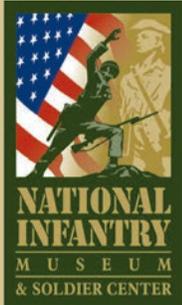


THE INFANTRY HERITAGE LETTER

VOL. 18 ISSUE 3

JULY 2020



for an experience
to remember

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NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM FOUNDATION

1775 Legacy Way
Columbus, Georgia 31903
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nationalinfantrymuseum.org

Field Trip!

NIM Reopens its Doors to Tomorrow's Warriors

With the lingering threat posed by the coronavirus, the National Infantry Museum remains closed to the public. We are just as anxious to reopen as you are, but with one eye on our guests' and staff's safety and the other on state and Army guidelines, we're sitting tight.

But a bright spot has emerged. The NIM and the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning have found a way to allow Soldier trainees back in the museum for heritage tours. These visits were part of their Program of Instruction until the pandemic put a stop to them. After a couple months in limbo, the troops are back.

Several days a week, the museum rolls out the red carpet for a couple hundred young men and women. During their 4- to 6-hour stay, they tour the museum, enjoy a hearty meal in the Fife and Drum restaurant, buy boots and gifts for friends and family in the new Soldier Store, and fill up on pizza and snacks at the concessions stand. It's a treat for these hard-working trainees, and it gives them a deeper understanding the profession they've chosen.

The only way to make this work is to keep the Soldiers segregated from the public. Fort Benning still is not allowing family members on post, even for graduations. Nor are trainees allowed to leave post. That's how the post has kept them protected from the virus. To make sure they stay clean, the museum has implemented a stringent and exhaustive sanitizing program in-between visits.

We'd love to have you back, too, to learn about the Infantry's heritage and to meet our future warriors as they stroll through the galleries. But the last thing we need is to sicken our nation's fighting force. We hope we can bring everyone together again soon. In the meantime, please continue your support of the museum as it honors today's Soldiers as well as all those who came before them.



Director of Education and Volunteer Services Chris Lewis leads Soldiers up the Last 100 Yards, teaching them about the heritage of the branch they're joining.



Soldiers are briefed on arrival by National Infantry Association President Rob Choppa. During their 4-6 hour visit, the Soldiers can tour the galleries on their own, enjoy a session in the DownRange Combat Simulators or indulge in a big burger at the Fife and Drum restaurant.

Memorial Day and Independence Day Celebrations Go Virtual

With state restrictions on the size of public gatherings, the National Infantry Museum made the difficult decision to turn its annual Memorial Day commemoration virtual, and to cancel the popular Freedom Fest celebration of Independence Day. But the nation has become accustomed to the need to take events online, and public reception to both decisions has been well received.

On Memorial Day, the museum produced a video event on Facebook honoring all who've given their lives in service to their country. Veterans from the museum -- including Executive Vice President Andy Redmond, Vice President and Director of Operations Steve McClaffin, National Infantry Association President Rob Choppa and former Weekend Operations Manager Jim Talley



(pictured) -- answered the question *Who do you Remember?* by offering heartfelt tributes to fallen Soldiers they'd served with. Each stood near the names of their heroes on the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall and the Global War on Terrorism Memorial.

Memorial Day is one of two days of the year the museum holds paver dedication ceremonies. This year, National Infantry Museum Foundation President and COO BG (Ret) Pete Jones shared stories of some of the warriors who are being remembered on those custom-engraved pavers. Director of Dedications Ilene Kent recorded a segment illustrating how the pavers are cut, etched and installed. Army Chaplain Anthony Randall provided the invocation.

The Memorial Day event ended with a video salute to the 2019 Global War on Terrorism Memorial rededication ceremony. The entire Memorial Day video can be viewed on the museum's YouTube channel.

With the 110 pavers dedicated this Memorial Day, the total number of pavers along Heritage Walk exceeds 6,700. The next dedication ceremony will be on Veterans Day. The deadline to order pavers in advance of that event is October 16. To learn more about the commemorative paver program, contact Ilene Kent at 706-221-4429.

As much as we wanted to give families a getaway from months of being homebound, we just could not find a way to do Freedom Fest in a way that would be both safe and fun. Instead, we celebrated our nation's 244th birthday by loading up our social media pages with memories of last year's event and posts about the fight for independence.

Assuming we beat this pandemic, mark your calendars for a bigger and better Freedom Fest next year!



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Meet The Clean Team

Next time you visit the NIM, be sure to thank the staffers you meet for the hard work they've put into cleaning the museum.

The building was virtually empty during Georgia's stay-at-home order in March and April. Now the staff is back, but with the museum still closed to the public, it was a good time to give the building a serious cleaning.

Staffers polished woodwork, scrubbed monuments and pavers, painted exterior doors and interior walls, and even refinished the wood trim on

theater lobby tables. The stainless steel kitchens in the Fife and Drum and the Rally Point Canteen are sparkling. The replica Blackhawk combat simulator is freshly painted.

Now that Soldier tours have resumed, the cleaning protocol has been elevated to ensure the Soldiers stay healthy. Before each unit arrives, housekeepers wipe down every surface in the museum with disinfecting solutions. When they leave, the process starts all over again.

Thanks, team, for making us safe and looking so good!



Memorial Rededication Set for September 12

At this point, engravers expect to add 40 names to the granite panels of the National Infantry Museum's Global War on Terrorism Memorial later this summer. That will bring the total to 7,021. The names belong to the men and women in all military branches who have given their lives in the war since 9/11.

and military members who wish to express their support and honor those who've made the ultimate sacrifice.

As the museum's special guests, the Gold Star families will be invited to an exclusive dinner the night before the rededication. Local sponsors have purchased gifts for them to take home as a keepsake of their visit. They'll also be invited to brunch and fellowship following the dedication.

Lingering restrictions on large gatherings may force some changes to the annual event, but the National Infantry Museum Foundation is committed to providing its guests an event that is both significant and safe.

If you know a Gold Star family, please ask them to call us for more information about the rededication. Invitations are starting to go out now. Be sure to mark your calendars for the ceremony Saturday, September 12, at 9 a.m.



The memorial's annual rededication is scheduled for Saturday, September 12, 2020, at the museum. The guests of honor will be Gold Star families -- those who've lost a child, parent or sibling -- in service to their country. They'll come from all over the country, joined by area civilians

Keeping in Touch

We wish we could invite you inside, but until we can, we'll keep in touch on our social media pages. Here are just a few of the things we've done virtually since the pandemic began.

The 75th anniversary of the Korean War and the 76th anniversary of D-Day

An image using M-4s, water cans and frag grenades to illustrate 6 feet of social distancing

62 live-streamed Turning Blue, Turning Green and graduation ceremonies for new Infantry Soldiers

A chart teaching kids the military alphabet

Book readings by our education staff

Historic events at the NIM revisited

Stories behind our priceless collection of artifacts and much more!

Stay connected to the NIM on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter!



Comings and Goings at the NIM

Chris Lewis entered the Army like a lot of kids. "I'll stay for four years and figure out the rest later," he recalled.

But it would be 31 years before Chris left the Army, and now has embarked on yet a new career as the Director of Education and Volunteer Services at the National Infantry Museum.

The Army was the perfect place for this Boston-born history buff to plant his feet. His assignments landed him in a variety of units, from Airborne to Mechanized Infantry to Light Infantry to Stryker. Career highlights include deploying to combat as a Platoon Sergeant with the 82nd Airborne Division, and becoming a paratrooper in the 505th Parachute Infantry. After six tours to Afghanistan and Iraq, Chris retired as Command Sergeant Major of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry, on Fort Benning's Sand Hill.

All those years of experience leading troops will translate to the NIM, where he'll help grow the museum's educational and volunteer programs.

Although he's always wanted to work in a military museum, Chris never imagined he'd spend his first year on the job figuring out how to teach Infantry history during a pandemic.

"I regret that we haven't been able to invite the public back yet," he said, "but I'm proud of what the staff has done to allow Soldiers to continue their training on the heritage, culture and traditions of the



Even before starting work at the NIM, Chris often volunteered in full WWII dress for museum events.

United States Army Infantry."

Chris and his wife Mikey have been married 12 years. They both love music, and they have a son who is about to start his third year at Virginia Tech.

Meanwhile, the NIM has bid farewell to another Command Sergeant Major, Steve McClaffin.

Steve launched his civilian career at the museum in 2013 following his retirement as the top enlisted officer of the Army's Infantry School. As Vice President and Director of Operations, Steve managed all kinds of projects including monuments, memorials, grounds, security, maintenance, attractions and more.

But his daughter in Indiana recently had the family's first grandbaby, and that was enough to lure Steve and wife Jackie back home.

With 27 years serving his country and 7 more honoring Soldiers at the museum, Steve has left a mark on the Infantry community that will last forever. He's still deciding what to do next, but whatever it is, we're sure it will be in support of Soldiers.



Museum Foundation President LTG (Ret) Tom Metz presents one of many gifts to Steve at his going away party, a framed print of the museum and the Infantry Silver Dollar.

Rotary Goes Virtual at the NIM

Having done weekly virtual meetings since the pandemic began, the Rotary Club of Columbus undertook an even bigger effort for its Memorial Day meeting. President Tyler Townsend and Past President (and media guru) Ryan Clements packed up the bell and gavel for a live-streamed broadcast from the National Infantry Museum on May 20.

Their special guests were Gold Star Mom Janet Crane and Gold Star wife Nicole DiCenzo. The club's leadership wants all members to know what Gold Star family members are, and how they should be remembered on Memorial Day and beyond.

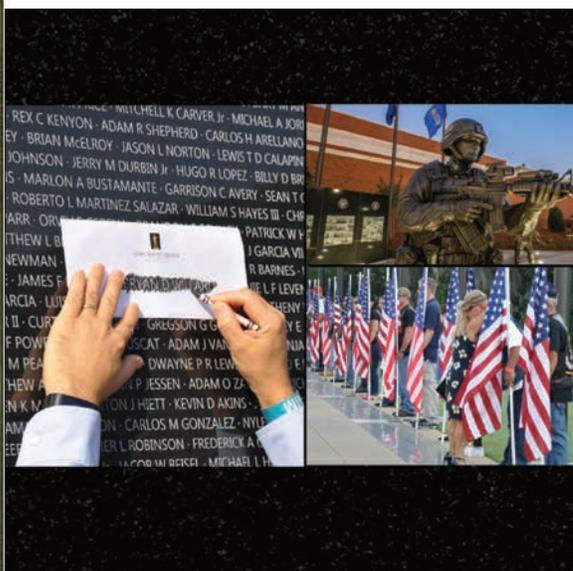
Janet's son, SPC Jason Edens, was a 22-year-old Soldier from Fort Bliss when he was killed by small arms fire in Laghman Province, Afghanistan in 2012. Nicole's husband, CPT Douglas DiCenzo, was

killed in 2006 when his Humvee drove over a roadside bomb. He was 30 years old; the couple had an 18-month-old baby.

Both women bravely tell their stories not only to keep their loved ones' memory alive, but to help others understand the sacrifices that Gold Star families make every day.



Ryan Clements monitors the live feed as Nicole DiCenzo shares her story. Seated are club president Tyler Townsend and Gold Star Mom Janet Crane.



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NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM

Rest in Peace, Good Soldier

The National Infantry Museum Foundation mourns the July 10 passing of South Korean war hero Paik Sun-Yup. Paik was legendary among his countrymen and was widely credited with saving the country from falling under the control of North Korea.

As a young commander in the early 1950s, Paik led his troops to victory in numerous Korean War battles. He became Korea's first four-star general.

At his funeral, US Forces Korea commander General Robert Abrams praised Paik as "a patriot, a soldier's soldier and one of the founding fathers of (Korea's and the United States') ironclad alliance." Soil from eight Korean War battlefields was scattered over his coffin.

Paik also was a great friend and partner to the National Infantry Museum. He helped raise more than \$1.5 million from the Korean government, the Korean Army and Samsung Corp. for the museum's Cold War gallery. The gallery honors the relationship between South Korea and the U.S. in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Paik made numerous trips to the museum, always declaring his appreciation for the longstanding support of his American friends.

In March 2009, Paik graciously accepted the museum's invitation to participate in the dedication of Inouye Field. He and fellow Korean War hero Colonel Ola Lee Mize spread soil from Korean War battlefields to give young Soldiers graduating on that field a tangible connection to the Infantry's past.

Paik was 99 years old. Thank you for your service, Sir. Rest in peace.



General Paik (right) and fellow Korean War hero Colonel Ola Lee Mize spread soil from Korean battlefields during the dedication of Inouye Field in March 2009.



Clockwise from top left: General Paik is joined by then-Commanding General at Fort Benning MG Mike Barbero, former National Advisory Board Chairman GEN Ed Burba and former NIMF President MG Jerry White in dedicating the new Korean War gallery in 2009. The gallery features an interactive map of North and South Korea, a recreated mortar pit dedicated to Korea War Soldiers, and cases of artifacts, including one with a tribute to General Paik. A plaque at the gallery's entrance is dedicated to "the Infantrymen of the Korean Army, the Korean Government and Samsung Corporation" for their support of the museum.



General Paik (left) and General Burba (right) are joined by Korean businessmen in Atlanta in 2007 in celebration of Korea's donation to the NIM.



General Paik and General Jay Hendrix (center) of the foundation's National Advisory Board present a check representing donations from every Korean Army officer who served at Fort Benning since the Korean War.

When the Show Must Go On



We're nearly five months into this war with COVID-19, but we're still holding onto hope for a return to "normal." Some people won't be comfortable until the virus goes away or a vaccine is available. Others are looking for ways to live their lives like they used to, but with modifications. Whether it's a wedding, a reunion or a retirement celebration, parties are still being planned. We understand that, and we're standing by to let you know that although the museum remains closed to the public, we can help you make those special life events happen.

Our Events staff can tell you all about the spaces you can rent -- by phone, with video, or in person (socially distanced and with masks, of course) -- whatever you prefer. We've become experts on

state guidelines for entertaining guests safely. If you're still a little leery, we can book your event for months in advance, or when experts expect to have this pandemic under control.

If you've decided to go ahead with a wedding ceremony, let us offer you a creative and affordable solution. We call them Mini-Monies. For just \$800, you can spend five exclusive hours at the museum with up to 40 guests. Use the grand rotunda as the backdrop for your ceremony, then enjoy dancing and dining in our exquisite outdoor courtyard. We'll have a team member on site dedicated to keeping your friends and family safe and making your day perfect. Want to learn more? Call us at 706-685-5809.

A New Way to Show Your Pride!



Families, you may not be able to attend your Soldiers' graduation, but you **can** send them an awesome graduation gift! And Soldiers, you may not be able to hug your parents in appreciation for letting you survive this long, but you **can** send them an awesome thank you gift! These are just a couple of great excuses for visiting the museum's brand new Soldier Store.

The entire store has been reimagined with top quality must-haves for Soldiers, patriotic household items and decor for families, fun toys for both little kids and grown-up kids, super-cool apparel and much more. Prices are very affordable.

For now, while the museum is closed to the public, these items are available only online. Soldiers in training who come to the museum to learn about their heritage get the chance to shop in person. They can take their purchases back to the barracks, or they can opt to have them shipped home.

Take some to do a little window shopping at www.infantrygifts.com. Your purchases will make someone feel really special, and you'll be helping to support the National Infantry Museum!

Day Campers Get Much Needed Break from Quarantine

As we know, kids are resilient, and are probably weathering this pandemic better than most grownups. A sure sign of that was seen at the NIM's Summer Camp this year, where not even masks and tiresome handwashing could diminish their fun.

The museum kept the weekly day camp sessions small this year, to make sure kids had plenty of room to keep their distance. Hand-washing stations were placed throughout World War II Company Street, and equipment and supplies were sanitized between each use.

Camp Director Alexis Belman says the kids adapted to the new rules quickly, even reminding others to put masks back on. "We put Xs in some places to show them where to sit or stand," she said. "And a couple of our especially tall counselors could simply lie on the ground to demon-



strate a six-foot distance!"

The campers enjoyed battle reenactments, nature hikes, obstacle courses and game making. They learned about trench warfare during a water balloon fight and platoon teamwork in a game of dodgeball.

School Tours Without Masks or Buses

Educators are having to reinvent the wheel as they head into the new school year. Should classes be held in person or online? With just weeks before the new school year is to start, there are still more questions than answers.

One thing we can be quite sure of is that there'll be no field trips for the foreseeable future. Even if the spread of coronavirus subsides, budgetary concerns will keep buses parked during the school day. So the museum's education department has been working diligently on solutions to keep kids educated and engaged on the subject of American military history when a visit to the museum isn't an option.

They are preparing a series of virtual classroom tours that kids can do online, either as part of a teacher's curriculum, or on their own. For instance, a series of lessons might focus on each of the battles depicted on the museum's Last 100 Yards ramp. After a short lesson on the Capture of Redoubt #10 in the Revolutionary War, students may be asked to name some of the key commanders or define new vocabulary words. The lessons are interactive and engaging, and meet the curriculum requirements of area school districts.

Another new platform being explored is called Vamonde. Vamonde is a place-based storytelling app that contains "adventures" the user can go take. The NIM could post a "tour" of World War II Company Street using pictures and text that visitors can use to enhance their self-guided tour. Or, people who are considering a visit to the museum can use it to get a better idea of what they'll see when they get here. While the museum is still closed because of the pandemic, fans can use it to quench their thirst for Infantry history.

Watch for more information on these new programs. They're expected to roll out as the school year begins.

Warrior Dog Exhibit Coming to the NIM

Military working dogs have long been used in combat. They've sent messages, patrolled the perimeter, guarded prisoners, detected mines. Today's working dogs even wear cameras and microphones to relay audio and visual information to their handlers. Sadly, their service on the frontlines often leaves them gravely wounded, just like their human counterparts.

The National Infantry Museum is proud to announce the arrival of a new traveling exhibit paying homage to wounded warrior working dogs. The collection of eight dogs was carved by Ohio master craftsman James Mellick.

The exhibit's opening date will be determined after the museum reopens. Stay tuned to our social media pages and website to learn more about the exhibit called *Canine Warriors – Courage and Sacrifice, Always Beside You*.





By joining the 1775 Society, you are part of an exclusive, annual membership group that provides significant financial support to help the National Infantry Museum Foundation achieve its mission of honoring Soldiers – past, present, and future. To learn more about supporting your museum, contact Jane Bayer at 706-685-2604 or jbayer@nationalinfantryfoundation.org.

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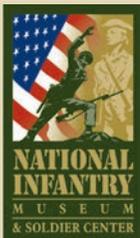
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The National Infantry Foundation was established in 1998 to honor our nation's Infantrymen, past, present and future, and to preserve their legacy. The Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Army, is committed to sharing their legacy through the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

The museum 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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