



THE BATTERY

FALL 2010



The Fort Miles Historical Association is a nonprofit group that has its mission to preserve, protect, and defend all aspects of Fort Miles working with community and state stakeholders and other interested parties. The FMHA also has its goal to work as an active partner with the State of Delaware to develop the historical potential of Fort Miles.



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with the Verner Johnson Architects of Boston to help us with the design of the museum. VJ is recognized as the premier museum architects in the country and they have just finished the US Army Museum at Fort Benning. We had one planning meeting with both VJ and the PRD Interactive group from Arlington, VA to help us with our vision. More meetings are planned for this fall to come up with what the museum might look like in its final form. At this point what we are thinking is that the northern end of the museum would actually be the entrance, the first 200' (the Battery is over 420' from end to end!) would be dedicated to telling the story of Delaware in WWII with such themes such as: the war on the home front; the German submarine attack on the East Coast; Lewes at War; Fort Miles 1940-1991; Fort Miles and the Cold War and other topics on a rotating basis.

The second 200' of the bunker would be actually what the Battery looked like in 1943 with 12" shells in the shell room, powder in the powder room,

and a plotting board and tower models showing how the three teams of the fort (the towers, the plotting room, and the guns) worked in a unified way. Both Verner Johnson and PRD will help us formulate the action plans which we will take out to public in a fundraising campaign, helped by Mike Rawl and his Horizon Philanthropic Services group during the next year to raise the necessary monies for our museum to come alive. Over the next year we will be coming to both our FMHA membership and our general community to open their hearts (and pocketbooks) to help us raise the funds to make the museum the best WWII museum

inside a WWII facility in the country. We have come a long way but we still a long way to go!

As I previously mentioned, our April 24 event was very well attended. The day was dedicated to the memory of Lee Jennings and his immense contribution to the



Fort Miles effort. Linda Jennings, Lee's wife, attended with other

From the Desk of the President

By Dr. Gary Wray

Welcome to the Fall, 2010 edition of the Fort Miles Historical Association Newsletter. There is much to report about the work of FMHA since our last Newsletter. We had a very successful April 24 event and our August 7th event, celebrating the surrender of U-858, was also very well attended. As always, many thanks to our hard working FMHA Board for making both days go well. As you can see from FMHA Board member John Robert's photos, lots of work has been done over the last six months by John and his "elves" working every Thursday and Friday in the Battery. Without their hard work we would be years away from where we are in preparing the bunker for our future museum. We owe these guys big kudos for all they have done!

Speaking of our museum, we have started the first stages of planning

members of his family as we all celebrated his life and his efforts to make the Fort Miles Museum come alive. It was a touching and memorable ceremony. FMHA hosted a reception in Lee's honor in the Orientation Building at the end of the day.

At our August 7th event we focused on the surrender of U-858 and we were joined by Dr. William Carter, a Sussex County native and a survivor of the ill-fated Convoy PQ17 that was so decimated by German Luftwaffe and submarines as it made its way around Norway to Russia with war supplies. Dr. Carter's duty station was on a 3"/50cal gun on the convoy and we recreated that event of firing that same 3"/50cal gun under Dr. Carter's command during the day.

The culminating activity during the August event was the Paver Induction Ceremony in the south powder room where we recognized the first sixty inductees in our Fort Miles Wall of Honor. The ceremony was very touching where members of the almost 100 person audience gave testimony to each of their loved ones who sacrificed so much

in defense of our country. We are now in the second phase of the Paver Campaign and we are including a Paver Application with this Newsletter. We would hope that if you support our museum and our plans, you would purchase a paver for a loved one for our Wall of Honor. The next Paver Induction will be at our November 6, 2010 Open House inside Battery 519, 10-4pm with the Paver Induction at 2pm. FMHA will have food (Etta Kosaveach's famous chili) and drink during the day. Of course, your contribution to the museum



and/or the Wall of Honor Paver Campaign is tax deductible.

Finally, as Ray Biven's mentioned in his article, we are putting the final touches on a video on Fort Miles, thanks to a grant from the Delaware Department of Tourism. The video is produced by Sharon

Baker of Teleduction in Wilmington and is going to be used both at the Fort as an introduction to Fort Miles for tours, but its main purpose will be with Delaware school's as an overview of the Fort for Delaware youngsters in elementary, middle and high school. We are excited about the video and it will be shown for the first time at our Open House on November 6 at 11am and then all through the day.

So, as I previously mentioned, we are well on our way to completing the vision of our museum inside Battery 519. We welcome Jim Hall, the new Park Historian, as he works with us along with Ray Bivens, Tim Resch, Mike Rogers, Pat Cooper and Paul Faircloth, and many others to make Lee's vision come alive over the next several years. We have come a long way but we have a long way to go yet to finish the job. As always, thanks for your valuable and continuing support.

Late newsletter addition:

Sadly, we were recently informed that Dr. Carter passed away on September 11, 2010. His family has asked that FMHA furnish the Honor Guard for his Ceremony of Life on September 18, 2010 at the Carter Partnership Building, Del Tech in Georgetown.

News From the Publicity Committee

By Bob Fellows



Many thanks to the FMHA Publicity Committee: Bob Fredrick, Bev Dalecki, Brian Lindsay, Jack Goins, Merlin Beil, Dan Lyons, Steve Hyle, Dr. Gary Wray and Mike Rogers for keeping Fort Miles on the "front page."

Many hours by all have resulted in large increases in attendance to all 2010 Fort events.

Fort Miles Battery Tours are scheduled for Saturday, September 4th and 11th, October 9th, November 13th and 27th and December 11th at 2 PM. Tour cost is \$5.00 for age 8 and over.

Tours by Lantern Light are schedule for Saturday, September 4th and 18th at 7 PM. October 2nd and 30th at 6 PM. Tour cost is \$5.00 for ages

10 and over. Pre -registration for all tours is required. Call 302-645-6852 or 302-644-5007.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Battery 519 open house on November 6th. See our website for more details at <http://www.fortmiles.org>

We always welcome new thoughts on how to get the word out to more people - so if you have any good ideas, we would love to hear them!

"Bits" From the Bunker Busters

By John Roberts and Joe Kosaveach

We've been busy over the spring and summer. Our big project was the electrical upgrades to Battery 519.



When Battery 519 was originally built, the electrical utilities ran under the floor and down the corridor in the cable chase, a 10 inch by 28 inch channel in the east wall of the corridor. Our plan was to run our modern power needs in the original pathways. This would allow us to install everything we need for our present and future power needs and meet modern code, and at the same time, have it completely out of sight.

In the design of this upgrade, we also built all new covers for the cable chase, patterned after the blueprints and the existing covers in Battery Smith. We were also able to use some creativity and hide the emergency lighting, a major detractor in any historic restoration, and conceal LED lighting in the cable chase covers. Out of sight, and far exceed code requirements for emergency lighting. It also makes for great lighting during lantern tours.

This process took place over about 4 months, and hats off to the FMHA for allowing us to purchase materials under their auspices.

Included were over 11,000 feet of wire and 1500 feet of conduit, and quite a few sore muscles from pulling on ropes threaded through these long wiring runs. We now have power in the gun pit for our up and coming sound system.

We passed our electrical inspection on the first pass, and this means we can cover our new conduits with concrete in the generator room, completely concealing these modern upgrades from the public view.

In addition, we harvested a pair of original panel boards from one of the abandoned bunkers. We restored them, both in appearance and electrically, and installed them in their original locations. The anchors were still in the walls, and still useable. One of them actually operates some of our lights, and the goal, when we get more resources, is to restore the original part of the electrical system with period correct fixtures and cabling wherever it is visible to the public.

We've also been painting, and now all of that green is gone! We still have work to do, but we're getting close to having all surfaces specified for paint covered. The south powder and shell rooms are painted in a gray that closely approximates the original concrete surface's average color. The gun rooms and the corridors immediately behind them will remain unpainted with their original surfaces. A thanks goes out to the Park for buying us the materials for this project!

Thanks to Fred, all of Battery 519's concrete access covers are restored. These provide access to the original below-floor conduits used for the original communications system and power system. These had to be demolished in order to remove them due to extreme rust, and Fred straightened out and restored the original steel frames and recast them with new concrete. They look great, and now the original phones in the gun room are connected to the outside through the original conduits. This restoration also allowed us to run modern power wiring to the gun pit, the motor/generator room and the south corridor where the searchlight is parked, completely concealed.

All in all, a lot of work for very few dollars with an amazing results! The most rewarding comments are from those who visit every couple of months, and are astounded how fast things are improving, the quality of the effort, and their desire to come back again just to see the results of a dedicated, passionate, and talented volunteer effort.

So, hats off to Harry, Steve, Tom, Jack, Fred, Joe K and everyone else who worked on this fairly involved and labor intensive project. And the corridor covers look great, giving the corridor a far more finished appearance.

Also, a big shout out to the Park staff for clearing all the rubble away from the demolition of the old generator/LORAN beacon shed outside 519. Outside as well, the place looks so much better now with all that debris out of the way.





**April 2010 event
Lee Jennings' Memorial**



Dr. William Carter

**August 2010 event
& Paver Ceremony**



ORDER YOUR ENGRAVED PAVER

For the "Wall of Honor" at the Fort Miles Museum

LEWES, DELAWARE

Now you can support the new Fort Miles museum, receive a tax deduction and have your name or that of a loved one honored on a handsome brick paver. Each engraved paver will be prominently displayed in Battery 519, America's first WWII museum at an actual military site.

More than 10,000 visitors each year will see your paver, and we will send a tribute card to whoever you designate, telling them of this special honor.

The tax-deductible cost for each paver is just \$200, including delivery and installation in a well-lighted entrance area. This first phase of the "wall of Honor" will accommodate just 500 pavers and orders are being accepted on a first-come basis. Be sure to reserve your paver now by returning the form below.

About Fort Miles

America's first on-site WWII museum is located on the Atlantic Ocean at the mouth of the Delaware Bay, where massive armament was secretly installed during WWII to turn back possible invasions by German naval forces and protect the key port of Philadelphia.

Prominently displayed at the museum is one of Battery 519's two 12 inch cannons, large enough to propel a shell 17 miles, as well as searchlights powerful enough to light the beach of Cape May, NJ. Visitors can also climb a coastal tower and tour an actual "cantonment" where soldiers lived and worked - an active city of 2,500 men and women. The coastal towers along the Delaware shoreline were the "eyes" of Fort Miles - strategically placed to triangulate readings if enemy ships were located. Your donation to the "Wall of Honor" helps support the Fort Miles museum.



YES, I want to purchase a paver at the Fort Miles Museum. All donations are tax deductible. Enclosed is my check made payable to: the Fort Miles Historical Association.

\$_____ for _____ paver(s)

Engraving Instructions

LIMIT 3 LINES OF 16 CHARACTERS PER LINE- spaces, punctuation & symbols count as characters

1

2

name _____ phone _____

street _____ city _____

state _____ zip _____ email _____

Send orders to: FMHA Wall of Honor
c/o Horizon Philanthropic Services
P.O. Box 802
Lewes, DE 19958
Questions? Call 302.644.0107

New Beginnings

By Ray Bivens, Chief of Programming, DE State Parks

I still vividly remember my first time exploring Battery 519. It was seven years ago; I had recently started as the Chief of Interpretation for Delaware State Parks. My guide's hair was a little out of control and it had nothing to do with the humidity levels of the bunker. He was giving quite the sales pitch on what was possible in the future for this abandoned structure that was ridden with trash, graffiti, and plenty of signs of rodents, raccoon, and snakes. I was a bit skeptical but I stayed close, intently listening, mainly because my guide, Lee Jennings, was carrying the only flashlight. Lee was predicting this historic site would be bigger than Fort Delaware one day; I had my doubts that day about Lee's vision but never again. I still wonder if those flashlight batteries would have died, could we have found our way out?

Later that year Lee, Jim O'Neill, and I met with two young guys who on their own were mapping out Fort Miles and all of the associated structures. We didn't tell them at our first meeting, but many of the maps they had created were better than anything we had at the time. We soon convinced Nate Davidson to become an AmeriCorps member and the other young man, Mike Rogers, signed on as a volunteer researcher and tour guide. Some of the first tours offered of the battery had over 100 paying customers. It was my job to sit Mike and Nate down over dinner and let them know that they couldn't take that many people on a tour and still give a quality experience.

Over the years the Fort Miles we have today took shape thanks to

the passion and energy of many volunteers and park staff. That passion is present now more than ever. You may not know that Cape Henlopen has more volunteer hours of service each year than any other park in the state. This year park volunteers logged over 29,000 hours, which is the equivalent of 15 full-time positions. Without strong commitment from our Friends, the park would be a much different place. Thank you for all you do!

Since March there have been many occasions when I wish Lee could have been with me at Fort Miles like he used to be. The August special event was incredibly successful! The paver campaign is off to a tremendous start and the ceremony was very moving. We have a bid in hand from Verner Johnson to start formal museum and site planning. But my favorite moment occurred almost by accident. At our August special event we had a film crew helping to create a promotional video for school kids and teachers. The film is being funded by a grant pursued by Dr. Wray and Lee and



German ships. I believe we got some great shots and can't wait to see the final product. On the way home it dawned on me that it may have been 65 years since an Azimuth instrument was last

peering out a fire control tower slit.

I would like to introduce the FMHA members to Jim Hall, Delaware State Park's new Park Historian. Many of you may know Jim from his work at the Indian River Life Saving Station and Delaware Seashore State Park. For the past five years he has served as the Park Interpreter, managing the museum, park environmental education programs, and special events hosted at the site.

After spending several years in Minnesota, Jim returned to our park system. He had previously served as a seasonal employee at Port Penn, Fort Delaware, and Cape Henlopen. Jim is a creative problem solver with a strong work ethic; I look forward to September when Jim will start full-time in the Park Historian position. I especially look forward to seeing him put his fingerprints on Delaware State Park History programs.

In closing, on behalf of all division staff, I would like to thank the FMHA board and membership for their support of Delaware State Parks. Without your group I believe that there would be no annual special events at Fort Miles, no restored 12 inch gun, and we would probably still be viewing the bunker by light of the flashlight. We still have much to accomplish but I look forward to many more milestones resulting from our successful partnership!

About Ray: Ray Bivens is the Chief of Programming for Delaware State Parks. He is responsible for management of Delaware's State Parks Archeology, Cultural Resources, Exhibits, Interpretation, and Recreation programs. Since March, Ray has served as the temporary FMHA liaison for Delaware State Parks.

Another Summer Down

By Mike Rogers
Fort Miles, DE State Parks

Another summer down... another excellent season for Fort Miles. Unfortunately I was not around for most of it, as I was at Basic Combat Training with the US Army for most of the summer season. However, being away for the summer gave me a view that I have not experienced in the 6 years that I have been with the project.

When my family came to pick me up at Fort Jackson, South Carolina neither my wife nor my mother recognized me. I had lost 40 pounds and 6 inches from my waist. I watched my transformation occur in the mirror every day, so I didn't really notice just how drastic the change was. However, for my family, it was quite a shock.

Fort Miles had quite a similar impact on me when I returned 10 weeks later. For so long I have been on the site every day and watching the transformation. Being away from it for some time underscored the amazing progress

and the speed at which it is being achieved by our dedicated crew of volunteers. To John Roberts, Fred Noll, Harry Winn, Tom Anderson, and the rest of the crew working diligently to bring Battery 519 back to life, I say "thank you and great job!" Take some time to read over John's article in this newsletter to learn more about what the crew has been up to.

Uncle Sam also had me busy during the August special event. However, I have had nothing but positive feedback from our re-enactors and Tim Resch, who did such an awesome job filling in for me while I was away. Again, I say "thank you" to the re-enactors and the association for making that event a success.

As I get back into the swing of things the Fort Miles project continues to make amazing progress. It's kind of like jumping on a train that isn't stopping at your station. Crews are working on and around Battery 519 to clean up the years of overgrowth. The electrical system inside of the building is nearly complete and the panels on the cable chase are finished and installed.

While the work moves on, so does the publicity. The Fort and the efforts of its volunteers have received some awesome coverage in local papers. A production company is currently working on a short documentary to help educate people about the history of Fort Miles. A draft of that documentary is available on the association's website. The Fort has also attracted the attention of the Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW. In late August Gary Wray and I had the pleasure of escorting the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW, Cortina Barnes through Tower 7 and Battery 519. Ms. Barnes also visited Tower 3 at Delaware Seashore State Park. The tour went very well, and she and her crew seemed thoroughly impressed with the history of Fort Miles and the plans to restore it.

As the summer season of 2010 comes to a close and vacationers venture back to their home bases, the restoration of Fort Miles will continue to surge ahead, ensuring another pleasing shock of progress for our visitors next year.

Some photos before and during restoration (2003 and 2010)



Front entrance



Looking towards the north gunroom



Looking towards the south gunroom



Help us preserve, restore and protect this remarkable site--become a member of the Fort Miles Historical Association simply by filling out the form below and mailing it with your check to the address listed below.

.....

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____, State _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Email: _____

Please check one:

- General 261st Coast Artillery (life member) \$1,000.
- Colonel , 261st Coast Artillery \$500.
- Major, 261st Coast Artillery \$250.
- Captain, 261st Coast Artillery \$100.
- Small Business \$75.
- Dual/Family \$20.
- Individual \$15.
- Student \$10.

Enclosed is my check in the amount of: \$_____

Make Checks payable to:

Fort Miles Historical Association
Dr. Gary Wray, President
120 E. Wild Rabbit Run
Lewes, DE 19958

Cut along this line if only mailing one application

NEW!!

We are also seeking volunteers to learn how to give battery tours, and/or run our Sperry searchlight. Our goal is to have a substantial group of members that can assist the Fort Miles staff with tours and other related programs. Volunteers will receive all the training and informative materials needed. So, if you've taken a battery tour and feel it might be something you would like to help with, fill out this bottom form, and mail it to Dr. Gary Wray at the address just above. If you would like further information, please call Dr. Wray at 302-645-0753.

Yes, I would like to become a volunteer!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____



Fort Miles Historic Association
120 East Wild Rabbit Run
Lewes, DE 19958

