



The Legend Continues...

Airborne and Special Operations Museum Foundation

December 1998

1997 - 1998: A Time of Decision

By Jim Lindsay

Many of you are probably wondering how the Foundation managed to break ground at Fort Bragg in October of 1996 and is now in the process of constructing the Museum in downtown Fayetteville. This article will address how this came about.

In order to allow the various airborne and special operations association representative's time to work the groundbreaking into their schedules, we announced the event in the early summer of 1996. In the weeks prior to the groundbreaking, each of the construction companies bidding on the project requested more time to prepare their bids. All expressed surprise at the escalating costs in the Piedmont area. As a result we did not receive the bids until about two weeks after the groundbreaking.

When we opened the bids we were shocked to find that the low bid was \$4 million over our planned figure of \$8 million for the construction of the building. In other words, the building alone would cost a minimum of \$12 million. Exhibit costs would bring the total figure to over \$16.5 million. Your executive board then voted to ask the architect to redesign the building to reduce the cost to a figure between \$8-9 million. By eliminating a lot of the costly glass and steel we were able to reduce costs to about \$10 million. To cut costs more would have meant sacrificing exhibit space which we elected not to do.

In the spring of 1997 the Foundation had about \$7.5 million on hand in cash and pledges, enough to proceed with the

building, but not enough to complete the building and design/construct the exhibits. In order to try to keep ahead of ever escalating construction costs, the executive board decided to start construction at the Fort Bragg site in October 1997, recognizing that we would still have to raise more money for the exhibits.

On Labor Day 1997, David Jameson, President of the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, approached me with a proposal that if the Foundation would agree to re-locate the Museum to downtown Fayetteville, the City would furnish the funds to complete the project. (At the time it appeared that we would need about \$5 million).

After discussions with the Fort Bragg leadership and most association representatives, the executive board voted to re-locate to downtown Fayetteville on condition the Museum would be part of the Army Museum system and ultimately the museum site would be deeded to the federal government. The city agreed to this and we then entered into a formal contract with the City of Fayetteville and Cumberland County.

The initial site chosen for the museum was the area around the old USO building on Ray Ave. Since the site was owned in part by the federal government it would obviously reduce our costs. Unfortunately, the site turned out to be contaminated by a 1930's coal-gas conversion plant located nearby.

The city then moved to acquire a site at the corner of the 500 block of Hay Street and Bragg Boulevard. While land acquisition costs were high (about \$2 million for 6.6 acres-paid for by the city of Fayetteville) it's a super location and is of "great historic significance" to all paratroopers.

The 500 block of Hay Street will look a lot different than it did from the 1940's through the 1990's. And, instead of hosting establishments whose goal was to separate the trooper from his monthly paycheck, the area will now host a magnificent memorial honoring our Airborne and Special Operations troopers and the sacrifices they made for their country.

As it turns out the final cost of the museum will probably be around \$16.5 million:

Construction	\$11,600,000.00
Exhibits	\$2,700,000.00
Large Screen Film	\$1,000,000.00
Motion Simulator	\$550,000.00
Contingency	\$650,000.00

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A Time of Decision *(continued)*

The increase in cost came about because of three factors: escalating construction costs in the rapidly growing Piedmont – about 10% annually; site preparation costs; and the addition of two features we did not feel we could pass up.

First, the Army came up with a fully restored CG4A Waco glider, which we are receiving free of cost. We had planned a mock-up of a partial glider. In order to accommodate the Army's glider, we had to spend \$158,000 to expand the exhibit area. In view of the glider's value, about \$500,000, we felt it was money well spent.

We also became aware of a feature that not only would be a great addition to the museum, but in the long run would be a money maker. This is a motion simulator that seats 24 people and tilts, rolls and yaws 18 degrees in any direction. At present it replicates a helicopter ride through a canyon in California.

We will add two parachute jumps (static line and free fall) and a helicopter gunship attack.

The simulator will cost \$550,000. (\$450,000 for equipment; \$100,000 for cinematography.) Added building space for the simulator will cost \$145,170. While admission to the museum will be free, we will charge a nominal fee for the simulator and the wide-screen theater.

These were hard decisions and as a result we consulted frequently with Airborne Association representatives and met with the vast majority of them on 23 May 1998. After much discussion there was near unanimous agreement on the above decisions. Frankly, we have come across other equally interesting features, but we simply can't afford them.

At this point, we have about \$12 million on hand in cash and pledges against a requirement for about \$16.5 million. The city of Fayetteville, which

has provided \$5 million to date, has agreed to provide a \$4.5 million line of credit so we can proceed with completing the Museum and all exhibits by our goal of May 2000. This means that we still need your help with our fund-raising effort.

We also have entered into an agreement with Fort Bragg and Cumberland County on our annual operating expenses. Each has pledged \$175,000 for a total of \$350,000 annually to operate the museum.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your support of this very noble effort to honor the greatest soldiers in the world. It's taken longer than we anticipated, but thanks to you the end is in sight.

**Mark your calendars!
Tuesday, May 22, 2000
Grand Opening**

ASOMF is on the Internet!

Get the latest news about events and the progress of our construction by logging on to our website:

www.asomf.org

The Foundation in Action

By Anna Honeycutt, Executive Director

The years 1997 and 1998 have been a busy time for the Foundation. In 1997, the Fayetteville Area Chamber of Commerce proposed to the Board of Directors that the museum be moved to a downtown location. This idea was approved unanimously. The Foundation then obtained approval from the U.S. Army Center of Military History and Fort Bragg to move the museum to the new location. The Foundation then set up a public/private partnership between the city, county and the Army. Once all agreements were in place, we were on our way.

The City of Fayetteville and the Foundation hosted a ground breaking ceremony in June 1998. A huge backhoe was in place to start tearing down the old Korean Lounge. Everyone cheered as bricks came tumbling down.

We continue to raise funds and always need new ideas and volunteers that can help us along the way. The Foundation and the Fayetteville Force hosted a Veterans Day Hockey Game on 13 November. It was a great way to give publicity to the project. Miss North Carolina (and runner-up to Miss America) was there along with General Dan McNeill, CG of the 82D Airborne Division. Custom made hockey jerseys were auctioned. Everyone had a great time.

The Foundation has already begun planning the Grand Opening scheduled for 22 May 2000. We want to stay firm with that date so we are moving ahead with construction.

Future events include: sales of bricks that will be placed on the Hay Street side

of the museum. If any of you are interested, please contact us by mail or email and as soon as we begin our campaign, we will send you information. We are planning an event that will focus on the hanging of the C-47 inside the museum. That should occur in July 1999.

A volunteer marketing committee has been formed of marketing professionals from all over Fayetteville and Cumberland County. They are developing an open-ended marketing plan and helping the Foundation with events, fund raising, budgets and publicity. They are a talented group of individuals with lots of energy and great ideas. Watch your mail for future updates.

Reconstructing History, One Artifact at a Time

By Dr. John Duvall, Museum Coordinator

One of the most difficult challenges facing the Foundation in the year ahead is to find important historical artifacts for exhibits. This is true for all periods from World War II through Korea and Vietnam to the 1990s. With an exhibit area of twenty-three thousand square feet, it is clear that we must redouble our efforts to find interesting material for display.

This past year of 1998 has been a successful collecting year, with material arriving from veterans of World War II, Vietnam and Grenada. Moreover, the foundation established a purchase fund to buy important collections in the hands of antique dealers. Through this method, the Foundation was able to buy the very important Rupert Graves collection, a remarkable group of World War II items. Graves was the commanding officer for the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Thus his collection is of the highest importance to the museum. Other purchases brought M1942 jump suits, boots, web gear, photographs, documents, medals, insignia, and captured enemy items into the collection. All of this material was transferred to the Army once the purchase agreements were signed. In this regard, it is important to remember that all donations and purchases

become the property of the U.S. Army. The Army will maintain catalog records for each item and be responsible for long-term conservation and security.

Donations by veterans or their families have also proven a fruitful source of historical material. We owe Joe deFrancesco, Office of Strategic Services (OSS) operative in World War II, a special debt of gratitude for providing important items related to his service as a Jedburgh. Other veterans provided their uniforms, photographs and captured material. We are especially grateful to the families of deceased veterans for important donations of material related to the 82D and 17th Airborne Divisions. And the U.S. Army has also been enormously supportive, providing a CG4A combat glider, AH-6 attack helicopter, a World War II airborne bulldozer, and a Sheridan Tank used by the 82D Airborne Division in Panama (1989) and the Persian Gulf War (1990 - 91).

Despite all these gains, we still need important material relating to the history of all the airborne divisions in World War II. Especially important are items from the Battle of the Bulge, the Philippines, Corregidor and the jump across the Rhine in March 1945.

What is needed? Everything! Helmets (does anyone have an authentic World War II jump helmet he will donate?), web gear, fighting knives, jump boots, uniforms (Class A and combat), photographs (with place and people identified), battle maps, letters home, V-mail, insignia, parachutes (T-5, T-7, T-10, reserves, etc.), items captured from the enemy, weapons, binoculars and a host of other items. We are especially interested in specialized gear used by engineers, medics, riggers, signal corps specialists, military intelligence, air defense, field artillery and headquarters elements.

If you want to make a donation, call the Foundation at 910-483-3003, or write Airborne and Special Operations Museum Foundation, PO Box 89, Fayetteville, NC 28302-0089.

Where to Send Artifacts

If you are ready to send an item, it can be sent directly to the museum registrar:

Mary Dennings
c/o Commander
XVIII ABN Corps and Ft Bragg
ATTN: AFZA-RBC-T (ASOM)
Fort Bragg, NC 28307
Phone: 910-396-7372

A Holiday Message

Fifty-four years ago American troopers of the 82D and 101st Airborne Divisions fought an extraordinary battle with the German Army in Belgium's Ardennes Forest. At Bastogne and on the northern shoulder of what became known as the Battle of the Bulge, paratroopers and glidermen fought the attacking Germans to a standstill in the zero degree temperatures of one of Europe's coldest winters. Christmas was spent in foxholes and in firefights.

Later joined by the 17th Airborne Division, the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the 509th Parachute Infantry, 550 Glider Infantry and 551st Parachute Infantry Battalions, these intrepid airborne soldiers broke the back of a cruel tyranny.

Looking back, we remember during this Christmas season that we have so very much to be grateful for as a result of the sacrifice, valor and fighting skills of American Airborne and Special Operations troopers.

Peace on Earth, Good Will Towards Men

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Museum Volunteers Make a Difference

by Jim Lindsay

Earlier this year we presented a briefing to North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt as part of our request for a \$2 million state grant for the museum. One of the items in the briefing that seemed to most impress the governor's financial advisors was the fact the museum's total overhead costs were less than 4%.

In other words over 96% of every dollar granted to the museum goes towards design or construction of the building or exhibits. That's possible only because of the great work done by the many volunteers who are the heart and soul of the Foundation.

As most of you know we have only two salaried employees, our Executive Director, Anna Honeycutt, and Museum Coordinator, Dr John Duvall. Both not only do great work, but put in many hours over and above the normal work week. What you probably don't know is the tremendous work done by a host of virtually unseen volunteers.

With so many people doing so much for this great effort, it's impossible to properly recognize all of them. I would however, like to highlight the efforts of a few of our volunteers, without whom we probably wouldn't have a Museum.

Rudy Baker, our comptroller and financial advisor has been with us since day one and spends as much time on Museum affairs as

most people do on normal jobs. Our Engineer, Carroll Beard, works virtually full time with the Architects, the construction firm, Fort Bragg and the City. Over the past few years, Charlie and Henry Holt have led an effort that has raised more money than any effort in the history of the local community. Terri Rudacille, who just recently joined us as a volunteer fund raiser, teamed with George Breece and has already produced a \$50,000 grant with more to come. There are many others such as Fritz Healy, Mac Healy, Joe Hibst, Dick Lewis, Marcelle Truelove, John Koenig, Lyndo Tippet, Al Alvarez, et al. We are deeply grateful to them and many others.

By the way, the State granted us the \$2 million (it is included in the \$12 million on hand)!

How You Can Help

- ◆ Make one last tax-deductible contribution to the Museum Foundation in 1998. Gifts of cash, stocks or in-kind contributions are accepted.
- ◆ Become a Museum Foundation volunteer. Events and activities are coordinated by people just like you! Call, write, or email us and our Volunteer Coordinator will contact you with information and opportunities to help out.
- ◆ Send us your ideas, comments and suggestions.

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