

Exhibition of photos at Arts and Crafts**Soldier in green offers photographs in black and white**

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444th MPAD/ Fort Dix PAO

Indiana Jones, Dow Jones, Ed Too-Tall Jones, Quincy Jones, John Paul Jones, Tom Jones, Roy Jones Jr: Jones is definitely one of the more common surnames. But just because the name is common doesn't mean the individuals or their actions are.

Such is the case of Sergeant Robert L. Jones, a Delaware Army Guard soldier in the mobilized 444th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment stationed on post.

Jones, a professional freelance photographer and artist in his civilian life, is being recognized for his not-so-common work at the Fort Dix Peter L. Hunt Arts and Crafts Center. Twenty photographs from the artist's ongoing exhibit entitled *Concrete Cathedrals* will have an opening night in the post gallery Tuesday, June 24 from 6 to 8 p.m.

"My style is visually a graphic style - strongly attracted to words, objects, to color and forms," said Jones. "The visual meaning of a picture I don't think can be put into words; it's a style issue. The meaning of

such can only be apprehended emotionally. Both the painter and the photographer have their own unique way of viewing reality and relating it to the viewer."

The entirely black and white collection is focused on the industrial qualities of an early American life. In a state as big as Texas, *Concrete Cathedrals* captures the immense architecture of its landscape's structures and condenses images for the human eye. The careful observer may notice the contrasting strength of light versus dark while still achieving a subtle feeling of movement in a stationary environment; maybe back to a place in our psyche where *Gattaca* or *Atlas Shrugged* exist.

"With these pictures, he stands firmly within the greater American tradition of documentary photography," wrote German art critic Martin Nied.

"I try to reproduce a world I fell in love with in the paintings of Edward Hopper, the photographs of Albert Renger-Patzsch and movies such as F.W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh* or Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*," said Jones.

Arts columnist John DeFore from the *San Antonio Current*

comments:

"The boldness of his compositions is an unusual match for buildings that, on casual observation, are devoid of activity...He's found a truckload of beauty in buildings constructed with no aesthetic impulse, for the sole purpose of holding stuff until it was sold."

"I just think it's great to have a member of the military exhibiting in the gallery with photographs of this high caliber," said Janice Corbo, chief of the arts and crafts branch on post.

Concrete Cathedrals first opened at the Wild Horse Gallery in San Antonio, Texas in November 2000. Afterward, it appeared in Athens, Georgia, Offenau and Frankfurt, Germany, and Bulverde, Texas.

This is not Jones' first time showing his work to a military community. In 1987, at a Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Arts and Crafts Center, while stationed in Germany, Jones first exhibited his infrared photographs. He describes this time in his career as "shooting heavily", more than 8000 pictures in 3 years.

"I want to exhibit my work at the arts and crafts center because I wouldn't be where I

am today without MWR darkrooms; that's where I got my start," said Jones.

"Unfortunately, now, they spend all their money on new gym equipment, and leave slim pickings for the artists; its just like high school - the same cliques are in charge. I am working with a number of photographers who also started out in the military, or at MWR crafts centers, to try to convince MWR officials to reinstate photographic facilities to the craft centers. Photography is becoming a lost art, and it would be a shame for the military - which has developed so many of the twentieth century's greatest photographers - to abandon promising young talent."

After Fort Dix, *Concrete Cathedrals* will undergo "a thorough reexamination," and be revised into its second edition. The second edition will open in 2004 in Monterrey, Mexico, and will include new photographs from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nebraska and Kansas.

The name Jones, we may all know one in life; in the Army it is as common as white bread at the chow hall, but his work is as uncommon at Fort Dix as frogs raining from the sky.



OUT OF TIME AND MIND - Photographer Robert Jones' print of the massive grain elevators in Corpus Christi, Texas, in May, 2000, evokes a stylized vision of industry that is more suggestive of 1920s German Expressionism. "I strive for total sharpness and an infinitely receding horizon when I print," said Jones.

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