

About Museum Creators

Jef Verswyvel and Maggie DeWeirdt

grew up in their homeland of Belgium, where their parents had experienced the ravages of World War II. Jef became a collector of war paraphernalia, some of which he brought with him when he and Maggie immigrated to the United States.

They found their way to the small town of Rowlesburg, West Virginia where they began assembling what would become The “Greatest Generation” World War Two Museum.

As the museum grew, veterans from around the state generously donated their uniforms, arms, and personal items to be displayed in the museum.

Battle of the Bulge



It was the largest land battle of World War Two in which the United States directly participated. More than a million men fought in the battle — 600,000 Germans, 500,000 Americans, and 55,000

British. The temperature in Belgium during January 1945 was the coldest on record, and casualties from exposure to the cold grew as large as the losses from fighting. Many lost fingers, toes, and feet; many died from exposure. Local citizens collected sheets and blankets to help keep the allies warm. The Germans attacked in white uniforms to blend in with the snow.

Navy Pilot Charles Brown Shot Down Over the Pacific



Retired Attorney Charlie Brown was “lost at sea” and considered “killed in action”. His family was notified of this and prepared for his funeral. However, he had been picked up by the Japanese Navy and held as a POW until the end of the war when he was released and sent home. Over the years, his mother saved all of his uniforms, foot locker, documents,

"Among the men who fought on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue."

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz - March 1945

telegrams, and medals. **Jef and Maggie** were astonished when Charlie presented his collection to be included in the museum.

In the Virgil Gibson Room

Named for a local hero, the exhibit has scenes of U.S., British, German, Belgian and Russian personnel dressed in their national uniforms. Many of the very realistic war-torn and bullet-riddled sets were designed and implemented by **Maggie**, especially the Russian set. She also put together the Home Front setting.



99% Authentic

Everything in the museum is 99% authentic to the WW II era, according to **Jef**. He protests that he is “no artist”, but he begins with a standard mannequin and, with special modeling clay, he re-sculpts the head, face, and hands until he has the exact realistic look he is after, including blood, wounds, scars, frown, or



furrowed brow. **Jef** then clothes that mannequin in militarily accurate uniform with accoutrements, including insignia, medals, stripes, and weapons. *Even the buttons and shoe laces are authentic.*

In the Molly Crane Zeller Room



These lovely nurses greet you as you enter the Molly Crane Zeller room, named for a local Army Nurse. You may do a double take because they look real enough to speak with you.



Not to be forgotten are the women who served their country so proudly during World War II. Represented in this room are WAAC, WAVE, Red Cross and the Home Front.

“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few”.
by British Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, commending the RAF after the Battle of Britain.

Where Is It?

Rowlesburg, WV is a quaint railroad town located on the scenic big bend of the Cheat River, 40 miles Southeast of Morgantown, West Virginia. Take Route 7 East, past Kingwood, and at bottom of hill, turn right onto Route 72 (go 10 miles). From I-68, take exit #23, direction Kingwood (Rt. 26); in Kingwood take Rt. 7 East to Rt. 72.



**In The Szilagyi Center
20 North Buffalo Street
Rowlesburg, West Virginia**

www.rowlesburg.org

www.rowlesburg.info

www.rowlesburgguide.com

To make an appointment or donate,
call or email:

Shirley Hartley 304 329-1240 shartley812@frontier.com

Katie Wolfe-Orescanin 304 454-9232 kvwo@frontier.com

“Greatest Generation” World War II Museum



Veterans Wall of Honor

**Visit this World Class Exhibit
Dedicated to All Veterans of
the 1939 – 1945
Second World War**

You would also enjoy WW II “Living History” in Rowlesburg on the last weekend in June, annually.

**Hours: May through October
Saturday: 11 AM – 5 PM
Sunday: 1 PM – 5 PM
Or By Appointment
We Welcome Tour Buses**

Sponsored by
Rowlesburg Revitalization Committee, Inc.
PO Box 135
Rowlesburg, WV 26425