



# COUNCIL ON AMERICA'S MILITARY PAST - U.S.A.

*PRESERVING, INTERPRETING AND SHARING OUR MILITARY HERITAGE*

*presents*

## The Persistent Preservationist

April 2026

### *Editor's Note:*

*Happy Spring! This is Number 21 of the CAMP newsletter dedicated to preservation. First, I hope you will participate in our annual meeting on May 12 and make your voice heard for the future of CAMP.*

*As we prepare to enter the 2026 summer season, our nation will celebrate 250 years of independence, and the preservation of military history will enter an exciting new phase, as we reflect upon how to preserve and interpret the sites of our war for that independence. I hope you attend programs related to our 250<sup>th</sup> or visit a Revolutionary War battlefield or historic site this year.*

*This issue will update a story I shared in our last issue related to the various museums of the U.S. Army. Also, a new organization seeks to preserve the memory of a National Guard unit that served in World War II. Also, I will share exciting news from the Sons of the American Revolution related to the 250<sup>th</sup>.*

*I ask that members consider submitting interesting articles they feel the rest of the membership would be interested in dealing with historic preservation from across the country. If you want to contribute content, please email me at [daniel.sauerwein@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.sauerwein@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for the opportunity to serve as editor. Have a wonderful spring and start planning those trips to historic sites for the summer.*

*— Daniel Sauerwein, Editor.*

## **US Army Museums No Longer Face Closure**

*From Task & Purpose*

The Army has put a hold on a proposed wave of closures that would have shuttered more than 20 official museums on Army bases around the country. Instead, the service will fall in line with rules set down by Congress this year that direct each military service to establish a “museum system.”

The Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps each operate a handful of established formal museums, but the Army's 45-facility museum network is by far the largest and least centralized, spread across nearly 100 buildings and warehouses on bases across the U.S. and overseas. Army museums include several large, heavily visited facilities at major bases, like the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia. But just as many are small facilities dedicated to lesser-known jobs at out-of-

the-way bases like Virginia's U.S. Army Transportation Museum at Fort Eustis and both the Quartermaster Museum and the Ordnance Training Support Facility at Fort Lee.

"The museum enterprise was created because lots of individual entities, whether that was posts or units or schools, created their own little museums," said James Vizzard, an Army museum official at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. Vizzard spoke to Task & Purpose in June as the Army considered closing many of its smaller museums. "So you had a post commander who was all excited about it and put a lot of money into it and built it up. And then the next commander was like, 'I don't really care about the museum. I got to train people to go to war.'"

The June plan, first reported by Task & Purpose, would have closed about half of the Army's museums, but the service announced in March it would "pause" those closings after Congress weighed in with its own museum plan in the Pentagon's 2026 budget.

As part of the National Defense Authorization Act passed in December, lawmakers instructed the Army, Navy and Air Force to design and launch a "museum system" for each service. The bill grandfathers in the Navy's 11 current museums and the Air Force's massive 20-acre, 350-aircraft National Museum of the Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

For the Army, though, the law simply instructs the service to develop a roster of museums that reflect "historical significance to Army operations, technology, or personnel; public accessibility and educational outreach programs; and alignment with the mission of the Army to preserve its heritage."

But Lawmakers also now want to see any plans to close museums.

Before any of the three services can close a museum, the law says, officials must show lawmakers where its exhibits and artifacts will go, where its employees will land, and outreach to local groups who might take over the museum in a public-private partnership.

Many of the Army's largest museums have converted to public-private models recently, or will soon, including the Wings of Liberty Military Museum at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Virginia, is also a public-private enterprise between the service and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.

"The Army Museum Enterprise remains a world-class collection of stories and artifacts that trains and acculturates soldiers and connects the Army to American society," said Charles R. Bowery Jr., Executive Director of the Center of Military History.

## **Organization Formed to Honor and Remember Renowned North Dakota National Guard Unit's Service and Holds Activities**

*By Daniel Sauerwein, Editor*

A group of dedicated living historians and descendants of veterans of a well-known North Dakota National Guard regiment formed a new organization and recently held activities to honor and remember the history of that unit. According to its website, the new 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Remembrance Association is "Dedicated to preserving, recreating, and educating about the service of the 164th Infantry Regiment of the North Dakota National Guard in World War II. Through living history,

educational programs, reenactments, and preservation efforts, we honor their legacy and connect it to the public.”



*Monument to the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery near Mandan, North Dakota.*

The 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was part of the North Dakota National Guard, tracing its origins to the Dakota Territorial Militia and later the 1<sup>st</sup> North Dakota Infantry Regiment, which served with distinction during the Spanish-American War and Philippine-American War.

The unit served from 1916-1917 on the Mexican border during Pershing's Punitive Expedition that attempted to capture Pancho Villa and was redesignated as the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in October 1917, serving in World War I.

Called into federal service in February 1941, the regiment initially was assigned to the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, but was detached from that division when the Army reorganized to triangular divisions in the early months of World War II. The regiment was assigned to the Pacific Theater and was organized, along with two other National Guard regiments, into the American-New Caledonia (or Americal) Division.

The 164<sup>th</sup> distinguished itself by being the first US Army unit to engage in offensive ground combat against the Axis forces when it landed on Guadalcanal in October 1942, reinforcing and relieving the pressure to the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, which faced heavy fighting against the Japanese since August. Their service on Guadalcanal was recognized by the nickname 164<sup>th</sup> Marines, being awarded a Navy Presidential Unit Citation, and one member earning the Navy Cross.

The regiment went on to serve in Bougainville, Fiji, and the Philippines, and some of its veterans became members of Merrill's Marauders. Over the course of World War II, soldiers of the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry earned the following awards: 1 Navy Cross (Lt. Colonel Robert Hall), six Distinguished Service Crosses, 89 Silver Stars, 199 Bronze Stars, 7 Legions of Merit, 10 Soldier's Medals, and approximately 2000 Purple Hearts. Woodrow Wilson "Woody" Keeble, a Native American veteran of the 164<sup>th</sup> was awarded the Medal of Honor for actions during the Korean War in 2008.

The records of the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association, which was the organization of veterans and their families, are preserved at the Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, ND, including a small exhibit of artifacts from the

collection. Documents and artifacts are also housed at the North Dakota Heritage Center and State Museum and State Archives in Bismarck, and the unit will be featured in the forthcoming military gallery being constructed there.



*Living historians portray members of Co. H, 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment at the 1883 Stutsman County Courthouse State Historic Site in Jamestown, ND.*



*164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Remembrance Association Members portray CCC workers at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, which the CCC operated at during the 1930s.*

The 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry Remembrance Association has held two public events thus far, one at the 1883 Stutsman County Courthouse State Historic Site in Jamestown, ND that commemorated the activation of Company H and another recent one at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park detailing the service of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) prior to World War II that some of the veterans also served in. The organization plans to hold more events in the coming years tied to the anniversaries of campaigns the regiment participated in.

If you wish to learn more, want to get involved, or support the group, you can visit their website at <https://www.164remembrance.org>, or find them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/164Remembrance>.

## **National SAR Announces Public Display of Louisville's 1823 William Stone Engraving of the Declaration of Independence**

*From the SAR Foundation Website*



The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), in partnership with the City of Louisville, proudly announces the public unveiling of the City of Louisville's rare 1823 William Stone engraving of the Declaration of Independence, one of the most significant printed representations of America's founding document.

The historic document, loaned by the City of Louisville to the SAR, will be placed on public display in the Craik Room of the SAR Genealogical Research Library at the Society's national headquarters on Main Street. Admission will be free and open to the public.

The display will be on view: Thursday, January 22, 2026, through Saturday, September 5, 2026, Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The announcement was made during a press conference held on January 21, 2026, hosted by Mayor Greenberg, members of the Louisville Metro Council, representatives of the Louisville 250 Commission, and SAR leadership. The event officially marks the kickoff of America 250 celebrations in Louisville, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

“This display represents a remarkable opportunity for the public to encounter history firsthand,” said SAR President General Mike Elston.

“The Sons of the American Revolution moved its national headquarters to Louisville in 1979, and we are a proud part of Main Street’s museum row. The education center and museum we are building there will be a great attraction for visitors and residents alike. We are thrilled to partner with our City to publicly display one of the few remaining 1823 copies of the Declaration of Independence printed from the Stone engraving. We hope that all who see it will feel a real connection to the founding generation, many of whom were still alive when it was printed. The Declaration was unique in world history, setting out the principles on which a new nation would be based. Every American — whether their family has been here for 400 years or four years — enjoys the benefits that have come from the Declaration, the war that made independence a reality, and the efforts of every succeeding generation to make a more perfect union.”

Commissioned by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, the William Stone engraving is widely regarded as the most accurate reproduction of the original Declaration of Independence. Only a limited number of these engravings survive today.

The SAR Genealogical Research Library is located at the National Society’s headquarters in downtown Louisville and serves as one of the nation’s premier centers for Revolutionary War research and education.

To learn more about the William Stone Declaration of Independence Display, visit:  
<https://library.sar.org/the-1823-stone-declaration/>

*Founded in 1966 as the Council on Abandoned Military Posts, CAMP changed its name in 1981. It is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization whose members are interested in the identification, restoration, preservation, and memorialization of old military installations as well as their history and traditions. All persons sharing these interests are invited to join. CAMP publishes an academic journal (The Journal of America’s Military Past), a newsletter on recent developments in historic preservation (Headquarters Heliogram), and hosts a webinar series (Military Moments). Find out more at: [www.campjamp.org](http://www.campjamp.org).*