



# ALLIES

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

Allies

Winter, 2012

Vol. XX, No. 1

## 'Mr. National Guard'

*Ellard A. Walsh (1887-1975)*

*Today's National Guard owes much to this tenacious Minnesota General*

-- Part 1

**Jack K. Johnson**

It's "a damn lie." His Irish ire was up and Major General Ellard A. Walsh was in no mood to mince words. As president of the organization looking after the interests of the National Guard, Walsh told a Washington Post reporter in January 1957 exactly what he thought of the accusation by Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson that men who enlisted in the National Guard were draft dodgers. Not even the Secretary of Defense could insult with impunity the organization that Walsh had so long championed.

Gregarious and combative, with a flair for organization that few individuals could match, Ellard Walsh of Minnesota had a profound impact on the modern National Guard. He was Minnesota's Adjutant General for nearly 25 years (1925-49), commanded the 34th Infantry Division when it entered federal service in February 1941, and led the Washington-based National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) from 1943-1957, building it into a powerful political force on Capitol Hill. NGAUS was the focal point for restoring the National Guard to its rightful place following World War Two.

Born in Ontario on October 3, 1887, Walsh moved as a child with his parents to North Minneapolis. He enlisted in the First Minnesota Regiment, Minnesota

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Walsh at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, while commanding the 34th Infantry Division, 1941.



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National Guard, on November 7, 1905. His early years in the Guard were unremarkable, but things took a turn when he was federalized in 1916 and sent to patrol the Mexican border. By the time he returned home in March 1917, he had become a first sergeant, and when he was federalized again just two weeks later—this time for World War One—he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant with the 135th Infantry. That summer he headed for training at Camp Cody, New Mexico, with the newly formed 34th Infantry Division, but he didn't ship to France until October 1918, a month before the war ended and too late to see action.



Minneapolis Truckers Strike, 1934. Walsh led a force of 4,000 Guardsmen while the city was under martial law.

After the war, he rejoined the Minnesota National Guard and quickly moved up in rank as the Guard rebuilt itself.

Savvy and energetic, Walsh was also remarkably good at remembering names and faces. People within the Guard's hierarchy took notice, and in 1921 he was offered a job on the staff as Assistant Adjutant General, along with a promotion to Lt. Colonel. Walsh took the offer. A few years later he became Chief of Staff for the 34th Division, was promoted to Colonel, and in 1925 assumed the role of Acting Adjutant General for the ailing AG, Walter F. Rhinow. In 1927 Walsh earned his first star and became the full-fledged AG. He had clearly found a niche in life: his rise from First Sergeant to Brigadier General took ten years.

Creating a replacement for Camp Lakeview, Minnesota's outmoded National Guard training camp in Lake City, was Walsh's top priority when he became Adjutant General. He discreetly scouted possibilities throughout the state and played his cards carefully. When he found what he was looking for, aided by state Senator Christian Rosenmeier of Little Falls, Walsh convinced the legislature and governor to acquire a 12,000 acre tract along the west bank of the Mississippi River north of Little Falls. By coincidence, the land incorporated the remains of Fort Ripley, a frontier army garrison from 1849-1877, and Camp Ripley was born, taking its name from the old fort. Construction began immediately and the first troops used the new post in 1931. By the early 1940s, the camp was able to accommodate up to 10,000 troops at one time, and by the early 1960s, it had incrementally grown to its present configuration of 53,000 acres.

One of Walsh's toughest assignments in the 1930s came during the 1934 Truckers' Strike in Minneapolis. Fights that spring and summer between striking workers and sympathizers on one side, and business interests supported by the police and strong-arm Citizen's Alliance "militias" on the other, had devolved into chaos with four dead and hundreds injured. Governor Floyd B. Olson placed the city under martial law on July 26, declaring it to be in a state of insurrection. Four thousand Guardsmen were immediately activated and put under the direct command of Adjutant General Walsh. It was a patent breach of military custom because Walsh was a staff officer, not a line officer, but Walsh was the man Olson most trusted. Working in concert with the Governor, Walsh moved decisively to restore order in the streets and protect citizens on both sides. Military zones and checkpoints were set up; the strike headquarters was shut down and its top leaders confined for a few days until tempers cooled; a curfew was imposed on businesses; assemblies without military authorization were prohibited; only vehicles with military permits were allowed into certain areas; and troops were assigned to protect shipments of essential goods, such as food, into city markets. Both sides grumbled, complaining that Walsh was overreaching his authority, but Walsh's firm actions

brought an immediate end to violent confrontations and set the stage for federal mediators who secured an agreement on August 21, ending Walsh's month-long tenure as the de-facto head of Minneapolis.

As the decade drew to a close, the nation could not ignore the wars being waged in both Asia and Europe. The United States had allowed its peacetime military to languish in the years after World War One. Isolationist sentiment was strong and government purse strings were tight. Nevertheless, the outbreak of war in Europe on September 1, 1939, spurred rapid improvements to the country's military preparedness. Within a year, America's Armed Forces were significantly larger, better organized and trained, and better equipped. In August 1940 Congress authorized the president to order the National Guard and Reserves to active duty for twelve months of precautionary training, and, shortly thereafter, authorized the nation's first peacetime draft.

The 34th Infantry Division, made up of Guardsmen from Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas, was federalized on February 10, 1941. Walsh had assumed command of the division eight months earlier while continuing to serve as Adjutant General. With it came his promotion to Major General. Upon federalization, he went with his troops to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, but his time with the division was cut short. Chronic ulcers hemorrhaged in August, preventing him from participating in Corps training maneuvers. He returned to Minnesota for a six-week stay at the Mayo Clinic, but the Army's doctors were adamant that he should not return to field command. Walsh could transfer to a desk job in the Army—General George Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, personally urged him to do so—but Walsh concluded that he could do more for the war effort and the country as Adjutant General of the State of Minnesota. It was a prescient decision.

*To be continued in the next issue.*

## Sources

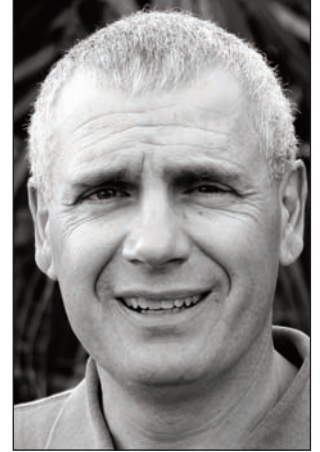
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Upon promotion to Brigadier General and appointment as Adjutant General in 1927

## **Director's Update**

By Jeff Thielen



With a new year comes a new column that will hopefully be a permanent addition to the newsletter. In my first eight months here I have learned a great deal and have enjoyed meeting all of the people associated with the museum. As with any new year it is always good to look back in retrospect at the old to see what we have accomplished. Here are a few things associated with the business end of the museum that have happened since I started my duties in May of 2011.

Of key importance to our business was receiving the use of five new Dell Computers with software loaded, along with internet access, all provided by Camp Ripley. This is another example of the great support we receive from the Minnesota Guard and something that has made the day-to-day operation of the museum run much more smoothly. We hope to have these computers networked in the near future so that staff is able to share files on a common server. We have also done some reorganization of office space. Our administrator, Sandy Erickson, now has the entire front office in the main museum building and I have established an office in the Library building next door. We think these physical changes will be beneficial in the long run.

This past year has been a very successful year for the museum and instead of telling you all about everything here, I would like to invite you to check out our 2011 Annual Report. The annual report has a new look this year and we have posted it on our website, [www.mnmilitarymuseum.org](http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org). We hope you find it interesting. Click on "About Us" using the left side menu bar.

Significant financial issues from this past year included receiving the entire \$10,000.00 match from the St. Paul Foundation for dollars that were contributed by you and by individuals who we appealed to in order to obtain the matching money. Thank you for your generous support. We also received a very significant \$10,000 contribution from the Masonic Charities and the Minnesota Masons which helped fund additional curatorial work. Thank you Masons.

In looking forward in 2012 we are excited to launch a new volunteer program that will improve the visitor experience to the museum. If you have not checked out our website, please do so, as we have the entire volunteer program laid out there. As I write this, I have a volunteer working diligently bringing new order to our library. We are anticipating great things from our volunteer program and encourage you to check it out and attend our volunteer training day this coming April.

Until next time, I wish you the best and thank you for all of your support to the Military Historical Society of Minnesota and Minnesota Military Museum.

## **Updated contact information being sought**

We are making a concerted effort to update our contact information for all members and supporters of the museum, and we need your help. Please send us an email that includes (1) your name; (2) your preferred email address; and (3) your current phone number. We would occasionally like to also correspond with you via email. It will be confidential and not shared with others. Are you a snowbird? Would you like to receive our mailings at an alternative "winter address? Give us your winter address and tell us when we should use it for postal mailings.

Also, would you rather get this newsletter electronically? Please let us know and we will send it to you that way. We will continue to mail a "hard" copy of ALLIES to you unless you request otherwise, but you can help us save on printing, postage, and handling costs if you receive your copy electronically.

Thanks for your support. We look forward to hearing from you.

## Curator's Notes By Doug Bekke



After completing the Civil War exhibit, we have been spending some time catching our breath and making plans for 2012.

Work has started on a project to restore the wooden spoke wheels on the WWI and WWII artillery in the collection. Some of these pieces have sat outside exposed to the elements for many decades without proper maintenance. The wheels will need to be rebuilt, and, once completed, these guns will no longer be exhibited outside. We have started with a smaller project as a test run. In the museum's collection are two WWI German light Minenwerfers. One was restored many years ago and is complete to include its wheels. The second has sat in storage awaiting restoration for many years. Using the wheels from the restored Minenwerfer as a guide we are having a pair of wheels reproduced for the second gun. Dennis Borgwarth, a very talented engineer and machinist is reproducing the hubs and some other parts. These wheels are relatively small, only about two feet in diameter and relatively easy to move around. If all goes well on the building of these small wheels, we will hopefully be ready to take on the work on the wheels for the large guns.

In September, significant changes were made to the Vietnam exhibit, just in time for the Camp Ripley "Vietnam Veteran's Welcome Home" event. This was a very successful event and over 2,000 veterans, friends and family members visited the museum. We continue to seek a wide variety of artifacts from the Vietnam War: American, from allied nations, and the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong.

Late last summer, a Twin Cities collector donated an important collection of 19th Century American leather equipment. Some of these artifacts are now on exhibit in the museum and I hope to add others soon. Collectors are an important resource for the museum. They have often devoted a big part of their lives to studying and collecting a particular aspect or period of military history and thus they have a wealth of knowledge. Occasionally they decide that their collection or a part of it needs a new home. They have put a lot of hard work into building their collection and they want to see it serve a meaningful function in a good home. While we need to be selective about what we can accept into the collection, we very much welcome inquiries from collectors or anyone with military artifacts.

Our major Civil War exhibit opened very successfully in July and this exhibit will be expanded in 2012 with more graphics, artifacts, and, if funding becomes available, an electronic media element.

We are currently working to expand our volunteer program. Volunteers are needed to support a wide variety of tasks at the museum, from greeting and guiding visitors to working on projects in the back rooms. In mid-January, we had six volunteers cleaning or restoring items in our weapons collection. All of these people came to the museum with a strong background in working with firearms. In the spring, I would like to have a group of volunteers with wood-working skills build several new cabinets for exhibits that need upgrading. A huge project waits to be started on the conservation, restoration, and preservation of the photograph, print, and art collection. Much work waits to be accomplished on the collection of Minnesota unit flags. It is very important that we match the volunteer needs of the museum with the aptitudes and skills of the volunteers. People interested in volunteering should contact the museum for more information.

In December, I made several fund-raising appeals to history-minded groups. We were nearing the end of the year and needed to raise the money to complete an important matching grant. One very generous man came forward with a check for \$1,100 allowing us to secure the full grant. Other financial donations followed. Needless to say, people who care about history need to support the organizations that work to preserve it. If you don't, who will?

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### **Artifact Donation Honor Roll (Aug. 1, 2011, through Dec. 31, 2011)**

*The museum gratefully acknowledges donations of artifacts from the following:*

Mary Ellen Barnes ▪ Lauren Bentler ▪ Scott Bjerke ▪ Savannah Cairns ▪ City of Hastings ▪ Sue Denuccio ▪ Jim Ekstrom ▪ Norbert Fiedler ▪ Kenath Harris ▪ Michael Johnson ▪ Michael Julien ▪ Sandra Kako ▪ Philip Kardong ▪ Donald Kitzman ▪ Richard Krom ▪ Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association ▪ Heidi Lagos ▪ Brian Linde ▪ Tom Lyons ▪ Dan Maciej ▪ Betty Masoner ▪ Jim McDuff ▪ Wallace McKay ▪ Paul Meyer ▪ Bob Nemitz ▪ Jim Newman ▪ Danny Noss ▪ Harris Olson, Jr. ▪ John Pfeifer ▪ Lillian Schuneman ▪ Dave Scully ▪ Mary Shaw ▪ Kevin D. Smith ▪ Bill Ward ▪ Washington County Historical Society ▪ Devery Weeks ▪ Joan Wiener ▪ Lawrence Wiener ▪ James Wilson ▪ Elsie Wittwer ▪ Ralph Yeager ▪

### **Artifact Donations (Aug. 1 through Dec. 31, 2011)**

**Uniforms:** Belt (5) ▪ Belt Buckle (7) ▪ Blouse, uniform, USA ▪ Blouse, uniform USMC ▪ Boots, English riding ▪ Boots, desert tan ▪ Breeches ▪ Cap USA officers (2) ▪ Cap, USMC garrison (4) ▪ Cap, overseas (2) ▪ Gloves, dress (pr) (6) ▪ Hat, campaign (2) ▪ Hat, Italian ▪ Hat cover, khaki ▪ Hat, Iraqi officers ▪ Hat, seal skin officers ▪ Hat, USN utility white ▪ Hat, USA visor ▪ Jacket, Fatigue ▪ Jumper, USN blue (3) ▪ Jumper, USN utility white ▪ Laces, legging ▪ Leggings (3 pr) ▪ Overcoat (5) ▪ Scarf, USN black (2) ▪ Shirt (9) ▪ Sweater, USMC ▪ T-shirt ▪ Tie (4) ▪ Trousers, USA (4) ▪ Trousers, USN blue ▪ Trousers, USN utility white ▪ Trousers, USMC wool

**Equipment:** Bag, gas mask ▪ Belt, garrison (2) ▪ Belt, pistol (2) ▪ Belt, web (2) ▪ Canteen ▪ Cavalry Box ▪ Harness, web belt ▪ Helmet, Iraqi Kevlar ▪ Mess Kit ▪ Rucksack (2) ▪ Spurs ▪

**Miscellaneous:** Banner, ROTC ▪ Blood chit, WWII ▪ Board, button polishing ▪ Books ▪ Bracelet (2) ▪ Button polishing guard ▪ Buttons ▪ Calendar, metal desk ▪ Can, oil ▪ Catalog, PX ▪ Charts (4) ▪ Clothing bag ▪ Coin purse, souvenir ▪ Flag, 48 star US ▪ Flag, Japanese (2) ▪ Flask ▪ Hanger, equipment (3) ▪ Instep, spur (2) ▪ Manuals ▪ Maps ▪ Matches ▪ Medals ▪ Newspapers ▪ Papers ▪ Paperweight ▪ Photos ▪ Postcards ▪ Posters ▪ Pouch (10) ▪ Puzzle ▪ Straps, spur (8) ▪ Unit Crest ▪ Windbreaker

**Weapons and related items:** Bayonet (2) ▪ Belt, cartridge (2) ▪ Belt, pistol ▪ Boot, Carbine (w/brass) ▪ Boot, carbine short ▪ Box, cartridge (6) ▪ Casings, ammunition ▪ Hanger, sword (2) ▪ Holster (2) ▪ Magazine, drum ▪ Rifle, Danish Model 89 ▪ Scabbard, bayonet ▪ Sling and hook, Carbine leather ▪ Submachine gun, PPsh-41 ▪ Submachine gun, Sterling Mk IV ▪ Sword, Japanese WWII ▪ Thimble, Carbine (CW era) ▪

### **Please notify us of address changes**

Please notify the museum if your mailing address changes so we can keep our mailing lists current. Changes in mailing rules recently enacted by the U.S. Postal Service require that any of our newsletters with incorrect addresses be returned and we must pay the postage. In order to keep mailing costs down, we must make every effort to maintain our mailing lists properly.

## Memorials

**(Aug. 1 through Dec. 31, 2011)**

<u>Given by:</u>	<u>In Memory of:</u>
Charley & Norma Extrand	Henry Peck, Sr.
Charley & Norma Extrand	Jim Bogart
194 <sup>th</sup> Tank Regt. Assn.	Jim Bogart
Sharon Bogenreif	COL (Ret.) Edward Baumgartner
David Larson	MAJ Fred Gundlach
Daniel Vandenberg	CW2 (Ret.) Dave Vujovich
Betty Masoner	MG (Ret.) Philip Feir
Todd Horness	Veryl Kalahar
Howard Neilsen	Dale W. Smith
PETCO	Dale W. Smith
James E. Smith	Dale W. Smith
Kevin & Susan Roberts	Dale W. Smith
Daryl & Ann Marie Olson	Dale W. Smith
Craig and Kathleen Fransen	Dale W. Smith
Donald W. Neilsen	Dale W. Smith
Mary Ann Werner	Dale W. Smith
Dale W. Smith Estate	Dale W. Smith
Kevin & Cynthia Smith	Dale W. Smith
Tim & Deborah Smith	Dale W. Smith
Ted and Pamela Smith	Dale W. Smith
Dale Hugunin	Dale W. Smith
Shirley A. Felber	Dale W. Smith
Betty Masoner	Ray Donald MacKinnen, Jr.
Todd Horness	Richard Knowles

### In Memoriam

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

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**Renewing Members:** Gerald Becker ▪ Russell Beddow ▪ Bernie Cahill ▪ Neil T. Carter ▪ Lyle Fuller ▪ Marvin Hey ▪ George Jacobs ▪ Edward Komac ▪ James Kuhn ▪ Earl Lillestrand ▪ Dale Mangskau ▪ George Martin ▪ James Nygaard ▪ Harris W. Olson, Jr. ▪ Paul Rehkamp ▪ George Sellner ▪ Susan Shelton ▪ George Steiner ▪ John Sturner ▪ Nancy Walsh ▪ David West ▪ Ward Zischke

**New Members:** Michael Belzer ▪ William J. Casey ▪ Chris Christopherson ▪ Joe & Mickey Ferguson ▪ Ross Fortier ▪ Ronald Hein ▪ Paul and Kelly Henderson ▪ David A. Johnson ▪ Charles G. Kapsner ▪ John Kolb ▪ Ryan and Bobbi Jo Nash ▪ Dennis M. Ottem ▪ Scott St. Sauver

**American Legion:** Post 146, Adams ▪ Post 57, Chaska ▪ Post 323, Clearwater ▪ Post 303, Fridley ▪ Post 46, Little Falls ▪ Post 21, Moorhead

**VFW:** Post 7266, New Auburn ▪ Post 4393, Northfield ▪ Post 7902, Osakis ▪ Post 4546, Waconia

**Donations:** Robert A. Anderson ▪ Philip S. Andrews ▪ Michael Belzer ▪ Cal Blomquist ▪ Sandy Blomquist ▪ Duane Bundy ▪ Mae Dobbs ▪ Janese Evans ▪ Dirk Gasterland ▪ Kevin Gerdes ▪ K. J. Guddal ▪ Ronald Hein ▪ Jason Hruza ▪ Robert Hystad ▪ Faye Johnson ▪ Jack Johnson ▪ Judith Johnson ▪ Douglas Julin ▪ Tim Kennedy ▪ John Kolb ▪ Duane Kunde ▪ Neil Loidolt ▪ Art Ludwig ▪ Cecilia McKeig ▪ Willis McLain ▪ Theodore McLaughlin ▪ Debra O. Messina ▪ Paul Meyer ▪ Gerald Miller ▪ Harry Moore ▪ William Morgan ▪ Edwin Nakasone ▪ MG Richard C. Nash ▪ Robert W. Nemitz ▪ John O'Leary ▪ Ferdinand Peters ▪ Donald Pettitt ▪ Leroy Poganski ▪ Eugene Sammon ▪ Kenneth Schumann ▪ James Seiberlich ▪ Ken Slipka ▪ Gerald Staehling ▪ Kenneth J. Streiff ▪ Lowell Ueland ▪ Roger Upcraft

**ALLIES**

**Allies** is published for the members and friends of the Minnesota Military Museum.

Nicholas Ostapenko, **President**  
Jeff Thielen, **Executive Director**  
Doug Bekke, **Curator**  
Leland P. Smith, **Archivist**  
Sandy Erickson, **Administrator**  
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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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## Remember us when writing your will

The mission of the Minnesota Military Museum is to document, preserve, and explain military history as it was lived by Minnesotans, in all branches of service and on the home front, in time of peace and war, from Minnesota’s early frontier years to the present day. Through exhibits, programs, and publications the museum seeks to foster awareness of how armed conflicts and military institutions have shaped our state and national experience, and to instill appreciation for the service and sacrifices of our state’s military men and women.

Although our mission statement is fairly straight forward and easy to understand, accomplishing the mission takes hard work and hard cash.

By providing for the Minnesota Military Museum in your Will or Trust you insure that future generations always have a place to go to help them remember the role Minnesotans have played in the military.

There are many ways you can “Bequest” money to the museum. By definition a bequest is the transfer of wealth by means of a will or a trust upon a donor's death. Bequests can take several forms such as:

- Specific bequest - precisely identified cash, securities, or property.
- General bequest - property that is similar to all other items distributed, usually cash.
- Percentage bequest - a stated percentage of the donor's estate.
- Residual bequest - all or a portion of what remains of the estate after specific and general bequests are distributed.

Besides a straight bequest, you can also set up a trust that will benefit the museum during or after your lifetime. Another way to leave money is to name the museum as beneficiary of an insurance policy or as the recipient of your IRA or retirement fund.

All bequests received by the museum will be deposited into our Endowment unless otherwise requested by the donor.

We urge you to consult your attorney when preparing your will or trust and ask about the tax benefits if you decide to help insure the future of the Minnesota Military Museum.

Your advisor may wish to know that the Minnesota Military Museum is the primary activity of the Minnesota Military Historical Society, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) education organization (Tax ID # 41-1308785), housed at 15000 Highway 115, Little Falls, MN 56345.