Our Division, Our Soldiers, Our Missions

Our Division: The Big Red One
Welcome to the First Division Museum, where you can learn the story of the 1st Infantry Division of the US Army, the famous ‘Big Red One.’ Created in 1917 to fight in World War I, the 1st Division is America’s first and oldest combat division, with continuous active duty since 1917 and service in every American conflict except the Korean War.

‘No Mission Too Difficult, No Sacrifice Too Great-Duty First!’ The division’s motto has inspired and bonded many generations of 1st Division soldiers. It is part of the powerful identity and esprit shared by all who have served and continue to serve with the division.

Our Soldiers: No Sacrifice Too Great
We present the ongoing history of the First Division through the stories, words and voices of the men and women who are the heart and soul of the division. They were and are ‘our’ soldiers-our relatives, our neighbors, our friends and, most important, our fellow citizens. Our soldiers take an oath to serve our country regardless of risk, danger or hardship. Their ethic of selfless service can cost them their lives- more than 13,000 1st Division soldiers have died in service to us. We want you to meet these remarkable people who have done and continue to do so much for us.

Our Missions: Serving the Common Defense
The 1st Division is tasked by our government to carry out missions that serve the common defense of the United States- from combat to deterrence, peacekeeping or training assistance. These missions are varied because, in a complex world, our interests and the threats to them are varied. Every mission, though, is undertaken in our name. Ultimately, we are responsible. We must have and voice our own opinions about where our soldiers go and why.
PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Q-Storm

- Read the introduction below.
- Your group has 5 minutes to write down as many questions as you can.
- Categorize questions as open or closed. Try to change closed questions to open ones.
- Choose your top 3 questions to share with the other groups.
- What do you notice about your questions? (Are they factual, emotional, interpretive, evaluative, or a combination?)
- Keep these questions in mind when you visit the First Division Museum.

DUTY FIRST EXHIBIT

BATTLE: Fighting the armed forces of another state.
Fighting and winning battles is the 1st Infantry Division’s main purpose. Division soldiers train constantly for all aspects of battle—from combat to deployment, logistics, medical support, intelligence, communication and more.

COIN: Finding and confronting enemies hidden in a population.
Counterinsurgency can look like traditional combat. Soldiers fight to clear villages, secure roads and kill or capture enemies, while also winning the trust of local people.

DETERRENCE: Displaying military force to prevent attack.
Continuous trainings and visible shows-of-force communicate to the enemy a readiness and willingness to fight at any time.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE: Training and helping armies of a friendly foreign country.
For the United States, military assistance is an important strategy that pays off in increased global security. Host countries gain the skills to defend and take care of themselves, and are less likely to need direct US military involvement in the future.

PEACEKEEPING: Enforcing peace agreements between hostile groups.
Peacekeeping tests a soldier’s training and discipline. Soldiers might guard checkpoints, confiscate weapons or resolve disputes. Above all, they must remain neutral—even in the most hostile environments—to avoid disrupting a fragile peace.