

Press Release for "Full Victory," the D-Day Commemorative Painting

For more information or interviews contact: Leonard Kloeber 952-334-4477

PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release

Local Artist and Author Collaborate to Honor Veterans on the 66th
Anniversary of D-Day, June 1944



"FULL VICTORY"

General Eisenhower visits the 101st Airborne on the eve of D-Day
65th Anniversary WWII Victory Edition

In honor of American veterans, local Minnesota artist Julie Wildgen and local author Leonard Kloeber have collaborated to create an original painting of the famous World War II photograph of General Eisenhower speaking with the paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division on the eve of the Normandy Invasion in June 1944. The sale of prints from this painting will be used to raise money in support of veterans' memorials and service groups. June 6, 2010 marks the 66th anniversary of the Allied invasion of France which is known as D-Day.

About the Project:

Author Leonard Kloeber, Jr. is a retired Colonel from the US Army Reserves with over thirty years of active and reserve service. After retiring from both the military and his civilian job, he wrote the book, *Victory Principles – Leadership Lessons from D-Day*, which describes the historical events leading to D-Day and seven universal leadership lessons illustrated by the D-Day story. While promoting his book, he met the artist, Julie Wildgen, at a local bookstore where she was regularly painting. Kloeber asked her if she would consider painting a copy of the now famous WWII photograph of Eisenhower and the 101st Airborne so that they could use it to raise funds to support veterans' memorials and groups. Wildgen was completing the project that she was working on at the time, and after several weeks, agreed to join the project. Now after almost one year of work, the painting is completed.

As far as can be determined, this may be the only color painting of the original black and white photograph that was taken by a military photographer. Since the original photo is not only in black and white, but also slightly distorted, they began with research to accurately portray the details.

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Kloeber obtained an original copy of the photo from the US National Archives, and also did research on the uniforms and equipment. With an artist’s eye, Wildgen asked many questions about the details which she tried to incorporate into the painting. Both have been concerned about keeping this version as true as possible to the original photograph and the historical event itself.

Now that the painting is complete, they are partnering with several veterans groups including the US War Memorials Overseas which provides for the care of monuments and grave sites that are not maintained by the government. They also anticipate partnering with several other groups that honor veterans or provide services to them. They will be selling print copies of the painting to raise money to support these partner groups. The artist and the author are donating their time to maximize the proceeds available for support.

The Story Behind the Painting:

General Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander of all Allied forces that launched the largest amphibious assault in history on the northern coast of France. They ultimately defeated the Nazi war



machine by opening the Western Front in Europe during WWII. The young paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division played a significant role by jumping behind the beaches to disrupt the German defenses and secure key terrain for the assault troops landing on the beaches. General Eisenhower made a difficult decision to authorize the airborne assault even though intelligence estimates predicted significant casualties. The courage of the paratroopers is emblematic of the selfless service of all veterans who have served our nation. This painting also commemorates the life-time service of Dwight D. Eisenhower who was promoted to the rank of five-star General as the Supreme Commander and then elected as the 34th President of the United

States. This famous photograph and now the painting capture that important moment in history.

The painting will now be featured at both local and national events to support veterans’ memorials and service groups where copies may be purchased by those who wish to support the project.

About the Artist:

Julie Wildgen is a self-taught artist who has been painting more than five years. Her work has been featured locally in the Twin Cities. She is honored to be a part of this project, especially since her father was a veteran of WWII. She and her family live in Burnsville, Minnesota.

About the Author:

Leonard Kloeber is a West Point graduate and retired officer who served with the 101st Airborne on active duty. His family also has a history of military service. Both his father and father-in-law served in WWII. Kloeber’s father-in-law, 1Lt. John Garvik from St. Paul, MN, landed on Omaha Beach in Normandy, France on D-Day and was killed-in-action. He is buried at the Normandy American Cemetery. Kloeber’s brother-in-law served in Vietnam, and his son-in-law served in Iraq with the 101st Airborne Division. He is now a consultant, and lives with his wife in Prior Lake, Minnesota.