



NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM

Georgia

Master Designer: Verner Johnson Inc.

About the master designer: Verner Johnson Inc.

A graduate of MIT, Ar. Verner Johnson began his museum planning, research and design work in 1961. In 1965, he established 'E. Verner Johnson, Inc.' in Boston. He has also co-authored with Joanne Horgan, 'A Handbook for Museum Collection Storage' which has been published in several languages by UNESCO.

Since joining the firm in 1978, Mr. Louis Sirianni has worked exclusively as architect on major museums of the firm's portfolio. He has completed Advanced LEED training and has been certified as a LID-accredited professional. Mr. Bradley Nederhoff has worked in key management since 1983 and has been in the design position for a broad variety of museum types.

Verner Johnson, Inc. has specialized exclusively in museum planning and design for 30 years. With over 200 museum projects in their portfolio, they have worked with all types of museums.

"We not only communicate with clients but also closely collaborate with exhibitors, workers and users because they are the ones who know what's happening everyday in the museums and are able to tell us where and how to improve," says Nederhoff in an interview with Ar. Bansri Pandey.

The projects in their portfolio ranging from expansion projects for regional museums to a complete reorganization plan for the Louvre museum in Paris, their museum expertise is recognized around the world. Each year, more than 15 million people visit museums designed by the firm.

Having more than 200 museums in their portfolio, Boston-based Verner Johnson Inc. has planned and designed more museums than any other firm. Thus, while selecting an architectural firm with its unsurpassed museum expertise, Major General White knew he could trust the decisions Verner Johnson Inc. would make in designing an appropriate museum for the Infantry on a grand civic scale.

"The National Infantry Museum is one of those life-time projects that showcase our firm's museum planning and architectural design process. Finding an appropriate way, through architecture, to adequately honor the hundreds of thousands of "ordinary soldiers" who have sacrificed so much for their country was a very humbling endeavour." says Bradley Nederhoff, Managing Principal of Verner Johnson Inc.

The national infantry foundation had set high goals for the new facility that would replace Ft. Benning's aging museum. The new museum was envisioned as a place to educate the American public on the role of a military branch through interactive and entertaining dynamic galleries, high - tech classrooms, experiential theaters and ceremonial venues.

As for the design of the building and development of the 200-acre site, the Foundation sought a world-class facility that would link Ft. Benning with Columbus.

Thus, Verner Johnson Inc. designed this 180,000 sq ft state-of-the-art museum which is as much monumental as it is welcoming. The rotunda at the building's entrance steals all the attention at first sight. Its soaring height and design carve out the building, giving the museum a monumental quality, while its openness welcomes visitors and conveys a sense of arrival.

Construction of the National Infantry Museum was completed in Spring 2009. From the beginning of the project, National infantry foundation, Verner Johnson Inc and exhibit designer Christopher Chadbourne and Associates have been working with shared vision to achieve full

integration in the project. As a result, the space, exhibits and content achieve a cohesive visitor experience in which all components reflect the museum's central story of infantrymen.

The museum is divided into two floors mainly consisting of an IMAX theatre, a classroom, a museum store, exhibits and a dining area. The most challenging area to design was the exhibit named 'The last 100 yards' that stretches out like a bayonet through the central gallery space, ascending from the first to the second floor of the museum. As the museum's signature exhibit, this powerful, interactive and multidimensional cinematic experience was designed to involve visitors into the life of infantrymen in their 200 years of American history.

Educational, experiential and entertaining, the National Infantry Museum is an ideal place for freedom-loving people around the world. The museum is a tribute to infantrymen in a true sense. Proudly standing beneath the monumental rotunda, the "Follow Me" statue brings alive the military life creating a lasting appreciation for those who have put themselves in harm's way for the nation.

"Museums are landmark spaces and their design should retain this quality. People shall be impressed with the design space. The building shall be welcoming, exciting and complementing with exhibits. A unified visitor experience is the key to the project's success." says Louis Sirianni, Principal of Verner Johnson Inc.

