

FORT MILES



HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

# The Battery

FALL 2020



## Sen. Carper Tours Museum



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### MISSION

Fort Miles Historical Association is a nonprofit group that works to preserve, protect and defend all aspects of Fort Miles, working with community and state stakeholders and other interested parties. FMHA also partners with the State of Delaware to develop the historical potential of Fort Miles.

To learn more, visit  
[www.fortmiles.org](http://www.fortmiles.org)

## From the Desk of the President



# FMHA Board Members Marching forward during the pandemic

By Dr. Gary Wray

Welcome to the fall 2020 edition of The Battery. This has been a very strange year for our country and for Fort Miles Historical Association. FMHA shut down in March 2020 because of the pandemic and restarted the work of our Bunker Busters (with masks and social distancing) in mid-June. Self-directed museum tours resumed in June with masking and social distancing. Tyler Dreibratt, interpretive programs manager at Cape Henlopen State Park, and his team have done a super job with the museum during the pandemic. Visitors continue to offer positive comments about the museum and its exhibits. All of our board of directors' meetings have been by Zoom. That has worked well, and we decided to continue with Zoom meetings for the foreseeable future. If you would like to join our Zoom meetings, we welcome you at 9 a.m. the fourth Saturday of each month.

### The Mountain State

I am a West Virginia native. I support all things West Virginia, including the state's Music Hall of Fame. My brother, Randall Wray (1949-1995), was one of the state's greatest rock 'n' roll guitar players. Randall is usually nominated each year for induction into the Hall of

Fame so I closely follow its events. A current West Virginia musician, Chance McCoy, won a Grammy in 2015 for best folk album. Chance is also a preserver of all things historical and his recent quote on the value of preservation is worth remembering:

"Preserving the past is preserving the future. There is only one moment in time when any great work of art, literature, music, architecture, etc. occurs and then that moment is gone. In many cases that level of skill will never be reached again. Let us make an effort to hold back the clock and preserve our historic treasures as long as we can so that future generations may be inspired by the brilliance of the past."

This was our thinking when we started to preserve Fort Miles in 2003, and this guides us to locate original historical artifacts for our Fort Miles Museum. When folks ask why we go to the trouble to save original works and artifacts, Chance's comments and insight sum it up.

### Delaware VIPs

Location, location, location. President-elect Joe Biden has a home in Rehoboth, barely three miles from Fort Miles! He has an

important building named after him in front of our work area in Battery Smith. Maybe we can get his attention next year and maybe even a visit. How nice would that be.

I have a connection to Delaware U.S. Sen. Tom Carper. We were born in Raleigh (County) General Hospital in the coal town of Beckley, W.Va., in the 1940s (I in 1943, Carper in 1947). My paternal great-grandfather, Abe Redden, taught many of the Carper kids who lived on Redden Ridge, near Crow, W.Va. (He also taught many of the Hatfield kids in a one-room school near Logan). Tom was not among that group because his family moved from Beckley to Danville, Va., and he was raised there. I was raised near Beckley in my mother's family home in Harper, W.Va. Senator Carper visited Fort Miles Museum on Oct. 22, 2020, to see our improvements and pay his respects to the battleship Arizona artifact. He was with us when we dedicated the Missouri gun barrel exhibit in 2015. We truly appreciate his support.

I also have a connection to Joe Biden. In the early 1970s, I was associate principal of Milford High School. In late summer 1972, I was contacted by New Castle Councilman Joe Biden's office seeking permission to hold a debate between the young (29 years old) Biden and incumbent Sen. J. Caleb Boggs, whom Biden was challenging for the Senate. I worked with our Milford High social studies department and set up a debate on the school stage: two chairs and a podium. We invited the senior class because many of them were eligible to vote in the next election. I had never

met Biden and looked forward to seeing him. He arrived early with a few of his New Castle County staff and struck everyone with his positive personality, engaging style and big smile. He went down each auditorium aisle, shaking hands with every student. Sadly, Boggs did not attend so Biden debated an empty chair. After the "debate," I had students cast ballots (this was the first election in which 18-year-olds could vote) on two voting machines I had set up in the lobby. Not surprisingly, Biden won overwhelmingly in the Milford High straw vote. Biden won the general election against Boggs in November 1972 and was on his way to national recognition. I got a nice note from Biden thanking me for setting up the debate.

### Busy board

Our FMHA board has been very active in this time of COVID-19. Vice President Bob Frederick has been informing our legislators of fort happenings and successfully working with them to renew our very important grant in aid from the General Assembly.

FMHA Secretary Jim Pierce has been updating our memberships, working with recording secretary Nancy Roberts. Jim also does yeoman service with our art initiative and works with board member Cliff Geisler on our two art galleries. Our FMHA Treasurer Larry Boyer works hard to keep our finances in order and completely transparent. Larry is also busy with our annual grant in aid submission, which is very important to our organization's financial health. And Larry is our Zoom coordinator and has organized that important effort since March 2020.

John Roberts and Jeff DiBella have been extremely active with Bunker Busters projects, including restoring Tower 3 at Dewey Beach and the Fort Miles Museum refresh of artifacts and their display. Will Short has been working with our Fort Miles docents, including several recent weddings at the Fort Miles Museum venue. Cliff Geisler has been coordinating the Arizona artifact display and working with the team that is





designing the official roll out of the relic in April 2021. Mike Dunkes continues to work on securing the Sipple World War II submarine map. He is working with the collections committee to find and bring at least one and hopefully two 155mm GPF's to our Fort Miles Artillery Park. These World War I long-range artillery guns were the first weapons brought to Fort Miles and placed in the dunes to defend the entrance of Delaware Bay. Four Panama mounts were built at the northern end of the fort and each of the towed 155s was placed on a concrete mount that allowed the gun to swivel 180 degrees. Our goal is to obtain at least one gun that we can place in our artillery park and, we hope, get another that we can place on the Panama mount that FMHA uncovered 12 years near the bathhouse. The bathhouse was built on Panama mount No. 1. The state wisely used the well-built concrete mount as a partial foundation for the building.

All board members are involved in FMHA projects. Will Short has been busy the past two months, working with Executive Director Mark Chura for several large weddings in the summer and fall. We created the Fort Miles Museum venue to rent for weddings, reunions and other events. It is proving extremely popular. Our Bunker Buster team does the setup, cleanup and irons out details for these events. We owe a big shout out to our "worker bee" team for helping to make the events so successful. Board member Merritt Cooch is our "go to" board member for several races and marathons that we have held. Merritt is our representative with Jim Pierce with the Cape Henlopen JROTC, which has been so active with us the past few years.

### 15 years of service

A long-term FMHA board member has retired. Joe Kosaveach has been with us almost from the beginning, starting to work in the dirty, dingy bunker in 2005. Joe and his wife, Etta, were great supporters, from helping to plan and work the annual FMHA banquet to restoring artifacts. Joe restored the Flak 38 that I found behind DelTech in the woods in Georgetown in 2004. He also restored the WWI mine that was donated to us. Joe's 15 years of support have been critical to our success. We owe a lot to him and Etta, who passed in May 2018. In the early days, Joe would wear his Navy uniform and give tours while Etta would sit in the Orientation Building, greeting folks who knew nothing about Fort Miles. What a great team. Joe will continue his FMHA membership and his leadership will be greatly missed on the board. We celebrated Joe's service to FMHA at a luncheon in the museum Oct. 22.

### Arizona artifact

It is our goal to officially roll out the Arizona artifact at the Delaware Goes to War spring event April 24, 2021. The Bunker Busters have built a display platform for the artifact and the public will be invited to see it that day. The museum received the Arizona artifact in March 2020, right before the pandemic shut us down. Thanks to the hard work of many FMHA folks, the artifact is safely inside the museum. Our team, led by board member Cliff Geisler, has been working hard to make the roll out a great success. A grant was written and approved by the Delaware Humanities Forum for the roll out. Outside of Pearl Harbor and Arizona, our Fort Miles Museum is the only place that has

Bookends of WWII with artifacts from the battleship Arizona and the battleship Missouri.

### Admiral Sipple map

Museums are only as good as the artifacts in their collections. For the past 17 years, Fort Miles Historical Association has assembled an impressive and important collection of WWII artifacts. Since 2014, we have been working to secure the one-of-a-kind Adm. Henry Draper Sipple submarine map. Admiral Sipple was a native Delawarean (1913-1992) and Naval Academy graduate. He had a distinguished Navy career, including commanding a WWII combat submarine (USS Conger #477). The Conger was the only U.S. submarine named after an eel! Sipple was taking his submarine to the Pacific combat area when the war ended in 1945. After retiring from the Navy to Rehoboth Beach, Admiral Sipple decided to record every American submarine that sank in WWII. Working on a large wall map of the world in his garage man cave behind his home, he detailed the loss of each of the 52 American submarines lost in WWII. He included data such as the number of crew lost and/or captured. The map is unique, put together by a Delaware native who was a WWII Navy submarine commander. Led by FMHA board member Mike Dunkes, we have been working with the family to save the map, move it to our museum to study how to preserve and conserve it. The map is a valuable Delaware and WWII artifact and deserves our best efforts.

### Submarine tactics

One of the little-known stories of the U.S. submarine attack on the

Japanese during WWII was how our submarine force adopted German U-boat tactics from the Atlantic and used them in the Pacific. The Germans repeated what they did in WWI, using unrestricted submarine warfare against shipping, condemning to death civilians, including women and children. This was the prime reason the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917. But Adm. Chester Nimitz decided that was also the best strategy in the Pacific during WWII. Our submarine campaign involved unrestricted attacks on Japanese shipping, which destroyed the Japanese merchant fleet by 1945 with more than 5 million tons of merchant shipping sunk by U.S. submarines, including “wolfpacks.” Our submarine attack on the Japanese was so successful that the Japanese homeland was starving for food and raw materials by summer 1945. In autumn 1945, the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal was under way. German Adm. Karl Donitz was charged with crimes for his wartime activities. He had ordered the German submarine force to use unrestricted warfare on the high seas, which many saw as a war crime. His future looked grim until his lawyer, Dr. Otto Kranzbuehler, studied the U.S. submarine campaign against the Japanese. Kranzbuehler worked with the tribunal to ask Nimitz to send in a written Q and A about the U.S. Navy adopting German tactics in the Pacific. Because it was an official request from the tribunal, Nimitz was required to respond. His response shocked and surprised tribunal participants. Dr. Kranzbuehler considered Nimitz’s answers so critical to the Donitz defense that he asked the Tribunal for permission to read them into

the record July 2, 1946. Nimitz wrote about the strategy the U.S. Navy used against the Japanese, a carbon copy of the German Atlantic strategy. The American admiral who was a hero of the Pacific was testifying in support of the German admiral’s submarine tactics. Most historians who have studied the Tribunal’s work consider Nimitz’s support of the Donitz strategy the main reason the Tribunal sentenced Donitz to 10 years in prison, the shortest sentence of all the top Third Reich leaders at Nuremberg. This gives Fort Miles Museum an angle with the Sipple map and ties us directly to the key history we tell about the German U-boat attack on the East Coast during the war.

### **A new year**

We hope the new year will bring a return to normalcy. We are planning for next year, including the important spring event April 24 with the roll out of the Arizona artifact. We want to thank everyone for the support we have received over the years, particularly this year. Here’s to a bigger and better 2021. (If you know anyone who would like to rent our new Fort Miles Museum venue and overlook with the best view of the Atlantic Ocean on the Delaware coast, tell them to contact me at [gdwray@hotmail.com](mailto:gdwray@hotmail.com).)

## **The President’s History Corner**

# **The Firefly that packed a wallop**

In each FMHA Newsletter, I will offer little-known WWII facts that I hope will spark readers’ thoughts. If you have questions or comments, let me know: [gdwray@hotmail.com](mailto:gdwray@hotmail.com)

The M4 Sherman tank was designed by the United States as a medium tank in the 30-ton range. It was never designed to fight heavy tanks such as German Tigers and Panthers but to support infantry with its rather puny (but effective in bunker busting) short barrel 75mm gun.

But many don’t know that a Sherman was designed to kill the big German heavy tanks and strike fear on the battlefield. It went by the rather innocent name Firefly. It got its name from the flash of barrel flame when it fired the British-designed high-velocity 17-pound cannon and its 35-pound shell. It was a battlefield beast but U.S. forces turned it down when the British offered to supply as many high-velocity 17-pound guns that we could use in 1943. By saying “no thanks,” we condemned hundreds of our M4 Sherman tankers to an unfair disadvantage when they fought Panthers and Tigers with no hope of penetrating their armor.

The British Quick Firing 17-pound high-velocity cannon was designed as the British response to the



German 88mm and an upgrade from the 57mm. As an anti-tank gun, it had no Allied peer and fired a shell that could penetrate thicker armor than the 75mm high-velocity gun on the Panther and even the 88mm gun on the Tiger I. The famous German 88mm gets rightfully deserved kudos but it seems that few have heard of its harder-hitting opponent, the Brit's high-velocity 17-pound cannon. The Brits reconfigured about 2,200 M4 Sherman turrets to take the 17-pound gun and had them ready for the Normandy invasion.

The Firefly was a nasty surprise to the Germans who quickly learned to stay away from the "Sherman with the long gun." It could kill Tigers and Panthers at long range. Combined with the mobility of the Sherman and its history of easy service (compared with the German heavy tanks that frequently broke down from engine and transmission troubles), it could handle most battlefield problems. The Fireflies of Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's Army kept the 21st Panzer Division from taking and holding Caen. A Firefly killed the great German tank commander Michael Wittman and his crew in his Tiger I by blowing his tank's turret off in August 1944. In the climatic scenes of the movie "Fury," four U.S. M4 Shermans take on one Tiger 1, losing three Shermans. The outcome would have been much different if four Fireflies had challenged that Tiger. But, sadly, too few Fireflies were available on the Normandy battlefield.

The Brits had the good idea and the good gun. Too bad our armor leaders rejected it. If the United States had adopted the Firefly concept instead of the M10 tank destroyer, many U.S. tank crew members might have been spared. Just as the Mustang was turned into a war-winning fighter when combined with the British-designed Merlin engine, the M4 Sherman could have been superior if our tank leaders had followed the British recommendation and their lead by installing the QF 17-pound high-velocity gun in the Sherman.



Source: United States Army Center of Military History via Wikipedia



# Financial health during a health crisis

By Larry Boyer - FMHA Treasurer

I was hoping I wouldn't have to say this again after the spring newsletter but I hope everyone is still staying safe during the challenges of COVID-19.

## Effect of COVID-19 on finances

The health crisis has had a negative impact on our finances, but I want to reassure you that our finances are holding steady. We have been unable to open our museum store, which annually contributes more than \$10,000. We have not been able to hold events to bring in a broader base of visitors who increase store sales, donations and membership revenue. And, just when our venue was beginning its initial season of events and weddings, many had to be rescheduled from spring to fall and into next year, which cut available rental dates.

To counteract the negatives, we have applied for grants (see below), are developing a more comprehensive budgeting process (also see below) and working with potential venue renters to provide the flexibility they need to secure the date they want. We will continue to look for creative ways to increase our revenue.

## FMHA/DSP committee structure

The steering team was put in place to develop the museum operating model. This included establishing the committee structure and museum leadership. It was part of the steering team charter that once these two goals had been met, we could dissolve the steering team. The steering team (made up of FMHA/Delaware

State Parks/community members) has done a great job developing the committee structure and operating model.

Our interpretation, collections, operating and fiscal committees continue to make progress as we gain experience. We are communicating needs across committees to increase awareness of activities and initiatives.

The steering team is establishing the leadership structure that will govern museum operations. This group also will be made up of representatives of FMHA, DSP and the community. The work is nearly complete to determine the composition of this group.

This leadership group and the committees will be the model of museum operation.

### **Budgeting for future**

Budgeting efforts between FMHA and DSP continue to evolve. Given the limited amount of discretionary funds in FMHA and DSP coffers, it is more important than ever that we understand the needs of both organizations for the museum and what funding sources we have. We are gathering information from our committees to better understand our operational and capital needs for the next year to 18 months. With better knowledge of our project needs, the effort required and finances needed, we will be better able to tap all funding sources for maximum benefit.

### **Grants in the works**

FMHA has become more involved in the grant process over the past few months. We are very fortunate in our state to have organizations such as Delaware Humanities, Delaware Community Foundation, Longwood, Crystal Trust and others. These groups have provided grant opportunities in the past several months that are helping our museum with operating and capital spending and exhibit development.

The first grant we received was the Delaware Humanities CARES Grant for \$10,000. These funds were used to help offset operating costs for critical

activities needed to continue operation through the COVID crisis. With many organizations losing money, it was important for us to apply for this grant because one key revenue source, our museum store, has been closed since the start of the virus.

We also received a second grant, for \$15,000, from Delaware Humanities. The funding is being used to develop and create a first-class exhibit for the recently acquired USS Arizona artifact.

The third grant is a request in progress. Delaware Community Foundation is offering capital funding to help nonprofits initiate and/or continue capital improvements needed to sustain their mission. This grant would help us repair or replace a capital item critical to our visitor experience.

The last grant, but certainly not the least, is the annual grant in aid that we receive each year from the state. The deadline for the next fiscal year's grant is Dec. 7. We will work diligently to ensure that requested funds will be used to improve Fort Miles Museum.

### **Fiscal 2019/2020 tax submission and financial reporting**

Our 990 tax submission and financial reporting is being finalized. The 990 of any nonprofit can be accessed at [www.990finder.foundationcenter.org](http://www.990finder.foundationcenter.org). Enter Fort Miles Historical Association and Delaware as the state.

Our annual financial reports are compiled by Raymond F. Book and Associates P.A. For copies: [lgboyer@gmail.com](mailto:lgboyer@gmail.com).

### **The value of contributions**

Thank you for your many contributions throughout the years and today. You can read on our website and in our newsletters about the improvements and restorations made to Battery 519, the gun park and historical area. We couldn't have achieved these great successes without your continued support. That has always been at the core of our success.



Marta Nammack

# USS Arizona artifact set for display in spring

By Cliff Geisler  
Photo Courtesy of Marta Nammack

Fort Miles Museum plans to unveil Part 1 of its Bookends of World War II this spring when it premieres its artifact from the USS Arizona, a casualty of the attack that began the war nearly 80 years ago.

About 8 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese carrier-borne aircraft launched a surprise attack on U.S. Navy ships at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The Japanese force caught the American fleet unprepared, and the airplanes inflicted severe damage on the U.S. warships.

When the attack ended, nearly 2,400 U.S. servicemembers and 50 civilians had been killed. Most of the military casualties, 1,177 sailors and Marines, lost their lives aboard the USS Arizona (BB39), which was tied up at Battleship Row, adjacent to Ford Island in the center of Pearl Harbor.

The Arizona was hit by bombs and strafed almost as soon as the attack began. None of this damage was fatal. About 8:15 a.m., a Japanese bomb (a converted armor-piercing artillery shell), struck the Arizona

near the battleship's forward gun turrets. The bomb penetrated the ship and detonated, setting off stored ammunition. The explosion was catastrophic. Hundreds of the Arizona's crew were killed instantly, and others were trapped below decks, unable to escape the sinking ship. The Arizona would burn for two days before its fires died out.

The Navy began salvage work on the Arizona almost immediately after the attack. It became evident within weeks that the ship was



damaged beyond repair. The bow was shattered, with the forward gun turrets, foremast and funnel collapsed into the hull. On Dec. 1, 1942, after a careful survey of the wreckage, the USS Arizona was struck from the Naval Vessel Register.

Salvage work continued on the Arizona during the war years. The ship's main armament (except for the guns in the foremost turret) were removed and repurposed as shore batteries or replacements on other ships. Because the ship sank keel down in only about 50 feet of water, much of its superstructure remained above the waterline. This material was gradually removed and dumped at a remote site in the Pearl Harbor reservation where it was left to rust. In 1962, a permanent memorial was built over the wrecked ship, a monument to those who lost their lives at Pearl Harbor.

Over time, more wreckage was removed from the sunken hull. Museums and memorials occasionally asked the Navy for pieces but no legal or administrative program existed to accommodate their requests. In 1995, the USS Arizona Relics Program began when Congress authorized the Navy to transfer fragments of the wreckage to museums, educational institutions and not-for-profit organizations. The receiving group must pay all moving expenses and may not sell, trade or benefit financially from its possession of the relic.

Efforts to obtain a USS Arizona relic for Fort Miles began in 2018, when the FMHA board of directors petitioned the Navy for a piece of the wreckage. After nearly two years, Fort Miles Museum received a 650-pound fragment of steel from the aft portion of the ship. The relic will be placed in an exhibit that is under development. We plan to

display the artifact to the public in spring 2021.

The Arizona relic will be placed near the 16-inch gun barrel on display outside the entrance to Fort Miles Museum. The barrel was in the foremost gun turret of the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945, the day the Japanese signed surrender documents aboard that ship. In August 1996, the Navy selected Pearl Harbor as the final home of the USS Missouri. The Missouri was located, as a museum ship, a few hundred yards from the wreck of the Arizona. The historical symmetry is unmistakable. The battleship where World War II ended would be retired near a battleship lost on the first day of the war.

It may be said that World War II came to an end in the shadow of the 16-inch gun outside our museum. With the addition of the USS Arizona relic to its collection, Fort Miles Museum will create, on a smaller scale, the same historical bookends that exist at Pearl Harbor.

The acquisition of relics from the USS Arizona and the USS Missouri makes Fort Miles Museum one of a very few places in the United States with significant artifacts from the day America entered World War II and the day it ended.





# Bunker Busters are busy with barracks, batteries, betrothals

By John Roberts

Even though we had a break because of COVID 19, we are back again and very busy.

We are working safely. We work in small groups, respect distance and wear protection. Many of us have also tested voluntarily and, so far, all have tested negative. And now, our projects.

## Barracks

Our crew is replacing rotted wood, replacing moldings with period-correct pieces, reglazing windows and improving lighting and electrical fitments.

We are reflashing chimneys to keep water out. The roof on each building is in fair shape, and we're doing what we can to make them solid. Eventually, we will replace the roof material.

The crew made wooden number signs to identify the barracks, similar to those installed in the



1960s. We no longer need to ask, "Which one is T604?"

FMHA hasn't held an event this year and we are taking this opportunity to finish work without being pushed against a deadline.

## Battery 519

The big news here is the museum refresh. We are organizing displays, setting up information panels, and moving in new artifacts. The M2 mine is now in the north powder room and we have a full mine display. It looks great. The crew did a terrific job, building a steel frame on which to hang the M2 mine.

With the help of Executive Director Mark Chura, we have dedicated LED lighting on these displays. It is the most professional room we have, and we're working to get the rest of the museum up to speed.

We have been working on signs throughout the building to describe what we have in place. We have more to do, including describing the building. This is progress as promised.

The north gun room has a carpeted floor, two large-screen monitors and cabinets for the AV equipment. It looks much better than it did just a year ago.

Also, thanks to Mark Chura and others, the north gun room

has heating, ventilation and air conditioning. It is quiet, draft-free and comfortable. It took a while for us to accomplish this because of funding, but we're one step closer to having the entire building's HVAC system completed. The last zone will be the north powder and shell rooms. This will complete installation that started nearly 20 years ago.

Fred Noll has built a ram for the 12-inch gun. It looks like the original. Our goal is to make the gun elevate, from horizontal, allowing us to conduct loading exercises. This will be power operated because of the weight of the rifle. The window to



the outside will be made to slide to maintain weather tightness.

Pat Bragdon has been working on shells for the 12-inch gun, which will be displayed in the museum, and 16-inch shells, which will be displayed near the Missouri gun. They are painted the appropriate colors and will really make this feel like an artillery installation.

### The Arizona artifact

We have a piece of the USS Arizona. Part of its superstructure was removed after it was sunk in Pearl Harbor and stored in the hills above. The Navy gave us an opportunity to get a piece and, after much work, it's in our possession. Our crew, with assistance from others, designed an illuminated display. It looks great. We expect completion in the next month or two. The work looks amazing. It's very professional, a creative presentation and something we can be proud of.

### Battery Smith

Our shop is in Battery Smith. With the help of the parks department, we got most of the junk left by the Navy removed and disposed of. We have a lot more working room and storage for artifacts and exhibits. This was backbreaking work. Congratulations to the team for bringing this home.

We have the climate under control in this building. It is always dry, probably for the first time in decades. Next, we deal with flaking paint.

When we have events, the searchlight needs a different home. With the help of the parks department, we have a second indoor parking space in the south gun room of Smith.



Fort Miles has effectively taken over all of Battery Smith. We have more space and the building is getting the tender loving care it needs. Nice work.

### Event support

A few weddings have been held at our outdoor venue, including three back to back to back in October. These have all been very successful and were well-supported by our crew. Usually, the wedding team provides most of what is needed, but we are responsible for building support and maintenance. Before and after each event, the place is cleaned and organized.

### Fire Control Tower 3

Our electrical crew ran a new power feed and installed a main panel inside the tower. Along with Bella Terra, the blue lights are up and operational again.

Parks also installed a full height door, concrete entrance ramp, and sump pump to keep the tower dry during storms. We're moving along nicely.

Our crew has also started designing and fabricating replacement windows for the ground level windows and vertical slits at the balcony level. We're doing what we can to make progress, so essential to maintain funding. Well done.

## Bouquets for docents, Bunker Busters at fort weddings

Our docents have been on an extended sabbatical because the COVID-19 pandemic forced FMHA to cancel most of its programs and events. The virus, however, hasn't interfered with love and marriage at Fort Miles.

### By Will Short

While complying with Delaware's COVID emergency declaration requirements, FMHA hosted one wedding in August and three in October at the Fort Miles event venue outside and inside the Battery 519 north gun room. The level of FMHA support needed for the four weddings was determined by Executive Director Mark Chura and his wedding organizer Gina Derrickson. Our Bunker Busters ensured that the venue was in tip-top shape and all systems were fully operational.

At the first three events, the wedding party was responsible for setup: tables, chairs, plates, glasses, decorations, etc. They also were responsible for catering, a sound system and an outside restroom facility. Setup usually included a 40-foot by 50-foot tent over the lower level of the outside venue to provide cover in inclement weather. FMHA was responsible for water, electrical and lighting systems, and cleaning the venue.

Each wedding had different requirements for how many FMHA support staff would be needed,



depending on the number of guests and amount of contracted space. For the three large weddings, FMHA volunteers drove guests in golf carts from the lower parking lot to the museum and event venue.

FMHA Bunker Busters Roy Messmer and Jeff Schellinger were our cart drivers for the Taylor-Lober wedding Aug. 8. They helped with pre-ceremony setup, post-reception teardown and closing. The Maddie Overturf wedding Oct. 3 was the largest. The wedding party rented the entire venue and museum. Wedding guests were driven from the lower museum parking lot to the south entrance of Battery 519 by Bunker Busters Don Macauley, Bill Evans and Rich Rohde. Roy Messmer coordinated their activities and Pat Bragdon assisted with pre-ceremony activities. Once inside the battery, docents Bill Bennett, Tom Blakeley, Bob Wheatley and Ed Paterline greeted our guests and directed them down the main hallway to the event venue. After the wedding ceremony and before the reception, these docents staffed four exhibit rooms: north powder, south powder, south shell and south gun. Guests were invited to walk the museum and visit the four rooms for viewing and interpretation until 6 p.m. Of the 140 wedding guests, about 40 visited the exhibit rooms. Docents left the battery after their shift while Roy and two of his drivers stayed to provide taxi service to the lower parking lot throughout the event, which ended at 10 p.m. The wedding

party and wedding guests heaped us with praise for the fabulous venue and excellent service provided by the FMHA staff.

The Oct. 17 Holly Briel wedding, with more than 100 guests, was another great success story. The logistics were very similar to the Overturf wedding. Guests were taxied from the lower parking lot to the south museum entrance in golf carts driven by FMHA volunteers. Inside the museum, FMHA docents were stationed along the hallway and directed guests to the event venue. We staffed two shifts of golf cart drivers. Don Macauley, Ed Paterline, Jim King and Rich Applebaum drove arriving guests to the south entrance of the museum. Don Macauley, Tom Blakeley and Jeff Romans drove departing guests back to the lower parking lot. Jeff Schellinger worked parts of both shifts as a backup driver and traffic director. Our docents inside the museum were Bill Bennett, Joan Applebaum and Bob Wheatley. They were on site from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., welcoming guests and directing them to the wedding venue. The wedding party did not contract the entire museum so exhibit rooms were closed. The wedding party was very pleased with FMHA support and effusive in its praise of the venue.

On Oct. 18, one day after the Holly Briel event, FMHA hosted a small wedding ceremony and reception for the Weitz party. Don Macauley

and Roy Messmer worked a long afternoon, setting up tables and chairs, directing guests to the venue and doing post-wedding teardown. It was our last wedding of 2020.

Although no other FMHA events are planned at Fort Miles until April 2021, we need docent training. We have two new docents-in-waiting, an exhibit refresh and the unveiling of the USS Arizona artifact display. These all require training and documentation revisions. We're in the early stages of developing a discussion and presentation on the early years of the Fort Miles restoration. We also plan to develop and video record a historian's tour of Battery 519 for our docents. The two- to three-hour tour will be guided by Dr. Gary Wray, John Roberts and Joe Kosaveach. They will provide our docents with in-depth technical data about the battery's operation during WWII and detailed descriptions of the acquisition or construction of our artifacts. It should be a very productive period while preparing for renewed activities and refreshed exhibits at the fort in 2021.

# New artwork on display, new prints for sale

By Jim Pierce

The use of art to visually display World War II scenes and history is a key part of making Fort Miles Museum a great visitor experience. FMHA has added new works to its collection and is offering more prints for sale.

Howard Schroeder Paintings: The museum houses a gallery dedicated to original works and prints by Howard Schroeder, created while he was stationed at Fort Miles during World War II. During the summer, FMHA funded an effort to place some of these works in the museum entrance and exhibit areas. Working with ColourWorks in Wilmington, FMHA had large prints made of mine laying and other activities painted by Private Schroeder.

**Fire Mission - Fort Miles:** Paul Rendel, Milton artist and great friend to FMHA, recently donated another of his original works to Fort Miles. "Fire Mission - Fort Miles" depicts a Battery 519 crew firing one of the fort's big guns during World

War II. Many training missions took place at Battery 519 to prepare soldiers if German surface warships reached the Delaware coast.



**Lewes Swing Bridge:** Joan Applebaum, FMHA volunteer docent and local artist, contributed an original painting called "Lewes Swing Bridge." Fort Miles, located at what now is Cape Henlopen State Park, depended on available rail service. A swing bridge over Lewes-Rehoboth Canal gave artillery and military supplies access to Fort Miles.

**New Prints:** Our friends at Casablanca Design in Milton and Print Coast2Coast in Lewes produced two series of limited-run prints of works by Paul Rendel -- "Fire Mission - Fort Miles" and "Fort Miles Flyover (Panchito)." Prices range from \$15 to \$40. These prints can be purchased at the Brush Factory



on Kings Highway in Lewes or at [www.fortmilesaha.org](http://www.fortmilesaha.org) for pickup at Fort Miles Museum or shipped to a domestic address (shipping costs apply). Look for other framed prints and print packages on our website. (FMHA member prices are available for online purchases only.)





# Fort Miles expands the brand

By Tyler Dreiblatt

2020 has been a year like no other. Parks and museums around the world have had to get creative and change the way they operate. Although this year has seen its share of challenges, new opportunities have arisen for Fort Miles to expand our brand.

In the last newsletter, I wrote about our efforts to move interpretation online. Our online content has reached 7,267 people and led to large increases in those who follow our social media pages. Our Facebook page has more than 200 new “likes” since the year began, and our Instagram account has added an amazing 2,661 followers in the same time. These are people from all over the country – and the world – who are aware of and interested in what we do at Fort Miles.

In September, FMHA held its fifth annual V-J day celebration. Even without a pandemic, attendance at this event is limited by the available area. This year, we were able to Livestream the event on Facebook and Instagram to more than 200 viewers. To my knowledge, this is the first time we have used live-streaming technology at Fort Miles. We can use it again to allow more and more people to interact with our events and exhibits.

Other institutions have also moved their events online. Zwaanendael Museum held a Cyber Seafaring event the first weekend in October. Fort Miles was asked to participate, and we jumped at the chance to engage with a new audience. We presented an hourlong virtual program on the history of our site to 152 viewers, many of whom were unaware of Fort Miles.

We can't forget traditional media. In August, Dr. Mark Dreisonstok, staff writer and editor for The Scottish Rite Journal, visited us. The Journal is the largest Masonic publication in the country, with a circulation of 138,000.

Dr. Dreisonstok is working on an article about Fort Miles to appear in the journal's December issue. We hope this will invite new visitors.

Fort Miles was featured on the Science Channel show “Mysteries of the Abandoned.” Our episode premiered June 4, right before the museum was scheduled to reopen. Many visitors this summer told our staff they heard about Fort Miles on the show and decided to see it for themselves.

Our social media accounts, live-streaming technology and media partnerships have helped to expand our brand during a difficult time. More people than ever are aware of what's happening at the site. As we continue to explore new ways of reaching people, knowledge of and respect for Fort Miles will continue to grow.



# Order Your Engraved Paver

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

Now you can support the new Fort Miles Museum, receive a tax deduction and see your name or that of a loved one honored on a handsome brick paver. Each engraved paver will be displayed in Battery 519, America's first WWII museum at an actual military site. More than 10,000 visitors annually will see your paver. We will send a tribute card to whom you designate, telling them of this special honor.

The tax-deductible cost for each paver is \$200, including delivery and installation.

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Limit 3 lines of 16 characters per line. Spaces, punctuation and symbols count as characters

Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

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Line 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Line 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

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**Send orders to:** Fort Miles Historical Association | Dr. Gary Wray, President  
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