
Conflict Zone, a Traveling War Photography Exhibit, Debuts March 1

First Division Museum show features the work of combat veteran and military journalists

WHEATON, IL, Feb. 25, 2013 — The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park invites the public to its Spring Exhibit beginning March 1 and running through April 14. Admission is free.

“Conflict Zone” is a multimedia exhibit that will transport viewers to the front lines of Iraq and Afghanistan. It is the first show featuring the work of Johancharles “Chuck” Van Boers, a combat photographer from the U.S. Army who won two Bronze Stars and three Purple Hearts.

Van Boers, a retired Army master sergeant with a 26-year military career, photographed soldiers from Apache Troop, 2-7 Calvary, 2nd Brigade Combat Team from the 1st Calvary Division providing medical aide to journalist James Hider, a British reporter embedded with the unit during the 2004 Battle of Fallujah in Iraq.

Other new contributors to the groundbreaking exhibit include decorated military journalists Stacy L. Pearsall and Lance Cpl. Jose Ortiz; award-winners Michael Kamber, Nicole Frugé and Ross Taylor, the 2012 National Press Photographers Association's Photojournalist of the Year; and Craig F. Walker of *The Denver Post*, who won the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography in 2010 and 2012.

After *New York Times* contract photographer João Silva was severely injured in October 2010, more than 20 combat journalists pooled their images from Iraq and Afghanistan to create “Conflict Zone,” the first collaboration of its kind. Both civilian and military journalists are represented in the exhibit, including several currently deployed or on assignment.

Silva is the editor of the exhibit that will visit the First Division Museum. Conflict Zone opened May 7, 2011, in Chicago, and is now traveling throughout the United States.

“The photographers and journalists of Conflict Zone are scattered, some still on the battlefield, which made this extraordinarily difficult to pull together,” said Jackie Spinner, co-director of the exhibit and a former Baghdad bureau chief for *The Washington Post*. “We have Army photographers and some of the biggest names in combat journalism. We have print, multimedia and old school photographers who remember what a darkroom is. And all of them signed on to help João and to help injured troops.”

Spinner will appear at the First Division Museum’s “talk back” event on Thursday, March 14, at 7 pm. The public is invited.

Other contributors to Conflict Zone are the late Chris Hondros and award-winners Andrea Bruce, Greg Marinovich, Jason P. Howe, Ben Brody and Jeff Newton of CBS’s “60 Minutes.” The work exhibited in Conflict Zone first appeared in *The New York Times*, Getty Images, *The Washington Post*, *GlobalPost*, *San Antonio Express-News*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *St. Petersburg Times* and *USA Today*, among others.

Hondros was a key supporter of Conflict Zone before he was killed in Libya in 2011 while on assignment for Getty Images. The exhibit is dedicated to him.

"Chris believed in Conflict Zone's potential to bring the unique perspectives of conflict photojournalists, documenting both the harsh realities and nuances of war, to a wider range of audiences," said Christina Piaia, president of the Chris Hondros Fund. "This very possibility—to engage the public about the work of photojournalists in conflict and the effects of conflict on civilians, combatants and society—is the impetus for the Fund's continued support of Conflict Zone and our efforts to raise awareness on such important issues."

Conflict Zone is a special project of The Independence Fund, a non-profit that helps meet some of the long-term financial and equipment needs of severely injured troops and their families.

"Hopefully the awareness will translate into funds to help ease some of the suffering and spur the transition to resolve the conflict into comfort zones," said Jerry Kykisz, a Vietnam veteran who was the original curator for Conflict Zone and a member of the Board of Directors of the National Veterans Art Museum. He is the exhibit's co-director and manages the permanent collection of Conflict Zone.

A gallery of select images from Conflict Zone can be viewed at conflictzone.org. The multimedia website was created by Laura Sellinger, a combat veteran who was injured in Iraq while deployed for the U.S. Air Force as an intelligence specialist.

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About the First Division Museum

The First Division Museum at Cantigny Park, part of the nonprofit Chicago-based Robert R. McCormick Foundations, promotes public learning about America's military heritage and affairs through the history of the Big Red One—the famed 1st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army. It stands in tribute to all who have served our country in the armed forces. The museum's main exhibit hall transports visitors to the trenches of World War I, the beaches of World War II and the jungles of Vietnam. Outside, tanks are displayed from every era, along with personnel carriers and artillery. The Robert R. McCormick Research Center, open to the public, houses the museum's library, archival and photo collections. Visit the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park online at FirstDivisionMuseum.org.

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