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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Name of organization** | | |  | National Cold War Center | | **Address** | | |  | 3711 Idaho Street Blytheville, AR 72315 [Map It](https://maps.google.com/maps?q=3711+Idaho+Street+Blytheville%2C+AR+72315) | | **Contact Name** | | |  | Joseph Alley | | **Title** | | |  | Exhibition Manager | | **Phone** | | |  | (870) 838-8100 | | **Email** | | |  | [joseph@nationalcoldwarcenter.com](mailto:joseph@nationalcoldwarcenter.com) | | **Website** | | |  | <https://nationalcoldwarcenter.com/> | | **Section 1- Qualifications:** | | | **1. What story does your institution tell about the Mississippi River as part of its regular daily visitor experience? How does it relate to the themes for interpretation which are attached? Why do you feel that this significant aspect or relationship to the river is presented at a high level of quality? Describe the quality of the visit your guests receive.** | | |  | The average visitor to our museum gets exposed to the story of the Mississippi River while learning about the history of Blytheville Air Force Base in two major respects. First, the visitor learns about the role the river played in the air base’s construction in the1940’s and 1950’s. Generally, the river allowed for easy shipment of construction materials at Barfield Landing on the Mississippi River. Second, Blytheville AFB’s SAC Alert Facility (the only such facility currently being rehabbed for public visitation) was specifically designed to be built sufficiently far enough below ground so as to allow for B-52 & KC-135 crews to survive an indirect strike from a Soviet nuclear missile as well as constructed in a way that did not compromise structural integrity due to the Mississippi River’s high-water table in the area.   We have created top quality exhibits in our BAFB Exhibition that make use of these themes: i. Theme 3 – As early as 600 BCE, the National Cold War Center’s property (and much of the acreage surrounding it) was home to a vibrant and complex Native American settlement. The site is believed to have been a Nodena-Phase town, with sturdy permanent houses, a defensive wall and ditch, and a mound. Based on surveys completed by the state of Arkansas, archaeologists estimate that as many as 400 or more prehistoric homes may be buried at the Eaker Site making it the largest in the Mississippi River Valley. While the National Cold War Center does not plan to include any comprehensive interpretation on the inhabitants of Eaker site (nor does the BAFB exhibition currently contain any such interpretation), mention will be made of the former inhabitants to show how the area has been utilized for a long time thanks to its proximity to the river. ii. Theme 4 – The base’s personnel were seen as a multicultural boon to the area. While this can be attributed to the US Air Force and their various policies in regard to moving people around the country as needed for various operations, it was the river that brought the base to Mississippi County, and thus it can be said that the river is the reason that the unique base community was in Mississippi County in the first place. iii. Theme 6 – In January 1942, Colonel A. Hornsby of the U.S. Army Air Forces conducted an aerial survey of Mississippi County to help with identifying the ideal spot for a pilot training school. This survey, combined with multiple soil tests and the areas close proximity to the Mississippi River, led to the selection of this spot for the creation of Blytheville Army Airfield.  iv. Theme 7 – Building 1225, the SAC Alert Facilities’ Readiness Crew Building, is a great example of architecture that has been affected by the Mississippi River. Designed by Leo Daly in 1958, the RCBs were two-story dormitory/admin buildings that housed bomber and tanker crews who were setting “on alert,” waiting for the ominous, final call to action. At other Air Force bases, the RCB was partially buried in the ground to facilitate survival in the event of a nuclear strike. This configuration was not possible at Blytheville, due to the Mississippi River’s high-water table. As such the RCB at Blytheville was built fully above ground with an earthen berm that rose up to the 2nd floor for added protection. Construction on 1225 started in February 1959, and is believed to have been completed in March of 1960.  v. Theme 9 – As stated previously, the property’s proximity to Barfield Landing (on the Mississippi River) made it an obvious choice for a military installation. In 1942, only 22 years after the Bankhead Convoy had detoured south of West Memphis due to the quality of the roads, most roads going into NE Arkansas were still dirt. The Mississippi River afforded the US Military an excellent opportunity to quickly and efficiently move equipment, supplies, and workers to construct desperately needed military bases. In 1954, Barfield Landing was again used to aid in construction at the airbase’s runway. Over 300,000 barrels of concrete (enough to pave a two-lane road from Blytheville to West Memphis) was shipped into the county from concrete plants in Memphis, TN, and Hannibal, MO. The expanded and thicker runway was vital for any future military operations. The slabs of concrete that make up the runway are four feet thick, and upwards of 100 feet square. Interestingly, despite their enormous weight and mass, due to the Mississippi River’s high water table, the slabs are prone to moving when a B-52 drives over them (some former base members describe the slabs as “floating”). While Barfield Landing has historically been in use since the 1850’s to serve fur traders, and currently serves Nucor Steel, for the National Cold War Center it is a vital piece of the history of Blytheville Air Force Base. vi. Theme 11 – As a continuation of Theme 9, the National Cold War Center expects its construction materials to (in part) come from Nucor Steel, located at Barfield Landing.   Our museum’s board has worked hard from day one to ensure that the story of Blytheville AFB was properly told. This includes the periods of construction in the 1940’s and 1950’s. We have consulted with professional exhibit designers to bring the highest quality to our museum. Guests do not leave with any questions, only a yearning to learn more about Blytheville and the Cold War. | | **2. What is the length of stay for the typical visitor experience at your institution? Please provide what you consider an average time, what you consider a short stay and what you consider a long stay for regular attendance.** | | |  | The average visitor to the BAFB Exhibition will stay for 30-45 minutes. About half of these visits are on impulse after seeing one of our billboards on either I-55 or I-40. We also have some visitors (usually former base members) that plan visits and can stay for up to an hour and a half. This is a small (but vocal) minority that is steadily growing by word of mouth in various veteran's circles. | | **3. What educational or interpretive programs beyond exhibits do you conduct that interpret the Mississippi River or some significant aspect or relationship to the river?** | | |  | Due to current constraints with time and resources, we are not able to offer any river related programing beyond exhibits.  In the future, we hope to implement an interpretive program on the MITO (minimal interval take off) Launch used by the B-52s during a nuclear war. This program will require the use of large area maps, and have a partial focus on what the bomber crews used for navigational aids during exercises (including the river). | | **4. What are your published and regular hours? Please describe hours for various seasons.** | | |  | Currently, our BAFB exhibition is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday, 9:30am-5pm. There are no seasonal hours, we are open on these hours year-round. | | **5. What is the annual attendance for regular museum hours at your site, exclusive of special events? What is the admission fee?** | | |  | As we have only been open a few years, we can’t give a proper annual attendance rating. However we can give a ballpark estimate of about 1,750. We expect this to grow over the next few years by a factor of 5. There is currently no admission fee for the BAFB Exhibition, and we do not expect there to be an admission fee. | | **6. What is your proximity to the Great River Road?** | | |  | The BAFB Exhibition and Blytheville AFB SAC Alert Facility are located 3.5 miles from the Great River Road on Division Street in the city of Blytheville. | | **7. Did you enclose a letter of endorsement from your state Mississippi River Parkway Commissioner?** | | |  | Yes | | **Attachments** | | | **Letter of Support - File 1** | | |  | * [Cold-War-Center-letter2777.pdf](https://mrpcmembers.com/mississippi/index.php?gf-download=2023%2F04%2FCold-War-Center-letter2777.pdf&form-id=7&field-id=23&hash=e211188117eff1368c426990f63c6a79de1eca138f80b5f30228e5746e46ad71) | | **Section II - Duties and Obligations:** | | | **1. Members of the network must have the Great River Road map at their site, at a minimum for reference, but preferably for sale or for distribution to visitors. One map will be provided as will an order form for additional maps. Will you agree to stock and/or sell the Great River Road map?** | | |  | Yes | | **2. Members of the network must ensure that front line personnel who have contact with the public are knowledgeable of and will promote the Great River Road and the museums and interpretive centers in the region. Describe how you will ensure that your front line personnel will be trained, briefed and monitored.** | | |  | Our Exhibition Manager, Joseph Alley, has previously worked at a GRR interpretative center. He is knowledgeable of the GRR and knows how to interact with the public to best suggest other GRR sites. Joseph will be in charge of training current and future NCWC volunteers on how to share info on the GRR with the general public. | | **3. Are you willing to display signage at your center showing that you are a member of the Great River Road Network? This may be inside or outside signage, but must be prominently displayed. Where will you display the Interpretive Center sign? Both inside and outside** | | |  | Yes, we are willing to display interior and exterior signage at all National Cold War Center properties. To start, we will be working to erect an exterior sign at our BAFB Exhibition. However, (especially in preparation for the 2024 eclipse) we will work to erect signage in front of Building 1225 at the Alert Facility. | | **4. Are you willing to secure the needed funds to have an officially approved Great River Road Interpretive Center sign erected at your site?** | | |  | Yes | | **5. Are you willing to use and incorporate the Great River Road network language and logo on all future marketing and promotional materials (i.e. radio, newsprint, social media, websites, maps, rackcards and brochures, etc.)? Sample language: [Name of Interpretive Center] is an Interpretive Center of the Great River Road – Mississippi River Parkway Commission National Scenic Byway.** | | |  | Yes | | **Section Ill - Capacity:** | | | **1. Do you have access to the internet? If your facility has a website, what is the address? Do you have the ability to post the**[**experiencemississippiriver.com**](http://experiencemississippiriver.com)**website on our website?** | | |  | Our facility has access to the internet. Our website is: <https://nationalcoldwarcenter.com/>  Yes, we have the ability to change our website to feature a link to [experiencemississippiriver.com](http://experiencemississippiriver.com). | | **2. Do you have traveling exhibit space? If so, what size is it in square footage? Would you be willing or interested in hosting a traveling exhibit?** | | |  | We do not currently have any interior space for traveling exhibits. However, we are in the beginning stages of a plan to add 1,200 square feet of temp exhibit space to the BAFB Exhibition. Additionally, we are actively working to bring in traveling exhibits that do not require interior space. In 2021, we brought in a traveling version of the Korean War Memorial. In 2023, we will have the Commemorative Air Force's Rise Above traveling exhibit, which includes a traveling theater (which will be parked in front of the BAFB exhibition) and a P-51 Mustang. | | **Attachments** | | | **Photo - File 1** | | |  | * [BAFB-Exhibition.jpg](https://mrpcmembers.com/mississippi/index.php?gf-download=2023%2F04%2FBAFB-Exhibition.jpg&form-id=7&field-id=42&hash=dfe3ae97e6fda1935e5fe5227d84c728d214e5a18cafaff64dd49c490527341b) | | **Photo - File 2** | | |  | * [BAFB-SAC-Alert-Facility-Building-1225.jpg](https://mrpcmembers.com/mississippi/index.php?gf-download=2023%2F04%2FBAFB-SAC-Alert-Facility-Building-1225.jpg&form-id=7&field-id=41&hash=9c72d8e45f3cf856bd554b2d6c9d24a598231916b44bae2564dd2b2e02e1b011) | | **Photo - File 3** | | |  | * [NCWC-broad-image22338.png](https://mrpcmembers.com/mississippi/index.php?gf-download=2023%2F04%2FNCWC-broad-image22338.png&form-id=7&field-id=43&hash=69e261ad0dbae2d5759d0ed88b48b8c0a58dbaed8ff6389b5623842245c32dc3) | |