



MEDIA ADVISORY

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NIM Nominated for Best Free Museum in U.S.!

USA Today Readers' Choice Award open for voting

Columbus, Georgia – August 4, 2016: *USA Today's* travel experts have selected the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center as one of the nation's top 20 contenders for best free museums in its 2016 Readers' Choice Awards contest. When voting is completed at the end of August, the multi-platform media company will announce its **10 Best Free Museums**.

"This is great feather in our cap, for a national news organization like *USA Today* to recognize the Smithsonian-like quality of the National Infantry Museum," said LTG (Ret) Carmen Cavezza, Chairman and CEO of the National Infantry Museum Foundation. "Having a **10 Best** endorsement will give travelers one more reason to discover for themselves how the NIM honors Soldiers and the sacrifices they make preserving our freedom."

National recognition has grown steadily since the \$110 million museum opened in 2009. The museum won a prestigious global award from the Themed Entertainment Industry in 2011. In 2014, *USA Today's* travel writers included the National Infantry Museum in a list of Top Ten Military Museums. The museum is #1 among Columbus attractions on TripAdvisor, with more than 90 percent of the 1,400 reviewers giving it a full five-star rating.

"People are often surprised to find a museum of this caliber in Columbus, Georgia," Cavezza said. "But Fort Benning has long been known as the Home of the Infantry, and so it made perfect sense for this world-class tribute to be erected right here, where Infantrymen and their families can get immersed in the legacy every day."

The 190,000-square-foot National Infantry Museum contains a collection of nearly 30,000 priceless artifacts documenting the Infantry story, which dates to 1775. Its signature attraction, the Last 100 Yards, features life-size vignettes of eight of the most important battles in Infantry

history. Galleries tell the stories of the training of a Soldier, the Medals of Honor awarded to Infantrymen, and the sacrifices loved ones make in support of the military. Era galleries trace the most important periods of Infantry history, engaging visitors of all ages with high-tech, immersive displays. The museum's campus includes an authentic World War II Company Street with seven restored buildings that were constructed on Fort Benning during the build-up to World War II. There is a Memorial Walk of Honor paying tribute to Infantry units and organizations and a Vietnam Memorial Plaza, featuring a ¾-scale replica Vietnam Wall. Plans are underway for a 2017 dedication of a large-scale memorial to those who gave their lives in the Global War on Terrorism.

Every week, trainees transition into America's newest Soldiers during formal graduation ceremonies on the adjacent Inouye Field. These public ceremonies are not only moments of pride for the families of the graduates, they are living and moving testimonials that enhance the general public's appreciation of the United States Armed Forces.

To help the National Infantry Museum gain greater national exposure, please cast a vote in *USA Today's* 2016 Readers' Choice Awards in the category of Best Free Museums. Votes can be cast once each day at www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-free-museum/ until the contest ends August 29, 2016. *USA Today* will announce the 10 Best Free Museums on September 2, 2016.

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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, Vietnam Memorial Plaza, authentic World War II Company Street and Giant Screen Theater. For more information, visit www.nationalinfantrymuseum.org.