Long-Awaited Gallery Now Open!

The story of the Infantry’s history – at least the pieces of it that can fit inside one museum – is finally complete. The National Infantry Museum has opened the long-awaited Securing our Freedoms/Defining the Nation gallery, which chronicles the branch’s history from 1775 to 1889.

When the museum opened in 2009, budgetary constraints put the completion of the planned Revolutionary War and Civil War galleries on hold. In 2011, the museum offered one of those two unfinished spaces to the Armor branch, which had just moved its school to Fort Benning.

Visitors to the new 5,100-square-foot gallery will be transported to the years preceding the Revolutionary War, and will travel through to the end of the Frontier Indian Wars. Among the 175 priceless artifacts now displayed are numerous muskets and rifles, a 200-pound mountain howitzer used in the Mexican-American War, a Civil War era James gun with its innovative rifling system, and the Gatling Gun – the forerunner of the modern machine gun – used in the Frontier Indian Wars.

There are interactive kiosks, too, including one that illustrates the challenges of building a disciplined and effective Army, and one that demonstrates the critical role of music in communication on the battlefield. Two large silk regimental and national flags from the 2nd United States Colored Troops – among the museum’s rarest artifacts – are on display for the first time.

Maneuver Center of Excellence Museums Chief Dave Hanselman says the gallery is intended not only to inform and educate the public, but to fulfill the mission of supporting Infantry training at Fort Benning. The underlying theme of the gallery, he says, is how ever-evolving technologies have dictated ever-evolving training since the Infantry’s earliest days.

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**Veteran Statesman Takes Sentimental Journey**

Sen. Bob Dole, a decorated World War II veteran, long-serving Republican lawmaker from Kansas, and former GOP Presidential nominee, visited the National Infantry Museum and Fort Benning April 20 and 21.

Dole attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning in 1944, completing his training as an Infantry second lieutenant. This was his first trip back to the area in 73 years. The 93-year-old, an apparent fan of Twitter, posted a photo of himself on the plane during his flight to Lawson Army Airfield with the message: *Headed to Ft. Benning. Believe it or not, I haven’t been there since 1944. Jiminy! Former Georgia Sen. Mack Mattingly is who encouraged his friend to make the trip and to see the museum’s tribute to Infantrymen like himself.*

Dole later posted a photo taken at Inouye Field, where hundreds of new Soldiers graduate from initial training every week. *Happy to see my dear friend Danny Inouye honored here at Ft. Benning. Well deserved recognition to one of the finest men I ever knew,* he wrote.

Dole said seeing former comrades honored at the museum was an emotional experience. “People who love this country lay down their lives if necessary to protect it, and that is why we are the greatest country in the world!”

In addition to touring the museum, Sen. Dole attended an Officer Candidate School graduation on post and talked to the newly minted officers about threats all over the world. “The world is on fire right now,” he told them, adding that they were now in a position to help fix it.
Groundwork Laid for GWOT Memorial

Progress is on track for a Fall 2017 completion of the new Global War on Terrorism Memorial at the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center. As work wraps up on the granite panels and bronze figures that will be featured on the memorial, crews are preparing the foundation and building the brick walls that will frame it.

The memorial will honor all who have served since September 11, 2001, and will pay personal respect to the nearly 7,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who have given their lives in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The National Infantry Museum Foundation needs to raise $2 million to fund the memorial's construction and to support annual rededications so that names of the recent fallen can be added. Watch for opportunities to donate when the Circle of Heroes campaign is launched. #CircleofHeroes

Gallery Open
(Continued from page 1)

“This time period set the stage for everything that has followed over the past 242 years,” said National Infantry Museum Foundation President Greg Camp. "We are thrilled to finally be able to share this chapter of Infantry history."

The new gallery will be formally dedicated at a ceremony at 10 a.m. Wednesday, June 14, the Army’s 242nd birthday. The guest speaker will be LTG (Ret) Tom Metz, Chairman and CEO of the National Infantry Museum Foundation. The event is open to the public.

Maneuver Center of Excellence Museums
Chief Dave Hanselman gave staff and docents a sneak peek at the new gallery before opening it to the public.
Rockets Climb, Parachutes Fall on NASA Day at the NIM

The Kennedy Space Center has been enticing youngsters in Titusville, Florida, to explore careers in space and science for years. But for the first time ever, they’ve taken their educational outreach program on the road. First stop: Columbus, Georgia, where NASA teamed up with the Coca-Cola Space Science Center, the Columbus Museum and the National Infantry Museum to provide two days of educational and entertaining activities for kids of all ages.

The event kicked off with a free screening of Academy Award Best Picture Nominee Hidden Figures in the Giant Screen Theater and a panel discussion plus question-and-answer period with Rex Engelhardt, KSC’s Launch Services Program Mission Integration Manager. On Saturday, KSC educators helped kids build rockets and parachutes, and demonstrated robots. The other two museums offered different activities. Visitors who got their passports stamped at all three locations took home a commemorative coin.

Top left: Kids play catch with a ball-tossing robot. Bottom left: Youngsters show off the commemorative coins they earned for attending all three NASA Day locations. Center: NASA educators helped kids build parachutes (with little Army men attached, of course) and then drop them from the museum’s mezzanine to a target below. Top right: Kennedy Space Center panelists Rex Engelhardt and Joshua Santora and moderator Shawn Cruzen of the Coca-Cola Space Science Center talked to audiences about how innovations in space science impact everyday life. Bottom right: Kids made their own rockets and then launched them on the museum’s front lawn.
Soldier Marathon Makes Another Big Donation

The annual Soldier Marathon is as much about honoring Soldiers as it is about running. Every year since the elite race began in 2010, organizers have donated more than $150,000 to military beneficiaries including the National Infantry Museum Foundation, the House of Heroes, Team Red White and Blue and Fort Benning Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Registration is open for the 2017 race, which will be run on November 18.

Ranger’s Book Sells Out ... Twice

The lines of people wanting to meet COL (Ret) Ralph Puckett and get their books signed never ended, and on both days of his scheduled book signings in April, copies of Ranger: A Soldier’s Life sold out. The autobiography chronicles COL Puckett’s life on and off the battlefield.

COL Puckett led the Eighth Army Ranger Company during the Korean War and was twice awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He served as the Honorary Colonel of the 75th Ranger Regiment, honorary instructor at the Infantry School, and was an inaugural inductee into the US Army Ranger Hall of Fame in 1992. His first book was Words for Warriors: A Professional Soldier’s Notebook.
WWI Centennial Commissioner Speaks at NIM

Educaor and historian Dr. Monique Seefried was the guest speaker at the National Infantry Museum Foundation’s Leadership Lecture Series in May. Dr. Seefried, who serves on the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, talked about the challenges and opportunities the first world war presented for our country. Prior to her presentation, three authors sold and signed copies of their books exploring various aspects of the war. They included *Send the Alabamians: World War I Fighters in the Rainbow Division* by Rod Frazer, *Wolfhounds and Polar Bears: The American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918-1920* by John House, and *Over the Top*, edited by Dave Stieghan.

The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission, which was established by Congress in 2013, is responsible for developing programs and activities at the national level to commemorate the centennial of World War I. It also works with state and local arms of the commission to organize commemorative events.

As president of the Croix Rouge Farm Memorial Foundation for the last decade, Dr. Seefried oversaw the private purchase of a World War I battlefield in France, and commissioned one of the best sculptors in England to create a memorial statue to the US 42nd (Rainbow) Division.

New WWI Centennial Exhibit Being Planned

The MCoE Museum Staff is preparing a new temporary exhibit celebrating the 100th anniversary of World War I. Although the museum’s *The International Stage: 1898-1920* gallery comprehensively covers this period in history, there are dozens of priceless and fascinating artifacts in the museum’s collection that are not currently on display.

The story line will be different, too, according to Museums Chief David Hanselman. “One of the most significant things about this timeframe is how far the U.S. Army came in such a short period of time,” he said. Before World War I, there were barely 500,000 troops serving. They were engaged primarily in policing actions, chasing Pancho Villa in the Punitive Expedition. Weaponry was primitive and Soldiers were ill-prepared for the harsh environment. But just two short years later, the U.S. had a 4,000,000-man Army with machine guns, tanks, airplanes and advanced techniques and tactics. “That ability made the U.S. a global player for the first time,” Hanselman said.

The pieces selected for the exhibit will reflect those improvements. A well preserved gas mask and case illustrate advancements made in chemical protection. A rare guidon belonging to the first Armor commandant will be displayed. There is even a biscuit tin that represents packaging improvement designed to make rations last longer.

Outside the case will be two macro artifacts: a 1916 White Automotive Co. armored scout car and a 1917 Renault tank. The exhibit is expected to open this summer.
Football Hero Helps Military Families

It’s been 20 years since Herschel Walker played football, but he’s still a rock star -- both to sports fans and to those who suffer with mental illness.

The Heisman Trophy winner, UGA Football Hall of Famer and motivational speaker visited the National Infantry Museum for the second time in April, generously interrupting his tour to pose for photographs and autographs. A day earlier, Walker presented “There is No Shame in Asking for Help” to Soldiers and families at Fort Benning. Walker frequently speaks to military groups about his own experiences with dissociative identity disorder, formerly known as multiple personality disorder.

Army Museum Director Frank Hanner, right, tells Herschel Walker about the two Georgia-made Civil War era cannons that flank the entrance of the Last 100 Yards ramp. Walker was born in Augusta, Georgia, and gained football fame at the University of Georgia in Athens.

Acting Secretary of the Army Tours the Museum

Acting Secretary of the Army Robert Speer made time for a quick tour of the museum after a full day at Fort Benning recently. Speer, who spent 28 years in the Army, is now the Defense Department's senior civilian official. In briefings with MCoE Commanding General LTG Eric Wesley, Chief of Infantry BG Pete Jones and other leaders, Speer received updates on readiness, modernization and gender integration. By 5:30 p.m., he was back at Lawson Army Airfield for the flight back to Andrews Air Force Base.

Acting Secretary of the Army Robert Speer reflects on the heroes whose faces line the walls of the Hall of Valor.
The National Infantry Foundation was established in 1998 to honor our nation’s Infantrymen, past, present and future, and to preserve their legacy. The Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Army, is committed to sharing their legacy through the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center at Patriot Park.

The museum project is sponsored, in part, by the U.S. Department of Defense. The content of this newsletter does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Government and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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