Call to Service

Throughout Holland's history the call to service, both in the community and beyond, has met with a vigorous response. Whether in peace or war, support for a diversity of needs testifies to Holland's commitment to the well-being of the larger community.

Service to the Community

Tulip Time, the Migrant Health Center, the Holland Rescue Mission, Evergreen Commons, Holland Hospital, downtown improvements and aid to the war-torn Netherlands all testify to Holland's deep sense of civic responsibility. Initiated through individual efforts, all owe much of their success to the continuing efforts of devoted volunteers.

In 1930, Mrs. J. E. Telling, the first chairperson of Tulip Time, introduced the idea of local residents, including Klompen Dancers, wearing authentic Dutch costumes during the festival.

William Connelly, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, began national promotion of Tulip Time in 1930. During World War II, the festival was cancelled. Immediately after the war, a shortage of tulip bulbs delayed further the return of the celebration until 1949 when it was incorporated as the Tulip Time Festival.

Miss Lida Rogers, a biology teacher at Holland High School for many years, proposed the idea for Tulip Time in a speech at the Woman’s Literary Club in 1927. In 1929, 100,000 blooms marked the first Tulip Time display. Originally an idea to beautify Holland, the annual festival has since become a major tourist attraction drawing visitors from all over the world.

De Zwaan, the last windmill to leave the Netherlands, was the highlight of the 1965 Tulip Time. It was dedicated by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and Michigan Governor George Romney. Today it is a popular tourist attraction.

Clarence Jalving led the Tulip Time parade for many years as the Town Crier who officially declared the streets dirty and in need of scrubbing.
Nellie Churchford came to Holland in 1903 and began the Holland City Mission. She preached and taught in many locations until a mission building was erected on Central Avenue between 7th and 8th Streets in 1927.

Miss Churchford was given an automobile to replace her horse and buggy in the late 1920s by A. J. Landwehr, President of the Holland Furnace Company.

Built as the Orphan House in 1849, the building was never needed because orphaned children were quickly adopted by other families. It opened as a public school in 1851.

Evergreen Commons, a senior citizen center, offers a wide range of services and activities. It opened in 1985.

Dorothy M. Bola, R.N. was the first bilingual nurse at the Migrant Clinic. The clinic was an outgrowth of a daycare program established in the ‘60s by church women from Third Reformed, First United Methodist and Hope Church. The women provided care for the migrant children while their parents worked in the fields around Holland.

In the 1950s, pediatrician Vern Boersma used a small borrowed trailer and drove to the blueberry fields, and later to the nurseries where migrants worked, to provide free medical care and immunizations for them and their families. After the clinic was established, he provided his services there.

Tuberculin testing is an outreach program of the clinic. Today, the Migrant Health Center, as it is now called, is open year round with a medical director and full-time physician to meet the needs of workers in the Holland area. Located in a shopping center on James Street at Butternut Drive, the clinic is supported by federal funds, Medicaid, and volunteers.

After serving his county in the Vietnam War and earning the Purple Heart, Randy Pacheco (1948-1993) became active in community affairs. A leader in the efforts to improve the economic, educational and housing situation for Holland's Hispanics, Pacheco's battle with ill health did not deter his dedication to political progress.

Among many accomplishments he is credited with voter-registration drives that greatly increased the number of Hispanic voters, managed the campaign of Holland's first Hispanic city councilman, Luciano Hernandez, and successfully lobbied Ottawa County
officials to create a “minority impact” district.

In October of 1993 Pacheco was posthumously awarded the Cesar Chavez Community Service Award displayed here. The first annual award was given to the Midwest-Northeast Voter Registration Education Project in recognition of his sacrifice on behalf of a local community.

2006.8.1 Gift of Linda Pacheco-Holmes

Gerrit J. Diekema, U.S. Envoy Extra-Ordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Netherlands is seen in front of his home in Holland on his last visit here in October 1930. He is being presented a Boy Scout Handbook by a group of Holland Boy Scouts. Diekema was Holland's first U.S. Congressman.

Hat worn by Holland native Gerrit J. Diekema. He was the first Holland resident elected to Congress. In 1928 President Hoover appointed Diekema Minister Plenipotentiary to the Netherlands. Diekema held many political offices at the local, state and federal levels prior to his death in 1930.

1993.12.1 Gift of Charles Vander Ven

A graduated brass mortar and pestle used by Dr. Geert Manting, an early pioneer physician, for dispensing medicine for his patients.

1937.23.6a,b Gift of Ida Hazelkamp

Medical instruments used by Dr. John Masselink, c. early 20th century.

1971.38.80; 1971.38.81a,b; 1971.38.88a Gift of the Masselink Family

Dr. John Masselink’s scale for weighing newborn babies.

1971.38.78 Gift of the Masselink Family

Katherine Nystrom Cheff, wife of the president of Holland Furnace Company, donated Christmas gifts for junior high students as a memorial to her father and son. Her son, John, was a student at Holland Junior High when he died in 1928.
Streetscape, a downtown Holland reconstruction project begun in 1987, included adding brick sidewalks, trees, and benches. In 1989, a system of sixty miles of loop piping to melt wintertime snow and ice was installed under the street and sidewalks along 8th Street.

Hope College students and faculty pictured in front of Dimnent Chapel at a rally in support of the Vietnam War.

The Patriotic League at Hope College sold war bonds during World War I.

Group of Home League Women sewing at the Salvation Army in the 1930s.

*We want to stay ourselves and remain that way May 1940-May 1945*

A reference to the national pride of the Dutch people during World War II.

1973.15.3 Gift of W. K. Von Weiler

Ceramic tile depicting a Dutch town submerged under water.

*You, my followers may suffer but God shall not abandon you. The waters may rise but the Netherlands shall rise again.*

Though this tile is dated to World War II, chances are this statement is a quote by William of Orange, the father of the Netherlands, during the rebellion against Spain when the Dutch flooded their own land to keep the enemy at bay.


*Nederland Brengt U Dank Thank you tile*

1973.15.5 Gift of W. K. Von Weiler

Ceramic plate given to an American in appreciation for his help distributing food in Rotterdam after World War II.

1991.10.1 Gift of Petra Warren
Ceramic plate celebrating the liberation of Maastricht by the Americans on September 14, 1944. Maastricht was the first city liberated in the Netherlands.

1991.16.3 Gift of Nell Wichers

Physician's bag which belonged to Dr. John Masselink of Zeeland who practiced medicine in the early 20th century.

1971.38.4 Gift of the Masselink Family

Dr. Henry Kremers' home became Holland's first hospital in September 1917. A new hospital was opened in 1928. The house became the Netherlands Museum in 1939 where it remained until 1993 when the museum was renamed and moved to this site, the former post office.

Staff nurses in the early years of the Holland Hospital pose in front of the annex or clinic building in back of the hospital.

Rena Boven began her work at the Holland Hospital in 1939 after finishing training at Butterworth Hospital in Grand Rapids. She retired as Director of Nursing in 1958.

**Lieutenant Colonel Matt Urban**

Lieutenant Colonel Matt Urban's personal valor made him the most decorated soldier of World War II. He commanded his troops through six major campaigns on two continents and was wounded seven times. His leadership in the Saint Lô Breakthrough in France was rewarded with the Medal of Honor presented to him by President Jimmy Carter in 1980 nearly thirty-six years after the fact. Urban received 29 additional combat medals from the U.S. Army and Medals of Valor from several foreign countries. He served as Holland City Recreation Director from 1974 until his retirement in 1989. He resided in Holland where he maintained an active schedule of speaking engagements until his death in 1995.

Exhibited here are some of the 29 medals awarded to Lieutenant Colonel Matt Urban for his service during WWII. Included is a photographic representation of his Medal of Honor.

Loan of Jennie Urban
Commemorative medals of the Grand Army of the Republic whose members were veterans of the Union Army.

Silver badge commemorates Holland's Company I of the 25th Michigan Infantry.

1991.7.12-16 Gift of JoAnn Stewart

A.C. Van Raalte GAR Post

Memorial Day parade on 8th Street. Men are wearing medals wrong side out to commemorate their fallen comrades.

Lieutenant John Kramer, Holland

Elected head of Company I. He led the company in the early months of its involvement in the war.

Corporal Otto Boot, Holland


Benjamin Van Raalte was the elder son of Albertus C. Van Raalte, founder of Holland. He served in the 25th Michigan Infantry during the Civil War. At age 22, he volunteered after an impassioned speech by his father at the town hall. During a battle at Eltoy Creek, Georgia, the regiment lost two color bearers and their flags were left behind on the field when the Union troops were driven back. During the night, Van Raalte crept through the Confederate lines to retrieve the flags which he carried until the close of the war.

Wulf Van Appeldorn, Holland


Dirk Van Raalte, Holland

Company I, 25th Michigan Infantry. Lost an arm during the war.
**Jan Nies**, Holland

2nd Michigan Cavalry. Nies played the bugle to the left of his picture.

**Nelson W. Ogden**, Holland

Drummer, Company I, 25th Michigan Infantry

**Johannes Van Lente**, Holland.


**John A. Wilterdink**, Holland.

Company I, 25th Michigan Infantry. Read the names of the names of the local soldiers killed in the war at the unveiling of the Civil War monument at Pilgrim Home Cemetery in 1902.

Musket with attached bayonet used in the Civil War by Holland resident John A. Wilterdink. He participated in the battle at Tebbs Bend, Kentucky between 300 Union soldiers under Colonel Orlando Moore and 6,000 Confederate soldiers under General John Hunt Morgan.

1937.162.12 Gift of Ed Wilterdink
1944.37.1 Gift of Gerard Telgenhof

Nelson W. Ogden took this drum from the Confederate Army at Goldsboro, North Carolina, March 1865. Ogden enlisted in Company I of the 25th Michigan Infantry and served for two years and 10 months.

1937.245.1 Gift of Clyde Ogden

Civil War bugle carried during the war by John Nies of Holland. He was a member of Company D of the 2nd Michigan Cavalry.

1947.50.1 Gift of Anna Nies
Civil War canteen with the names of ten battles in which Holland area soldiers were engaged.

1998.82.1 Holland Historical Trust Purchase, John Noe Memorial

Wooden Civil War fife from the family of Nelson Ogden, drummer of Company I of the 25th Michigan Infantry.

1938.28.60 Gift of George Ogden

1860 model light cavalry sword used in the Civil War.

1938.19.138a,b Gift of George Getz

Musket manufactured after the War of 1812. Butt plate has a date stamp of “1834.”

1937.255.1 Gift of Cornelius Steketee

THE BATTLE OF TEBBS BEND

Company I and the 25th Michigan Infantry distinguished themselves at the Battle of Tebbs Bend, Kentucky on July 4, 1863. Under the command of Colonel Orlando Moore, a small band of Union infantrymen were charged with keeping the Confederates from crossing the Green River and moving on Louisville.

The men, including soldiers from Holland and Zeeland, held off eight attacks by unmounted Confederate cavalrymen led by celebrated General John Hunt Morgan. Morgan was forced to bypass that spot and move instead to Lebanon, Kentucky. That same day, the battles of Vicksburg and Gettysburg were raging.

Encampment of the 31st Michigan Infantry during the Spanish-American War, 1898. 32 Holland men enlisted and all returned. The pair of kid goats served as mascots.

Volunteers from Holland (Company H, 32nd Michigan Infantry) enlisted April 26, 1898. The war began when the warship Maine blew up in Havana Harbor, Cuba. It only lasted 100 days.
Spanish-American War soldiers from the 19th Infantry in San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1898.

**Military Service 19th Century**

Only a decade and a half after the arrival of Holland's first residents in 1847, those who had come from the Netherlands found their adoptive land plunged into a civil war. They supported Lincoln's call for help in ending the South's attempt to dissolve the Union. Thirty-six years later they joined in the brief war to end Spanish control of nearby Cuba.

Mess cup used by Corporal James Van der Sluis, Company B, 21st Michigan Infantry.
1937.235.4a Gift of the Van der Sluis Family

Snare drum and drum sticks carried throughout the Civil War by Nelson Ogden while serving with Company I, 25th Michigan Infantry from 1862 to 1865.
1937.245.2,3a,3b Gift of Clyde Ogden

Musket with bayonet used during the Civil War.
1937.255.2a,b Gift of Cornelius Steketee

This valise belonged to West Michigan resident Captain Daniel Kennicott, Company F, 5th Michigan Infantry.
1938.25.2 Gift of G.A. Witherell

Bullet scarred limbs, called war logs, were prized as souvenirs of battle to show people back home the intensity of the fighting.
1938.77.26 Gift of the Blom Family

**Local Military Service of the 20th Century**

In the twentieth century, with the emergence of the United States as a world power, Holland's men and women were called on for service around the globe. They found themselves in France and Russia in World War I, on all continents and oceans in World War II, and in such places as Korea, Vietnam, and in the Persian Gulf in later regional conflicts.
Holland, Michigan and World War I

The causes of the conflict were complex. Europe’s imperial monarchies with their nationalism and colonial ambitions were jealous of each other’s territories. At the same time, countries formed an intricate web of protectionist alliances, that, once set in motion, were impossible to break.

In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson decided to send troops to Europe; the American public supported involvement. The Holland area sent young men nicknamed “Doughboys” to Western Europe (to fight the “Central Powers” of Germany and Austria-Hungary) and “Polar Bears” to Russia (to fight the Bolsheviks/Communists) and, as President Wilson put it “Make the world safe for democracy.”

When the German surrender was announced on November 11, 1918, there was great celebrating in the streets of the Allied countries. For many communities in Michigan, however, the celebrating proved to be premature as hundreds of the state’s “Polar Bears” continued to fight until mid 1919. The American “Military Intervention” into Russia during its civil war was never officially declared and its veterans were not recognized as having fought in World War I. America’s intervention in Russia had another lasting effect beyond the experiences of its soldiers: the newly formed Soviet Government never again trusted the motives of the United States.

WWI Helmet, “Russia”

In North Russia, American soldiers painted their helmets white to blend into the landscape. The word “Russia” stenciled across the top was most likely added later.

1991.20.4 Gift of William Ver Hey

WWI German Rifle

German Gewehr 98

1938.19.120 Gift of George Getz

World War I artillery shell which belonged to Henry Geerds, 126th Infantry. A war memento, the shell is inscribed with the names of the men in the 3rd Platoon, Company G., 32nd Division. Also included are the names and dates of each offensive in which the platoon was engaged.

1990.15.2 Gift of Marion Geerds Beebe
Duty in Russia: The Polar Bears

This group of “Polar Bears” was among those who fought the Bolsheviks at Murmansk and Archangel during the winter of 1918-1919.

Michigan Barracks, Archangel

The “Polar Bears” built a barracks in Archangel, Russia during the winter of 1918-1919.

World War I Cavalry Boots

Owned by Lieutenant Colonel Henry A. Geerds

1990.15.24a,b Gift of Marion Geerds Beebe

Trench Art

When not in combat, a front line soldier’s life was extremely dull, and soldiers constantly sought ways to amuse themselves. To while away the hours, some made handicrafts. Their creations are now known as “trench art.” The men used what they had at hand: shell casings, bullets, uniform buttons, and coins. These WWI examples shown here include:

Letter Opener, “N.R.E.F.”
NREF stands for North Russia Expeditionary Force (the “Polar Bears”)
2005.55.19 Gift of Joel Lefever

Letter Opener “Souvenir of the Front, 1918”
Once owned by Holland soldier Bertal Slagh.
1968.27.6 Gift in Memory of Bertal Slagh

Two strands of French coin “bracelets”
Once owned by Holland soldier Lawrence Slotman.
2005.10.10,11 Gift of Ruth Slotman

Shell, “Verdun, 1919”
1938.19.167 Gift of George Getz
Ring
Made from a single silver coin.
1938.19.176 Gift of George Getz

Ring
Owned by “Polar Bear” Leonard Bareman.
2001.104.7 Gift of Carolyn and Esther Bareman

Ring
2005.71.20 Gift of Ruth Athey

Bracelet
2005.71.19 Gift of Ruth Athey

Badge
“Lawrence Slotman, Overisel, Michigan”
2005.10.9 Gift of Ruth Slotman

Spoon
The carved and decorated Russian spoons were popular “Polar Bear” souvenirs.
2006.41.28 Gift of Randall Vande Water

Pincushion
This pincushion satirizes Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm I.
2005.55.18 Gift of Joel Lefever

WWI Dagger
Used by Henry Geerds.
1990.15.6 Gift of Marion Geerds Beebe

WWI Mess Kit
2005.85.4 Gift of Ruth Athey

WWI Cup
2005.68.4 Gift of Heidi Wiersma
**Prelude to World War II**

World War I ended in 1918 and was followed by two decades of uneasy peace. German resentment of the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles terms, Japanese expansionism in the Far East, the economic collapse of the thirties, and isolationist sentiment in America helped bring on a new war that engulfed the entire world between 1939 and 1945.

**World War II and Holland**

Already, in 1940, with the German conquest of the Netherlands, the mobilization of Holland’s National Guard company, and the departure of the first draftees, the community had felt the impact of the war in Europe. When the attack on Pearl Harbor brought America into the world-wide conflict in 1941 many activities in Holland’s homes, schools, churches and businesses were focused on the war effort.

- **Staff Officers of the 25th Michigan Infantry**
  - Surgeon Bolivar Barnum
  - Adjutant Charles Brown
  - Major Dewitt Fitch
  - Colonel Orlando Moore
  - Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Orcutt

**Spoon**

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2005.55.18 Gift of Joel Lefever

**World War I Cavalry Boots**

Owned by Lieutenant Colonel Henry A. Geerds
The Post-World War II Era

World War II was the defining experience for all who lived through those years. Everyone in 1945 hoped for a lasting peace this time. In spite of the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars, and the long Cold War between America and the Soviet Union, the world has, after fifty years, been spared the horrors of a third global conflict in less than a century.

WWII Military Patch Blanket

The Sixth Reformed Church of Holland, MI produced a monthly newsletter titled the “Eastern Lights” which they sent to servicemen connected with their congregation serving in WWII. In appreciation, the servicemen sent home their military branch patches. Berdina Barkel and Hazel Steggerda made this blanket as a reminder of the “wonderful young men” who served our country. The original 48 star flag had deteriorated and was replaced with a 50 star flag prior to its donation.

2005.102.1 In memory of George, Hazel Steggerda, and Eastern Light; Gift of Beatrice Overway and Clarissa Steggerda

Campaign at Buna, New Guinea

During the campaign at Buna, New Guinea (October-December 1942) the Japanese landed on New Guinea in an attempt to conquer it and to establish an airbase to Australia. The 126th Infantry, including men from Holland, hiked over the rugged Stanley Owen Mountains to surprise the Japanese and push them back off the island. The U.S. Office of Military Intelligence of the 16th Infantry personnel took these photos during that campaign.

Remember our Soldiers
In memory of the local servicemen who lost their lives during WWII. This photo was taken of a downtown storefront after the war ended.

WWII Helmet
The dent came from a .25 caliber sniper bullet on William A. Sikkel’s first day of combat in New Guinea.

1990.15.24a,b Gift of Marion Geerds Beebe

1990.19.1 Gift of William A. Sikkel
WWII Japanese Rifle
_Arisaka_ type 99

2007.8.2 Gift of Donald Van Ark

Broomhandle Mauser Pistol and Case
Model C

1938.19.119 Gift of George Getz

The Birds are Going Home to Roost
The Hilltopper
Holland Furnace Company Newsletter, 1943

T89-0279.3 Holland Furnace Collection

Service on the Homefront

While Holland’s servicemen and servicewomen went off to war, civilians stateside contributed to the war effort as well. Several local industries converted to military equipment production. World War II examples include the Holland Furnace Company which produced armor plating for tanks, Chris-Craft which built boats for the armed forces, and Hart and Cooley which made mortar shells and watertight electrical boxes. Others helped with the work of the Red Cross and special wartime relief efforts.

Western Machine Tool Works received an “E” award from the U.S. Government in recognition of excellence in production.

World War II jeep hook, manually attached for hitching a vehicle or trailer to a jeep. Manufactured by Holland Hitch Company.

1992.70.1 Gift of Holland Hitch Company

Display board of steel mortar halves in various stages of production. Hart and Cooley manufactured these projectiles at its Holland plant during World War II and the Korean War.

1992.100.4 Gift of Ken Tippett
American Red Cross nurse’s aide jumper and blouse, c. 1944.
1990.14.14a,b Gift of the Ottawa County Chapter, American Red Cross

American Red Cross hat used by Kitty Vande Water, a nurse’s aide at Holland Hospital during World War II.
1992.34.5 Gift of Randall Vande Water

Employees of the Holland Furnace Company who served in the armed forces during WWII. Published in a special issue of the company’s newsletter *The Hilltopper*, 1943.

A pair of World War II combat boots, possibly manufactured by the Holland Racine Shoe Company, worn by H. Bernard Wolters in the European theater. During the war, the company made one million pairs of combat boots for the United States Army and a large number of shoes for the Navy. Peak production in the 1940s was about 30,000 pairs a month.
1992.60.1a,b Gift of H. Bernard Wolters

Group of Red Cross volunteers prepared blankets and other items for use by World War I servicemen.

Local youngsters made model planes during World War II which were used to teach airmen to identify Allied and enemy planes.

These 10-cent, World War II savings stamp dolls resemble children of the Netherlands. They were saved toward the purchase of war bonds.
1991.54.1a,b Gift of Nell Wichers

Ration books and coupons were used during World War II for the purchase of gasoline, coffee, meat, canned goods, sugar, shoes, tires and other essentials.

1990.10.5-12, 13 Gift of Margaret Van Vyven

Wooden, two-blade airplane propeller made by Globe Carving Works of Holland during World War I.
1958.17.1 Gift of Globe Carving Works

This “E” Flag was awarded by the Defense Department to the Chris-Craft boat building plant in Holland on May 20, 1942. The white “E” on the field of blue signifies
excellence; the anchor indicates that the work was done for the U.S. Navy.

Loan of Chris Smith

**Korean War Uniform**

Frank Sherburne (1928-2012), was drafted into the US Army in 1952. After receiving his basic training at Camp Pickett, Virginia, he was stationed at Fort Sam Houston, Texas as a member of the Medical Corps for the remainder of his service. He joined the mathematics faculty at Hope College in 1959 and retired after 35 years in 1994.

2007.37.1a,b,c Gift of Frank Sherburne