

# Copyright Lore

As thousands of World War II veterans helped dedicate the new World War II Memorial on the Mall this past Memorial Day weekend, the Office continued to display the Copyright Office service flag to honor its employees who answered their nation's call to duty from 1941 to 1945.

The flag, which hangs in the Copyright Office conference room, is an extraordinary example of staff loyalty and support. Creation of a service flag to honor employees who went to war was the idea of David Wells, a longtime Copyright Office staffer who retired in 1960 as head of the Miscellaneous Section (now the Visual Arts Section of the Examining Division). Wells had originally

planned to make a small flag with just two stars to hang in his section. One star would honor his son, Richard Wells, who was serving as an officer with the 383rd Engineers Battalion overseas, and the other, Erskine Lytle Jr., a Copyright Office employee who had just en-

listed. As Wells watched more and more of his colleagues enlist, he felt it would be selfish to create a service flag honoring only two servicemen and decided to involve the entire office in a campaign to create a flag for all Copyright Office servicemen. Wells circulated a memorandum outlining his idea and pledged a generous contribution to get the project underway.

The idea was met with great enthusiasm, and on May 18, 1943, the Copyright Office service flag was unveiled at a ceremony in the Adams Building. Patterned after the small flags that were proudly displayed in the windows of those families who had sons and daughters in the service, the red service flag displayed 40 blue stars, one for each Copyright Office employee who entered military service up to that time. At the bottom of the flag, the words "Copyright Office" appear in bright yellow letters. At the dedication, Wells said, "The flag itself symbolizes the sacrifice that these men are making. It has been my privilege to talk with most of the men who have entered the service of our country, and I have been greatly impressed by the fine spirit that they have shown. Without exception, they have all welcomed the opportunity."

Filed away for over 45 years in the Copyright Office archives and its significance all but forgotten, former Register of Copyrights Ralph Oman arranged to have the Copyright Office service flag mounted, framed by the Library's Interpretive Programs Office, and returned to a place of honor. Unveiled at the Register's annual holiday reception for Copyright Office retirees on Dec. 18, 1991, the flag served as a poignant reminder to everyone in attendance that 11 days earlier, the nation had marked the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

David Wells came to the Copyright Office in 1918 after graduating with honors from Howard University and attending 1 year of law school. He was known for his friendly, courteous nature, which endeared him to visitors and staff members alike. His father was a veteran of the Civil War, who served as a first sergeant in the 45th U.S. Infantry of the Colored Troops from Pennsylvania. Prior to Wells's death on Aug. 2, 1990, at the age of 99, he was believed to be the oldest living Copyright Office retiree. ©



FILE PHOTO  
David Wells

By the end of the war, 55 Copyright Office employees had served in the military, and one, Alexander Chavez, 25, perished. Measuring approximately 4 by 6 feet, the Copyright Office service flag honors all 55.

Don Bindenagel  
John W. Boyle  
Callis A. Caldwell  
Clyde Carlisle  
Edwin Cash  
Alexander Chavez ■ Frank Evina  
James F. Cooper  
Charles L. De Bora  
Clyde W. Durst  
John Estopinal  
James Faurot  
Robert G.F. Fortune  
George N. Foster  
Robert Frech  
Robert Garlick  
Gerard Gover  
William O. Griffith  
Charles A. Hatton  
Hugh M. Heelen  
James Howard Heizer  
Clair F. Henninger  
John J. Holt  
John Hubbard  
William Herman Jenkins  
James M. Kimbrough  
Donald K...  
Ralph K...  
Lloyd...  
Robert...  
Herbert...  
Erskine...  
Richard S. MacC...  
Orin S. M...  
Mike...  
Clarke J...  
Terry M. McPh...  
Donald A...  
Charles M...  
Luther H. M...  
David L. Pellman  
Walter L. Pforzheimer  
William E. Phillips  
Lawrence H. Reed  
Edward C. Salmon  
Charles A. Schulte  
Louis C. Smith  
John E. Strong  
Joe Jackson Summers  
E. Murray Tate  
Frank B. Ticknor  
Roger W. Tollman  
Robert L. Von Gunten  
James A. Walker  
W. Harvey Wise