

Guidelines for Prospective Artifact Donors

The mission of the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum is to collect, preserve, interpret, exhibit, and hold in public trust for the exclusive benefit of the people, significant historical property related to the history of the State of Mississippi and its contributions to the Armed Forces of the United States from the early 19th century to the present.

The Mississippi Armed Forces Museum maintains a collection of historical artifacts and archival materials, with emphasis on the military service of Mississippians as well as units and individuals who received training at Camp Shelby and other military installations in the State of Mississippi.

Artifacts donated by individuals are placed in one of two collections. The Museum's Permanent Collection contains significant items that merit perpetual care and professional preservation standards. The Education/Interpretive Collection contains reproductions and other expendable items for research and educational purposes.

If you feel your donation may enhance one of these collections and fits the mission of the Museum, please become familiar with the guidelines outlined below and submit an Artifact Donation Form for consideration. If we determine that your offer may meet our needs, we will notify you and arrange to have the items sent or brought to the Museum. **Please note that the Museum cannot accept physical custody of your items unless requested.**

The Museum is limited to acquiring only artifacts that meet the following criteria:

- Artifacts must be relevant to and advance the mission of the Museum.
- Items acquired must fill an actual or forecasted gap in the existing collections or replace inferior examples.
- Items can be made available for exhibitions and research.
- Adequate care, storage facilities, and properly trained Museum staff must be available to maintain items in keeping with professionally accepted standards.
- The Museum and its staff must be sensitive to and fully comply with State, Federal, and international laws and regulations governing the acquisition, sale, and transfer of cultural properties.
- The Museum must obtain free and clear title to all items acquired without restrictions as to use or future disposition. *(Once accepted, a donated item may not be returned to the donor.)*
- The Museum must receive reasonable assurances that the present owner has a clear and verifiable title of ownership to each item offered to the Museum for acquisition and has obtained the item legally and ethically. *(The donor of an item accepted by the Museum signs a Deed of Gift transferring ownership of the property to the Museum.)*

To aid in the Museum's evaluation of your donation offer, please provide any documentation, photographs, or other information on the chain of ownership, historical significance of your donation, and its specific relation to the State of Mississippi. Including provenance on the artifacts helps preserve the personal stories associated with each item and allows the Museum to better interpret the artifacts.

Please see the attached page for frequently asked questions regarding donations to the Museum. For any additional questions, please contact the Museum Registrar at 601.558.2337 or agospo@mafm.us.

We appreciate your support of the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum and its mission to honor American servicemen and women from Mississippi and those that trained in this State.

Frequently Asked Questions About Artifact Donations:

- **How do I donate artifacts to the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum?**

The preferred method for donation offers is for potential donors to complete and return an Artifact Donation Form. Please include as much detailed information as possible, including a description of the artifact, its original owner, and additional information related to its history and significance to the State of Mississippi. The Artifact Donation Form can be mailed to the Museum or given to one of our Visitor Services Representatives. After your form has been received, Museum staff will make a determination on the offer to see if it is a good fit for the collection. Arrangements will then be made to receive any items requested, and the proposed donation will be presented to the Museum's Collections Committee for approval.

Please note that even though your item may have intrinsic or historic value, these factors may have no bearing on the Museum's ultimate decision of whether or not to accept your offer. The Museum may have similar items in storage, or the item may not fit within the Museum's collection scope. A decision made by the Museum not to accept your offer in no way diminishes the value of your item.

- **Can I drop off or mail my artifact donation to the Museum without prior approval?**

We would prefer for an Artifact Donation Form to be submitted first or an appointment be set up with Museum staff to review the artifacts offered as a donation. The appropriate Collections staff may not be available to meet without advanced notice. ***Unsolicited donations cannot not be left with a Visitor Services Representative and are not the responsibility of the Museum.***

- **Does the Museum accept all artifacts offered as a donation?**

Unfortunately the Museum is unable to accept all artifacts offered as a donation. Only items directly related to the Museum's mission will be considered. Duplicates and items similar to ones presently in the collection are often not accepted. Exhibit and collections storage limitations also prohibit some artifacts from being accepted for the collection. We must also ensure that the Museum has the proper staff to care for the items offered.

- **What are the different collections maintained by the Museum?**

The Museum's Permanent Collection contains significant items that merit perpetual care and professional preservation standards. The Education/Interpretive Collection contains reproductions and other expendable items for research and educational purposes.

- **Will my donated artifact be placed on exhibit?**

The Museum cannot guarantee that a donated artifact will be placed on exhibition. Only a small percentage of the collection is displayed. Those items not exhibited are properly cared for and housed in secure, climate controlled collections storages areas, ensuring their preservation for generations to come. The Museum does often rotate artifacts on exhibit and features temporary exhibitions, allowing for more of the collection to be accessible to the public. Artifacts in the collection not on exhibit are also available for research and study purposes.

- **Are there any special procedures for donating a firearm or other weapon?**

The transportation of firearms, edged weapons, and live ammunition onto Camp Shelby is restricted and requires special coordination with Museum staff. All donation offers of such items to the Museum must be coordinated in advance. ***Do not bring a firearm, edged weapon, or live ammunition onto Camp Shelby or to the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum without prior authorization and instructions from Museum staff.***

- **Can Museum staff appraise my artifact for its monetary value?**

Due to IRS regulations, Museum staff are not able to appraise artifacts. To find a licensed appraiser in your area, contact the American Society of Appraisers or the Appraisers Association of America.