



THE BATTERY

FALL 2011



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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many guns at Fort Miles, our FMHA Board made the decision to go after one of the Missouri barrels. During the war Fort Miles had two 16" guns in Battery Smith, behind the present Biden Center. In addition, it was always Lee Jennings' idea to have one 16" in a static display in our Fort Miles gun park. Working with State Parks staffer Jim Hall, we jointly wrote an application to the US Navy for the Navy to donate one of the Missouri barrels to the state of Delaware to be located at Fort Miles. We created a Missouri Barrel Fundraising Committee, chaired by Nick Carter, and started the process for raising the necessary funds to bring the 136 ton barrel to Cape Henlopen State Park.

The Navy has given us until March, 2012 to move the barrel to Fort Miles. At the present time, only Delaware State Parks/FMHA has secured one of the barrels and the state of AZ is working to secure another. After September 30, they go to auction and the welders for cutting up. Thanks to Terry McGovern of the Coast Defense Study Group and FMHA we were able to get our plan in on time to the Navy for our barrel, #371, the middle barrel of the first turret of the Missouri. As of today, we have raised over \$70k through grants, pledges and actual cash. One supporter has pledged \$10k and two little guys have given us nine dollars for the effort! We need \$110k to bring the barrel to Lewes so anything you can give would be greatly appreciated! Visit our website (www.savemissourigun.org)

to contribute. For those who contribute \$200 or more a memorial paver will be purchased for the final static display. We only have a few months to raise the necessary funds so please don't hesitate! When we finish with the barrel and its static display in our gun park, we will have the final 16"/50 display in the country! We are also working actively to continue to develop our plan for a WWII museum inside Battery 519. We discussed this effort at length in our last newsletter. The Verner Johnson Architects from Boston have worked with us over the last two years to design a future plan for the museum. After we complete the Missouri Barrel Project, we will embark on the beginning of raising the necessary funds to make our museum inside Battery 519 the best WWII museum inside a WWII facility in the country. It is an ambitious project that will need a lot of support from both our local community and our state but we are sure that it can be done. Your FMHA will be forming a committee in the spring of 2012 to begin to raise the funds for the coming museum inside Battery 519. This Fort Miles Museum Project will be very ambitious in these trying economic times and we are not fooling ourselves concerning the amount of effort that it will take, but our community has been so supportive over the last eight years that we feel that it is very doable. Visit our website at www.fortmiles.org to see what we are planning. This museum project will take several years to complete and will probably have to be done in stages, but

From the Desk of the President

By Dr. Gary Wray

The past six months have been extremely busy for the Fort Miles Historical Association. Bids have been opened and work will soon begin on our new geothermal HVAC system for Battery 519. When completed we will be able to use the bunker year round. This was part of a \$175k Department of Energy grant we secured last year, thanks to the help of the City of Lewes allowing us to "piggyback" on their grant. Thanks to the hard effort of our "bunker busters" and their leader, Board member John Roberts, we have the bunker ready to accept the new system. Installation should begin sometime this fall, 2011.

We also found out in late May that the last three barrels from the battleship Missouri (BB-63) that were on her the day the Japanese surrendered in WWII, are on the ground at the Norfolk Naval base and due for the scrap heap. Since it has always been in our plan to secure at least one gun representative of the

when completed we will have the best WWII museum inside a WWII facility in the country...and a world class gun park to surround it with the last static display of a 16"/50 Mark VII gun in the world! Very exciting!! Hopefully you will join us in the effort!

So, we have come a long way since that hot day in August, 2003 when four of us (David Main, FMHA Vice President Bob Frederick, the late Lee Jennings and myself) stood under FCT3 in Dewey Beach as David and Bob announced the birth of the Fort Miles Historical Association. Our Association has grown from the original four members to over 350 today and has become one of the best "friends" groups in the state. We have always been supportive of the efforts of our State Parks staff, and they have been very supportive of our efforts. We have worked well together as a team to improve Fort Miles and thereby improving Cape Henlopen State Park and the experience of our park visitors.

We have achieved a lot over the last eight years but there is much more to be done. Our organization is strong and active and we are committed to making our museum and gun park the envy of the nation!

On reflection, it has been a wonderful eight years for me working on FMHA issues and planning. My experience working with Lee Jennings was extremely valuable to me, both personally and professionally. Lee was much more than my coauthor on the Fort Miles book as he became a close personal friend and never a day goes by that I don't think of him. I know he would be proud of the things we have done and the path we have the organization on. Our little group of four in 2003 has grown to over 350 today and we have established much credibility both locally and statewide. For example, just recently the Delaware Department of Tourism named Fort Miles as one of the 50 most important historical treasures in Delaware! To come from a critter infested, graffiti-marked dank, dark and wet concrete slab to one of the 50 most important historical sites in a state rich in history is a great accomplishment in such a short time. It shows the important work that our organization does and one of the reasons that we were selected State Volunteers of the Year by the Governor in 2008.

We just completed a very successful Open House on October 8, 2011. Over a thousand folks visited the bunker

and toured the exhibits. Thanks to the organizational skills of Bob Fellows, the day was a real hit. Lots of positive comments by all who attended and the weather was perfect!

We have achieved much but there is much more to do to take the Fort Miles Historical Association to the next level. One of our strengths is the support we receive from many of our membership, but we need more members to step up and become more active. If you have renewed your membership in FMHA, now is the time to do it. If you have a small black dot in the left corner of your address, we have not received your FMHA renewal. Remember that it is our membership dues and Wall of Honor pavers that keep money flowing to our volunteers who work in the bunker. Our dues remain low (\$20 for a two year membership, less than a family meal at McDonalds!) so hopefully you will renew after receiving this newsletter.

So, thanks as always for your support over the years. And thanks to our FMHA Board of Directors for giving of their time, sweat and treasure to further the aims of the organization.

News From the Publicity Committee

By Bob Fellows



The Battery 519 OPEN HOUSE, held on Saturday, October 8, 2011, was a big success thanks to both Park personnel and FMHA members. Placing interpreters at key positions throughout the Battery allowed the public to understand the important role Fort Miles played in protecting the Atlantic coastline during World

War II. Henlopen Park personnel. Parking and transportation concerns from past years were eliminated. Well done!

A Wall of Honor Inductee Ceremony was conducted at 3 PM. Thanks, Dr. Wray, for recognizing and honoring

our veterans at this Open House.

A special thanks to Mike Hills, a new FMHA member for his role at the entrance to Battery 519. His overall knowledge set the pace for this event.

The parking and van shuttle service from the Biden Center was handled by Cape

our veterans at this Open House.

The teamwork shown by both Park and FMHA personnel made this year's OPEN HOUSE the best ever. Well over 500 visitors attended this event. My personal thanks to all who supported this important event.

We are always looking for new thoughts on how to get the word out to more people. If you have new ideas or constructive changes on improving visibility of FMHA, we would love to hear them.

See our website for more information: www.fortmiles.org

The Restoration of the Remaining Flak 38 20mm Anti-Aircraft Gun form U-853

By Joe Kosaveach

U-853, was one of six type IXC40 German U-boats built and commissioned at Bremen, Germany during 1943. Her last patrol was during late February/early March of 1945. Her destination was the Canadian Maritimes but "pickings" were poor at this location so she headed South off the Rhode Island coastline.

On May 4, 1945, GrossAdmiral Karl Donitz, now the Fuhrer of Germany after Hitler's suicide, in addition to the head of the U-Bootwaffe notified all U-boats to cease hostilities. We'll never know whether the message was received, as U-853 sank the coal carrier Black Point the next day on the 5th and was herself sunk with all hands twelve hours later.

U-853 sat on the bottom of Block Island Sound until 1968, when local businessman Mel Joseph received permission from the German Government to raise and recover U-853. Although this attempt failed, one of the twin Flak 38, 20mm AA guns was recovered and brought to Georgetown, DE., where Mr. Joseph displayed it in front of his business. (This gun saw action in 1944, causing heavy damage to several British Swordfish aircraft.) Then in the early 1970's he donated the weapon to Deltech. The college didn't know quite what to do with it, so it sat in their maintenance yard/woods until February of 2004, when the President of FMHA, Gary Wray, and board member Joe Johnson rescued the gun and brought it to Joe's shop to start restoration.

It is a very important piece of our Fort Miles History as her sister boat U-858, surrendered here on May 14, 1945.

It's been a long haul punctuated by many long hours of dis-assembly - cleaning - fabricating - research - painting - reassembly, etc. Well over six years of painstaking work and dedication have gone into this project so far. There is still work to do, but the bulk of the restoration is

behind us.

The following people are to be commended for their hard work and dedication to this project:

Fred Noll- welding/fabrication/ assembly
Keith Donohue- welding and fabrication
Joe Johnson- dis-assembly/cleaning/research
Joe Kosaveach- cleaning/painting/detailing/research/assembly
Harry Winn- research

AND

All the rest of the Bunker Buster team who assisted with the building and construction of the rolling Wintergarten.

You will notice the one flash hider is unpainted. This piece was painstakingly reproduced/fabricated by Keith Donohue (machinist



extraordinaire). We are leaving it unpainted as a tribute to his skill. And finally, a huge thanks to the volunteers!

When I started working on this about three years ago, it was just a couple of us working on restoring Fort Miles. Now, we have over 15 volunteers with a range of skills, including at least three electricians, two engineers, a former CEO, retired and current contractors, a doctor and others. At times I feel like the Pied Piper, and that's a good thing!

The most amazing thing, a lot of our projects are dirty, difficult, and downright unpleasant at times. To make life even more challenging, a great deal of the improvements are utterly out of sight, and only we know they are there. These are

critical, but in order to maintain the period correct appearance, this modern stuff needs to be hidden from view, and alas, unappreciated by our visitors.

And yet, these fine people show up every week and pitch in. Our usual crew is around 5-7 people on Thursdays, and a couple less on Fridays, and we are always busy. No matter how unglamorous the work is, they come, pitch in, and sometimes we get too many people competing for the same rough work. Sure, we get really cool stuff like the Flak 38 and our Sperry searchlight to restore, but the lion's share of the work is in places like the crawl space under the latrines, digging out handholes in the floor, pulling wiring through conduits often over 300 feet in length in one pull, painting and an endless list of ongoing maintenance items.

Our crew is seriously dedicated to Fort Miles and bringing it back to life. It is difficult for me to find the words to relay my pride and appreciation in these fine people, so, should you get a chance, come out on one of our work days (every Thursday and Friday, starting at around 9:30 or so) and take a look and shake the hands of these fine people.

To keep our work going, we are needing funding. We're pretty much through with all the free to cheap projects, and I'd hate to lose momentum because we're running low. Give what you can, it's going to be a great project, and we've been able to make great progress on very little money. Please, do realize, we make our money go a lot farther than most other volunteer organization I am aware of, because we do all the work ourselves, and we try to get the most out of our dollars. So give generously, and come see what your contributions are bringing to life!

The volunteers, and this list is by no means complete, and in no particular order: Harry Winn, Fred Noll, Joe Kosaveach, Gary Wray, Tom Anderson, Jack Hliva, Steve Tarantolo, Bob Wheatly, Jack P., Joe Johnson, Bob Fellows, Merlin Beil, Mike Hills, Don Hattier, Art Ellison, Jason Garver, John Roberts.

Photos from the October 2011 Open House



Wall of Honor recipients and donors



Merchandise table



Bev discussing the Wall of Honor



Visitors watching the 12" gun training video



Joe discussing the use of mines during the war



Bob discussing the 12" gun

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

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2

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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

"Bits" From the Bunker Busters

By John Roberts and Joe Kosaveach

Progress on Battery 519, thanks to our volunteers!

We've been busy, and thanks to a steady appearance by our volunteers, we've been making exceptional progress, even more remarkable given our limited funding.

The South Security Gate Project

Thanks to Fred Noll, Tom Anderson, Jack Hliva, Harry Winn, Joe Johnson, and many others, the south security gates are completed! This was a daunting task, as the corrosion was so extensive, sections of these gates were actually missing.

The first step was to remove and dismantle the gates. Keep in mind, these haven't been removed since they were installed in 1943, and have received zero maintenance since then. The hinge bolts were rusted solid, and several had to be cut to get the gates down, with many hours of work to remove the remaining bits from the hinges.

The next step was to remove the expanded steel mesh and all the reinforcing steel. This was attached by a combination of spot welds and rivets, all of which had to be cut. The rivets were particularly challenging as corrosion made driving many of them out impossible, requiring drilling.

The next step was cutting away the sections that were too corroded to be reused, and fabricating replacement steel sections and welding them in place. We retained as much of the original structure as was practical, and in the end, it is estimated that by weight, 75% of the original material was retained.

After everything was checked for squareness, it was off to the sandblaster where all the rust and old paint was removed, and a coating of epoxy primer was applied.



Then came the arduous task of reassembling these. The original mesh was too far gone to use, and all new mesh was welded in place. Unlike the originals, we painted the

mesh with corrosion resisting paint before the structural sections were reattached. This will prevent some of the corrosion related failures in the future. Then the lengthy process of installing 160 steel rivets, hot swaged, began. This was an exercise in persistence if I ever saw one!

The last step was fabricating the missing latch hardware. Fortunately, we had the plans for these gates and were able to make faithful reproductions of the missing hardware.

Finally, two coats of paint, and we hung the gates. They look brand spanking new!

The Communication Infrastructure Project

Thanks to a great deal of help from Parks and PP&D, we were able to bury 8 phone circuits and a high capacity 24 fiber optical cable from the orientation building to Battery 519. The cables enter the building through the original underground access points, and all the phone wiring runs through the original under floor communications conduits. This has the advantage of making the modern lines out of sight, shielded from noise, and there's just something cool about using the original conduits that have been unused for nearly 70 years.

The final win was getting phone service to Battery 519. We have a few phones in the place, as cell phones don't work in there, and we now have the ability to monitor our security system.

Additionally, the EE91 phones in the south gun room now have reliable access to the cantonment area. Hopefully, we'll have those connected at the other end sometime this year.

During this period, the remaining foundation of the old generator/LORAN shed was removed.

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The North End Ceiling Leak Repair Project

This is actually thanks to Parks and Britt Murray's group. There has been a seam leak in the north end of the corridor probably since the construction of Battery 519 was completed. These folks removed the sand from the top of the structure, applied asphalt and a new membrane, and re-covered the structure. The repair has been 100% successful, as I was sure Hurricane Irene would be the real test. Just recently, they did a similar repair on our worst leak, the one in the ceiling of the muffler gallery. The only seam left to repair is at the south end. Hats off for a job well done!

Electrical Infrastructure Improvements

For those who remember the lighting in the south powder room, and felt like you were taking your life in your hands just by walking in there, well, not any more!

We gutted all the existing deteriorated wiring and conduits and replaced it all with new, salvaging the old light fixtures. Thanks to careful recycling, we did the entire job for less than \$200 in materials. Try doing THAT with a contractor!

Given our up and coming HVAC installation, we installed power outlets at the top of the wall in the south powder and shell rooms. This will be hidden from view when the period correct style ducting goes in place, yet allows us to plug in

computers, additional lighting, multimedia presentations, crock pots, or whatever we choose.

We are also doing the prep work to put the main building power feed completely underground all the way to the power pole, where the main transformer is located. This will remove the last post WWII structures and features from the center entrance area. This is a big project, as we need to bury, in conduit, cables capable of handling 500 amps. We have a copper recycling pile, and plan is to use the monies from that to pay for the new cables, conduits, etc.

The North Gun Block Entrance Project

We have a project to put a door in the north end of Battery 519. Our current plan is to put it in the center of the block wall of the North Gun Block

There are several reasons for doing this.

1. We presently can't take tours to the north end due to a lack of an emergency exit.
2. Starting the tours from the center of the Battery is a bit confusing, now we have a linear flow.
3. Starting the tours from one end gives a much greater impact as to how long this building really is!
4. Given that all of the original entrances and gun blocks are at exactly the same elevation, all we would need is about 75 feet of hard surface to have a complete hard surface for walking, wheelchairs, etc., all the way from the cantonment area to Battery 519. It additionally

cuts out about 150 feet of distance outside, no walking up and down the rise of the current path, etc. This will facilitate some of our less mobile visitors.

Our preparation included running power to that wall for security lighting, a telephone line and security wiring. This has been completed, and now we're working on the exterior plans, which include removing the excess sand over the gun block, a vandal resistant door, graffiti resistant paint, etc.

Battery 519's Geothermal Heat Pump System

Thanks to the City of Lewes, the State of Delaware, and the hard work of several board members, volunteers and folks from Parks, we are ready to install part of a geothermal heat pump system!

With the help of the City of Lewes, we obtained a grant work \$175,000 to install this system! With help from the State, we have some additional monies to bring this home.

The design, ultimately, will be for six zones throughout Battery 519. Right now, we only have funding for roughly the south two thirds of the bunker. This includes 3 geothermal units with hot vapor reheat option (basically, this is a high capacity dehumidification option that reclaims waste heat for building heat), an energy recovery ventilator for fresh air makeup, and a series of closed loop wells to provide the energy source/sink for the system. This design was chosen over others because:

1. It qualified for this particular energy grant.
2. No outside equipment whatsoever, which helps maintain the period correct appearance, eliminates a vandalism opportunity, and eliminates a seacoast corrosion problem.

Our volunteers have installed all the power feeds and will be boring some discreet holes in some hidden spaces through as much as seven feet of highly reinforced concrete to get the lines from inside the building to the well fields. Installation is expected to commence some time this fall or early winter.

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

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 Historical Association
120 East Wild Rabbit Run
Lewes, DE 19958

