

## NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM



### Duty, Sacrifice, Honor *New Mexico Veterans Answered the Nation's Call*

Welcome to the latest installment of our media-release series, "Telling New Mexico: Stories from Then and Now." See the links below for previous releases, along with information about obtaining photographs to accompany your coverage.

For generations, New Mexico's men and women have heard the nation's call to service and answered it with courage, sacrifice and honor. Their stories – including those of the Buffalo Soldiers, Indian Code Talkers and Bataan Death March survivors – are among the many told by the New Mexico History Museum, opening May 24, 2009, at 113 Lincoln Avenue on the historic Santa Fe Plaza. More than four centuries of stories fill the Museum's 96,000 square feet – a testament to the roles New Mexico has played and continues to play in how the American West evolved.

In the realm of military service, the museum's artifacts include chain mail worn by Spanish soldiers during the *entrada* of the late 1500s. The museum also tells of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, when Native American tribes banded together to drive Spanish colonists back to Mexico. These accounts, and those that followed, create a picture of a state that grew from discord, difficulties and treaties into one of the nation's most honored and turned-to sources of service in times of war and peace. Among those accounts:

- ▶ Under a Territorial flag in 1846, U.S. Gen. Stephen W. Kearney occupied New Mexico and implemented the Kearney Code, providing for a Territorial Militia.
- ▶ In 1862, the New Mexico Volunteers played a vital part in the battles of Glorieta and Valverde, spoiling Confederate plans to occupy the West.
- ▶ In 1866, the first members of the U.S. Army's Buffalo Soldiers began working to keep the peace between New Mexico settlers and tribal members. The 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers saw action in the Wild West unrest of Cimarron and Lincoln as well as the successful pursuit of Apache leader Victorio, earning eight Medals of Honor in that campaign alone. Among their fellow African-Americans, these soldiers – many of them newly freed slaves – were regarded with the same pride as Civil Rights leaders of the 1960s.
- ▶ In 1898, many New Mexicans served as Teddy Roosevelt's "Rough Riders," riding with him at the charge of San Juan Hill. New Mexicans pursued Pancho Villa under the command of Gen. John J. Pershing. Many also volunteered for service in WWI.
- ▶ In 1941, the New Mexico National Guard was sent to the Philippines for a one-year training exercise and instead became one-sixth of all the service members on the Bataan Death March. Two-thirds of the New Mexicans died on the march or in the prison camps. Despite deplorable conditions, a strong sense of identity as New Mexicans fortified the survivors who, after three years of unspeakable horrors, were released. They are still honored today in New Mexico and in the Museum.
- ▶ At the outset of WWII, the U.S. Marine Corps recruited 29 Navajos to devise a secret code. Eventually, more than 420 Navajo code talkers served their country, using Diné, their native language, as the one code the Japanese never broke. According to Maj. Howard Conner: "Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima."
- ▶ In the summer of 1942, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took on a top-secret task called "the Manhattan Project." Based in Los Alamos, N.M., and boasting some of the greatest minds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including its leader, J. Robert Oppenheimer, its scientists developed the atomic bomb and ushered in the Nuclear Age.

These stories represent more than New Mexico's contributions; they belong to the entire nation. From its earliest days, through World Wars, Vietnam and today's Mideast conflicts, New Mexicans have charted a legacy of honor and distinction. Nearly 200,000 U.S. veterans live in New Mexico. Of those, 16,149 are women, 9,970 are Native American, and four can say they served in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, *and* the Gulf War. During WWII, New Mexico lost more lives, per capita, than any other state. Three Medal of Honor recipients currently live in the state.

The New Mexico History Museum, [www.nmhistorymuseum.org/](http://www.nmhistorymuseum.org/), is proud to help tell these stories in interactive, multimedia exhibits that allow visitors to experience the adventure and gather information to frame their own point of view. Define your place in history by understanding those who came before. Get into it! Join us at the New Mexico History Museum, opening Memorial Day weekend 2009.

#### **New Mexico History Museum**

at 113 Lincoln Avenue, just behind the Palace of the Governors on the Santa Fe Plaza

**For more information** about the New Mexico History Museum, including a selection of user-ready high-resolution photographs, log onto <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/nmhm>. More than 8,000 additional, high-resolution photographs illustrating the history of New Mexico are available by keyword search at [www.palaceofthegovernors.org](http://www.palaceofthegovernors.org) (click on "Photo Archives" then on "Digitized Collections"). Most requests for scans from this site can be delivered the same day, and usage is free for publicity purposes only.

#### **Previous releases:**

[Four Centuries of History: the Fiestas de Santa Fe](#)

[Where ancient artifacts meet cutting-edge art](#)

[Fashioning New Mexico](#)

[The Tiffany Ties that Bind](#)

[The Railroad Wars](#)

[The New Face of History](#)

[The Tales that Made the American West](#)

[New Mexico History Museum's Core Exhibits](#)

[Telling the People's Stories: A Message from the Director](#)

[Creating a Place for Our Past](#), by Dr. Frances Levine, El Palacio, Summer 2006

#### **Other Sites:**

[NM History Museum on Twitter](#)

[NM History Museum on Facebook](#)

#### **Media Contacts:**

Kate Nelson  
New Mexico History Museum  
505 476 1141  
[Kate.Nelson@state.nm.us](mailto:Kate.Nelson@state.nm.us)  
[www.nmhistorymuseum.org](http://www.nmhistorymuseum.org)

Rachel Mason  
Ballantines PR  
[Rachel@ballantinespr.com](mailto:Rachel@ballantinespr.com)  
505 216 0889  
[www.ballantinespr.com](http://www.ballantinespr.com)