



Leah Kucharek

It Wasn't Good for Anyone Involved. There was a deep connection between horses and soldiers and how they leaned on each other for courage, sharing their fears equally between them. As well as being instrumental to the war effort, for the men in battle, the warhorses were inspirational figures, acting as morale boosters in the darkest of times.



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Horses bolstered morale on the front due to the soldiers' obvious and sincere affection for them. They relied on their horses for bravery and companionship.

It began one day, a slight shift in my universe. An ordinary errand of dropping my son off at a small residential hangar for volunteer airplane activities would soon lead to things far more significant than I ever imagined, for both him and myself.

He began his time at the hangar, spending hundreds of hours learning about mechanics, and responsibility, about the true grit it takes to be a hard-working young man. He dedicated his time and enthusiasm; he shared this incredible opportunity with his friends so they too could experience bringing this piece of history back to life. He found his future because of his love for this project and this experience with the museum. It inspired him.

LEAH KUCHAREK
Museum Trustee

Synchronously, his experiences had a profound effect on me and changed my future as well. The museum started to become as important to me as it was to him, but for very different reasons.

I started volunteering with my graphic design and putting together ideas, helping with fundraisers, striving to make our mission look its best. I love being in the restoration hangar. It is an inviting, creative space full of energy, history, inspiration, and ideas.

I continually ask myself why I do this. Why do I donate so much of my time to this organization? I can't turn a wrench; I'm not mechanical. I'm a terrible historian. Dates and historical timelines all melt together in my head.

So what do I love about this? The answer is this: I love how history makes me feel. History stirs a curiosity, a wonder, and a connection with me. There is a sense of nostalgia, heroism, truth, and honor in remembering a person or a time that once was.

Recognizing this love of history has transferred over to my role as an equine artist. My series of artwork *War Horse*, commemorates the role of horses and mules of WWI and WWII, whose sacrifices were as great as the soldiers they fought alongside. In my quest to learn more about the horses used in war, I was drawn to the lesser-known heroes such as the British Land Girls and the Army Vet Corps, and many others, which are also subjects in my work.

History created a curiosity that I never thought I would enjoy. Inspiration for these paintings started at the museum, and grew from my new appreciation of our past.

The mission of the Warbirds of Glory Museum is not just about making an airplane fly again. It's not a single vision of rebuilding a piece of history or educating youth. -It's a memoir of our past—and it inspires! The story is different for everyone, and it can be life-changing.