Minnesota Veterans for their service to our State and our Nation.

With deepest respect.



Joseph L. Votel
General, US Army (Retired)



GENERAL JOSEPH VOTEL



General Joseph L. Votel is a retired U.S. Army Four-Star officer and most recently the Commander of the U.S. Central Command, responsible for U.S. and coalition military operations in the Middle East, Levant, and Central and South Asia. During his 39 years in the military, he commanded special operations and conventional military forces at every level. His career included combat in Panama, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Notably, he led a 79-member coalition that successfully liberated Iraq and Syria from the Islamic State Caliphate. He preceded his assignment at CENTCOM with service as the Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command and the Joint Special Operations Command.

Votel graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1980. He is the Class of 1987 Senior Fellow at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.



Arn Kind / Mankato
Public School Teacher with 40 years of experience

It is absolutely necessary to have an informed citizenry that is knowledgeable and appreciative of the sacrifices made by our veterans. I've found the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum to be invaluable. Their school-based programs benefit all students. After touring their extensive archives, I realized that there are many artifacts not on display because of the limited floor space available. I whole-heartedly support the museum's plan for a new, larger facility.



William Wroolie / Brainerd
US Army (1966-73), National Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (2002-03), Board Member of the MN Military Museum

I believe in the positive power of veterans staying connected with other veterans throughout their lives. My role as board member is to make sure we help develop strong ties between veterans and their respective communities. I'd welcome the opportunity to be the first to host my unit's national Vietnam Vet Reunion at the new museum! The proposed facility is designed with these kinds of reunions, for all branches, in mind.



Mariah Jacobsen / Northfield
Daughter of Flight 93 Hero Tom Burnett

Every 9/11 victim and Global War on Terrorism veteran deserves a permanent exhibition in a beautiful, new facility packed with galleries and classrooms to inform and inspire future generations. I look forward to bringing my kids to the new space so they can better appreciate the scope of their grandfather's bravery and selflessness.



Sarah Vessey / Garrison
General John Vessey's daughter

After his passing, our family entrusted the MN Military Museum with my dad's personal effects, official records and letters from world leaders. My mom and dad were both laid to rest at the State Veterans Cemetery just across the street from this proposed site. Creating a direct link between the cemetery and museum would be of enormous benefit for many families.



Larry Osvold / Brainerd
Historian, 194th Tank Regiment

Since their departure on February 20, 1941, Brainerd's beloved Company A of the 194th Tank Battalion has enjoyed a special place in history. Sometimes it feels like the community has been waiting all these years for a museum big enough to share their larger-than-life-story. I strongly endorse plans for a new military museum. WWII had a devastating impact on the Brainerd area. The 194th fought in Bataan, followed by the Death March, Hell ships, and POW labor camps for more than three years. Sixty-one members from Brainerd served, 33 were lost and 29 returned. Julius Knudson remains listed as missing in action.



David Nguyen / St. Paul
OEF/OIF Veteran

The war in Vietnam was a turning point for my dad and informed my thinking to enlist on September 10, 2001. My service shaped who I am today. I am grateful for the lessons I learned and the friendships I formed. The ongoing work of the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum is crucial and their vision for a new facility to tell my story and my parent's story and the story of all veterans is an investment we must be willing to make.



Louise Woehrle / Minneapolis
Filmmaker, Whirlygig Productions

I owe so much to the MN Military Museum. They provided uniforms for reenactors portraying POWs and countless artifacts to ensure historical accuracy. Their involvement was essential to the success of our award-winning film *Stalag Luft III - One Man's Story* about my uncle Charles Woehrle, a Minnesota man who was a B-17 Bombardier in the 'Mighty Eighth' and POW in Stalag Luft III for two long years. He was one of countless WWII heroes. Filmmakers like myself and the many other authors and researchers who document Minnesota history rely on this museum. They have proven themselves to be an incredible resource. They have outgrown their current facility. It's time to open a larger, even more extraordinary, military museum in honor of the greatest generation and those who followed.



Lee Pao Xiong / St Paul
Director of the Center for
Hmong Studies

Since 2004 our Center has worked to promote the scholarly interest, rich legacy and the complex heritage of the Hmong people. I am happy to know that including this history in a new, larger Military Museum is already being thought through. I support this new facility and you should too.



Jill Stephenson / Minnetonka
Gold Star Mom

I am fully committed to this new facility for the Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum as the home for thousands of veteran stories. In honor of my son, I am working with the Museum team to develop the one-mile Gold Star Trail that will wrap around this 32-acre campus. Ben's legacy lives on in his brothers-in-arms, those whose lives he saved with the donation of his organs upon his death, and in the hearts of all who love and miss him. The MMVM will be a new avenue for Ben's story to touch the lives of strangers and be preserved for posterity in Minnesota's military history.



Kristina VonBerge / Little Falls
Director of the Convention and
Visitors Bureau & Navy Veteran

The community is proud to have the MN Military Museum in Little Falls. We consider the museum one of our treasures. However, it is hidden on the Camp Ripley base. The new location will provide a regional impact. I would like to see it on the HWY 371 corridor and strongly feel that this will positively impact the community, retail businesses and restaurants. This is a win/win for residents, tourists and veterans alike.



Mark Ritchie / Minneapolis
Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the
U.S. Army and Board Member of the
MN Military Museum

The Military Museum has been an exceptional steward of veteran stories for more than 40 years. The time has come to dramatically increase public access to this very special collection. As a board member, I look forward to being involved in every step of this process.



Larry Herke / Sauk Centre
Commissioner of the Minnesota
Department of Veterans Affairs and
Board Member of the MN Military
Museum

The Department of Veteran Affairs supports the replacement of the outdated and undersized military museum with a new, expanded and conveniently located museum that will tell the stories of all veterans. The new museum will be used for Veteran reunions and celebrations, which is a key consideration for soldier resiliency.



Roger Reinert / Duluth
Commander, United States Navy
and Board Member of the MN
Military Museum

I am proud to now serve as a Board Member of the Minnesota Military Museum. This 32-acre site is at the crossroads of HWY 371, Mississippi River and the State Veterans Cemetery. As envisioned, this new, larger museum and library will be a tremendous statewide resource. I'm a post-9/11 veteran, having recently spent a year in Afghanistan. A new facility would not only be a place to tell OUR story, but also a place to gather for all those who served in the Global War on Terror.



Eric Kerska / Rochester
Fire Chief & Post-9/11 Vet

The MN Military Museum has taken on the Herculean task of documenting the experience of the state's post-9/11 vets. For this, I am very grateful. The support and love I felt from the Minnesotans I served alongside is something I will never forget. America's longest war has come at a tremendous cost to families and the resulting bonds run deep. Our state experience in the 20-year Global War on Terror will serve as the centerpiece in a new, larger, and much improved military museum.



Steve Glasper / Minneapolis
Business Owner & Vietnam Veteran

I recently shared my story at the Military Museum's Vietnam War Roundtable. Having done it, I would encourage other vets to share their stories and appreciate the museum creating this opportunity for me and others. Investing in the museum is investing in veterans. We want a place where our kids and grandkids can learn more about our service to the country.



Trudell Guerue / St Paul
Paratrooper, Lawyer, Tribal Judge

My American Indian ancestors served in very high numbers. It is a warrior ethic and I am proud of this heritage. The MN Military Museum has done much to document my time in Vietnam as an artillery forward observer. I welcome the opportunity to further work with them to represent my people's story in service of this great nation. This plan for a new museum is something I support. When our work is done, it will be a place everyone should visit. Understanding our cultures and traditions is important to our future.



Major Charlie Dietz / Baghdad
25th Infantry Division

I am writing to you from Iraq. As an active duty Army officer, I bump into fellow Minnesotans all the time. My job entails assisting reporters from all over the world. I've been privileged to work alongside correspondents from the BBC, NBC, ABC, Washington Post, Associated Press, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and many more. I appreciate that the MN Military Museum has begun the process of documenting America's longest war but I know their current space is inadequate for a story this big. When my tour is complete, I look forward to taking my family to a new museum where my story and the story of fellow Minnesotans is on full display. Thank you for valuing our veteran's service enough to provide a place where it can be recorded and shared.



Rick Nash / New Prague
Lt. General (Ret.) and Board
Member of the MN Military Museum

The new museum will be a focal point for all branches of the armed services and the men and women who have worn the uniform in service to our state and nation. For those who have served and those who will serve, the facility will be a place of reflection and a repository for oral histories as well as a central gathering place. For their families and friends, the museum will be a rich educational environment. It will be a source of pride and inspiration.