

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A New Book and Exhibit from the Pritzker Military Museum & Library

DIGNITY *of* DUTY

The Journals of Erasmus Corwin Gilbreath, 1861-1898



A personal odyssey of service from the Civil War to the Spanish – American War, the Pritzker Military Museum & Library’s newest book and exhibit are an exploration of the life and times of Major Erasmus Corwin Gilbreath, whose harrowing journey through 19th Century America was made with a rifle and pen in hand. From the blood-stained battlefields of Bull Run, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg to the Reconstruction-era South, the vast wilderness of the Western United States, and finally to Puerto Rico during the War with Spain, ***Dignity of Duty*** is a remarkable collection of the original writings of this mid-ranking officer and family man that paints an illuminating portrait of a nation seeking its identity in the wake of the most devastating event in its history.

Published 117 years after his death, ***Dignity of Duty*** (June 24, 2015 | \$29.95) comprises three original documents assembled and edited by Gilbreath’s great-granddaughter, Susan Gilbreath Lane, who discovered the papers by chance at the Detroit Public Library in the late 1970s. The Museum & Library’s third major publication, the book is available in both hardcover and e-book (Amazon Kindle | \$14.95) formats.

Also inspired by Gilbreath’s journals is a comprehensive museum exhibit by the same name, to be officially unveiled June 24 during a public reception at the Museum & Library. Featuring authentic photographs, maps commissioned for the book, rare books, and artifacts compiled from Gilbreath’s scrapbooks and related collections on 19th Century America, the exhibit is a physical extension of the book, and is widely accessible via a dynamic online gallery and audio experience at www.dignityofduty.org.

A self-taught student of history who once aspired to a career in law, Gilbreath’s intelligence and natural curiosity are on full display in his writings, resulting in a collection that is as fascinating as it is enlightening to read. Severely wounded at the Battle of Fredericksburg during the Civil War—a wound that would haunt him for the rest of his life—the Valparaiso, Indiana native not only went on to a successful 37-year military career, but also bore witness to the coming of age of America as we know it through experiences including a hazardous 175-mile journey by stagecoach in the Texas frontier during



the Indian Wars; a shipwreck off the Gulf coast; travels in a wagon train pulled by mules with pet names; the second Great Chicago Fire; and the establishment of Fort Custer in the Montana Territory, where his daughter was born in a tent with his cook acting as a midwife.

To learn more about the incredible life of this 19th Century American citizen soldier, the new book and exhibit by the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, or the June 24 premiere event, visit www.dignityofduy.org.

About the Pritzker Military Museum & Library

The Pritzker Military Museum & Library is open to the public and features an extensive collection of books, artifacts, and rotating exhibits covering many eras and branches of the military. Since opening in 2003, it has become a center where citizens and Citizen Soldiers come together to learn about military history and the role of the Armed Forces in today's society. The Museum & Library is a non-partisan, non-government information center supported by its members and sponsors.

About Erasmus Corwin Gilbreath

Born in Ohio in 1840, Erasmus Corwin Gilbreath spent his formative years in Valparaiso, Ind., where his parents settled in his youth. Following the death of his father, Gilbreath studied law and worked to support his family until he was called upon in 1861 to assist in the raising of the 20th Indiana Volunteer Regiment. Over the course of a 37-year military career, Gilbreath reached the rank of major twice—once as a volunteer and once with the regular Army—chronicling his experiences while serving in nearly every major battle of the Civil War; on various official assignments throughout the Indian Wars with his wife and children by his side; and finally in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War, where he lost his life to an illness in 1898.

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