

# MUSEUMS



JAMES C. SVEHLA/PHOTOS FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Omaha Beach, one of the landing areas in the D-Day invasion during World War II, is evoked at the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park.

## Division has storied history

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every closed door.

But technology still isn't the main point at the museum, which opened in 1960 and moved into its present building in 1992. The people who fought in these wars, those who did the fighting in the First, are. The new exhibition and the makeover of the old one, guided by Luci Creative, of Lincolnwood, strive to emphasize human stories.

"We wanted to show what it was like to be a soldier," said AJ Goehle, Luci's director of strategy and design, during a media preview Monday.

Display cases emphasize the things soldiers carried, the personal items that remind us these are our neighbors, our uncles, our mothers. The memorabilia on display, wartime souvenirs such as a French town sign, were often donated by former First Division soldiers.

"We are proud to be the custodians of seven Medals of Honor," said Paul Herbert, the museum's executive director. And the stories of those men, short tales of heroism and sacrifice interspersed amid the artifacts and the battle maps, tug hard at the heartstrings. "We make three big points," Herbert said. "This is our division, our soldiers, our missions. That's 'our' as in 'we the people.'"

The museum had been averaging about 175,000 visitors a year and hopes the changes might bump that figure up to 200,000, Herbert said.

The museum doesn't hammer home patriotism. It doesn't need to. What's underscored here is

### First Division Museum

**When:** Open daily except Mondays

**Where:** 1s151 Winfield Road, Wheaton

**How much:** free admission, \$5 per car parking (\$10 on summer weekends); 630-260-8185 or [www.fdmuseum.org](http://www.fdmuseum.org).

deeper than wearing an American flag pin in a lapel, say. It's something fundamental to the idea of the nation.

"The civil-military contract in which we are not afraid of our soldiers is almost unique in the world and one of the most important things in our democracy," Herbert said.

Many now-famous men passed through the ranks of the First: the film director Sam Fuller, whose footage from a liberated concentration camp shows in the WWII section; future Sen. Sam Ervin, who guided the Senate's Watergate Committee; and Theodore Roosevelt Jr., a 1D officer in both world wars.

And, of course, there was McCormick, who named the Wheaton property, which now also houses public golf courses and gardens, after the French town the First had to take from Germans in the inaugural American battle in World War I.

There is new signage throughout, rich with information but contemporary in its feel. The one explaining how a WWI trench was built and used, for instance,



The interior of a Bradley Fighting Vehicle is featured among equipment at the Wheaton museum.



The Army's First Infantry Division has been around for more than 100 years. The museum includes new exhibits and some remade displays.

gave me the best sense I've ever had of those infamous shelters. But the overall metaphor for the museum's main exhibition, which covers the First from inception through Vietnam, remains almost

a walk-through diorama. The route that follows the division through these conflicts puts you in the settings, whether it's a shattered building in Cantigny with an early-generation

French tank looming overhead, or in a European forest at the Battle of the Bulge, or amid the chaos on Omaha Beach, in Normandy, on D-Day.

"A million things went wrong with the plan to take Omaha Beach," Herbert said, including men becoming separated from their commanders. "The reason we took the beach is because the soldiers of the First Division took over."

"In the 100-year history of the First Division," he said, "this is the best moment. And it's a moment on which the history of the war literally turned."

As it did at Normandy, the First got some of the military's toughest missions and, from the story the museum presents, it has developed a reputation for executing them well — "the best troops I had," in a quote on display from Gen. Omar Bradley.

The museum dedicated to commemorating the First is doing a fine job living up to that tradition of excellence.

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## SEE IT NOW

### A global gathering of print media

The Chicago Printmakers Collaborative, the city's longest-running independent print shop, is hosting "On Paper," an exhibition celebrating this year's International Printmaking Award. Drawing in 28 winners and finalists from 15 countries, "Paper" shows how printmaking traditions and innovations move throughout the world.

From Japan, Kouki Tsuritani shows "Moonlit Night," a mezzotint that feels eerie and soothing in its swamping, shadowy use of color and shape. The medium of mezzotint resembles tattooing: A fine-toothed tool called a "rocker" methodically and consistently punctures a copper plate until its entire surface holds ink, allowing for a rich and various array of tones once put to print. While mezzotint was invented in Germany during the 1600s and faded with the invention of pho-



CARRIE LINGSCHHEIT PHOTO

"Kindred" is among featured works at the Printmakers Collaborative.

tography, it had a resurgence during the 20th century. Tsuritani's masterful work is an example of why such a practice endures.

The gallery also features Chi-

cago's Carrie Lingscheit, in an intaglio print titled "Kindred." The intaglio print features a moon made of swirling water, with a girl standing in front of it,

tightly embracing a shadow. "Kindred," while simple in elements, offers a tangle of narratives and moods, all established by the visceral sense of movement and muscle the printmaker has created. *Through Sept. 2, Chicago Printmakers Collaborative, 4912 N. Western Ave., Chicago; [www.chicagoprintmakers.com](http://www.chicagoprintmakers.com) — K.T. Hawbaker*

### Environment offers artistic inspiration

According to a few primeval rock blogs, it was Ian Brown, lead singer of the Stone Roses, who first said, "It's not where you're from, it's where you're at." While it's a line that's been used in everything from boxing films to cellphone ads, it gets a fresh new look at Sidewinder Gallery's show "Moving Point."

The exhibition brings together Connor Francis, Douglas Stapleton and Gene Skala in a curation that unpacks the relationship between the artist and their location.

Francis' abstract paintings are breezy and playful. He builds his canvases layer by layer, manipulating the paint with tools ranging from palette knives to bare hands

to rags, while scraping and reapplying throughout the process. The formal aspects of this work imply an interaction with an environment, a relationship of addition and intervention. Francis' carefree use of color, line and shape add an additional organic quality that evokes joy.

Stapleton's collages use found images that are self-referential and muddled. An anthropologist in a previous life, Stapleton uses the medium to directly respond to the dramatic history of Western art. Like someone doing cultural fieldwork, Stapleton pieces together highly charged, representational fragments of images to create a loaded, often religious, narrative.

The paintings of Skala round out the trio. While the artist doesn't want to claim surrealism, this show's artwork is akin to scenes out of a David Lynch movie.

In the artist statement, Skala writes that the paintings are "references to a dream state and the dreamer's own conscious awareness of their place within it." *Through Sept. 3, Sidewinder Gallery, 4880 N. Clark St., Chicago; [www.sidewindergallery.com](http://www.sidewindergallery.com) — K.H.*