



ALLIES

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

ALLIES

SPRING 2009

VOL XVII, No. 2

Special Points of Interest:

- *Membership Open House*
- *Board of Directors News*
- *Feature Article, "The Mexican War" by Leland P. Smith*

The Mexican War

The Mexican Campaign and The Mexican Border Campaign: How Can We Tell Them Apart?

By Leland P. Smith

From the end of the American Revolution to the Louisiana Purchase, the United States paid little attention to Mexico or "New Spain" as it was then known.

When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, the situation changed. Although the people of Mexico were strongly united in their desire to shed the Spanish yoke, they were not nearly so strongly united in their concept of a national government. The Catholic church, the military, the great landholders, and the strongly native population of the southern provinces, and after 1830, the growing number of migrating U.S. citizens in the Texas territory, north of the Rio Grande, each had their own concept of what kind of government they should have. In the twenty three provinces making up Mexico, everything from monarchy to anarchy was being tried.

In 1828, Spain attempted to re-establish its rule. This united the people of Mexico as no other event could have. By 1830 there was enough unanimity to declare a national policy that no more settlers from the United States would be allowed to settle in Texas. The Texans, only 15% of whom were either Hispanic or Catholic, declared their independence and petitioned the U.S. government to be annexed. There was reluctance on the part of the U.S. government, mostly based on the concern that Texas would be admitted as a "slave state," thus upsetting the status quo.

The European community, especially Spain followed by England and France, were opposed to the expansion of the United States. They saw Mexico as a target of their own imperial ambitions, and continued to pour out financial aid to Mexico, in spite of its haphazard governmental systems. There were popular leaders from the church, military and landholders, but no one of them represented a majority of the total populace. Diversity was the only uniformity.

Things came to a head when Texas troops took the Alamo from the brother in law of the Mexican President, General Santa Ana in December of 1835. Sam Houston

Editor's Note:

In the last issue of Allies, the name of Anita Buck was inadvertently omitted as author of the article about Stephen Taylor, the Revolutionary War soldier buried in Minnesota. We apologize for this omission.

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ordered Jim Bowie to destroy the old mission in order to deprive the Mexicans of it in the event they should return. Bowie chose to ignore Houston's orders and took it upon himself to garrison the Alamo with a force of volunteers and make a stand against Santa Ana who was approaching with an army of conscripts and convicts.

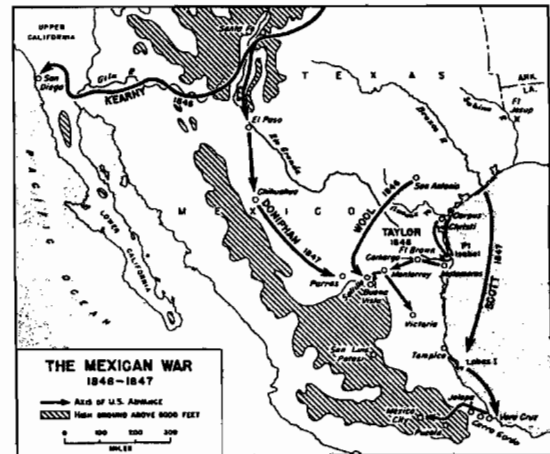
Bowie stood off Santa Ana from February 23 to March 6, 1836. By that time there were only five defenders left. As the Mexicans broke through the doors of the Alamo, those five men managed to get off one shot into the charging Mexicans with an 18 Pound cannon before they were run over and killed. The women and children who had taken shelter in the Alamo were released by Santa Ana and sent to Sam Houston with the information that the Alamo had been taken.

"Remember the Alamo" became a rallying cry for the Texans, who followed Sam Houston to defeat Santa Ana at the battle of San Jacinto on April 21. The outcome of this battle led to the creation of the independent Republic of Texas.

Things remained quiet on the military front for several years, while the United States and several European nations developed their plans for the exploitation Mexico's lack of central organization. Then, with the election of James K. Polk, a democrat, to the presidency of the United States, the stalemate on the annexation of Texas was broken. Texas became United States territory and Mexico declared war on the United States.

President Polk ordered troops into Texas and sent the Navy to patrol the coasts of Mexico. By midsummer there were four thousand troops concentrated between the Sabine and Nueces rivers, led by General Zachary Taylor. This represented territory originally considered to be the Texas province by the Mexican government. The Texans wanted to push the boundary south to the Rio Grande. The Mexican government refused to discuss this proposal, even when President Polk sent a representative with an offer to cancel all financial claims against Mexico in exchange for their agreement to the Rio Grande line.

The failure of Polk's diplomatic efforts led to the invasion of Mexico. Three columns proceeded south. The first, led by General Taylor from Matamoros. Brig. General John Wool moved south from San Antonio, and Colonel Alexander Donophan went from El Paso. General Winfield Scott traveled by sea to mount an amphibious invasion of Vera Cruz to prevent the English from taking over that port. General Scott's expedition eventually led to the capture of Mexico City.



Map 19. The Mexican War, 1846-1847.

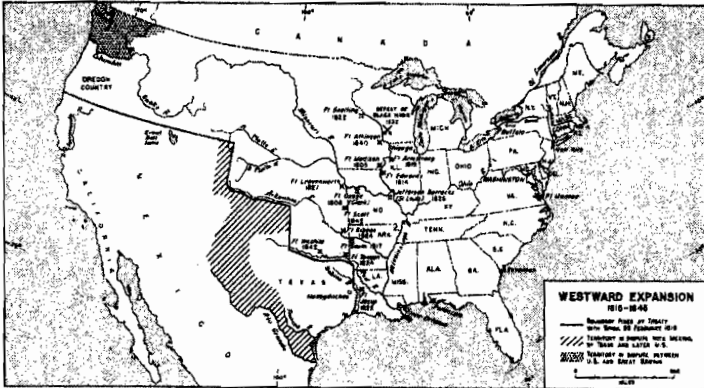
ROTCM 145-20, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, July, 1959

A fourth expeditionary force, led by Colonel Stephen W. Kearny, was sent west toward California. There it was met by the navy, which had been ordered to secure California ports against occupation by the English.

With Mexico's major cities and ports occupied by United States forces, the Mexican government had no choice but to enter serious negotiations. A peace treaty was signed on February 2, 1848. The Rio Grande was recognized as the boundary of Texas, and Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, California and parts of Wyoming and southern Colorado were ceded to the United States. The United States paid \$15,000,000.00 and assumed all Mexican indebtedness to the U.S.

With the termination of hostilities the United States was nearly doubled in size. Mexico was left with an even more unstable government and a deep resentment against the United States because of the terms of the settlement. The United States viewed their new territory in the light of "Manifest Destiny," a concept which had gained popularity with the presidency of James Polk. It implied that there was a divine obligation for the United States to explore, populate and exploit the "empty" west of the continent.

ROTCM 145-20, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, July, 1959



Map 18. Westward expansion, 1818-1848.

In 1849, a year after the treaty with Mexico, Minnesota was declared a territory and authorized to begin the process of becoming a full fledged state. The issue of slavery, which had played a part in the annexation of Texas and all the rest of the western territory was again an issue with the national government because of the impending formation of states in the newly acquired regions.

For thirteen years, the Mexicans tried to sort out their government, and the United States took no official stand on the issue. We had problems of our own. As settlements moved west, the army was involved in pacifying the occupants of the "empty" lands. Gold was discovered in California, and later in Nevada. Immigration and settlement took more and more time and attention, and the slavery issue simmered; and then it boiled over.

In 1861 war broke out. The army was spread thinly over the whole continent. There were few troops readily accessible. President Lincoln called for volunteers. Minnesota responded immediately with a regiment of Infantry, and eventually with the equivalent of 22 regiments during the course of the war. Many of the officers who had made reputations in the Mexican War achieved high rank and considerable fame in the Civil War. Most notable were Ulysses S. Grant who had been a second lieutenant at Mexico City, and Robert E. Lee, who was asked to take command of the U.S. Army by President Lincoln. Lee politely declined on the grounds that his loyalty had to be with his native Virginia, and resigned his commission. Alexander Caldwell Jones, who had been the first Adjutant General of the Territory of Minnesota, also went south.

While the United States was preoccupied with its Civil War, Mexico remained in its perpetual state of revolution, and became a target for European interests. England and Spain sent forces to occupy the cities and ports on the east coast of Mexico, while France used the excuse of overdue financial obligations to invade Mexico and put a relative of the emperor Napoleon III, Archduke Maximilian of Austria, on the throne in Mexico City, backed up by a French expeditionary force.

Maximilian was deposed in 1867 and executed. The Mexicans then elected a president who remained in power for over thirty years. Then factionalism reappeared and whenever the United States government declared support for one group or another, the opposition would start making trouble along the border.

To be continued...

(Watch our Summer, 2009 newsletter for part two of this article)

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Contributions Honor Roll (January 1, 2009-April 30, 2009)

Renewing Members: Ronald Andreen ▪ Louis Bode ▪ Donald Hauck ▪ Harold Henagin ▪ Donald Jensen ▪ Wilfred Kalmoe ▪ Walter Kosel ▪ Howard Larsen ▪ Earl Lillestrand ▪ Stuart Lindman ▪ Lois Luker ▪ Ron Miller ▪ Richard Morey ▪ Patricia O’Connell ▪ Bruce Porvaznik ▪ Tim Sanken ▪ Paul Severson ▪ John Sisterman ▪ John Sjogren ▪ LaVon Skoog ▪ George Steiner ▪ Fred Steinhauser ▪ Daniel Vandeberg ▪ James Youngquist

New Members: Newell Chester ▪ Mike Doucette ▪ John Sturner

American Legion: Post 102, Anoka ▪ Post 550, Bloomington ▪ Post 46, Little Falls ▪ Post 33, St. James ▪ Post 560, Zimmerman

VFW: Post 4393 Auxiliary, Northfield ▪ Post 5252 Auxiliary, Pelican Rapids ▪ Post 9433, Rosemount

Donations: Jim Bennett ▪ Tom Chial ▪ Janese Evans ▪ Charley & Norma Extrand ▪ David L. Hanson ▪ Richard & Betty Hayes ▪ Kenneth D. Johnson ▪ Betty Masoner ▪ Gustav R. Oberg

Memorials

January – April, 2009

Given by:

Richard & Betty Hayes
 194th Tank Regt. Assn.
 Ray & Shirley Lunde
 Betty Masoner
 Ray & Shirley Lunde
 Betty Masoner
 Betty Masoner
 Betty Masoner
 Sidney K. Schmuckler
 Lyle C. Doerr
 Paul V. Meyer
 194th Tank Regt. Assn.
 Richard & Betty Hayes

In Memory of:

Gaylord Zelinski
 Noel Asp
 Lloyd G. Becker
 Donald W. Bye
 Ronald W. French
 Richard Haugo
 Solo Green
 Paul Naumann
 John Rodney Grubb
 John Rodney Grubb
 Robert Walker
 Harland Rowland
 Gerald W. Young



In Memoriam

In Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Please indicate here name and address of member of family to whom we can send notice of your gift:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Make checks payable to:
 Minnesota Military Museum
 15000 Hwy. 115, Camp Ripley
 Little Falls MN 56345

Gifts are deductible for income tax purposes

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.

Artifact Donation Honor Roll (January – April, 2009)

The museum gratefully acknowledges donations of artifacts from the following:

Ken Aumock ▪ Judy Bajari ▪ Glen Belseth ▪ Betty Briggs ▪ Henry Capiz ▪ Tom Coverston ▪ Sherry Cyza ▪ Craig Degendorfer ▪ Harold Fiala ▪ Eugene Henrickson ▪ Louis Jasmin ▪ Jack Johnson ▪ Laurie Johnson ▪ Doris Knutson ▪ Phil Knutson ▪ Jack Lambert ▪ Robert McFarland ▪ Susan Moen ▪ Grayson Morrow ▪ Connie Mueller ▪ David Nelson ▪ Doug Nelson ▪ Ernest D. Nelson ▪ Jim Noll ▪ Steve Osman ▪ Red Wing Police Department ▪ Suzanne Rogstad ▪ Robert Schwier ▪ S. Don Singlestad ▪ Preston & Kate Smith ▪ Kathy Spargo ▪ Mary VanDevere ▪ Robert Wienhold

Artifact Donations (January 1-April 30, 2009)

Uniforms: Belt; Blouse, WWI wool; Blouse, USA WWII (3); Blouse, USMC (2); “Ike” jacket (3); Breeches, WWI; Cap, garrison USAF; Cap, USA garrison; Cap, USA overseas (2); Cape, general officer; Coat, USA, WWII (3); Coveralls, USAF; Fatigue jacket, USAF; Gloves, USAF; Handkerchiefs; Jacket, USAF officer blue (2); Leggings, canvas; Paratrooper suit jacket; Paratrooper suit pants; Service cap, M1956 white; Service cap, USA suntan; Service cap, USA OD (2); Socks; Shirt, TW; Shirt, LS wool; Tie; Trousers, WWI wool (2); Trousers, USAF officer blue (2); Trousers, USMC;

Equipment: Bag, parachute; Helmet, US WWI; Helmet, WWII German; Helmet, Prussian spike; Helmet, German WWI; Parachute, German; Pistol, Walther flare; Tent, German Luftwaffe; Collection of reproduction Cavalry equipment; Oxygen mask; Headset;

Miscellaneous: Flight training manuals, B17E; Books; German half track model; Stuka plane model; Magazines; VHS tapes; MG Ellard Walsh medal collection; Cap, Garrison, American Legion; Service record, Canadian Army; Rosters; Insignia; Medals; Books, WWII ration; Newspapers; Certificates; Pin, American Red Cross WWII; Women’s Relief Corps medal; Photographs; Dog tags; Documents; Post-cards; Ribbons; Ribbon bars; Braid, Infantry;

Weapons and related items: Rifle, M1 Springfield; Submachine gun, Thompson; Bayonet, Czech; Bayonet, German Ersatz; Bayonet, German dress; Bayonet scabbard, German dress; Bayonet, German M1871; M1918 US Cavalry bandolier; Dagger, North African; Dagger, WWII Italian; Hand grenade (inert); ammo can;

Vehicles and related items: Framed unit vehicle marker;

Change of E-mail Address

Please note that the museum’s e-mail address has been changed to:

mnmuseum@yahoo.com

This change was effective on May 14, 2009.

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By Doug Bekke

In the middle of May I traveled to beautiful southern New Hampshire to receive for the museum the collection of Mr. Bill Williams. Bill was a veteran of the 135th Infantry, a first class historian on the 135th, and an avid collector of books and artifacts related to the 34th Infantry Division and the 135th Infantry Regiment. Over the years Bill was a very active supporter of the museum, and the museum's medals room is filled with medal sets that Bill collected and donated. Thanks to Bill's work these important artifacts of Minnesota's military heritage were not lost. Unfortunately Bill passed away last year but he told his widow Dorothy that he wanted his collection to go to the museum. I shipped eight boxes of awards, medals insignia, documents and books to the museum. Thank you, Bill! Thank you, Mrs. Williams! And Thank you, Herb Schaper of New Ulm, MN for assisting in the transfer of these artifacts.

Herb Schaper, a very passionate member of the 135th veteran's organization and long time supporter of the museum's work, recently reorganized and transferred to the museum all of the 135th organization's history files and records. Herb is also working on an important fund raising project for the museum. Thank you Herb for all your efforts to support the museum's mission!

Henry Capiz, Francis Krenik, Mary Van Devere, the Rogstad family and Mrs. Beverly Hall, have all made important donations to the museum in 2009. Thanks to them and all the others who have donated!

On Memorial Day weekend the Minnesota Historical Society opened the largest special exhibit in its history titled, "Minnesota's Greatest Generation, The Depression, The War, and The Boom." It's a very nice exhibit representing the work of many people over many years. The museum supported this exhibit is several ways, and artifacts from our collection are on display in the part dealing with WWII. Please try to visit it. I'm sure you will enjoy it.

I recently reinstalled the Vietnam era Medal of Honor exhibit on Minnesota Congressional Medal of Honor recipients Dale Wayrynen and Robert Pruden . I will soon install an exhibit on one of only two WWI Medal of Honor recipients from Minnesota, George Mallon. Capt Mallon's award documents were saved from a dumpster several years ago, sent to the museum, and restored and conserved by Twin City's paper conservator Alan Thenen. I recently located Captain Mallon's Medal of Honor at Ft. Riley, KS and hope that in the future I will be able to arrange the transfer of the medal to Camp Ripley. Many thanks to museum volunteers Todd Hintz, Merl Fletcher, and especially Ken Fasching for your wonderful work in building and preparing the Medal of Honor exhibit cases.

In fall 2009 I plan to completely reorganize the U.S. medal exhibit by adding the missing Army medals and adding the currently not displayed complete set of Navy, Air Force, USMC, and Coast Guard awards and decorations.

All of this work costs money. Your continuing support will ensure that the museum will be able to continue its mission of honoring all of Minnesota's veterans far into the future.



Museum Membership Open House
(held jointly with Employer Support for Guard & Reserve)
Saturday, August 8, 2009

Agenda:

- 10:00 -10:30** Arrive at Camp Ripley (**Town Hall, on the right at stop sign**)
- 10:30 -10:40** Welcome & Introductions by Museum President Jack Johnson
(**Town Hall**)
- 10:40 -10:55** Camp Ripley briefing by Post Cmdr, Colonel Richard Weaver
(**Town Hall**)
- 10:55 -11:10** Museum/ESGR briefing by ESGR Rep, Exec Dir, Dave Hanson & Curator
Doug Bekke (**Town Hall**)
- 11:10 -12:30** Tour Environmental Center by Marty Skoglund (**Environmental Room**)
(**Transport by bus**)
- 12:30 - 1:00** Lunch (provided, \$8.00 per attendee) (**Town Hall**)
- 1:00 - 1:20** Military deployment briefing by TAG, MG Larry Shellito (**Town Hall**)
- 1:20 - 2:30** Weapons simulator (hands on) (**Rec Center, transport by bus**)
- 2:30 - 3:45** Army Aviation C 130/helicopter Orientation (**Airfield, transport by bus**)
- 3:45 - 4:45** Military museum tour (**Museum, transport by bus**)
(**transport by bus back to car lot for departure**)

RSVP For planning purposes please register **no later than August 5** if you plan to attend this event. We encourage members to invite friends and prospective members to also attend.

Membership Open House
Saturday, August 8, 2009



Name: _____ \$8.00 for meal enclosed
 Guest: _____ \$8.00 for meal enclosed
 Guest: _____ \$8.00 for meal enclosed

Museum

\$ _____ total for meals

Stop Sign



Town Hall

Checks should be payable to MN Military Museum and mailed to:
 MN Military Museum, 15000 Hwy. 115, Camp Ripley
 Little Falls MN 56345

Main Gate

For additional information: mnmuseum@yahoo.com

Board of Directors News

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Stan Turner, Oakdale, has joined our Board. Stan is a career radio/TV journalist with a long and active interest in military and local history. He hosts a weekly radio show with frequent segments in military history and is often called upon as an MC for military related public events. Welcome aboard Stan!

Membership Application for the Military Historical Society of Minnesota <i>Yes, I want to preserve Minnesota's military history for future generations!</i>			
Name: _____		Phone: _____	
Address: _____		City: _____	State: _____ Zip: _____
Date: _____	Branch of Service (if applicable): _____	Rank: _____	Active or Retired (circle one)
E-mail address: _____			
Membership Categories:			
Individual:	Organization:	Corporate:	
____ Regular (\$25/yr.)	____ Regular (\$500)	____ Regular (\$1,000)	
____ Sustaining (\$50/yr.)	____ Sustaining (\$1,000)	____ Sustaining (\$3,000)	
____ Life (\$350+) (or 4 X \$90)			
All memberships are <u>annual</u> 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			

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.

Museum Contact Information:

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Telephone: 320-632-7374
DSN: 871-7374

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Military Historical Society of Minnesota
c/o Minnesota Military Museum
Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy. 115
Little Falls MN 56345-4173

TO:

Jack K. Johnson
10286 Kismet Lane North
Stillwater MN 55082