



ALLIES

Newsletter for Members and Friends of the Military Historical Society of Minnesota

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WINTER 2009

VOL XVII, No. 1

Special Points of Interest:

- *New Military Vehicles Received*
- *2008 Museum Statistics*
- *Feature Article, "The Revolutionary War Soldier Buried in Minnesota"*

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR SOLDIER BURIED IN MINNESOTA

By Anita Buck

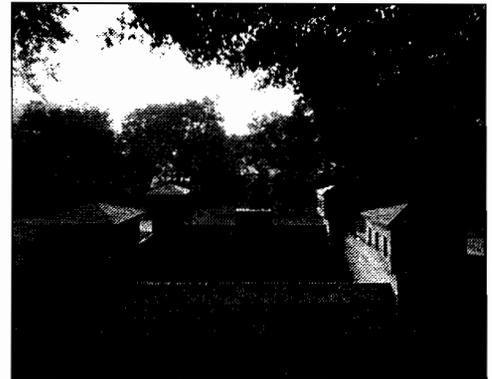
The American War of Independence began in 1775 when Massachusetts militia clashed with British regulars at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The fighting largely ended with Cornwallis' surrender to combined American and French forces at Yorktown, Virginia in 1781, although officially the war did not conclude until 1783 with the Treaty of Paris.

Surprisingly, more than 1,000 miles west of the scene of the conflict is the grave of a Revolutionary War soldier. In Woodlawn Cemetery, just off Highway 61 on the southwest corner of Winona, Minnesota, is the burial site of Stephen Taylor, the only soldier from the Revolutionary War known to be buried in Minnesota.

His grave is marked with an unusual monument in the shape of a colonial fort which was installed there in 1933 through the efforts of the Wenonah Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Earlier, he had been buried in the old "prairie" cemetery a short distance down-stream from Winona. Later, his remains and those of other members of his family were transferred to Woodlawn Cemetery. A plaque on the rear wall of the fort is a headstone which had marked an earlier grave in a somewhat hidden part of the cemetery. The stone reads:

"In memory of Stephen Taylor,
One of the heroes of Ticonderoga,
Born March 23rd, 1757, in the state of New York,
Died June 2nd, 1857."

Along with the old headstone is a bronze marker that was installed in 1902. It states that Taylor was a member of the New York Militia. In addition is a metal plate which carries the inscription "A courageous soldier and member of Ethan Allen's immortal band of 83, who took part in the surprise attack on the British Garrison at Fort Ticonderoga, and the only Revolutionary War



Grave of Stephen Taylor at Woodlawn Cemetery, Winona. It was erected in 1933 by the DAR and depicts a colonial fort. (Minnesota Historical Society photo)

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soldier known to be buried in the state of Minnesota."

There are some uncertainties about Taylor's age and military service, however. An article by Kenneth Carley in the summer 1975 issue of *Minnesota History* magazine refers to research by James A. Sheehan, who questioned some of the information on the grave markers. Sheehan pointed out that if born in 1757, Taylor would have been just 15 years of age in 1781, when he claimed to have enlisted in the First Massachusetts Regiment, which was then part of the Continental Army under General George Washington. Taylor later said he was only 15 years old, but large for his age, when he enlisted, and that he eventually became acquainted with Washington. The regiment was commanded by Colonel Joseph Vose. The company in which Taylor served as a private was first commanded by Captain John Williams, then by Lieutenant Thomas Gushing. Serving under Williams, Taylor probably was stationed at locations on the Hudson River in New York. He served for almost three years in the Continental Army, and received an honorable discharge at West Point on December 27, 1783. His papers were signed by General Henry Knox. Taylor then returned to Massachusetts. Some time later he moved to New York State and eventually settled in Seneca. His first wife, Ruth, died there in July 1814.

But Taylor's association with Fort Ticonderoga is something of a puzzle. To begin with, the dates of Taylor's military service have been documented as 1781-83, but American forces under Ethan Allen captured the fort in 1775 (it was abandoned and retaken by the British in 1777). In his research, Sheehan determined that no Stephen Taylor was listed among men known to have fought at Ticonderoga. He found that Taylor applied for a soldier's pension on April 16, 1818, shortly after Congress passed an act to provide for Revolutionary War Veterans. At that time he listed his age as 52, which would have made him just nine years old at the time of the attack on Ticonderoga in 1775. If he was 52 in 1818, he would have been born in 1766 rather than 1757. At any rate, he was granted a pension of \$8.00 a month, as of April 16, 1818. Perhaps the confusion as to his serving in the battle at Ticonderoga was caused by Taylor's frequent reminiscences about the battle. In fact, an article carried in the *Winona Argus* upon Taylor's death in 1857 linked Taylor with Ethan Allen and the capture of Ticonderoga.

So what was Stephen Taylor, a Revolutionary War veteran doing in Minnesota at the time of his death? Taylor made the move in 1854. He was well into his 80s at that time, but still possessed with "an adventuresome spirit" he wanted to acquire new land. He came west with his son, Edward, and Edward's wife and four children, with whom he had close ties. They made the trip by way of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and settled in Money Creek, Minnesota Territory, near present-day Winona. After about a year in the territory, Taylor placed a claim and qualified for 160 acres of bounty land. Taylor gave his age as 93 when he applied for the land in 1855, just a few months after Congress passed the law granting 160 acres to veterans who had been mustered into military service for the United States. Taylor apparently lived with Edward and his family in a farm in Wiscoy Township, Winona County.

He died there on June 2, 1857. His obituary in the *Winona Argus* on June 4 stated that "Mr. Taylor was one of the immortal band of heroes who fought and bled in the battles of the Revolution, and to whose undaunted patriotism we are indebted for our Independence." One description of Taylor said he was, "a large and robust man, never known to be sick. He was a strictly temperance man never using liquor or tobacco." He had passed away after an illness of just a few hours.

The replica fort monument which honors Stephen Taylor was dedicated on October 1, 1933. The main dedicatory address was made by Frank Sheehan, an uncle of James A Sheehan, Taylor's biographer. Included in dedicatory remarks were the following statements:

"Here in our midst lie the ashes of a soldier of the American Revolution. Here stands a monument, raised to his memory that his name and record may be a reminder to us and our descendants of the sacrifice he and his fellow soldiers made, under the leadership of Washington, under our own flag, without any interference from a remote and absentee government." Sheehan continued. "It was with his help, and that of his fellow soldiers of the Revolution that Washington was able to carve the first shining pathway through the powers of tyranny and oppression and point the road to liberty to all the world."

An announcement in Taylor's obituary carries a statement which applies to all who have served in the United States military since its creation: it stated he was "one of the immortal band of heroes who fought and bled ...and to whose undaunted patriotism we are indebted for our Independence."



What's New? **Museum Receives 1958 2-1/2 Ton Truck**

In November 2008, the museum received a new addition to its military vehicle exhibit collection. Benjamin Follis donated a 1958 M109 2-1/2 Ton Truck originally manufactured by the Curtis-Wright Aircraft Company. This truck is configured as a shop van for a Signal Corps unit and includes all pioneer tools and driver's tools as well as all shop equipment. Mr. Follis also donated an M105A2 2-1/2 ton truck trailer manufactured by the Stevens Company.

The truck and trailer are in excellent condition and will be placed on exhibit this Spring south of the museum in our overflow parking area. Thanks to Ben Follis for this generous donation!

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Contributions Honor Roll (October 1 – December 31, 2008)

Renewing Members: Gerald Becker ▪ Jim Benedict ▪ Bernard J. Cahill ▪ Henry Capiz ▪ Joe Clements ▪ John Cox ▪ Marvin Hey ▪ Richard Kaasa ▪ Edward Komac ▪ Orland Kreitlow ▪ James Kuhn ▪ George Martin ▪ Allan Meixner ▪ William Morgan ▪ James Nygaard ▪ James O'Brien ▪ Charles Pautler ▪ Les Pearson ▪ Paul Rehkamp ▪ Susan Shelton ▪ Harry Sieben ▪ Theodore W. Thorson ▪ James Youngquist ▪ Jim Weber ▪ Roger S. Williams ▪

New Members: Jon Stratte

American Legion: Post 146, Adams ▪ Post 368, Backus ▪ Post 372, Blackduck ▪ Post 15 Auxiliary, Detroit Lakes ▪ Post 381 Auxiliary, Eden Valley ▪ Post 381, Eden Valley ▪ Post 47, Hastings ▪ Post 211, Holdingford ▪ Post 320, Hopkins ▪ Post 443, Ironton ▪ Post 261, Kimball ▪ Post 12, Long Prairie ▪ Post 101 Auxiliary, Melrose ▪ Post 537, New London ▪ Veterans Club, Onamia ▪ Post 216, Princeton ▪ Post 67, Sauk Centre ▪ Post 545, Spicer ▪ Post 33 Auxiliary, St. James ▪ Post 168, White Bear Lake ▪

VFW: Post 474, Crystal ▪ Post 5518 Auxiliary, Elk River ▪ Post 1816 Auxiliary, Garrison ▪ Post 7266, New Auburn ▪ Post 9433, Rosemount ▪

Museum Highlights and Summary for 2008

Visitor Count:	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">January – April</td> <td style="text-align: right;">880</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May – September</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10,960</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October – December</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>1,167</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">13,007</td> </tr> </table>	January – April	880	May – September	10,960	October – December	<u>1,167</u>		13,007	Museum Operations:		
January – April	880											
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Tour Groups:	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Military Related</td> <td style="text-align: right;">21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Youth Groups</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School Tours</td> <td style="text-align: right;">18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Misc.</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>24</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">73</td> </tr> </table>	Military Related	21	Youth Groups	10	School Tours	18	Misc.	<u>24</u>		73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Membership open house held August 2, 2008 ▪ Began remodeling of old Library area for exhibit space and store stock storage ▪ Instituted new business/Corporate fundraising campaign ▪ Developed new artifact processing area
Military Related	21											
Youth Groups	10											
School Tours	18											
Misc.	<u>24</u>											
	73											
Volunteer Hours:	1,346 hours by 32 individuals	Exhibits and Collections:										
Gross Sales in the Sutler Museum Store:	\$39,638	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updated machine gun exhibit ▪ Received M725 ¼ ton ambulance ▪ Received 2-1/2 ton shop van ▪ Received 2-1/2 ton cargo trailer 										
Sutler Store profit for 2008:	\$24,194											

Artifact Donation Honor Roll (October 1 – December 31, 2008)

The museum gratefully acknowledges donations of artifacts from the following:

Alice Bekke ▪ Elaine Blomquist ▪ Lyle Doerr ▪ Ben Follis ▪ Don Frederick ▪ Jim Gerber ▪ Jeff Howe ▪ Jo Jensen ▪ Clinton Johnson ▪ Herb Karow ▪ Richard Koehnen ▪ Susan Moen ▪ Nancy Oleheiser ▪ Steve Osman ▪ Preston & Kate Smith ▪ Ken Streiff ▪ Bernice Thommes ▪ James Wilson ▪

Artifact Donations (October 1 – December 31, 2008)

Uniforms: Belt; Blouse, WWI uniform; Coat, USA officers (2); Leggings, wool wrap; Shirt, USA officer (3); Shirt, USA EM; Tie (5); Trousers, USA officer (4);

Equipment: Compass; Dog tags; Gas mask, NVA; Knife;

Miscellaneous: Banner, blue star; Books; Buttons; Deployment memorabilia shadow box; Documents; Flag, 50-star; Footlocker; Medals; Photos; Pillow cover, souvenir (2); Postcard; Scrapbooks; Racks, metal clothing (3); Shelves, metal (2)

Vehicles and related items: 1958 M109 2-1/2 ton truck; M105A2 1-1/2 ton trailer; 1967 M125 1-1/4 ton ambulance.

Memorials (October 1 – December 31, 2008)

Given by:

Lyle and Dorothy Doerr
Dale W. Smith
Dale W. Smith
194th Tank Regt. Assn.

In Memory of:

Franz X. Westermeier
Dan Studelska
Donald F. Smith
Randall Thoe



Membership Application for the Military Historical Society of Minnesota

Yes, I want to preserve Minnesota's military history for future generations!

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Date: _____ Branch of Service (if applicable): _____ Rank: _____ Active or Retired (circle one)
E-mail address: _____

Membership Categories:

Individual:

____ Regular (\$25/yr.)
____ Sustaining (\$50/yr.)
____ Life (\$350+) (or 4 X \$90)

Organization:

____ Regular (\$500)
____ Sustaining (\$1,000)

Corporate:

____ Regular (\$1,000)
____ Sustaining (\$3,000)

All memberships are annual except Life, Organization and Corporate Memberships. Contributors of \$350 or more will be recognized on a plaque in the museum lobby.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible check for \$ _____ made payable to the Minnesota Military Museum.

Please mail to: Military Historical Society of Minnesota, c/o Minnesota Military Museum,
Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy. 115, Little Falls MN 56345-4173.
Phone: 320-632-7374 E-mail: mnmuseum@brainerd.net

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Curator Notes

By Doug Bekke

Many projects are currently underway at the museum. The Honors Room exhibits will be expanded by completing the display of U.S. medals and awards from all branches of the service, and the Medal of Honor exhibit will be enlarged. In the Arms Room additional rifles, handguns and other weapons will be put on exhibit. With the recent activation of the 34th Division Headquarters, the Museum's 34th Infantry Division exhibit will need to be updated.

Last fall my office/work space was finally moved to the museum storage building behind the museum. This at last provides much needed curator workspace for processing, conserving, and generally dealing with the museum's huge collection of artifacts. It also provides a much needed area for exhibit preparation. I am currently working to train and increase the number of museum volunteers to assist with the collection.

Initial planning has started for the museum's special Civil War Exhibit which will open in 2011 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the war. The exhibit will deal with both of Minnesota's Civil Wars, the one between the North and the South, and the one between white settlers and the Native Americans. Artifacts, stories of Minnesotans, and ideas are very much needed for this exhibit, which will be the largest and most ambitious in the museum's history. It will also be costly, and special financial support for it will be crucial.

WWI is one of my special interests. For many years I have worked to expand the museum library's collection of WWI county or community histories, and I have managed to collect 23 different county histories so far. These typically included the name and photo of all the veterans of that county. Not all counties published a history after WWI. To the best of my knowledge no one has a complete list of what counties did publish a history. In addition to those now in the collection we have identified an additional 14 histories which were published and which we would like to include in our library. We are currently seeking the following WWI county histories: **Carver, Cass, Clay, Kanabec, Polk, Rock, Washington, Steel, Faribault, Fillmore, Decker, Chippewa, Sterns, and Wilkins.** Certain municipalities also published histories, including South St Paul, which is not in our collection. We currently have the following histories: Anoka, Blue Earth, Chippewa, Chisago, Cottonwood, Dakota, Dodge, Freeborn, Goodhue, Isanti, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Martin, Mower, Nobles, Otter Tail, Pipestone, Polk, Ramsey, Renville, Waseca, Watonwan, and Winona.

The museum is also seeking photographic equipment. Professional photographer's lights with tripods and reflector screens, as well as a professional camera tripod are sought to assist in establishing a professional quality photo capability to further document items in the museum's collection. If you have such items to donate, please call or e-mail the museum.

Minnesota Military Museum's Mission Statement:

The Minnesota Military Museum exists to serve the general public as well as military personnel. It provides education and training, enhances public understanding of how armed conflicts and military institutions have shaped our state and national experience, and functions as a major repository in Minnesota for historical military artifacts and records. In particular, the Museum seeks to document, preserve and depict the stories and contributions of Minnesotans who served in all branches of service or on the homefront--in time of peace and war--from Minnesota's early frontier years to the present.

An open letter to our members, friends, and supporters —

These are challenging times. Our financial and political landscape is being reset by an economy that just keeps spiraling downward. Few can escape it. It is especially tough these days for nonprofits. Donations by individuals and corporations are down nationwide. Government support, if given, is being reduced or cut altogether, and the return on institutional investments and endowments has declined sharply. Philanthropic foundations that give grants to other nonprofit groups have lost an average of 30 percent of their assets in the past year due to the depressed bond market and plunging stock market.

The Minnesota Military Museum is not immune from these forces. Government support accounts for about 38% of our operating budget. It comes to us as an appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature. But that level is changing. For the upcoming biennium, the governor's budget calls for a 15% cut in direct state support for our museum. It represents \$7,500 per year—small potatoes, I suppose, in the scheme of things—but pretty big when you operate as we do on a thin budget. This reduction will have a harmful impact on our work if it comes to pass.

Of real concern, however, is the other 62 percent we need to operate. We have to come up with that on our own and we are especially nervous about fundraising—which is where you come in.

Membership dollars and other cash contributions received from individuals like you are critically important, as are donations from civic and veterans' organizations, especially American Legion and VFW posts statewide. Such donations are a major source of revenue for us. We worry about how much it may shrink in light of the economy. Will you and others now give less?

We know that you want to support the Minnesota Military Museum. We know that you understand the unique significance of its work. We know that so long as it exists, the collective memory of Minnesota's military men and women will be respectfully preserved, honored, and retold to younger generations. But nothing about the future is certain. Without the active financial support of museum members and friends, we would cease to exist. The government is a key partner, but private citizens—people like YOU—make our work possible.

When the time comes this year to renew your membership or make any other kind of financial commitment to the museum, we hope you will be as generous as you can. More than ever, you matter.

Thanks!

*Jack K. Johnson, President
Military Historical Society of Minnesota*



What's New? Museum Receives Kaiser Jeep Ambulance

Through a generous donation from Preston and Kate Smith of St. Paul, the museum has received a 1967 M725 1-1/4 ton Jeep ambulance. This particular ambulance was manufactured by Kaiser Jeep of Toledo, Ohio. It was designed to carry four litter patients and six ambulatory patients on bench seats. The model saw some use in Vietnam.

Restoration of the ambulance will begin in Spring 2009 and will be completed by Jerry Ryan who has restored many of the museum's aircraft and vehicles. Thanks to Preston and Kate Smith for the generous donation of this rare ambulance!

Allies is published for the members and friends of the Military Historical Society of Minnesota.

LTC (Bvt.) (Ret.) Jack Johnson, **President**
COL (Ret.) David L. Hanson, **Executive Director**
MAJ (Ret.) Doug Bekke, **Curator**
SSG (Ret.) Leland P. Smith, **Archivist**
Sandy Erickson, **Administrator**

The **Military Historical Society of Minnesota** is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, registered with the Federal and State Governments. Donations are Tax Deductible.

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