For Fiscal Year 2017, we document and celebrate a pivotal year for the Museum—one featuring two grand opening events and the dedication of a fully restored WWII patrol-torpedo boat. This special annual report also draws on the oral history process still in use in building our collection of personal war narratives. The report frames Fiscal Year 2017 milestones while recognizing essential support from so many Museum benefactors. As the Museum anticipates a future of global outreach, the report recounts achievements of Founding President & CEO Gordon H. “Nick” Mueller, PhD, who at the close of the Fiscal Year was succeeded by new President & CEO Stephen J. Watson.

In his own words, Dr. Mueller recalls each inspiring grand opening. Beginning with the June 2000 debut of The National D-Day Museum and reaching to the June 2017 opening of *The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George Brown Salute to the Home Front*, you’ll see archival photos of gala ribbon cuttings and read commentary from Dr. Mueller. Throughout that chronology, which begins on page 10, a supplemental timeline tracks Museum events, key statistics, program developments, and other milestones, exploring beyond the parade of exhibit halls. The combined effect tells the Museum’s history to date, highlighting distinguished efforts by Dr. Mueller and many others. The chronology concludes with a special spotlight on the events and achievements of Fiscal Year 2017—12 months at the Museum that call to mind the adjective “momentous.”

Dr. Mueller’s walk through time pauses to allow for Stephen Watson’s narration of Museum grand openings still to come. In the same conversational style Dr. Mueller uses to revisit the Museum’s past events, Watson explores upcoming major changes. He emphasizes that much of the institution’s continued growth will serve the ever-expanding mission to share historic assets and intellectual expertise far beyond our New Orleans campus.

From the soaring Bollinger Canopy of Peace to the digital outreach and education that will spring from the Hall of Democracy’s Institute for the Study of War and Democracy and WWII Media and Education Center, Watson walks the reader through architectural renderings and outreach plans that map the Museum’s bold future. Turn to page 28 and watch it unfold.

The text for Mueller’s chronology and Watson’s gatefold leap ahead is based on edited excerpts from video interviews conducted with both men during the final days of the Fiscal Year.

Personal accounts of World War II are at the heart of The National WWII Museum’s mission to preserve and tell the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world. Our still-growing collection of firsthand observations from the war era numbers more than 9,400, and actually predates the Museum itself: Founder Stephen E. Ambrose seeded the priceless depository with hundreds of oral histories recorded during research for his classic books about World War II. Today, these and subsequently recorded eyewitness accounts enliven our galleries, and ongoing digitization efforts are bringing personal narratives to a global audience of WWII students and scholars.
Seventeen years of leadership—past, present, and future Chairman of the Board of Trustees—gathered at the June 2017 grand opening ceremony for The Arsenal of Democracy. (Left to right) James A. Courter, Philip G. Satre, Richard C. Adkerson, Gordon H. “Nick” Mueller, PhD, Donald T. “Boysie” Bollinger, Paul Hilliard, Herschel L. Abbott Jr., and Governor Pete Wilson.
Looking back at what the Museum accomplished in 2017, I’m astounded by the dedication brought forth by the entire Museum family. It’s gratifying to see how our endeavors in reaching new audiences have taken shape and gained momentum throughout the country and around the world.

None of these successes would have been possible without the vision and leadership of Nick Mueller, whose passion has established the Museum as a world-class institution. I am grateful for his considerable talents, which will continue to benefit the institution in his new role as President & CEO Emeritus. Furthermore, I’m excited to see Stephen Watson’s leadership carry the Museum through the completion of its expansion. His natural ability to bring innovation to both the on-site and off-site visitor experience will further strengthen the Museum’s influence as the leading educational resource on the war that changed the world.

The Museum’s growing popularity with educators is already evidenced by audiences reached through its distance-learning programs: In December 2016, our National Electronic Field Trip commemorating the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor was viewed by over 116,000 students. Additionally, the Museum’s new STEM Innovation Gallery opened its doors this year so that visiting students can learn through hands-on experiments how science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) advanced during World War II.

Through this year’s American Spirit Awards, we were also able to recognize students’ contributions to their communities with the inaugural Billy Michal Student Leadership Award. American Spirit Awards attendees enjoyed a new program that featured multiple events over the course of two days, including a patron reception, student luncheon, and capstone gala event. This year, the Museum honored financier David M. Rubenstein and author David McCullough with the American Spirit Award, the institution’s highest honor.

The weekend culminated with the dedication of the Governor Pete Wilson Liberty Flagstaff and grand opening of the Museum’s newest permanent exhibit, The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George Brown Salute to the Home Front, which sparked national media interest as it reflects a pivotal chapter in America’s history. NBC Nightly News was there to cover the exhibit’s launch as Tom Brokaw sat down with McCullough to discuss the combined efforts and sacrifices made by Americans on the Home Front during the war.

When PT-305 was dedicated in March, CBS This Morning was there to capture the moment when WWII veteran Jim Nerison rode aboard her for the first time in 70 years. Months prior, The New York Times covered the massive vessel’s trek through the streets of New Orleans, from the Museum to the Mississippi River.

Fiscal Year 2017 wrote new chapters in the continuing story of a remarkable teaching institution. As the Museum strives toward completing its expansion, plans for future educational and outreach enhancements will help inspire new, diverse audiences far beyond our brick-and-mortar campus.

I look forward to all that awaits us on the road ahead, as together we write new chapters in the Museum’s exciting narrative. Thank you for an unforgettable year.

JAMES A. COURTER

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
Having the opportunity to lead this institution as its President & CEO is truly an honor and privilege, but also a tremendous responsibility. To ensure that the legacies and lessons of World War II are not forgotten, we must continue expanding our efforts to tell one of the biggest stories in human history—one that has relevance today and for generations to come.

The incredible progress that the Museum made this year has been nothing less than inspiring. Our presence on Andrew Higgins Drive has been completely transformed with the addition of Founders Plaza, the Governor Pete Wilson Liberty Flagstaff, and the Horatio Alger Association American Spirit Bridge, connecting Louisiana Memorial Pavilion to Solomon Victory Theater. After 10 years of restoration work, we returned PT-305, the world’s only fully restored and operational combat-veteran PT boat, to her native waters of Lake Pontchartrain for guest rides and deck tours. And, to cap off the Fiscal Year, we celebrated another major milestone with the opening of our newest permanent exhibit, The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George Brown Salute to the Home Front.

These accomplishments and so many others are a great testament to the visionary leadership of my dear friend and mentor, Nick Mueller. I am so grateful to be the beneficiary of all that he’s done to advance this Museum from opening day to 2017. None of this growth, however, would have been possible without your generous support, which continues to pay dividends. Thanks to your investments, the Museum attracted a record 685,721 visitors this year, and earned the ranking of No. 2 museum in the world and No. 2 museum in the country, according to 2017 TripAdvisor Travelers’ Choice Awards. We are so grateful that our family of supporters continues to grow beyond all expectations, with Charter Membership totaling 156,558—an increase of nearly 10,000 Members from last year.

Despite the continuous growth, there is much work left to do as we complete our expansion Master Plan. Construction is already underway on the Bollinger Canopy of Peace and the Hall of Democracy while we work diligently to raise the final $100 million of our $400 million campaign, which is needed for our final exhibit hall, the Liberation Pavilion, as well as our digitization initiatives and endowment. With these significant additions, it will be nearly impossible for visitors to experience the whole campus in a single day, making it even more important for us to complete The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center.

While much of our physical campus is under construction, our educational programming is also flourishing. The new Institute for the Study of War and Democracy as well as the WWII Media and Education Center are now established and have begun developing new WWII research, public programming, distance-learning programs, and other initiatives for students, teachers, and adult learners.

The opportunity to work with you to complete our Museum campus and extend our educational outreach far beyond New Orleans is truly exciting. I look forward to our growth not just as a Museum but also as a trusted source for all WWII knowledge-seekers.
MISSION STATEMENT

The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.
On June 6, 2000, the Museum’s first ribbon-cutting capped a 10-year effort to open The National D-Day Museum in New Orleans. The last miles of that journey covered the streets of the city as a large parade made its way to the institution, housed in a single structure. Eight WWII Medal of Honor recipients paraded solo in jeeps. Vintage military aircraft soared overhead. Flakes of red, white, and blue confetti and the music of military marching bands from the United States, France, and the United Kingdom filled the air. “I’ve seen bigger parades, but none more enthusiastic,” said Medal of Honor recipient Herschel W. “Woody” Williams, a veteran of the Battle of Iwo Jima, to The New Orleans Times-Picayune. “If this doesn’t do something for you, then you might as well pack it in.”

That was a great day. The grand opening of The National D-Day Museum was a culmination of 10 years of work. We knew we were going to hit a home run, but we didn’t know we were going to knock it around the world. C-SPAN covered the event all day, and there were 200,000 people on the street to cheer on 80 trucks filled with WWII veterans from all D-Days. Office buildings poured out. The parade stretched for three miles, 40 feet deep on every side. It was just an incredible, joyful day after 10 years of truly hard work.

After opening, we thought we were finally done. We created a much larger experience than we’d originally dreamed about, which was a small, modest museum for $15 million located on the New Orleans Lakefront, in the research park that I was developing at the time. Instead, The D-Day Museum opened with 80,000 square feet downtown in a building three times what we’d originally imagined, at a cost of $26 million. It was extraordinary. We had so much support and star power behind us. If you look at this picture, there’s Tom Hanks, and the Secretary of Defense next to him. You’ve got Stephen Ambrose and me, of course, and Bosie Bollinger, who succeeded me as Board Chairman. You’ve got Senator Mary Landrieu next to Tom Brokaw, who assembled during research for his books, including D-Day and Band of Brothers. Their initial vision was to build a modest museum near the University of New Orleans Research and Technology Park on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain—a project Ambrose proposed as a way to celebrate the significance of Higgins Industries’s contribution to Allied victory on D-Day, and to honor the American citizen soldiers of World War II.

As a consultant on the 50th anniversary of D-Day, the museum for $15 million located at 945 Magazine Street, instead of at the Lakefront as first planned. C-SPAN covered the event all day, and there were 200,000 people on the street to cheer on 80 trucks filled with WWII veterans from all D-Days. Office buildings poured out. The parade stretched for three miles, 40 feet deep on every side. It was just an incredible, joyful day after 10 years of truly hard work.

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WE HAD SO MUCH SUPPORT AND STAR POWER BEHIND US. IF YOU LOOK AT THIS PICTURE, THERE’S TOM HANKS, AND THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE NEXT TO HIM. YOU’VE GOT STEPHEN AMBROSE AND ME, OF COURSE, AND BOOSIE BOLLINGER, WHO SUCCEEDED ME AS BOARD CHAIRMAN. YOU’VE GOT SENATOR MARY LANDRIEU NEXT TO TOM BROKAW, WHO ASSEMBLED DURING RESEARCH FOR HIS BOOKS, INCLUDING D-DAY AND BAND OF BROTHERS. THEIR INITIAL VISION WAS TO BUILD A MODEST MUSEUM NEAR THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY PARK ON THE SOUTH SHORE OF LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN—A PROJECT AMBROSE PROPOSED AS A WAY TO CELEBRATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIGGINS INDUSTRIES’S CONTRIBUTION TO ALLIED VICTORY ON D-DAY, AND TO HONOR THE AMERICAN CITIZEN SOLDIERS OF WORLD WAR II.

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The grand opening of E.J. Ourso Discovery Hall in April 2006 came against the backdrop of a city still reeling from devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. The new addition’s special-exhibition display space and state-of-the-art education wing completed the first phase of ambitious expansion initiated prior to the hurricane. Its opening signaled the Museum’s strong commitment to its WWII educational mission. At the time of the dedication, more than 200,000 students had already visited the Museum, and more than 500 teachers had attended professional development workshops. Far more impressive results were on the horizon. Robust distance-learning and asset-digitization programs—all of which came of age in Discovery Hall—would propel the Museum’s artifacts, programs, and mission far beyond its physical campus. Discovery Hall became a symbol of revival and commitment to the Museum’s educational future.

This opening event took place in the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion in 2006 with Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco—quite a contrast to how the Museum opened six years earlier. As you can see in the photograph, there’s no one else in the Museum in the aftermath of Katrina. The others who are there were the Chairman of the Board David Voelker, myself, and Jesse Arboneaux from the Ourso Family Foundation, which made a major gift for Discovery Hall.

During this event, we dedicated the four-story building in the rear of the Museum that houses our orientation hall, special exhibit space, our education center, and offices on the fourth floor. This was necessary because we needed office space, yes, but I also wanted to reaffirm that student and teacher education, and a K-12 laboratory, were going to be the first parts of the expansion—even though the Hall was largely invisible because it was built onto the rear of the existing Museum.

Even though there were few people in the city in the first year after Katrina—scarce residents, virtually no tourists—we decided to have a ribbon-cutting for this building, which was about halfway completed when Katrina hit. Fortunately we could combine some federal and state funds to finish it. It was a great day. David Voelker was there with Governor Blanco, who was so much help to us—not just for this building but for the next one as well.

The debut of E.J. Ourso Discovery Hall was low-key, but represented a big step forward for The National WWII Museum. (Left to right: President of the E.J. and Marjory B. Ourso Family Foundation Jesse Arboneaux, Museum Trustee Louis Freeman, Museum Trustee David Voelker, Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco, and Nick Mueller.)
That was a moment—when I really began to think that the WW II Museum Master Plan for the expansion was going to happen. The Solomon Victory Theater was a game-changer for us, along with BB’s Stage Door Canteen and The American Sector restaurant. The new pavilion wasn’t about exhibits, except Beyond All Boundaries, which was a major exhibit and a very expensive attraction. We rolled the dice on the whole shebang. We said, “We’ve got to have something that’s going to break us out of the starting gate and put us into the big time.” And it wasn’t going to be more of your traditional exhibits. This was going to be a dramatic four-dimensional multimedia experience that would immerse people in the story of World War II.

So, there we are at the opening with the benefactor of that building, Teddy Solomon; Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco; Senator Mary Landrieu; Lieutenant Governor (and future New Orleans Mayor) Mitch Landrieu; founding Chairman Boysie Bollinger; and former California Governor Pete Wilson. Of course, Tom Brokaw and Tom Hanks are still with us nine years after our grand opening. What a day! It was for me one of the best grand openings because that was the first big step across the street that’s going to break us out of the starting gate and put us into the big time.

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In New Orleans, there were people who were skeptical about the ambitious Master Plan, especially since it took us 10 years to open The National D-Day Museum in 2000. But now we’re opening The National WW II Museum in phases. This was the first major phase. It grabbed the attention of the media, our business community, and people around the country.
The Museum dedicated the John E. Kushner Restoration Pavilion on a hot June day in 2011. Its glass-wrapped main room—118-by-45-feet with a 32-feet-high ceiling—was a perfect fit for PT-305 for the final years of her restoration, a project that John Kushner would’ve appreciated.

A real estate broker and Museum Trustee, Kushner, who died in 2005, was an avid collector of WWII memorabilia and champion of the Museum campaign to acquire major artifacts.

This is the John E. Kushner Restoration Pavilion, where we house our macro-artifacts that are under restoration, including PT-305, our patrol-torpedo boat that we just launched on Lake Pontchartrain in 2017. PT-305 moved out, and we’re now using Kushner as a space to house various instruments and weapons of war, including radar, to tell the science-and-technology story of World War II. We design lessons into those stories to teach science, technology, engineering, and math—the STEM standards for teachers and students. This pavilion will become an incredible learning space for field trips. Some restoration will still take place there, and students and teachers will see how theory relates to practice in technological innovation, math, and science. We’re a history museum, but there’s a history of science and technology, too.

The dedication for this pavilion was a smaller crowd of about 500-600 people gathered right on the street, in front of this building. Herschel Abbott was our Board Chair at the time. This Pavilion is the only building named after anyone involved with the Museum, but John Kushner was on our Board from the early 90s until his death in 2005. He was a commercial realtor who convinced us to buy this old warehouse downtown that we opened as the original National D-Day Museum. He also led the effort to buy all of the six acres of property that we needed for expansion of the Museum. He succeeded in acquiring all properties without any of the sellers knowing who was buying, except the last one, who said, “I’m going to cost you more because I know who you are and why you’re buying.”

This dedication was another major milestone for the Museum. It was one of our smaller buildings, but very important to our story, our macro-restoration efforts, and for science education.

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US FREEDOM PAVILION: THE BOEING CENTER SOARS ABOVE THE REST

Among the dignitaries attending the January 2013 grand opening of US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center were Irene Hirano Inouye and Catherine Stevens, respectively the widows of US Senators Daniel Inouye and Theodore Stevens. More than a decade earlier, these two decorated WWII veterans had been instrumental in securing federal funding for the Museum’s earliest plans to expand its scope beyond WWII veterans had been instrumental in securing federal funding for the Museum—and everyone around the country, not only New Orleans, began to realize we were about serious business here and were going to finish this expansion.

In a dramatic last-minute gathering before a critical meeting of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Irene Hirano Inouye secured a meeting with Senator Inouye, Senator Mary Landrieu, herself, Governor Pete Wilson, David Voelker, Cisland Powell, and Paul Cambon. We said we needed $25 million to build US Freedom Pavilion as the capstone building for The National WWII Museum—one that would be funded almost entirely by Congress. It was a huge earmark; I mean huge! Senator Mary Landrieu helped plow our case during an hour-and-a-half discussion with Senator Inouye.

Everything was on the table. Senator Landrieu told Senator Inouye she would contribute all of her previous earmarks, saying, “I’ll give up everything for this.” Senators Inouye and Vitter added theirs, and we got it. While we ended up with a “haircut” when the House Appropriations Subcommittee, Irene Hirano Inouye secured a meeting with Senator Inouye, Senator Mary Landrieu, herself, Governor Pete Wilson, David Voelker, Cisland Powell, and Paul Cambon. We said we needed $25 million to build US Freedom Pavilion as the capstone building for The National WWII Museum—one that would be funded almost entirely by Congress. It was a huge earmark; I mean huge! Senator Mary Landrieu helped plow our case during an hour-and-a-half discussion with Senator Inouye.

Everything was on the table. Senator Landrieu told Senator Inouye she would contribute all of her previous earmarks, saying, “I’ll give up everything for this.” Senators Inouye and Vitter added theirs, and we got it. While we ended up with a “haircut” when the House Conference Committee reconstituted the defense bill, we still received $20 million. Then the Boeing Company came in with an enormous $15 million gift to increase the height of the pavilion and get the B-17 in there, the great iconic bomber of World War II. We owe Boeing and those senators and the Museum’s fleet of warbirds. (Front row, left to right:) New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Phil Satre, Pete Wilson, Catherine Stevens, Boyle Bolinger, Herschel Abbott, Nick Mueller, Boeing Vice Chairman, President, and Chief Operating Officer Dennis Muilenburg, Mary Landrieu, US Senator David Vitter, Irene Hirano Inouye, and Tom Brokaw.

NICK REMembers

The Museum welcomes its 3 millionth visitor.

The first annual Robotics Challenge pits 30 teams of elementary and middle school students, and their team-built robots, against table-top challenges and obstacles based on real-life problems and scenarios from World War II.

For the first time, high school and college students travel to Normandy with the Museum to experience D-Day events, visit battle sites, and pay tribute to fallen soldiers.

A replica 1940s train car takes its place at the beginning of the visitor journey through the Museum and through World War II. This simulated train-car experience in the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion features videos, “windows” recounting the initial journey of recruits traveling by train as they go off to war.

The Museum debuts a new website, www.ww2online.org, as a public portal to its growing digital collections. The site launches with 100 oral histories—including firsthand accounts of D-Day at Normandy, the Battle of Guadalcanal, and the liberation of Dachau—and more than 6,000 wartime photos.

The Museum commemorates the 70th anniversary of D-Day with a journey from Lisbon to Normandy aboard a Silversea cruise ship while events in New Orleans attract more than 6,000 guests. Joining the commemorative cruise were Tom Brokaw, Rick Atkinson, Donald L. Miller, and decorated WWII veterans.

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The Museum welcomes its 3 millionth visitor.
My Gal Sal—an iconic B-17E Flying Fortress pictured on Magazine Street en route to permanent installation in US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center—was a gift of Museum Trustee Bob Ready and family.
The December 2014 opening of the Campaigns of Courage: European and Pacific Theaters pavilion marked another milestone for the Museum—the debut of an enveloping storytelling style that transports visitors to the battlefronts in the Europe and Asia-Pacific campaigns experienced by Americans during the war years. The Campaigns of Courage pavilion also launched one of the Museum’s most personal interactive elements to date, the Dog Tag Experience, which begins in a re-created train station where Museum visitors are issued a digitally enabled card representing the dog tags given to new GIs. Each tag contains a unique identification chip and the opportunity to unlock the story of an actual war participant at kiosks located throughout the campus.

The opening of the Campaigns of Courage pavilion happened in two stages. When we started building that pavilion, we didn’t have all the funds for both major exhibits, but we had enough funds to build the pavilion and complete one floor, the Road to Berlin exhibit—so we opened and dedicated that exhibit first. Road to Berlin transports visitors from the deserts of North Africa where soldiers first fought in 1942, through combat in the Italian landscapes and the French hedgerow country, into the freezing Ardennes forest in the Battle of the Bulge—and all the way into the ruins of Germany, heavily bombed before our troops arrived.

It’s a powerful exhibit, and I’m very proud of it. A year later, we opened the Road to Tokyo on the second floor of the Campaigns of Courage pavilion.
In December 2015, the Museum opened the Richard C. Adkerson & Freeport-McMoRan Foundation Road to Tokyo: Pacific Theater Galleries. The galleries plunge visitors into the naval war and grueling combat conditions on the trail that led America’s military from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay. Building on the narrative breakthroughs introduced in Road to Berlin, the galleries examine the cultural differences, logistical challenges, and staggering range of extreme conditions and battles that confronted American military forces in New Guinea, Guadalcanal and Southeast Asia, the Himalayas, Burma, the islands of the Pacific, China, India, and Alaska.

On the same day, the Museum also opened the Ralph E. Crump, LTJG, USNR, US Merchant Marine Gallery in honor of civilian merchant mariners who risked their lives transporting weapons, men, and matériel to US troops overseas.

In 2015, we opened Road to Tokyo. Here we have Woody Williams, a recipient of the Medal of Honor from Iwo Jima; Phyllis Taylor; Madlyn Hilliard; and Paul Hilliard, Museum Trustee and WWII veteran of the Pacific. And of course our Chairman, Richard Adkerson, who was not only Chairman of the Board, but he and Freeport-McMoRan were the key benefactors to the Road to Tokyo exhibit—a major, major gift that enabled us to finish that exhibit on time. He was a great leader, as have been all of our Chairmen. Gary Sinise was there as our Master of Ceremonies. Also present are Mary Landrieu, Phil Satre, Jim Courter, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Bob Hayes—all people who’ve meant so very much to this Museum’s success.

The opening of Road to Tokyo was of major importance for several reasons. First, this exhibit joined Road to Berlin in completing the Campaigns of Courage experience for visitors in both the European and Asia-Pacific theaters of World War II. Second, it closed an important circle for the Museum. Immediately after the D-Day Museum opened in 2000, many visiting WWII veterans of the Pacific war let us know in no uncertain terms that their war experience was conspicuous by its absence from our galleries. So, we got to work and opened the D-Day Invasions in the Pacific exhibit in Louisiana Memorial Pavilion in December 2001. This was a significant step toward expanding into all campaigns of World War II, even before we became the official WWII museum for the nation.

Many of the artifacts and oral histories from that exhibit migrated to the new Road to Tokyo, which tells the full story of the American experience in the Asia-Pacific theater. It’s always stirring to observe a WWII veteran in those galleries—from standing on the flight deck of the USS Enterprise to the “Green Hell” of the Guadalcanal gallery, and the island-hopping and China-Burma-India campaigns to the exhibit’s haunting concluding treatment of the use of atomic bombs to finally end the war. This grand opening, attended as it was by many veterans of the Pacific theater, was a very proud moment for the Museum and its supporters.

The grand opening of Road to Tokyo completed Campaigns of Courage. (Front row, left to right) Richard Adkerson, Paul Hilliard, Nick Mueller, Museum Trustee and WWII veteran Richard L. Duchossois, WWII Pacific theater veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Hershel “Woody” Williams. In the lower photo, a restored P-40 Warhawk—bearing the distinctive markings of Claire Lee Chennault’s “Flying Tigers”—arrived for installation in the China-Burma-India gallery of Road to Tokyo.
A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

On the evening of Friday, June 30, 2017, Museum staff members, volunteers, friends, and family gathered in Louisiana Memorial Pavilion—the original home of The National D-Day Museum—to salute the end of one era and christen the beginning of another. Just a few hours later, as Fiscal Year 2017 turned to Fiscal Year 2018, Stephen J. Watson officially assumed the title of President & CEO from Gordon H. “Nick” Mueller, PhD.

As heartfelt speeches were delivered by both men during the characteristically informal and collegial ceremony, all in attendance quietly crossed a symbolic bridge joining the Museum’s birth and explosive early growth to its infinite future. When the speeches concluded, both men and their families, friends, and colleagues crossed Andrew Higgins Drive—following a traditional New Orleans “second line” band—onto Founders Plaza to raise a champagne toast to The National WWII Museum’s past, present, and future.

Here’s to Nick and Stephen!

GORDON H. “NICK” MUELLER, PHD
PRESIDENT & CEO EMERITUS

On July 1, 2017, Gordon H. “Nick” Mueller, PhD, became President & CEO Emeritus of The National WWII Museum. Dr. Mueller is Founding President of the institution, formerly known as The National D-Day Museum, the creation of which was a shared vision with fellow historian Stephen E. Ambrose. Dr. Mueller led the organization as Chairman of the Board from 1998 through its fund-raising and construction to its grand opening on June 6, 2000. His appointment as full-time President & CEO in 2000 allowed him to reinvent the Museum’s mission and Master Plan, and begin to develop the $400 million campus of America’s National WWII Museum, as designated by US Congress. Dr. Mueller raised more than $300 million in private, federal, and state funds by 2017, and the Museum is scheduled to complete its capital expansion in 2020. During Mueller’s tenure, the Museum achieved both national and international recognition, and in 2017 the institution was ranked by TripAdvisors.com as the top-rated tourist destination in New Orleans, No. 2 most popular museum in the nation, and the No. 2 museum in the world.

Before stepping into his second career in the museum world, Dr. Mueller enjoyed a 33-year career as Professor of European History at the University of North Carolina, Stetson University, an MA and PhD in higher education, museums, research and technology, and contributions to foreign countries, including the Chevalier Ordre national de la Légion d’Honneur, Republic of France.

“Nick has the character of one of the biggest stories in human history, a story that has relevance today and yesterday will have relevance for generations to come,” said Stephen J. Watson. “I think the most important thing I can say as I step into this new role is, ‘Thank you, Nick, for all you have done for this Museum, and for the mentor you’ve been to me for the last 15 years.’ Quite simply, this Museum exists because of Nick Mueller.

“Nick has been so much more than the title President & CEO could ever capture. He’s been the intellectual driving force, the fund-raiser and the entrepreneur in every possible way you can imagine. And most importantly, he’s always been a loyal and passionate leader who inspired all of us to reach just a little bit higher and to do our very best. No one will ever contribute more to the mission of this Museum. Period. And we will always continue to be inspired by his leadership and his passion for the American spirit.”

STEPHEN J. WATSON

Stephen J. Watson, MBA, has held increasing levels of responsibility at The National WWII Museum for 15 years—most recently as Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, with involvement in strategic decisions as well as daily administration. In addition to daily operations, his purview as COO has included Membership programs, educational programming, collections and acquisitions, event rentals and group sales, fund-raising, marketing, and public relations. In his various roles at the Museum, Watson has had a hand in developing nearly every aspect of the institution: Membership (2,000 percent increase during an 18-month campaign while Director of Membership), donor stewardship (establishing several key supporter relationships as Associate Vice President of Development), educational travel programs (overseeing the launch of the first Mediterranean and Pacific tours), capital expansion (management of the 2009 grand opening of the Solomon Victory Theater, BB’s Stage Door Canteen, and The American Sector Restaurant + Bar; the launch of the permanent programming and ongoing involvement as an executive reviewer of new exhibits and galleries), and digital collections (authoring and championing a 10-year, $11.3 million comprehensive digitization initiative).

The Scotland-born grandson of a WWII Royal Air Force pilot, Watson earned his BS and MBA degrees at Nicholls State University before moving to New Orleans and entering the nonprofit sector with UNO’s WWNO public radio station. He joined the staff of the institution then known as The National D-Day Museum in 2002, quickly adding value to the young institution with his business, marketing, and leadership skills. Shortly after the Museum’s congressional

designation as The National WWII Museum in 2004, Watson was promoted to Vice President & COO with responsibility for the Museum’s ongoing growth. In this role he worked closely with President & CEO Gordon H. “Nick” Mueller, PhD, and with the Board of Trustees to bring to life an ambitious capital expansion plan that would quadruple the size of the campus and firmly establish the Museum as a world-class institution.

As that plan to grow the Museum’s physical campus has progressed toward completion, Watson’s leadership helped create a comprehensive strategy to provide greater digital access to the Museum’s collections as an integral component of new education programs and outreach. "One characteristic of what has built this Museum is entrepreneurship," said Dr. Mueller. "It’s in our DNA. Stephen’s got it in spades, and it’s going to carry forward. We have a hotel and a couple of more pavilions to build in the next few years, and we’re going to get there. I want to tell you, you haven’t seen anything yet." "Stephen, you’re a singular leader with extraordinary vision for this Museum. I’m very confident that you are going to be—as you are and have been—inspired by that same American spirit that inspired me and Stephen Ambrose in his backyard in 1990."
The National WWII Museum is in the midst of a $400 million Road to Victory Capital Campaign that will quadruple the size of the original Museum facility, add state-of-the-art programs and exhibit space, enhance the library and archives, and expand collections and conservation space.
The Museum Honors Its Founders and Salutes the American Spirit with Horatio Alger Association American Spirit Bridge

In January 2017, WWII veterans, dignitaries, staff, and volunteers gathered to dedicate Founders Plaza and the Horatio Alger Association American Spirit Bridge. These projects connect the original D-Day Museum with a magnificent bridge and arrival area in the Plaza that celebrates the founding of The National WWII Museum.

The Plaza provides a striking new introductory experience for visitors, as well as a welcoming space for reflection and contemplation. Highlights include WWII macro-artifacts well-known to returning guests, recognition walls for major donors and the Museum’s Founders, and a bronze sculpture of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The Bridge would become a key part of the Museum narrative after the June 2017 opening of The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George Brown Salute to the Home Front, leading guests from the prewar and Home Front stories in that exhibit to a recounting of the epic effort by the US Merchant Marine that supplied men and matériel to the far-flung battlefronts detailed in Campaigns of Courage: European and Pacific Theaters.

Again, the key people at the ribbon cutting are those who helped us complete this grand arrival area. The area separating the original building from the rest of the campus—previously named Howard Avenue, now Andrew Higgins Drive—was a little underwhelming. It was not really battling the arrival to a national museum. So with private funds, some state help, and the Horatio Alger Association, we were able to combine a number of new Museum features on this occasion.

We completed the American Spirit Bridge and dedicated that. The Bridge spans Andrew Higgins Drive, so it physically links the campus and keeps visitors indoors during bad weather. We also dedicated Founders Plaza, which includes the sculpture of President Roosevelt and fragments of the Atlantic Wall that were given to us by the Utah Beach Museum in Normandy. We added a Major Donor Wall to recognize all the individual donors and corporations who have contributed $1 million or more to the Museum—gifts ranging from $1 million to $20 million. The Wall is very beautiful, and we’re not just honoring our donors there; the Wall reads: “Honor those who served and sacrificed.”

And then, unknown to me, the staff added something very personal, the Founders-recognition area. Former Trustee Ron Hansen had advocated some 10 years earlier for the Museum to recognize the conversation between Ambrose and me, which was the original conception for the Museum. In Steve’s backyard—over glasses of sherry—Steve proposed we build a small D-Day museum in the research park I was developing for the University of New Orleans. We had done many things together over years of friendship and as historians. Steve came to New Orleans in 1971, and this was the biggest of many ideas and projects we pursued together. Neither one of us had a clue about what we were getting into other than it was a very big idea. We both knew it.

At that time, Steve had finished the research for his book on D-Day, collecting about 600 oral histories from veterans of D-Day. He wanted to save those stories for posterity and thought other people ought to have access to them. He wanted to hire professionals to run a small D-Day museum where Andrew Higgins tested his landing craft, right on the beach of the research park. So I said, “Let’s do it.” He said, “You go raise the money, and I’ll give you my oral histories and artifacts.” I said, “No, we’re going to do this together, as with all our other projects.” So that was the start.

That’s why we call it Founders Plaza. The monument is very flattering and provides much-appreciated recognition not only of the great friendship that Steve and I had together, but also is a tribute to the origins of the Museum and how ideas can actually come to life if you believe in them and work hard enough.

As the Museum celebrated the January opening of Founders Plaza, it also observed the official dedication of the Horatio Alger Association American Spirit Bridge, which spans the new Plaza and Andrew Higgins Drive.

The spark that inspired the generous funding of the striking structure came in October 2014, when Horatio Alger members William J. Dorr and Paul Hillard—a WWII veteran and an officer of the Museum’s Board of Trustees—housed the association’s membership and board of directors meeting at the Museum. The association and its members found common ground in the mission of each organization, and elected to support the American Spirit Bridge in honor of members who served in World War II and more recent conflicts.

The Horatio Alger Association is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to “the simple but powerful belief that hard work, honesty, and determination can conquer all obstacles.” The organization now annually awards more than $18 million in undergraduate and graduate need-based scholarships across the United States and Canada.

The organization annually bestows the Horatio Alger Award, which recognizes leaders who have triumphed over adversity to achieve success in their respective fields. Since the association’s 1947 founding, more than 750 individuals have received the Horatio Alger Award and accompanying lifetime membership in the association.

Of the more than 300 living honorees, about a third of them are military veterans, approximately half of whom served in World War II.

“I am deeply moved to be able to recognize the many Horatio Alger members who served in World War II—as well as those who served in more recent conflicts—with the dedication of the American Spirit Bridge,” said Horatio Alger Association Board Member Tom Shannon. “I can think of nothing more fitting than for our two organizations to be linked in such a magnificent tribute.”
THE ROAD AHEAD

BOLLINGER CANOPY OF PEACE
2018

The Bollinger Canopy of Peace will soon take its place as a new landmark on the New Orleans skyline. This magnificent piece of architectural sculpture, scheduled for completion in 2018, will rise 148 feet above the entire campus. The 482-foot-long, 134-foot-wide steel structure with Teflon-coated fiberglass panels will be one of the first of its kind in the country, and will stand as an engineering and architectural statement of distinction. A high-tech lighting system will illuminate the Canopy at night, making it a beacon symbolizing hope, peace through strength, and American technological achievements unleashed at the end of World War II.

STEPHEN LOOKS AHEAD

Bart Voorsanger, our Master Plan architect who’s been with us throughout the expansion, envisioned the Bollinger Canopy of Peace as the crown jewel over the entire campus, an uplifting symbol, bringing all of the buildings together in a way that embraces and protects the heroic stories beneath it. It’s going to change the skyline of New Orleans, and give us the ability to showcase some amazing presentations at night with light and projection on the Canopy. Thanks to the incredible generosity of Joy and Boysie Bollinger, the Canopy will become one of the most iconic elements not only in the city, but also in the country.

This structure will create awareness and become a symbol for the Museum, while putting us on the world map in a way that we have never been.

The Canopy represents America’s hopes and aspirations, and ultimately the peace that was won. The structure will mean different things to different people, but we think it’s a beautiful and bold architectural statement that will set a tone. We hope it will give visitors a feeling of awe from the moment they arrive on campus and really get their attention.

I don’t believe anyone can really imagine its impact or fully understand it until they see it.

To lead the Museum into its next monumental chapter, the Board of Trustees appointed Stephen J. Watson to succeed Dr. Mueller as President & CEO on July 1, 2017. Recognized nationally as an innovative leader in the nonprofit world, Watson’s deep knowledge of the institution has been guided by his longtime collaboration with Mueller in shaping the strategic plan for the Museum’s future.

A main priority for Watson is raising the final $100 million of the Museum’s $400 million Capital Campaign. Dr. Mueller believes he is poised for the job and fully prepared to expand the Museum’s reputation for excellence both nationally and internationally, noting, “The Museum is in wonderful hands with Stephen as President & CEO. Both the Board and I agree that with Stephen at the helm, the Museum’s brightest days are ahead.”

HALL OF DEMOCRACY
2019

The Hall of Democracy, expected to open in 2019, will be a 34,800-square-foot pavilion dedicated to the Museum’s research, WWII content expertise, and outreach to visitors, educators, students, and scholars around the world. This pavilion will make the Museum’s extensive digitized collection of oral histories, photographs, artifacts, and archives more accessible to the public through new online and learning initiatives.

The pavilion will house a special exhibits gallery; the Institute for the Study of War and Democracy, a growing hive of WWII historical expertise; a WWII Media and Education Center with production studios and broadcast capabilities for the editing, production, and dissemination of the Museum’s digital assets and programs; and a stunning library that will support research and public engagement.

STEPHEN LOOKS AHEAD

The Hall of Democracy, in my mind, represents a pivot—that may not be the right word—but it’s a pivot in the sense that it’s the physical structure that represents the next phase of the Museum’s evolution. We have to work just as hard at providing educational outreach, access, and being a source of authentic knowledge and information about the American experience in World War II as we have with building the physical campus and world-class exhibits.

The Institute for the Study of War and Democracy will become a new center of WWII research and expertise in the Museum. Staffed with top WWII historians, it will be key in developing our Conference programs and symposiums, new initiatives like Corporate Leadership Academy, and online learning partnerships at the higher education level. The Institute will also work internally with our Education department, our collections professionals, and our exhibit designers to make sure all of our content and communications are produced with the highest level of commitment to authenticity and quality.

The WWII Media and Education Center will be staffed with media specialists who will produce digital content for students, teachers, our public history audiences, and those in the corporate world who are looking for great models of leadership among the men and women of World War II.

The Hall of Democracy is different from our exhibition pavilions because its impact won’t necessarily be felt by the visitors who come to our campus, but instead experienced by people across the country through distance-learning technologies. That’s exciting to me because as a national museum, I think that the access, the outreach, and how we bring the story of World War II to communities across the country is a core responsibility and part of our mission, and the Hall of Democracy is really going to help make that happen.
As the Museum enhances its reputation among the great museums of the world, it will need to serve an increasing number of visitors, students, scholars, and educators. In 2017 alone, the Museum attracted, just in daytime visitation, 700,000 visitors. Of those visitors, 85 percent came from out of state, and half of those visitors cited the Museum as their primary reason for coming to New Orleans. Due to this increase in national visitation and distinction, the Museum is developing The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center, which will be managed by Hostmark Hospitality Group and will support the mission and growth of the institution.

The property, which is expected to open in 2019, will feature 230 guest rooms and over 18,000 square feet of meeting space. Not only will the Hotel enhance the Museum visitor experience, it will also provide a dedicated space to sponsor the growing number of educational programs for the Museum.

**LIBERATION PAVILION 2020**

The Liberation Pavilion will mark the final major physical addition to the Museum, exploring the end of the war, the immediate postwar years, and the war's continuing repercussions in our own lives today through stories spread throughout three levels of the Pavilion. With an expected completion date in 2020, the Liberation Pavilion will allow the Museum to become one of the premier cultural attractions in the world, and show how World War II was a pivotal moment in this country’s history, ensuring the freedoms we have today.

**THE Higgins HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER**

We fundamentally believe that a dedicated space for programs for students, teachers, enthusiasts, corporate groups, reunion groups, and the military should be a core component of what we have here at the Museum. When we looked at our last undeveloped piece of land, we had two goals: one, do something that economically supports the Museum's land, we had two goals: one, do something that economically supports the Museum. When we looked at our last undeveloped piece of land, we had two goals: one, do something that economically supports the Museum. When we looked at our last undeveloped piece of land, we had two goals: one, do something that economically supports the Museum.

When you walk in, you're going to know that this is a personal highlight for me during my tenure. This is perhaps our most challenging and exciting work—and it's been a personal highlight for me during my tenure. This is perhaps our most challenging and exciting work—and it's been a personal highlight for me during my tenure. This is perhaps our most challenging and exciting work—and it's been a personal highlight for me during my tenure. This is perhaps our most challenging and exciting work—and it's been a personal highlight for me during my tenure. This is perhaps our most challenging and exciting work—and it's been a personal highlight for me during my tenure. This is perhaps our most challenging and exciting work—and it's been a personal highlight for me during my tenure. This is perhaps our most challenging and exciting work—and it's been a personal highlight for me during my tenure. 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One of the most popular elements of the Museum’s Founders Plaza is a life-size bronze sculpture of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, which anchors a tribute bench featuring the wartime leader’s own inspirational words.
A seven-decade homecoming journey culminated with PT-305’s dedication in March 2017. The patrol-torpedo boat made by Higgins Industries in New Orleans served in combat in the Mediterranean, then went on to a long postwar career as a workboat. Meticulously restored by volunteers who gave more than 120,000 collective hours to the project, PT-305 has returned to service as a living-history macro-artifact educating future generations about WWII Home Front industry and ingenuity, as well as the brave crews who served aboard her.

This was the first time we’d had a dedication off-campus. It was raining, so instead of doing it in the boathouse where the PT boat was, we had the dedication at the Lakefront Airport. At the dedication I said, “This is probably the first time anyone dedicated a PT boat inside of an airport,” but that’s what we did.

Here we are with a PT boat veteran, Marty Sherbecoe, and Stephen Watson, my successor as President & CEO, on the boat. This project began in 2006 with nothing but a rotting out hulk of a boat with 15 feet cut off its stem. We had a large, dedicated group who worked on a volunteer basis for 10 years to restore this vessel. It was a very big, complicated project—as big a project as restoring the B-17, except the B-17 wasn’t going to fly. PT-305 had to meet Coast Guard standards and be certified to take people for hire in the lake. But we did it! She’s in the water, taking passengers back into history on thrilling rides.

In the early years of the restoration, I really didn’t know if we could afford to put PT-305 back in the water. I told the boat volunteers, “Maybe we’ll just leave her in the Kushner Restoration Pavilion for visitors to see there.” Then the volunteers kind of went on strike. They said, “Doc, if you don’t put this boat in the water, we’re not going to restore her.” So I agreed. I said, “Okay, you win. We’re going to put her back in the water.” Then they started a rumor that I also agreed to let them take her over to the Mediterranean where she served in combat. I said, “No, I never agreed to that one. We’re not doing that. The lake and US waters will be just fine.”

PT-305 crew members and volunteers gathered to officially launch the Museum’s fully restored WWII patrol-torpedo boat on Lake Pontchartrain, joined by PT-305 WWII crew member Jim Nerison (blue cap, fourth from right) and Museum President & CEO Stephen J. Watson (back row, third from right). At upper left, Stephen Watson; at upper right, Marty Sherbecoe; and Nick Mueller at upper right, PT-305 veteran Jim Nerison cruises Lake Pontchartrain aboard the restored patrol-torpedo boat.
Built in New Orleans by Higgins Industries, PT-305 is again patrolling her home waters of Lake Pontchartrain, offering rides and deck tours aboard living history.
In June 2017, the Museum celebrated a major milestone with the grand opening of The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George Brown Salute to the Home Front. Also dedicated that day was the Governor Pete Wilson Liberty Flagstaff, which rises high above Founders Plaza. The Arsenal of Democracy completes a central element of the Museum's mission statement, demonstrating why the war was fought and how it was won with Home Front industry, ingenuity, and patriotic spirit.

This is the last of the grand openings so far, a major, 9,000-square-foot exhibit that is part of the core story of America’s success in World War II. Everybody in this country was involved in this volunteer effort to support our troops in the Pacific and in Europe. I was born just before the start of the war. My older brothers who lived through that period thought it was one of the most unifying times in American history, or any history that anyone could remember.

The Arsenal of Democracy exhibit covers the road to war, from the end of World War I through World War II on the Home Front. An early gallery explores the great debate going on in Congress, and in America, about whether or not we should be involved in the European or the Pacific wars. That debate, of course, ended with Pearl Harbor.

As visitors move through the Home Front exhibit, they find themselves on Main Street USA. They’re seeing the movie theaters and the newsstands where people get their news. Fifty-thousand a month are signing up for the war or being drafted. They then enter a little 1940s house, complete with a little kitchen, living room, and radio, where people got news. From that small house, you go on to experience the entire social, economic, and mobilization effort, standing up our troops, and recruitment on an unbelievable scale.

Finally, visitors move onto the factory floor, with assembly lines running, in the Manufacturing Victory gallery. Car production turned into tanks and planes. It was a great miracle. Neither Hitler nor Tojo thought we could possibly do it—going from 500,000 to 16 million in the armed forces. The weapons, the uniforms, the transportation to the supply—who would’ve thought? Our enemies were probably thinking no country in the world could do something like that, especially isolationist America still in the throes of an economic depression. But we did it. It was extraordinary. Everybody played a role. Everyone was a part of this war effort. It’s a huge story and critical to Allied victory in World War II. Nothing has been the same since.

The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George Brown Salute to the Home Front, which opened in June 2017, pays tribute to the American Home Front during World War II through nine immersive galleries that focus on America’s road to war and then how it was fought through the ingenuity and labor of patriotic Americans. As visitors enter the new gallery space, they immediately encounter a story emblematic of the values of the WWII generation and reflecting the key changes within the country—the story of the Brown Shipbuilding Company. During the Great Depression, the Brown brothers grew their construction company Brown and Root into a firm capable of building large-scale projects. On the eve of war in early 1941, when the US Navy realized one of its shipbuilders was not capable of producing the necessary ships at the speed and quality required, it called upon the Brown brothers—despite the fact the company had never built a ship.

The Brown Shipbuilding Company quickly began turning out high-quality ships at a rapid pace. As the war raged, the company’s patrol craft sank German submarines in the Gulf of Mexico and along the East Coast. One of the Brown destroyers escorts, the USS Samuel B. Roberts, fought Japanese battleships during the Battle of Samar, earning her crew the highest award for bravery in action, the Presidential Unit Citation. The Brown Shipbuilding Company ultimately launched 359 combat ships into Green’s Bayou outside Houston.

At the end of WWII, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox personally awarded Herman and George Brown the Army-Navy E Award for Excellence. The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston was created by the brothers and their wives, Margaret Root Brown and Alice Pratt Brown, to support, encourage, and assist education, the arts, and community service in Houston and surrounding areas. The Museum is thankful for their continued partnership on the Road to Victory.

The Arsenal of Democracy joined the Museum’s WWII narrative by exploring the road to war and Home Front contributions to Allied victory. (Left to right) Museum volunteer and WWII Home Front worker Dolores Libby, then-Chair of the Board of Trustees at The Brown Foundation Nancy Abendroth, Nick Nute Jr, Joe Courter, Stephen Matthews, and WWII veterans and Museum volunteers Rosette McConnell and Bob Wolf.
The United but Unequal: I Am an American gallery of The Arsenal of Democracy explores the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.
In Fiscal Year 2017, Patriots Circle Members contributed more than $2.6 million to the Museum—the largest amount ever and a telling demonstration of their fidelity. Members of the Patriots Circle have placed their stamp on The National WWII Museum. In addition to contributing between $1,000 and $10,000 annually, Patriots Circle Members participate in the Museum’s travel programs, attend The International Conference on World War II, and are national ambassadors for the institution. Among the Circle’s 1,126 Members around the country, 65 are Members of the Museum’s Board of Trustees and staff. Their annual financial support is a testament to the personal investment each has made in the mission of the Museum. Thank you to all of our Members across the country for supporting The National WWII Museum.

Thank you to all for leading by example through your giving.

The staunch support of over 156,000 Charter Members is the foundation of The National WWII Museum’s growth. Their loyalty throughout Fiscal Year 2017 exemplifies a strong commitment to the mission of America’s National WWII Museum. Combined, our Members provided the Museum with over $10 million in operating revenue to help fund educational programming and preservation initiatives. As we continue our efforts to expand the Museum, their commitment and generosity are an inspiration.

WWII veterans helped establish this Museum. With the passage of time, the torch has passed to the sons and daughters of our treasured WWII veterans—Americans who are invested in ensuring that their family’s contribution to our collective history and the war that changed the world is preserved for all future generations.

Welcome to the 64,213 new Charter Members who joined during Fiscal Year 2017, and thank you to all of our Members across the country for supporting The National WWII Museum.

Charter Members
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After visiting The National WWII Museum while on a business trip in New Orleans, David DeVido returned the following year with his wife Rosemary. During their visit, they met a WWII Veteran and Museum volunteer who asked about their connection to World War II.

“I shared that my father, Joseph L. DeVido, who was in the US Navy, had lost at Normandy about two weeks before the beach was secured. He rarely spoke to us about his experiences in the war. He was not telling me that he was a hero and injured, and that he went through the concentration camps. He had difficulty erasing those memories and died at the age of 54 in a hospital for veterans.

“When the volunteer explained that I could honor my father through a Membership with the Museum, we joined Patriots Circle that afternoon. I also decided to honor my mother. Beatrix Scholfeid DeVido, who served on the Home Front,” says David.

Rosemary was born in Switzerland. Her parents, Brigitte and Johann Stimmring, whose names also appear as the DeVido’s homonyns, sheltered refugees from France, Greece, and Poland during World War II.

The father was a German citizen and Swiss armed forces.

“The understanding through the Museum, I understand more about my father—the emotional suffering from PTSD that he and other veterans experienced,” says David. “I regret that so many did not live long enough for their stories to make the thanks of a grateful nation.”

The DeVidos remain committed to the Museum to ensure that their children and grandchildren learn about the sacrifices and effect of war on those who experienced it firsthand.
humor, and dedication. "Being part of the Museum, and it shows in their vitality, have been honored to work among the staff who have grown into the Museum experience as each new generation has emerged."

Both remain enthusiastic about the Museum: veterans, volunteers, and both soon started volunteering at the Museum: veterans, volunteers, and both soon started volunteering at the Patriots Circle in 2005.

First supporting The Museum in our Chartor program in 2001, the Wolls were among the initial supporters in Patriots Circle in 2005. Then, after Bob retired, Mary reminded him that she "married her "Bob" for better or worse, but not for richer," and both soon started volunteering at the Museum.

Bob greats visitors at the Guest Services Desk and also volunteers with the Museum's Curatorial Services team translating German materials for the Museum's collections. Marie works with the care and conservation of uniforms and other textiles in the Museum's collections.

Over the years, Marie and I have marveled at the enrichment of the Museum experience and its "abundant exhibits," said Bob. "I've also taken part in my friends among the staff who have increasingly rewarding positions, and have been honored to work along with the volunteers, and both are now welcoming faces on the Museum.

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Both remain enthusiastic about the Museum: veterans, volunteers, and both soon started volunteering at the Museum: veterans, volunteers, and both soon started volunteering at the Patriots Circle in 2005.
Ron and Karen Adams were investigating tours that would honor the 60th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy. Serendipitously they found themselves at the National WWII Museum—which offered a tour in 2004 from London to the landing beaches of the invasion. After their travels with the Museum and walking through the more than 5,000 American graves at Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, they decided on the spot to become involved with the Museum.

“Ironically, we realized the potential for the Museum. Their mission to share the history of the United States’ involvement in World War II, and to also reflect the personal accounts of the heroes that served their country resonated with Karen and me,” said the Adams. The Adams remains loyal supporters through Patriots Circle in addition to frequent attendees at the Museum’s annual International Conference on World War II. “We brought several of our family members from Illinois and Minnesota to visit the Museum while we attended the 2017 Conference in New Orleans,” says Ron. Karen notes, “Our favorite Museum experience is Beyond All Boundaries. The 4D film experience was heart-wrenching. It captures and conveys the significance of the WWII generation in the fight for freedom from an extra-ordinary viewpoint. “Being involved has instilled in us a sense of being an integral part of a large family with common goals and a true sense of patriotism. It has been an honor and a privilege to be part of the Patriots Circle,” concludes Ron.
World War II looms large within Tyler Herbert’s and Lauren Prince’s families. Their paternal grandfather, Sergeant Glenwood Herbert, was a tail gunner on a B-17 bomber who was killed in action during the war in a plane crash over Reimsburg, Germany. Tyler’s father, Glenn, was raised by his stepfather, Franklin Strong, who served in the US Army during the war. “His father’s real dad in every sense of the word,” explains Lauren Prince. “As a result, we consider him our ‘grandad’ within our family and exemplify ‘The Greatest Generation’ in every way.”

Lauren’s maternal and paternal grandparents served on the Home Front. James Rasmussen served in the 89th Armored Infantry Division of General George Patton’s Third Army. His mother, Lauren’s maternal grandfather, served in the Corps of Engineers. “He exemplified ‘The Greatest Generation’ in every way,” says Tyler. Currently serving as a Young Benefactor who helps produce the Museum’s resource materials for an event, which supports the restoration of significant WWII artifacts. A self-confessed “nuts and bolts” typer, Tyler says that his friends often Mock him for speaking “tours” running every word within the Museum’s exhibits. “Lauren and I are honored to be enlisting our names on the plaque,” he says. “We are humbled by the sacrifices of our families and others who came before us to battle the freedom we enjoy today.”
The National WWII Museum will tell the entire story of the American experience in World War II. When completed in 2025, this $400 million expansion project will quadruple the size of the original Museum, adding state-of-the-art program and exhibition space, library and archives, and collections and conservation space. An endowment campaign will provide long-term funding for educational programs, research, collection of oral histories, and long-term funding for educational programs, archives, and collections and conservation.

The Lori and Bobby Savoie Family
Peggy and Carl Sewell
Superior Energy Services, Inc.
The Swieca Family
Estate of ... Mrs. Robert E. Kelso
Mr. and Mrs. John P. Laborde
Coya and Frank Levy
Libby-Dufour Fund
Mr. and Mrs. Kevin J. Lilly
Jennifer and Phil Satre
Kathy and Joe Sanderson
Pam and Mark Rubin
The Robert J. Ready Family
Pam and Mark Rubin
Kathy and Joe Sanderson
Jennifer and Phil Satre

Deborah G. Lindsey
The Mango Family
Robert & Anna Edsel
Disabled Veterans of LA Chapter 4, Inc.
Robert A. Day
Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. Bouillion
The Booth-Bricker Fund
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth L. Blanchard, Sr.
Mrs. Suzanne B. Bissell in Honor of Major Anne and Herschel Abbott
Lt. and Mrs. James H. Stone
Ricketts Family

Jeff & Debbie Garriott
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gardner
Mark B. Gourney
Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Godschalk III
Gulf Island Fabrication Inc.
In Memory of Calvin "Kelly" Goines
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Francis Williams Barnett III
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John E. Keenan Family
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The Starr Foundation
Goldring/Woldenberg Foundations
Frank and Paulette Stewart
Madlyn and Paul Hilliard
The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston
Donna and Jim Barksdale
Richard C. Adkerson & Freeport-
HPL

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Frank and Paulette Stewart
Madlyn and Paul Hilliard
The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston
Donna and Jim Barksdale
Richard C. Adkerson & Freeport-
HPL
The National WWII Museum thanks the following donors, whose support makes our exhibits, educational programs, outreach initiatives, and commemorative events possible. These generous organizations and individuals help us increase understanding of the war that changed the world among people of all ages across the nation.

### PROGRAM SUPPORTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 ANNUAL REPORT</th>
<th>• American Spirit Awards Donor</th>
<th>• American Spirit Awards Donor</th>
<th>• American Spirit Awards Donor</th>
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### THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

**STEPHEN E. AMBROSE LEGACY SOCIETY**

The Stephen E. Ambrose Legacy Society recognizes 80 special individuals, couples, and associations who have included The National WWII Museum in their will, trust, life insurance policy, retirement assets, or other estate plans. These gifts support our mission to preserve and share the history of the American experience during World War II. The Museum recognizes and thanks these Society members for their generous support.

- **Dr. Teresa Whitehead**
- **Frank G. Wilson**
- **Charles Wilson**, Jr.
- **206 Combat Engineer Battalion**
- **James Werdegg**
- **Col. William G. Yarborough**
- **Jack Wm. Windt**
- **282 Combar Engineer Battalion**
- **Mr. and Mrs. William Ryan**
- **Mr. and Mrs. David Oreck**
- **Peoples Health**
- **William M. Tebow**
- **Wyatt Rockefeller**
- **Mr. William and Mrs. Dina B. Riviere**
- **Todd Ricketts and Sylvie Legere**
- **Reily Foods Company**
- **Pritzker Military Museum & Library**
- **Pritzker Military Foundation**
- **Curt Pringle & Associates**
- **Peoples Health**
- **Marguerite E. Pendleton**
- **Mr. and Mrs. David Oreck**
- **The E.J. and Weyna B. Duhr Family Foundation**
- **The Morgan Stanley Foundation**
- **Mutual of America**
- **Morgan Stanley**
- **New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau**
- **Wells Fargo**
- **Windsor Court Hotel**
- **Virginia T. Wise**
- **Anonymous (2)**
- **American Spirit Awards Donor**
- **American Spirit Awards Donor**
- **American Spirit Awards Donor**

**The Willis-Bierstadt Endowment Group**

**The 801st 492nd Bombardment Group Association**

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**Urban G. Rump**

**Frederick E. Ruccius**

**Lewis A. Post**

**Eileen Owsiany**

**Mr. Lou Linxwiler**

**Arthur Jones**

**Louise James**

**William K. St. Claire**

**William K. St. Claire**

**Jack M. Schwartz**

**Harold M. Schubert**

**Ida M. Rucklos**

**Paul Rivas**

**Richard J. Rinebolt**

**Mr. Felicien “Gus” Perrin**

**H.W. Lay**

**Sophia Kallelis**

**Carolyn Davis Fernandez**

**Robert W. Dannelly**

**Lucille and Robert Coleman**

**Jay H. Frankel**

**Capt. John Ford**

**Charles Faught**

**Tom Czekanski**

**Gail P. Cox**

**IMO Everett A. Smith, Pvt.**

**Mr. and Mrs. Dave Cowan**

**Dr. Sol Courtman**

**Urban G. Rump**

**Frederick E. Ruccius**

**Lewis A. Post**

**Eileen Owsiany**

**Mr. Lou Linxwiler**

**Arthur Jones**

**Louise James**

**William K. St. Claire**

**William K. St. Claire****
## FINANCIALS

### CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

The National World War II Museum, Inc. and Subsidiaries  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
June 30, 2017  
(with comparative totals for 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>44,842,627</td>
<td>43,943,273</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>20,400,630</td>
<td>17,518,623</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unconditional promises to give:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Campaign</td>
<td>17,090,815</td>
<td>13,573,169</td>
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<td>Endowment, net of allowances</td>
<td>2,390,165</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other, net of allowances</td>
<td>1,228,676</td>
<td>1,864,536</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants receivable</td>
<td>12,819,876</td>
<td>12,542,383</td>
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<td>Notes receivable</td>
<td>665,041</td>
<td>654,598</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gift shop inventory</td>
<td>3,929,352</td>
<td>3,044,713</td>
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<td>Other assets</td>
<td>12,564,559</td>
<td>12,087,630</td>
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<td>Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collections</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>289,803,961</td>
<td>270,536,907</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>LIABILITIES</strong></td>
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<td>Accounts payable trade</td>
<td>1,928,478</td>
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<td>Construction projects payable</td>
<td>1,599,750</td>
<td>2,242,865</td>
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<td>Accrued expenses</td>
<td>1,799,102</td>
<td>1,970,398</td>
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<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>3,018,614</td>
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<td>Line of credit</td>
<td>3,692,185</td>
<td>3,477,807</td>
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<td>Notes payable</td>
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<td>17,383,438</td>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>29,580,470</td>
<td>44,173,644</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designated</td>
<td>5,523,803</td>
<td>3,302,280</td>
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<td>Undesignated</td>
<td>223,998,513</td>
<td>187,357,069</td>
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<td><strong>Total Unrestricted Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td>190,659,349</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
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<td>Permanently restricted</td>
<td>17,527,578</td>
<td>17,204,905</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>289,803,961</td>
<td>270,536,907</td>
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### CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

The National World War II Museum, Inc. and Subsidiaries  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
For the year ended June 30, 2017  
(with comparative totals for 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<td><strong>SUPPORT AND REVENUES</strong></td>
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<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Contributions</td>
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<td>Capital Campaign</td>
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<td>Endowment</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Tax credit incentives</td>
<td>6,636</td>
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<td>Memberships</td>
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<td>Admissions</td>
<td>15,874,388</td>
<td>14,895,800</td>
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<td>Facilities and property rental</td>
<td>2,485,884</td>
<td>3,287,504</td>
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<td>Sponsored events and conferences</td>
<td>4,809,564</td>
<td>4,029,504</td>
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<td>Gift shop</td>
<td>3,975,510</td>
<td>3,876,111</td>
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<td>Investment income</td>
<td>2,477,235</td>
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<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>267,260</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
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<td>(22,032,660)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Support and Revenues</strong></td>
<td>78,747,759</td>
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<tr>
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<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
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<td>Capital Campaign</td>
<td>1,928,280</td>
<td>1,928,280</td>
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<tr>
<td>and other</td>
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<td>1,525,641</td>
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<td>Depreciation</td>
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<td>7,728,044</td>
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<td>3,060,967</td>
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<td>General and administrative</td>
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<td>3,233,938</td>
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<td>Gift shop merchandise sold</td>
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<td>Interest - amortized</td>
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<td>271,221</td>
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<td>Interest - other</td>
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<td>619,100</td>
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<td>Museum expansion</td>
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<td>1,183,830</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs and operations - personnel costs</td>
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<td>9,778,728</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs and operations - other costs</td>
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<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>47,884,792</td>
<td>43,085,127</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHANGES IN NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning of year</td>
<td>190,659,349</td>
<td>189,499,009</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of Year</td>
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<td>217,527,576</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>226,323,451</td>
<td>226,323,451</td>
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<td>196,999,189</td>
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The National WWII Museum thanks the following donors for purchasing a seat in the Solomon Victory Theater to honor or remember a family member, personal friend, or organization. An engraved plaque has been permanently affixed to the arm of the purchased seat to recognize the contribution. Such support helps preserve the stories of World War II for future generations in this one-of-a-kind theater.