## ARMY HERITAGE CENTER FOUNDATION





FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO, AHCF

# The Roots of Cumberland Valley's Quiet Promise to Soldiers

A yearly gathering at the gravesite of Sgt.

1st Class Randall Shughart brings Special Forces, families, and neighbors together to remember the Battle of Mogadishu—and to renew a promise to the fallen. These are the roots of our community and a part of a legacy of remembrance and honor.

It was muggier than usual in Cumberland Valley early last October. It felt like midsummer. I sat in the car with my parents, COL (Ret.) William and Laura Barko, watching the gravel drive winding through Westminster Cemetery in Carlisle fill somberly, one car at a time.

When we stepped out of the car, I felt a slight breeze and reached out to put my arm around my mother's shoulders as we walked to where a small formation gathered at the gravesite of Sgt. 1st Class Randall Shughart. The sky was deep blue, patched with those heavy cumulonimbus clouds that sometimes hang over our valley like lost cities in the sky.

Each year on October 3, the Special Forces community in Cumberland County returns here to observe the anniversary of the Battle of Mogadishu, and last year in 2024, like many past years, members of our Army Heritage Center Foundation team came to share in the commemoration. There was no fanfare, just the steady cadence of soldiers and neighbors who came, as they always do, to keep a promise: to remember the Battle of Mogadishu and those who gave their lives--a few words, a moment in time that teaches us that memory is a duty.

This is where a national story becomes local, and where a local soldier's legacy helps carry the weight of history.

#### Remembering Mogadishu

On October 3, 1993, American soldiers fought through the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, in what became one of the fiercest battles of the modern era. Randall Shughart, a soldier from Newville, Pennsylvania, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism that day. His gravesite in Cumberland Valley has become the natural center of remembrance for the Special Operations community and for local residents who claim him as one of their own.

#### Why We Gather

The commemoration is both solemn and intimate. Veterans return each year to honor their comrade, and neighbors stand alongside them in quiet solidarity. This annual gathering at Randy Shughart's gravesite calls us to remember, but also to act. For the people of Cumberland Valley, October 3 is not just history—it is a lived reminder of sacrifice and service.

The gathering will unfold in camaraderie and respect. A few remarks. A wreath. Bowed heads in prayer. A steady hand resting on the stone. The moment is brief but meaningful.

#### **The Promise Endures**

This year in 2025, when the community gathers on October 3, something special will occur. Special Forces Association Chapter 64 will dedicate a Mogadishu Memorial at West Pennsboro Veterans Memorial Park in Plainfield, Pennsylvania to all the fallen of the Battle of Mogadishu. This memorial has united Central Pennsylvania with supporters across the country and around the world--and I've had the honor of witnessing the selflessness, devotion, and leadership of many over the course of the last two years.

The day before, on October 2, 2025, a few of my colleagues from the Army Heritage Center Foundation and I will observe the anniversary of the Battle of Mogadishu in Huntsville, Alabama with our friends from the AUSA Redstone-Huntsville chapter, the Veterans Memorial Museum of Huntsville, and WAAY-TV at an afternoon tea with Gold Star families and later at an evening dinner and panel discussion with some of the veterans of the Battle.

As a lifelong student of the classics, I have found the theme of fallen comrades to be powerfully explored in the epic The Iliad. I think of Achilles' grief and rage over the death of Patroclus, and the profound commitment Achilles makes to preserving Patroclus' memory:

"Nay if even in the house of Hades the dead forget their dead, yet will I even there be mindful of my dear comrade."

When the last note of taps fades on October 3, no one will hurry away from Westminster Cemetery or from the West Pennsboro Veterans Memorial Park. Patches and coins will be placed at Randy Shughart's gravesite and at the newly dedicated Memorial to the Battle of Mogadishu, small circles of color against the granite.

Our promise endures: we will remember, and we will tell the story.

#### **Carrying the Legacy Forward**

The Army Heritage Center Foundation is committed to preserving soldier stories like those of Randy Shughart and all the fallen of the Battle of Mogadishu and ensuring they are told with integrity for future generations. After all, it's in our roots.

That's why the Army Heritage Center Foundation invests in programs that foster understanding and build meaningful connections between the military and civilian communities. We are shaped by gratitude and commitment. We're a private, nonprofit, non-Federal entity. We're not the Army, and we don't speak on behalf of the Army. But we

believe in something greater than ourselves: preserving the stories of American soldiers not just to honor their memories but also so that they can inspire new generations. We believe Army heroism is a living story.

Thank you for joining us in that mission. I can't wait to share both our past and our future with you and our other members and supporters.

In Service,

President

Julie Germany

Sidebar: The Battle of Mogadishu, Oct 3–4, 1993

#### October 3, 1993 – 15:30 hrs

U.S. Special Operations Forces launch a mission to capture Somali militia leaders in Mogadishu.

#### 16:00 hrs

Two Black Hawk helicopters are shot down by enemy fire. Rescue efforts begin immediately.

#### Late Afternoon-Evening

Rangers and Special Forces secure crash sites under heavy fire. A fierce urban battle unfolds. Sgt. 1st Class Randy Shughart & Master Sgt. Gary Gordon deploy voluntarily to protect the downed helicopter crew. Both are killed in action while defending the site, later awarded the Medal of Honor.

### October 4 – Early Morning

After hours of intense street fighting, U.S. troops break contact and withdraw with the help of UN forces.

#### Casualties

18 American soldiers are killed, more than 70 wounded. Hundreds of Somali militia and civilians were also killed.

#### Legacy

The battle—later chronicled in "Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War" by Mark Bowden (1999) and "In the Company of Heroes" by Mike Durant (2003)—became a defining moment in U.S. military history, underscoring courage, sacrifice, and the cost of service.

#### FOUNDATION STAFF

Julie Germany, President & CEO

Amanda Neal, Vice President of Operations

Jillian Acevedo, Operations Manager

Allysa Turner, Membership and Donor Coordinator

Daniel Whitcomb, Museum Store Manager

Chuck Payne, Book and Manuscript Processor

Emily Hughes, Operations Assistant, Patron Relations and Public Communication

Garrett Hale, Operations Assistant, ROTC and Group Tours

Nan Simonetti, Store Associate

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Diane McNaughton, Media and Marketing Consultant

Michael Essig, Operation Assistant

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Mr. Thomas French

Mr. Barry Pepper Mr. Joseph Suarez

Dr. Walter Zapotoczny, Jr.

## Development Update

In 2025, the Foundation began the initiative of hosting a Thank-A-Thon; what this means is we really reflected on the incredible generosity of our community, and we knew that we needed to share our appreciation. We are working tirelessly to create new programs and initiatives that can become beneficial for not only the Foundation, but the entire military and history communities.





This year, we've been especially inspired by the outpouring of support for our highlight on the courage of Army nurses in the Vietnam War, which has already helped us expand access to other diverse and authentic stories. If you enjoyed our spring mailing entitled, "Honor the Courage: Vietnam Nurses," be sure to look out for our new educational content on the Flying Tigers, a group of American volunteer pilots who fought for China during World War II before the United States officially entered the war.

The contributions of our donors directly support our mission, whether by preserving and sharing the stories of American Soldiers, by uplifting and supporting voices in the military community, or by providing engaging and educational tours. Every gift, large or small, makes an impact. Because of you, we were able to add the stories of SP4 William Beck, TSgt. Richard Weaver, LTC Hannah Tussey, COL Robert Black, Captain Dorothy Pecora, MG John Armstrong, SSgt John Minick, Sgt Patrick Hawkins, BG William Thompson, Jack Smawley, and Richard Boyd.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for an increase in educational and research content, debuting in 2026, so that we can continue to highlight ALL Soldier stories, and we invite you to be part of this exciting journey. Your continued support ensures that the Foundation remains a landmark for our military community and for future generations.

From all of us at the Foundation, thank you for helping us preserve history, honor the courage, and build this legacy.

Allysa Turner Membership and Donor Coordinator

## 2025-2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 6, 2025 Sergeant Santa June 13, 2026 251<sup>st</sup> Army Birthday Dinner

April 29, 2026
Walk with the Generals:
From Antietam to
Emancipation Staff Ride

October 24, 2026 Annual Recognition Dinner

## O P E R A T I O N S

The Operations team has been busy and is expanding. From coordinating ROTC staff rides, participating in outreach events, offering used book sales, coordinating corporate volunteers, working on a construction project, and welcoming new members of our group, we have been charging full-speed ahead.

We've welcomed new team members to the Foundation including Allysa Turner and Dan Whitcomb. Allysa has brought an enormous amount of talent as our Membership and Donor Coordinator. Dan has updated our Point of Sale System and online store in the few months he has been onboard as our Museum Store Manager. We were also joined by intern Sydney Thomas from Virginia Tech. She assisted with all of our summer events and programs and is already missed!





This summer we hosted Dr. Richard Marsh as this year's LTC John William Whitman Research Grant recipient and Ms. Riley Ford as the 2025 Ruth Fellow. Both of these fellowships reimburse travel and lodging for the recipient to conduct research at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center. Dr. Marsh focused on the Army's contribution to aerospace defense of North America during the Cold War, by specifically looking at the records of the Army Air Defense Command (ARADCOM). He is currently the Deputy Command Historian for NORAD and USNORTHCOM's Office of History. A doctoral candidate at Texas Christian University, Ms. Ford's dissertation is delving into Brides' Schools overseas and the impact

they had on war brides becoming Americanized while assisting with servicemen's transition back to home life.





Dr. Richard Marsh

Ms. Riley Ford

This past summer we were busy with Army 250 programs, from hosting a reception in advance of Rick Atkinson's greatly attended June lecture to our Army 250 Birthday Dinner. Attendance at the dinner was larger than any other Army Birthday dinner we've held since we began the practice in 2013. Included in the event were tributes to the Army and birthday well wishes, along with Proclamations in honor of the event from US Senators John Fetterman and David McCormick, State Representative Barb Gleim, the Cumberland County Commissioners, and the Carlisle Mayor.

We were honored to share Soldier Stories with our attendees, listen to the brass quintet of the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Band, and hear LTG James Dubik, USA Retired speak about the importance of Army heritage and its impact on our national history.

We are currently planning all of the logistics for our Annual Awards Dinner to be held at the Penn Harris Hotel on October 25. Our honored awardees will be General David Petraeus, USA Retired as our Living Legend and Veterans Outreach of Pennsylvania as our Boots on the Ground awardee. Tickets to this event are now available on our website (www.armyheritage.org).

## UPDATE

In coordination with USAHEC, we assisted with cleanup days on the Army Heritage Trail on May 16 and September 5. A big thanks to our community partners from Dickinson Presbyterian Church, Carlisle Rotary, Highmark, Mid Penn Bank, M&T Bank, Starbucks, Members 1<sup>st</sup> Federal Credit Union, and Central Penn College who volunteered to assist with trail preparations for summer and Army Expo.





The team also participated in many outreach activities over the summer. Our President, Julie Germany served as the speaker for Carlisle's Memorial Day ceremony and appeared on "Good Day PA" and iHeart Radio's "Insight with Sylvia Maus" podcast.

We hosted the Scions of the 17<sup>th</sup> Airborne for a wreath laying ceremony in April at the newly reinstalled Battle of the Bulge Monument on the Army Heritage Trail and attended the Mid Atlantic Air Show in Reading, the Pritzker Gala in Chicago, the Military Reunion Network Conference in Texas, VetFest in Malvern, and the Pennsylvania American Legion Annual Conference, where our Board Chair Bob DeSousa spoke.



Allysa Turner and Bob DeSousa at VetFest.



Emily Hughes & Allysa Turner at the Pritzker Gala.



Bob DeSousa at the Pennsylvania American Legion Annual Conference.



Garrett Hale & Sydney Thomas attended the Mid-Atlantic Air Show.

We have been busy but have so many more programs and outreach activities on our 2026 calendar as well, so be on the lookout for those.

## **Amanda Neal Vice President of Operations**



If you are interested in attending, please scan the QR Code to reserve your ticket today!



## TOURS & ROTC UPDATE

With summer over, the start of the Fall ROTC staff ride season begins. Over the next 3 months, the Army Heritage Foundation will work with Dr. Carol Reardon to send cadets from 8 different schools on staff rides of the Gettysburg Battlefield. As part of their staff ride experience, these groups will spend an afternoon learning about USAHEC and how the Army Heritage Center Foundation contributes to telling the Army story. This is all made possible through generous donations and the Donald Esper ROTC Endowment. This incredible program allows us to play a part in kicking off the careers of these young and aspiring soon-to-be-commissioned Army officers, and we are delighted to help send them on the path of maintaining the Army legacy.

Alongside the staff ride season, we are working on a special project to commemorate the  $250^{\rm th}$ anniversary of the country being celebrated next year. In coordination with the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau, Cumberland County Historical Society, and several other historical organizations, we are working to develop a walking/driving tour with the goal of highlighting Cumberland County's ties to the American Revolution. The tour will feature stops at landmarks pertinent to our local patriots and key figures, as well as attractions and businesses that really capture the history of our national independence. A few notable attractions around Carlisle include: The gun shop of Thomas Butler, the Hessian Powder Magazine on Carlisle Barracks, the site of the Carlisle Riot, and others. The trail will formally debut on July 4th, 2026, as part of the county's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. However, there will be opportunities for early access to the historical trail ahead of its official debut. We will keep you posted on its progress over the next few months.



University of Tennesse ROTC at the Gettysburg Visitor Center.



Guests enjoying the trail during our VIP Staff Ride.

One final project we would like to share with you is our upcoming 2026 member staff ride. Many of you joined us this past April for a day out in Gettysburg. After spending the morning at USAHEC and enjoying a catered breakfast, we boarded buses to the Seminary Ridge Museum, spent the afternoon out on the battlefield guided by Dr. Carol Reardon and COL Tom Vossler, USA Retired, and enjoyed an evening reception at the Gettysburg Foundation's Museum and Visitor Center.

Our goal is to recreate this same charming experience at a new location. For 2026, we will be travelling to Antietam National Battlefield in beautiful Sharpsburg, Maryland. The battle of Antietam was a pivotal engagement in the American Civil War, ultimately leading to President Lincoln's passage of the Emancipation Proclamation, among its many life-changing impacts this allowed free black Americans to enlist in the United States Army. In addition to a guided tour of the battlefield, we will be offering catered meals, a viewing of the new Antietam orientation film, and much more! The first set of tickets for this event will be made available during the silent auction at our Annual Awards Dinner in October, with additional sales to follow later this fall.

Garrett Hale
Operations Assistant- ROTC & Tours

## BUILDING MOMENTUM IN THE MEDIA

Irish author Oscar Wilde famously quipped that the only thing worse than being talked about is NOT being talked about.

That sentiment resonates with all of us who are dedicated to raising awareness and appreciation for USAHEC, the U.S. Army, our soldiers and their unique and compelling stories. Being hailed as the region's "best-kept secret," as USAHEC often is, is hardly received as an accolade from a marketer's viewpoint. At the Army Heritage Center Foundation, our team has been focused on continuing to build connections, foster understanding and bolster support for our nation's defenders, past, present, and future. Being part of the national, state and community conversations about tourism, economic development, education, national security, patriotism, and beyond is a sign of our success in storytelling, led by Julie Germany, our board, and staff.

Capitalizing upon March's national recognition in NEWSWEEK Magazine and the irreplaceable news value of the Army's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June, we have endeavored to keep the media momentum focused on USAHEC going.

Our objective is to continue to raise our visibility and enhance our support among all audiences, from historians, veterans and military families, to authors, educators, children, tourism officials, and beyond.

Our main vehicles for storytelling include newspapers, magazines, journals, books, newsletters, emails, TV news, TV talk shows, social media, and face-to-face outreach at events. We are now working to quantify the impact of our outreach efforts, in terms of increased visitors, financial support, heightened awareness, and positive reputation. The surveys we are collecting to share with USAHEC should help us identify how visitors learn about the Center and Foundation, what messages are making an impact, and where.

Bolstered by the newsworthiness of the Army's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Foundation has gained added visibility, enhanced its positive reception, and inspired action in both attendance numbers and support.

In the past four months, PCN and WHTM-27 News visited the US. Army War College to cover the Hessian Powder Magazine reopening, as we supported USAHEC by funding newly created Historical Structures Report. Our President Julie Germany was named as a Woman of Influence, and the Foundation was awarded an Empowering Women Award for 2025, selected by the CENTRAL PENN BUSINESS JOURNAL. We have sent many media notices already on our Annual Awards dinner on October 25 at the Penn Harris Hotel, with listings expected in the BURG Magazine calendar and beyond. The BURG also agreed to start including USAHEC in their recurring monthly list of cultural attractions in central PA.

We are working to craft timely opinion pieces on the Awards dinner, the applicability of military leadership to business solutions, and the reasons why every citizen should care about the Army's 250th birthday, with the hope of inclusion in CPBJ, the CARLISLE SENTINEL and Pennlive, and perhaps much larger reach in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York, and Washington, D.C.

We also remain committed to the goal of achieving national media coverage, including the national news channels and major

major newspapers such as the WASHINGTON POST and NEW YORK TIMES.

Looking forward, representatives of the Foundation will appear on WHTM's "Hot Topic Tuesday" in mid-October to talk about the Awards dinner with Valerie Pritchett; we will also appear on GOOD DAY PA to promote the Awards dinner and on the RJ Harris morning drive-time radio show with Bob DeSousa and Julie Germany. Media coverage from an extensive media list will also be sought before, during, and after the October 25 dinner to maximize the goodwill of this toptier event.

It remains my goal to attract free, positive news coverage of our work, our veterans, and our military every week if possible.

Sincere gratitude goes out to anyone who shares their ideas, is willing to appear on news shows, give interviews, and contribute to the conversation in some way.

In the end, the best public relations is not about spin or sugarcoating; it is, in truth, about forming a genuine connection with our audience, and that is a goal we endeavor to execute daily.

Diane McNaughton Media and Marketing Consultant

## MUSEUM STORE UPDATE

As we move into autumn, there is a harvest of items available at the Army Heritage Museum Store. We have new Army 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration T-Shirts, as well as fresh USAHEC Polos in blue, green, black, and grey. We also have two challenge coins available-- a USAHEC Challenge Coin as well as an Army 250<sup>th</sup> Challenge Coin. And as always, our used book selection is continuously being updated and replenished.

Please visit our new online store (www.armyheritage.org), where you can shop anytime.





## USAHEC DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Greetings from Carlisle! It is such a privilege to be at the helm of the United States Army Heritage and Education Center. As I reflect on my first year as part of the leadership team of the US Army War College, I am struck by the energy and excitement my colleagues have for the mission to educate senior leaders in the military in strategic thinking. USAHEC is proud to be an integral part of this mission, and our focus has shifted to collect, preserve, and present materials related to the evolution and application of landpower, as well as the experiences of American Soldiers, to build a foundation for strategic thought and to connect the public to the United States Army. As we hone in on how to best serve the US Army, one thing stands out: the USAHEC collection is the US Army's premier archive, linking biography and personal archives to Army history. Those of us interested in American history know that without the strategic decision makers and influencers in the US Army, American history would be a completely different record.

Our collections inform our wonderful exhibitions that are now on view: "This We'll Defend: Celebrating 250 Years of Army History," and "From Powder to Purpose: Carlisle Barracks from Revolution to Today." We had an incredibly successful Director's Preview opening of "This We'll Defend" exhibition to commemorate the Army's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, and the whole team felt the joy and support of the regional community. The latter exhibition helps illuminate the importance of Carlisle Barracks, and we were delighted that the exhibit informs the new documentary, "Gunpowder in Carlisle," which our teammates in the Public Affairs Office produced.

A highlight of the Fall at USAHEC is our Army Expo, an annual weekend-long event, which we held in September. Annually, we welcome over 7,000 people to explore everything that the US Army has to offer. An unparalleled experience, this year the Army Expo blended military history, cutting-edge technology, and thrilling demonstrations—including aerial spectacles (the Black Knights!!), historical reenactments, military machinery, and the First Oval Office Project, a replica of General George Washington's Revolutionary War tent. This year was a smashing success, and I am proud of how this year's event reflected the teamwork and comradery that distinguishes USAHEC.

As my teammates and I seek to get the word out about the importance of the USAHEC collection, we are so grateful to the Army Heritage Center Foundation for its continued support in filling the gaps that are outside of our capacity. With the help of the foundation, we will achieve an even bigger impact. Below, I list the USAHEC accolades that we can build from, with the foundation's support.

#### **USAHEC: Recognized Locally and Nationally**

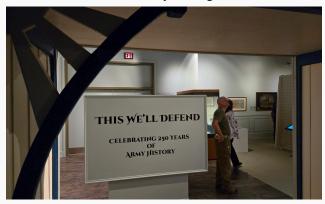
We are honored to be the public's choice—both locally and across the nation. The U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center was named one of *Newsweek's* **Top 10 Free Museums** in the country for 2025. Closer to home, *The Sentinel*, a Carlisle newspaper, announced that USAHEC was voted the **Best Outdoor Attraction in Cumberland County for 2025**.

Throughout the year, USAHEC was highlighted on *ABC 27, PennLive* and *The Sentinel*. Additionally, entities, including the Pennsylvania Tourism Office, Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau and Cumberland County, PA have promoted us on social media and their websites.

Recognitions like these highlight the vital role USAHEC plays in connecting the American public with our Army, preserving Army history, and helping to bridge the civilian-military gap.



This M60 tank is one of many historic vehicles on USAHEC's Army Heritage Trail.



Visitors enjoy the new This We'll Defend Exhibit. As you can see, through the boundless energy, ability to intellectually connect, and the sheer talent and creativity of the USAHEC team, we are generating enormous value in connecting researchers as well as the American public to the US Army. These recent recognitions reflect how effective we have been at executing our mission - but we hope to achieve even more. In the next five years, we aim to update our permanent gallery, the Soldier Experience Gallery, with exhibits specific to the Army today, its impact, and what strategic leadership as cultivated by the Army War College has done in the past and can do in the future. We hope you share our excitement in our potential, especially as you see what we can achieve in our basic functions.

Please feel free to reach out if you would ever like to engage with any of our ongoing initiatives at <a href="mailto:usahec@army.mil">usahec@army.mil</a>. We hope that you will visit USAHEC very soon!

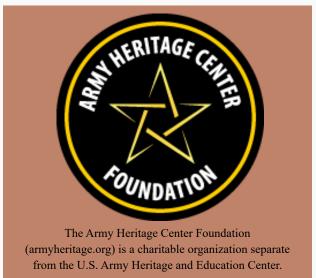
# Dr. Kate Lemay USAHEC Director



Visitors to Army Expo 25 were thrilled by the U.S. Military Academy's Black Knights Parachute Team, World War II tanks, over 300 historic reenactors, and a myriad of current U.S. Army assets.



Historical reenactors from all time periods of U.S. Army history thrilled visitors to Army Expo 25.



## ACADEMIC LIBRARY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

## **Academic Library News & Highlights**

Here's a look at what the Academic Library Department (ALD) has been up to. We're proud to share some exciting news about our team, our work, and the resources we're providing to the community.

#### **Department Updates & Staff Spotlights**

It's been a busy and productive time for the ALD! First, we're thrilled to announce the promotion of Greta Braungard to the academic rank of Assistant Professor. This well-deserved recognition celebrates her exceptional dedication to teaching, her deep expertise, and her ongoing commitment to our students and the library profession. Congratulations, Greta!

We also want to give a shout-out to Steven Semmel for completing a graduate-level course on Genealogy Research in Libraries with an incredible 98%! Steven's new skills from this course, which was offered through the Army's Education Program, will be a valuable addition to the Ridgway Branch and our work there.

## **Supporting USAWC Students & Faculty**

We've hit the ground running with the U.S. Army War College's new Academic Year '26 resident class! From day one, the library team has been hard at work, ensuring every student has the tools they need to succeed. We welcomed them with their borrower cards, helped them establish their ebook accounts, and gave them a quick tour of our services, including our popular research consultations. We can't wait to support their research journeys throughout the year.



Duane Miller working with a student during a seminar Foundations tour.

We've also been busy introducing new faculty to everything the library has to offer. Nicole Wallace, Duane Miller, and Steven Semmel hosted an orientation where they provided a digital tour of our resources and gave an overview of our unique repository holdings, including a special look at materials related to the Korean War, a key case study for the Foundations Course.



Nicole Wallace instructs new faculty to the U.S. Army War College in Root Hall.



Steven Semmel shows new faculty some of the archival holdings.

#### **Research & Resources**

Our team is dedicated to providing top-notch resources and research support. Jim Scudieri and Allen Knechtmann recently answered a request from Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) G-1 on the phrase "This We'll Defend." Their fascinating research delved into the origins of the Army seal, which dates back to the colonial era! The findings are now a searchable FAQ:

https://usawc.libanswers.com/ahec.

The library liaisons and Ridgway Branch staff also teamed up to create a new Korean War bibliography, now live on our website. This guide is specifically tailored to meet the needs of the Foundations Course, helping students access both current and archival materials for their studies.

#### Community & Partnerships

We're always looking for new ways to connect with and serve our community. Earlier this year, our staff came together to support the Vietnam War elective course, curating a rich collection of archives, books, and artifacts for the students and their instructors.

Finally, we'd like to highlight a special online program, which was conducted in August. We partnered with the National Museum of the Pacific War to conduct a collaborative panel discussion on the Battle of Okinawa and Ie Shima. We commemorated the 80th anniversary of the War in the Pacific with a free livestreamed event featuring our very own Steven Semmel! The conversation examined the Battle of Okinawa, the last major battle of World War II, and one of the bloodiest, fought from April to June 1945, and the smaller but fierce fight on the nearby island of Ie Shima.

Greta Braungard Chair of Academic Library Department

## COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT UPDATE

# **Exploring U.S. Army History Through Vertical File Manuscripts**

The history of the U.S. Army is woven into the fabric of the nation, shaped by the dedication and sacrifice of Soldiers across generations. For those seeking to understand this legacy, the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC) offers a remarkable resource: Vertical File Manuscripts (VFMs). These collections capture personal experiences, pivotal moments, and operational details that provide a window into Army life and service.

As part of USAHEC's mission to support and preserve these vital resources, we want to share how VFMs contribute to understanding our shared history and highlight some remarkable materials within the collection.

## What Are Vertical File Manuscripts?

VFMs are curated collections of smaller, individual documents that provide unique

glimpses into Army history. Unlike larger archival collections, these manuscripts are smaller, standalone documents that offer unique snapshots of history. The VFMs include oral histories, correspondence, diaries, memoirs, anecdotes, and sketches – each providing a vital perspective on Army life and operations.

Each document contributes to a deeper understanding of military service – not just from a strategic or historical perspective, but through the lived experiences of individuals. Every file reflects the people, moments, and decisions that have defined the Army's 250 years of service. Whether depicting moments of heroism, the challenges of warfare, or the daily realities of Army life, VFMs offer an invaluable connection to the past.

#### **How We Serve Our Users**

We understand the value these files hold for those connected to the Army's history – whether through personal service, family heritage, or

## COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT UPDATE

shared appreciation. They tell the stories of Soldiers both on and beyond the battlefield, showing us their ingenuity, their struggles, and their triumphs. For a community dedicated to supporting the preservation of Army history, VFMs represent an essential tool for ensuring these stories endure. USAHEC staff work diligently to ensure VFMs are accessible through:

- On-Site Exploration. Visitors can immerse themselves in the collection by accessing VFMs at our archive, with the guidance of our knowledgeable staff.
- Digitization Efforts. We are continually working to digitize materials for easy, online searching and worldwide access.
- Expert Support. Our archivists are ready to help users navigate the collections, offering expertise and assistance to uncover materials that align with their interests.

These efforts ensure that the stories preserved in VFMs remain available, aligning with the Center's mission to preserve and share the U.S. Army's legacy for current and future generations.

#### Gems of the VFMs

The VFMs are filled with extraordinary glimpses into Army life and history, revealing both the iconic and the deeply personal. Here are some standout features:

• Frontline Letters: Letters written by Soldiers during World War II convey their courage and resilience, as well as the emotional toll of service. The Fred Elwyn Andrews Letters provide a raw, first-person account of the Chaplain's two and a half months of front-line service in North Africa and Sicily. CPT Andrews describes being under German fire, being forced to stay in fox holes for two days near Hill 609 in

- Tunisia and burying the fallen. Andrews was presented the Silver Star for gallantry in action against the enemy in Sicily during July and August 1943.
- Unit Histories: Files dedicated to specific Army units documenting their history and contributions. For instance, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment "Red Warriors" Battle Report captures their heroic defense of Landing Zone 501N (LZ 501N) during OPERATION SAM HOUSTON in Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam, through official reports and firsthand accounts. On February 15, 1967, the regiment repulsed an enemy force almost four times their strength.
- Generational Service: VFMs contain the histories of families who served across generations. The Swengel Family History includes PVT Uriah Frantz Swengel's 1864-65 Civil War diary, and details Henry D. and Derbe H. Swengel's service in the Spanish-American War, PVT Uriah Clark Swengel's WWI duty in France, SSG John Clark Swengel's WWII service in Germany, and Chief Petty Officer Peter Joseph Swengel's service in the U.S. Navy from 1977-1997.
- Everyday Heroes: VFMs often highlight the contributions of medics, engineers, logisticians, and civilian personnel the unsung heroes without whom missions could not succeed. The oral history of Mr. Walter W. Hollis, who served as an optical designer and engineer at Frankford Arsenal in Philadelphia and designed the fire control system for the M551 Sheridan Armored Reconnaissance / Airborne Assault Vehicle, describes the work of the Combat Vehicle and General Instruments Fire Control Laboratory and Operational Test and Evaluation Agency from 1965-1980, and its efforts to equip the U.S.

Army Soldier. Hollis became Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for Operations Research, and the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command headquarters building is named for him.

- The Soldier's Perspective: From Vietnam to Desert Storm, VFMs preserve stories of adaptation and resilience, showing how Soldiers met the challenges of changing warfare and technology. The diary of NCAA champion pole vaulter Richard V. Ganslen details his experience with the Signal Corps in the China-Burma-India theater in World War II. The diary contains a design sketch for a device to destroy captured Japanese guns using a magnetic fuse. LTC Ganslen later worked with NASA on the Gemini program and authored papers on the aerodynamics of discus and javelin as well as a mechanical analysis of pole vaulting.
- Post-Service Life: Many files also reflect life after service, chronicling how veterans shaped their communities and their world. The VFM papers of Glenn I. Jones, who served as Camp Surgeon in the Medical Corps at Camp Funston, Kansas and later in the Office of the Surgeon General in Washington, D.C., consists of personal correspondence between Jones and MG Leonard Wood depicting Wood's contemplation of running for political office. Additionally, letters between Jones, GEN John J. Pershing, and GEN Peyton C. March outline the workings of the Tacna-Arica Plebiscite Commission, appointed by President Calvin Coolidge to settle a territorial dispute between Chile and Peru.

#### **Preserving and Sharing History**

Military history is not just about battles and strategy – it's about people. VFMs ensure that the stories of those who served endure, providing a lasting record of their experiences. Engaging with these materials fosters a deeper appreciation for the challenges and triumphs of Army personnel, helping to keep their legacy alive for future generations.

As an institution dedicated to honoring Army history, USAHEC works daily to ensure the preservation and accessibility of these materials. Our efforts guarantee that VFMs and the stories they tell remain a living resource for those seeking to understand the Army's legacy and impact.

Whether you're delving into the history of a specific unit, uncovering the experiences of a family member, or researching the evolution of Army operations, VFMs connect you to the people and events that shaped our Army, and our nation.

We invite you to engage with this collection and celebrate the lives and service it represents. Please visit our website, ahec.armywarcollege.edu, and search in the bar at the top of the page.

# **Greg Statler Chair of Collections Department**

## EDUCATION & EXHIBITS DEPARTMENT UPDATE

This year, the Education and Exhibits
Department (EED) celebrated the 250<sup>th</sup>
anniversary of the U.S. Army through a myriad
of exhibits and programs. These worked to
connect the history of the Army to the public and
demonstrated that Army History is American
History. The Army 250 celebration will continue
through the fall before we shift to recognizing
the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the nation.

On 26 May, the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center hosted the U.S. Army War College's Memorial Day ceremony. The record-breaking crowd enjoyed stunning weather and heard remarks from GEN (Ret.) Stephen Townsend prior to a 21-gun salute from the 1-108<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Additional support was provided by the Carlisle Company of the Harrisburg Recruiting Battalion.



The USAWC Memorial Day ceremony at USAHEC, 26 May 2025.

Army 250 programming kicked into high gear on 4 June with a special lecture by renowned historian Rick Atkinson, who discussed his new book *The Fate of the Day: The War for America, Fort Ticonderoga to Charleston, 1777-1780*. The second in a planned trilogy, this work details the difficult middle years of the Revolutionary War and how the trials experienced by American troops helped forge the army that ultimately achieved victory.

This was followed by the opening of our two newest exhibits, *This We'll Defend:*Celebrating 250 Years of Army History in June and From Powder to Purpose: Carlisle

Barracks from Revolution to Today in August.



Curator Molly Bompane discusses the new Hessian Powder Magazine exhibit *From Powder to Purpose* with USAWC Commandant Major General Trevor J. Bredenkamp.

The EED team also leads the *Perspectives in Military History Lecture Series*. These monthly lectures bring in historians, educators and authors to discuss their area of expertise. These events are in-person, to audiences of up to 300, and also recorded and posted at: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/theusahec">https://www.youtube.com/theusahec</a>.

Through lectures, our exhibits and our ceremonies, EED continues to link the Army to the American public. To learn more about our events, visit ahec.armywarcollege.edu.

# Ken Hickman Chair of Education & Exhibits



Rick Atkinson (right) discusses his new book *The Fate of the Day* with Dr. Daniel Krebs of the U.S. Army War College.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Running now until November 5<sup>th</sup> you may purchase a flag for our Annual Veteran's Day Flag Campaign. This year we will be partnering with Love Carlisle for the Veteran's Day Flag Campaign. All purchased flags will be placed throughout the borough of Carlisle and a map will be published so you know where your flag has been placed. The flags are \$5.00 each and can be purchased on our website.





Join the Army Heritage Center
Foundation for our 2026 Battlefield
Tour, as we follow this thread of
Emancipation from the Antietam
Battlefield, to the graves of Black
soldiers who answered that call, and to
the communities they built in
freedom's aftermath.

Save the Date for Saturday, June 13, 2026, as we celebrate the 251<sup>st</sup> United States Army Birthday dinner.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Fall reminds us that change is inevitable, and within the last year change has been happening within the Foundation. Roles filled and created with emerging leaders who are bringing new ideas to the table. We, the new staff members, are thankful to have such great leadership from the veteran Staff Members who are helping us foster connections with our community and donor base. Our roots are growing deep, and we can't wait to show you what will come of them in the upcoming year. We hope you consider donating to the Foundation so we can continue "Telling one Soldier Story at a Time."

#### **Emily Hughes**

**Operation Assistant- Patron Relations and Public Communication** 



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