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Fort Drum museum unveils exhibit showcasing WWII veteran's artwork

FORT DRUM, N.Y. (April 3, 2025) -- A new art exhibit is making its debut inside the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum, and it features the work of a 10th Mountain Division World War II veteran.

Pfc. Arnold J. Roberts served with Company G, 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment – one of three regiments that made up the division in the 1940s. His artwork captured key moments of the 10th Mountain Division's deployment to Italy – from the initial voyage aboard the U.S.S. West Point all the way to a post-war ski race on Mount Mangart on the border of Italy and Slovenia.

"I'm not an art connoisseur, but I was amazed by the exceptional details in the paintings," said Doug Schmidt, museum curator. "If you know even a little bit about the history of the 10th Mountain Division, you can look at these and kind of pick out some of the exact locations where they were in Italy."

Schmidt said a Saranac Lake resident discovered the collection of watercolors and charcoal drawings inside an abandoned storage unit that he won at an auction.

After the artwork was donated to the museum, Schmidt started the process of accessioning the paintings as artifacts in the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He also worked with Keli Schmid, the archivist librarian in the 10th Mountain Division Resource Center at the Denver Public Library, to research the artist and the scenes he painted.

"Roberts earned a Bronze Star for his actions during the attack on Mount Belvedere," Schmidt said. "He had a passion for art his whole life, so after the war he went into advertising. We also learned that he came up to Whiteface Mountain, joined the Ski Patrol, and became a ski instructor."

Schmidt said the display only covers half of the collection, and they selected artwork that best tells the 10th Mountain Division story in World War II.

“My personal favorite is kind of a snapshot of Soldier life on the front lines,” he said. “This was their downtime after the battle for Riva Ridge and before the Spring Offensive. And the details are amazing – he even painted in the eyelets on the boots.”

Kent Bolke, museum director, said that art has a unique way of telling history.

“You can look at these painting and see what the 10th Mountain Division experienced during World War II from the viewpoint of a Soldier who was there,” he said. “Our hope is that people will see this collection and take away a little bit of what life was like for them.”

The 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum is located in Bldg. 2509 on Col. Reade Road, off Route 26. For more information, call (315) 774-0391, and visit <https://history.army.mil/Army-Museum-Enterprise/Find-an-Army-Museum/10th-Mountain-Division-and-Fort-Drum-Museum> or [www.facebook.com/FortDrumMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/FortDrumMuseum).

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Photo Captions:

Roberts Exhibit - The 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum has a new art exhibit on display featuring the work of Arnold Roberts, who served with the division in Italy during World War II. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs) (Photo Credit: Michael Strasser)

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