

National Infantry Museum

Columbus, Georgia

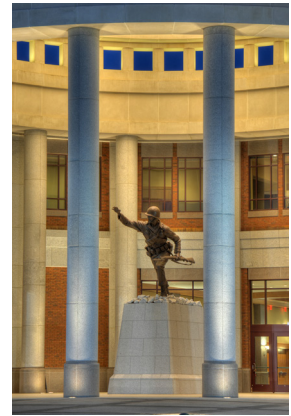
Role: Architect & Museum Planner for New Museum; lead team of engineers and specialist consultants; collaborated with a team of exhibit designers (Christopher Chadbourne)

Program: Interactive military history exhibits (65,000 sf), theaters, lobby, cafe, gift shop, function space, archives, collections, classrooms, exhibit support, and offices

Building Area: 185,000 sf

Status: Opened in 2009

Description: The National Infantry Museum is located on a 200-acre site connecting Ft. Benning and the City of Columbus. This dramatic new museum is a place to simultaneously preserve and share the heritage of the U.S. Army Infantry. Through dynamic spaces, including 65,000 SF of interactive exhibits and theaters, it presents the contributions of the Infantry to the founding and growth of the nation and the preservation of freedom throughout the world. The museum is organized around the primary message, "The Infantry Owns the Last 100 Yards." Visitors literally traverse a 100-yard upward sloping ramp accompanying the Infantry through 234 years of its history. The National Infantry Foundation, the museum's sponsoring organization led by Major General Jerry White, set high goals for the new facility that would replace Ft. Benning's aging museum. Beyond a permanent home for an enviable collection of 30,000 military artifacts and a fitting memorial to Infantrymen everywhere, the Foundation envisioned the new museum as a place to educate the American public on the role of a military branch that parallels the nation's history. Specifically, the Foundation targeted a state-of-the-art museum so interactive and entertaining that it would attract 500,000 visitors a year to dynamic galleries, high-tech classrooms, experiential theaters, and ceremonial venues. As for the design of the building and development of the 200-acre site, the Foundation sought a world-class facility that would link Fort Benning with Columbus, GA and serve as a catalyst for economic growth. The museum's message is





best illustrated by the fact that no war in all of history has been won without an Infantryman seizing the land at the very end. Thus, the design challenge was the creation of The Last 100 Yards—an exhibit that stretches out like a bayonet through the central gallery space, ascending from the first to the second floor of the museum. As the museum's signature exhibit, this powerful multi-dimensional cinematic experience was designed to enlist visitors into the ranks of

the Infantry as they take the final advance over more than 200 years of American history, from the Revolutionary Era to the Gulf Wars.