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MVC TO HOST “BUS-eum” TRAVELING EXHIBIT APRIL 20

Traveling Exhibit Tells Unknown Story of German POWs Held in Midwest Camps During WWII

Marshall, Mo. (April 13, 2009)—Using 10 narrative panels and films, TRACES’ mobile museum—a retrofitted school bus called the BUS-eum 3—will tour six Midwest states, reaching schools, libraries and historical societies, including a stop in Marshall, Mo. at Missouri Valley College. TRACES exhibit driver, Irving Kellman, will tour with the exhibit and is available for phone or live interviews as the tour progresses.

“Because this traveling museum focuses on WW II POWs that were in Missouri camps, I’d like to encourage everyone who has an interest in American history, or Missouri history in particular, to visit the exhibit, view the artifacts, watch the short film, and enjoy a discussion with the curator,” said Pam Reeder, MVC Murrell Library director.

By the end of World War II some 425,000 German, Italian and Japanese prisoners of war (POWs) found themselves imprisoned in over 660 base and branch POW camps in almost all of the then-48 United States and the territory of Alaska. Millions more Axis and Allied POWs were held in other camps in Europe, the Soviet Union, Canada, Australia and Africa.

While Axis and Soviet POWs were both the perpetrators as well as victims of dictatorial governments and state-sponsored violence, POW experiences on all sides embody ageless and timely themes of war and peace, justice under arms and issues regarding human rights, international reconciliation and future conflict avoidance.

The roughly 372,000 German POWs held in U.S Army-operated camps across the United States were sent out to harvest or process crops, build roads and waterways, fell trees, roof barns, erect silos, work in light non-military industry, lay city sewers and construct tract housing, wash U.S. Army laundry and do other practical wartime tasks.

With the high rate of 19th-century German immigration to the Midwest, many of those who worked with POWs spoke to them in their native tongue; some even had relatives or former neighbors among them. In the process, they formed significant, often decades-long friendships with “the enemy” and underwent considerable changes as individuals and as a group – thus fundamentally influencing postwar German values and institutions, as well as American-German relations. A number of POWs even chose to immigrate to the United States after the war.

The BUS-eum 3, which is free and open to the public, will be at Missouri Valley College from 9 a.m. until noon on Monday, April 20. The exhibit will be parked in front of MVC’s Columns on College Street just east of the Murrell Memorial Library.

For more information, contact Reeder at reederp@moval.edu or 660-831-4123.

To confirm the BUS-eum's itinerary or learn more about this exhibit, see www.TRACES.org. The exhibit's texts and photos of the exhibit can be previewed at that web site; reading the narrative in advance facilitates speedier visitor flow in the bus. Educators are welcome to utilize any teacher material on our web site.

ABOUT MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE

Missouri Valley College is a liberal arts college that provides educational, social and cultural experiences in a decidedly Christian environment. Established in 1889, MVC offers 28 majors and 7 pre-professional programs, and 12 sports and 20 varsity teams. The most popular majors include business and education, and the newest major are nursing, graphic design, and hospitality and tourism management, which will begin in Fall 2009. The liberal arts heritage focuses on scholarship, critical thinking and academic excellence to prepare students to become members of a responsible citizenry. For more information, call (660) 831-4000 or visit www.moval.edu.

ABOUT TRACES

TRACES Center for History and Culture is a Midwest/WWII history museum in downtown Saint Paul/MN's historic Landmark Center (formerly 1896 Federal Courts Building). Each of its more than two dozen exhibits about Midwesterners' encounters with Germans or Austrians between 1933 and 1948 forms part of a larger mosaic, a fuller image of a war that is often misunderstood or seen in clichés. At TRACES, WWII is a case study to learn from for today and future generations.

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