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GEN Abizaid to Lead National Infantry Museum Project Honoring Soldiers in the War on Terrorism

Blue ribbon panel enlisted to help design memorial and update exhibits

Columbus, Georgia – July 22, 2015: GEN (Ret) John Abizaid, the man who led American military forces across most of the Middle East from 2003 to 2007, has taken on a new role as head of the National Infantry Museum’s efforts to complete the story of Soldiers’ service in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). GEN Abizaid has visited the museum to begin laying the groundwork, and has enlisted a team of fellow four-star generals to help him get the job done.

The enhancements include a new large-scale outdoor memorial featuring the 14-foot steel beam taken from the wreckage of World Trade Center Tower 1, donated to the museum by New York City firefighters. In addition, a new film will be produced for the museum’s Line in the Sand Theater chronicling the Army’s fight from 2001 to the present, and some of the exhibits in the Sole Superpower gallery will be updated.

“This is a living museum,” National Infantry Foundation Chairman and CEO LTG (Ret) Carmen Cavezza explained. “The story of the Global War on Terrorism has changed significantly since the museum opened in 2009, and our Soldiers are still in the fight. The museum needs to continue to grow and evolve if we are to achieve our mission of honoring them for their service and sacrifice.”

GEN Abizaid retired from the United States Army after 34 years, earning four stars and becoming the longest-serving commander of United States Central Command. He was responsible for all military operations and activities in 27 nations in the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East, the Horn of Africa,

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GEN (Ret) John Abizaid, fourth from left, meets with National Infantry Foundation board members and others June 24 at the site of the new memorial.



Presentation of World Trade Center beam from New York City firefighters to National Infantry Museum (September 2009)

and Central Asia.

Since retiring from the Army in 2007, Abizaid has lent his expertise in matters of the Middle East in various consulting capacities. He enthusiastically accepted a request by officers of the National Infantry Museum Foundation to help design the Global War on Terrorism memorial and update the stories told in the museum's film and exhibits.

"I can't think of a more meaningful way for me to help," Abizaid said. "The Soldiers who have served and continue to fight against terrorists worldwide deserve to have their story fully told in the National Infantry Museum."

Abizaid has recruited a blue-ribbon committee of associates – all retired four-star generals who held command positions in the War on Terrorism – to help oversee planning for the improvements. They include:



General Stanley A. McChrystal – McChrystal's last assignment was as Commander, International Security Assistance Force and Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan. As Commander, Joint Special Operations Command from 2003 to 2008, he was credited with the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.



General George W. Casey, Jr. – Casey retired after serving President George W. Bush as the 36th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army from 2007 to 2011. He previously served as Commanding General, Multi-National Force – Iraq from 2004 to 2007.



General Charles H. Jacoby, Jr. – Jacoby served as Commander, United States Northern Command and Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command from 2011 to 2014. Jacoby was the first Army officer to assume command of Northern Command.

Abizaid's first on-site meeting on the project was in late June. Early plans for the memorial call for a name-by-name listing of all those killed serving their country since September 11, 2001. It would recognize troops from all branches of the United States military. A separate panel might recognize U.S. allies and coalition partners.

"This is potentially the first national level monument to the current conflict," Abizaid said. "This is the perfect place for it, and I am committed to making sure it adequately honors the hundreds of thousands of Soldiers who have sacrificed so much."

The team of retired generals has also promised to help raise money for the project. Additional funding will come from the National Infantry Foundation's phase II capital campaign called Advancing the Mission: the Campaign to Honor Heroes. The campaign to date has raised close to \$9 million. Other planned projects include designing and fabricating the last remaining artifact gallery, building a patio garden for outdoor events, completing the Vietnam War Memorial, enhancing the functionality of the theater by installing a stage and equipment suitable for meetings and presentations, and creating a special effects Infantry Theater experience.

No date has been set for dedicating the Global War on Terrorism Memorial.

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The National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center at Patriot Park, a 155-acre tract linking Columbus, Georgia, and the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, is the first world-class site to pay tribute to the U.S. Army Infantryman and those who fight alongside him. As the only interactive Army Museum in the United States, the museum showcases the contributions of the Infantry Soldier in every war fought by the U.S. by offering immersive participation and engaging visitors in the unique experiences of the Infantry Soldier. The complex also includes a parade field, memorial walk of honor, authentic World War II Company Street, Vietnam Memorial Plaza, and 3-D IMAX® Theatre. For more information, visit www.nationalinfantrymuseum.org.