



FMHA

FORT MILES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
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Fort Miles Historical Association Newsletter, Spring Summer 2007

President's Notes: I would like to welcome you to the Spring/ Summer FMHA newsletter. As always, I would like to remind you that your Board of Directors meets the third Saturday of each month at Books by the Bay in Lewes at 8:30 am. If you would like to join us, you are more than welcome. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for their hard work this past busy year. Your Board is Ted George, Secretary: Steve Hyle, Treasurer; Bob Frederick and David Main, Cofounders; Bev Dalecki; Joe Kossaveach; Brian Lindsay; Merlin Beil; Ray Quillen; and Joe Johnson. Again, special Thanks!

December 9, 2006 Meeting: FMHA had a great Winter Meeting at the Biden Center! Over 60 folks attended to hear two super seminars by two FMHA members, Bill Manthorpe and David Peterson. Bill presented a detailed look at the super secret underwater listening station at Herring Point during the Cold War (SOSUS station) when we listened on Soviet submarines off our coast. Much of this information is still classified and Bill did a great job of walking the group through the mission of the station at battery Herring in the 50's and 60's. David is a professor at DelTech in the CAD department and his classes worked all last year doing CAD work in Battery 519 which will be very beneficial for our museum planning. David walked the groups through his work and all found it very informative. Thanks again to Bill and David for their super work!

FMHA Work/Tour Training Day, Sat April 21, 2007 We have scheduled another work afternoon at the Fort Miles Historical Area (Cantonment) 1-5 pm. We have two big jobs to do: paint the two 155mm guns in the Gun Park and to restore the flag pole and get it up. Call Joe Johnson (645-1875) to get on the list to work. You can also email Joe at karlajoe@aol.com. We will meet at the Fort Miles Orientation Bldg. (where we hold the dances) at 12:30 to get organized. Also, that afternoon will be our training for the Battery 519 Tour guides at the same time so if you are interested in helping in that vital area, give me a call at 645-0753 to get trained (or renew your skills.) We will use you the very next week!

Fort Miles WWII Weekend, Saturday, April 28, 2007: Another great WWII Day and Dance is planned for Saturday, April 28, 2007. Tours of Battery 519 (the future museum) will be given all day. The WWII US Army re enactors will be back again this year to make the day a success but a different twist this year will be several German U-Boat from U858 re enactors who will be with us to recreate the famous day (May 14, 1945) when U858 surrendered at Fort Miles. And, as always we will have the neat WWII dance at the Fort Miles orientation Bldg. At 7 pm that evening. Call the Park Nature Center for tickets (645-6852.) Call early as the tickets sold out quick last year. Don't miss this special event!.

FMHA and the Delaware Joint Finance Committee: On February 22, 2007 I testified before the Joint Finance Committee to request that a full time Fort Miles Interpretive position be funded for Parks and Recreation for the Fort Miles project. I was very pleased that FMHA was so well received by the JFC and several members such as Sen. Bob McBride and Rep. Joe Booth had many nice things to say about what has gone on at Fort Miles, as did Sec. John Hughes of DNREC. I indicated that since over 7,000 tours were given last year and expect to outreach to Delaware schools, more help is needed at Fort Miles. Hopefully, the JFC will see fit to fund the position.

Upcoming Events and FMHA: We are planning to open up the new year at Kite Day in the State Park at the old Parade Ground opposite the Nature Center on Good Friday, April 6, 10-4 pm. Hopefully many FMHA members (and others) will turn out for this usually spectacular and colorful day! Also, put August 4, 9-5, Lewes Historical Complex, for the next Lewes Antiques Day. We will also be there. At both events we will have all our shirts, hats, tote bags, books and two new items ...Tower NightLites! We have two different heights just like the different heights of the towers. Both sell for \$50 and are of course, tax deductible. They make great gifts!

FMHA Membership: At our January board meeting, your FMHA board decided to extend all memberships for another year, so your membership will be extended through 2009. This was due to the significant renewals FMHA experienced this past year and the board felt a big Thank You was needed for the over 350 member FMHA. I am pleased to report that many FMHA members renewed at a much higher rate than expected, showing great support both for FMHA and its mission to “preserve, protect and defend” the Fort.

Battery 519 Museum Planning: Work continues on the 519 museum. I am happy to report that the Plexiglas wall windows for the front of the 12” gun in the south gun block is in the works. When completed it will be possible for those standing behind the breach of the 12” to see the exact view the gunners witnessed when they fired the gun! It should be spectacular! The layout of the museum has passed the first draft and continues to be worked. Remember, that when we are completed we will have the best WWII museum in the country, inside a real WWII gun battery. There will be nothing like it!

Battery Herring, the Overlook and the Twin Towers at Gordon's Pond: I am happy to report that the state is on target to begin working on the failed north jetty underneath Battery Herring within a month or so to begin the process of both saving the Overlook and the Battery. As many know, we have lost some of the Overlook to the constant pounding of the ocean over the last several years, but much more this past year to the point that some of the fence has fallen in the ocean in the last month and the state has closed down some of the Overlook to the public. But now we have a plan (repair north jetty this year, south jetty next year, and beach replenishment in 2008 for Battery Herring and the twin towers.) We then need to sit down and put together a long range plan for all three beach treasures. The really neat thing is that three diverse groups (FMHA, Surfriders, and the Mobile Surf Fishermen) have come together to support the state's effort. Thanks to all!

Dr. Gary D. Wray, President
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