

Local veteran's photographs of World War II on display

By Ryan Clark

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FORT THOMAS – Tom Austin never knew the difference he was making during the war.

Born and raised in Newport, Austin served in the Army for five years. During World War II, he spent four of those years as a photographer in the 165th Photo Company. He captured scenes from Europe and the Pacific in the 1940s, and his collection included unpublished photos of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Now those photos, as well as others, are part of the "Meet My Hero" exhibit at the **KZF** Gallery,

FOLK TALES 655 Eden Park Drive, Cincinnati. The exhibit celebrates the Armed Forces Tickets Association of Cincinnati.

Part of the exhibit – which is free and runs through Nov. 30 – features photos from the military, including Austin's.

"I never knew how much my job meant," said Austin, now 90 and living in Fort Thomas. "Only now do I see it. I feel like a gold medal winner in the Olympics."

Austin said one photo stands out in particular: A shot he took of two soldiers in a doorway, waiting to move away from enemy snipers.

"We were under heavy artillery (fire) at that time," he said. "And when you heard shells like that going off, you had to hit the ground. I took the photo, and then I hit the ground. Then I realized it blew out my right eardrum. I'd lost 80 percent of my hearing when I took that photo."

For the next few months, the public will be able to see Austin's work, as well as that of other soldiers who have submitted photos for the exhibit.

Many of the soldiers who submitted photographs were with the Army's Fort Thomas-based 478th Engineer Battalion that returned from Iraq just a few months ago.

Austin said that to be included in the exhibit was an honor.

"It makes me know that what I did was important," he said.



Provided

Photographs taken by Tom Austin of Fort Thomas are on display in the "Meet My Hero" exhibit at the KZF Gallery in Eden Park. The photographs were taken while Austin served in the Army during World War II.

