

FORT MILES



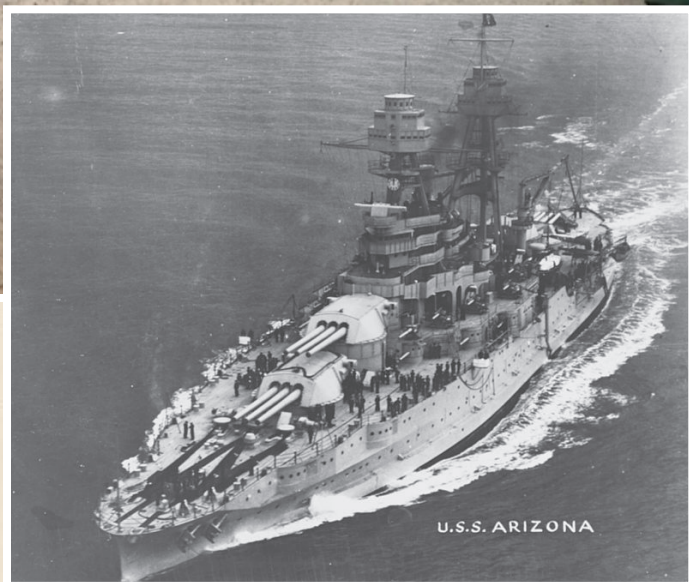
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Battery

SPRING 2020



Arizona Arrives





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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

From the Desk of the President



FMHA Board Members Keep Fort Miles Moving Forward

By Dr. Gary Wray

The state of emergency for the COVID-19 virus has changed our Fort Miles Historical Association operations for the next several months. We stopped all meetings, tours and events well before Gov. John Carney declared a state emergency. All the work of our 400-member group has ground to a halt and our Fort Miles Gift Shop is closed until at least May 15, 2020. Postponements include the always-popular spring event that was scheduled for April 25, 2020. Cape Henlopen State Park is open and all events are postponed rather than canceled. We hope we can resume our normal lives after May 15. We had to postpone the last film/lecture series on the life of Audie Murphy but it will be presented this summer. We will announce new dates.

It is hard to believe it is 2020. What a wild 17-year ride it has been for

Fort Miles Historical Association, from our inauspicious start under Tower 3 in August 2003 when Lee Jennings, Bob Frederick, David Main and I (with Jim O'Neill of Delaware State Parks and Molly Murray of the *News Journal*) talked to the few folks who were there. That small group has grown, gathering much support, with a membership of more than 400 and climbing. While Lee passed away in March 2010, our three founding board members are still with us. Our Fort Miles board remains very active and involved to move the organization ahead, with Executive Director Mark Chura. The FMHA board meets at 8:30 a.m. the fourth Saturday of every month at the museum. All are welcome.

Each board member is charged with working on particular projects. Bob Frederick, our vice president and founding member,

is our legislative liaison with our Delaware lawmakers. He has done yeoman work to keep our legislators informed of our activities and helping us reach out to them. Larry Boyer has been our FMHA treasurer for the past several years and has performed exemplary work, keeping a close eye on the organization's finances. Larry also is responsible for filing our yearly Delaware Grant in Aid and I am happy to report that last year FMHA received the largest percentage GIA in the state. We attribute that to the credibility we have established with our legislators and the success we have achieved. Jim Pierce, our FMHA secretary, has done a great job changing our membership structure and keeping our membership informed on our website and Facebook. Board member Cliff Geisler chaired our Arizona Task Force to arrange for the arrival of the Arizona artifact at Fort Miles. Board member Will Short coordinates our docent efforts, which proved invaluable in 2019 when we kept the museum open six days a week all year for the first time. Board members Joe Kosaveach and Bev Dalecki have been on the board for many years and provide valued guidance.

Joe Johnson also has been on our board for many years and is the designated driver for our 1942 Sperry searchlight. Board member Merritt Cooch leads our outreach efforts for events such as the Big Gun Run in April. Merritt's grandfather Ned Cooch was stationed at Fort Miles during the war, in charge of the mine detail. Board member Mike Dunkes has

worked closely with Cliff on the shipment of the Arizona artifact to Delaware. Board members John Roberts and Jeff DiBella work closely with the Bunker Busters on all jobs, large and small. Board member Frank Ali has done a wonderful job in charge of our Fort Miles Gift Shop and, with his food service skills, has led our food effort during events (his wife, Catherine, has been by his side all the way). It is a total team effort. Without a strong board, our organization would not be as successful as it is and we are well-positioned for the future.

Remembering those we lost

We lost board members and Bunker Busters this year. Board member Merlin Biel passed away. Merlin had been on the board for many years, including a stint as assistant treasurer. His counsel was always valuable. Merlin was the only FMHA board member who was stationed at Fort Miles in the 1950s. We also lost longtime Bunker Buster Tom Anderson. FMHA chose Tom for our most important honor, the Lee Jennings Award, in 2018. Tom was one of our original Bunker Busters, serving in that important role since 2008. No job was too big or small for Tom to tackle and he worked with our team until the last few months. Because of his distinguished service, we invited the Anderson family to hold Tom's memorial service in our new North Gun Block. More than 90 people attended the event March 7, which was Tom's birthday. Attendees included many members of Tom's family from Pittsburgh, Pa., and many Bunker Busters. I had the

honor of leading the service. FMHA members spoke about how much Tom gave of himself during his 12 years as a Bunker Buster.

A former board member, Brian Lindsay, was honored recently. Brian's family and FMHA leaders dedicated a bench in memory of Brian near the Missouri gun barrel pad. Brian was a longtime board member who was active with our outreach programs in the organization's early days when people were just learning about our work at Fort Miles. It is on the shoulders of these longtime FMHA leaders that our organization grows and prospers.

Updating the interior

Museums must renew and refresh exhibits continually to attract visitors, and Fort Miles Museum and Historic Area is no different. We add to our exhibits and artifacts all the time but this year we wanted to make a special effort to upgrade our Fort Miles Museum. We created a Museum Refresh Team and began to tackle the major task of an interior upgrade. The team mapped the redesign and each team member was given a task to complete. Our goal was to have the refresh done by the now-postponed April 25, 2020, event. All the interior changes were done by our Bunker Buster team led by board members John Roberts and Jeff DiBella. Our visitors will be able to see the refresh when our museum reopens this year. See Mark Chura's article for details.

FMHA and JROTC

One big challenge that organizations face is keeping



the organization growing and advancing, especially attracting young people. I have been in the Cape Henlopen School District since 1974, everything from a teacher to school board president and most jobs in between. It was a natural fit that we reached out last year to the Cape Henlopen High School JROTC program and its leaders, Colonel Erale and Sergeants Webb and Hurt to get the cadets involved with Fort Miles. Cape was most receptive, and over the past two years Cape JROTC cadets have worked shoulder to shoulder every other Thursday with our Bunker Buster teams. The cadets bring their lunches and eat with our teams in our media room, sharing information and ideas. It's a wonderful relationship. More than 40 Cape JROTC cadets have been involved at Fort Miles, helping with many projects such as the Fort Miles Museum refresh, painting the north powder room with many of our new exhibits. Our FMHA board has authorized the presentation of a \$500 award to two deserving Cape JROTC cadet leaders at the school's May awards assembly. Our FMHA relationship with Cape JROTC has proven very beneficial for both groups and we envision its expansion.

Progress on Tower 3

As I wrote at the beginning of this article, our FMHA organization was started in 2003 under Tower 3 in Dewey Beach, Del. Lee Jennings and I picked that place to announce our beginning because fire control towers were so important as the fort's "eyes" to spot enemy ships. We also incorporated towers in our FMHA logo to show their importance. Tower 3 has always had a special place in the hearts of FMHA members. We set out in

2007 to rehab Tower 3 and make it accessible to the public, to join Tower 7 in Fort Miles Historical Area as a public venue. We signed an agreement with DSP and our fellow parks Friends group, Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation, for the three groups to work together to restore the tower and open it to the public. We set out to raise the money to get the job done. Our FMHA Bunker Busters would provide much of the "grunt" work to begin the rehabilitation. Two years ago, Bella Terra Hardscapes of Ellendale, Del., installed cobalt blue lights. In February 2018, Governor Carney threw the switch to turn the lights on at the tower base. We want the public to know we were working on the tower and to invite people to see it lighted at night. The Tower 3 rehab is unique because it's the first time two parks Friends groups have worked with DSP to complete a project.

Our goal continues to raise the funds to finish Tower 3. With help from the Longwood Foundation, Crystal Trust and other groups, we are almost there. We have made the base of the tower more handicapped-accessible and will be installing a new door. Bella Terra will install more lights before summer as we raise the final funds we need to install a spiral staircase and open the tower top for the public to see the wonderful views of the Atlantic Ocean. The staircase is the most complex aspect of the project because it has to be built inside the tower. We should have the tower project complete within a few years.

A bright future

FMHA continues to work to make our Fort Miles Museum the best WWII museum inside a WWII

facility in the country. We have world-class exhibits, including those from the battleships Arizona and Missouri and the largest piece of the last U-boat sunk in WWII.

Any museum in the world would give a fortune to have what we have in our Fort Miles Museum and our artillery park, which is one of the best in the country. We have much to be proud of, much more work to do and a bright future. We have a great supporting membership, an active "dirty hands" group of Bunker Busters, and an energetic board of directors with a supportive DSP partner. We invite you to visit this year and see what's new, including the Arizona artifact. As always, we thank you for your support.



Structuring Committees, Learning About Budgets

By Lary Boyer - FMHA Treasurer

I hope everyone is staying as safe as possible in these trying times brought on by COVID-19. FMHA recorded quite a bit of progress before the state emergency went into effect.

Museum, DSP committees

We have had tremendous success in the new committee structure developed by FMHA and Delaware State Parks. The committee structure consists of Coordinating, Operating, Collections, Interpretation, and Fiscal Management and Fund Raising. All committees have met at least once (except for Collections, which hasn't sorted out membership), and some have met multiple times. Members have reviewed and approved committee charters and membership, and each has designated a leader and agendas. A collaborative database will hold meeting notes, etc., to help us share information.

The acquisition of the Arizona artifact gave us a chance to work on a cross-committee basis and shows much early success getting several committees together (Fiscal Management and Fund Raising, Interpretation, Operations).

Budgeting

Our budgeting and forecasting efforts continue to move forward. FMHA and DSP have shared their budgets and budgeting processes with each other as part of the Fiscal Management and Fund Raising Committee activities. We reviewed how state budgeting works when DSP secures funding for its capital and operations activities and how FMHA can be a part of this. We look forward to working with DSP to understand our financial requirements for Fort Miles and to secure funding.

Grant-in-Aid

While the COVID-19 pandemic will slow some of our grant-funded efforts this spring, we had begun to use the grant-in-aid funds we received last year.

- We have been working on an exhibit refresh in Battery 519, including improved lighting, exhibit placement and construction, and improved signs.
- We have increased our social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, etc., and are ensuring that these media will be updated regularly.
- We have contracted with a bookkeeper to help us with accounting, reporting and procedures for operations and capital activity.
- Several members of FMHA leadership met with Jason Smith, a senior legislative analyst in Dover and state grant-in-aid coordinator. We took him for a tour of Fort Miles Museum and Historic Area. We told him how we spend our GIA dollars and what we have on our to-do list for future grant funding. Jason was very impressed by our hard work and good use of funds. He encouraged us to “keep doing what we’re doing” and to continue to request funding through the GIA process. He provided us with very useful guidance. It was a very positive and useful session that keeps us on the radar in the Delaware Legislature.



Fort Miles + Delaware State Parks = Finished Projects

By Grant Melville
Park Superintendent - Cape Henlopen State Park

Cape Henlopen State Park is unique for many reasons. One is the partnership between Delaware State Parks and Fort Miles Historical Association to develop Fort Miles Museum. This partnership accomplished great things during the past winter. Here are a few highlights.

One completed project is a bright new Fort Miles Museum sign and



a new gate at the entrance. We're grateful to our Bunker Buster Fred Noll for his work with the contractor on gate specifics. In addition to the sign and gate, Tyler Dreiblatt and his staff now have a black powder specific building where they can assemble rounds for live artillery demonstrations. The Orientation Building has new sidewalks connecting it to the bike path, and an HVAC system, the first step in the building's facelift. This winter the event venue got two water spigots and a geothermal HVAC system.

The Delaware State Parks mason finished a three-year project to rehabilitate all the old barrack buildings in the youth campgrounds. Below you can see



the work on these buildings and the finished product.

Additionally, Bunker Busters and Cape Henlopen staff secured the second door at the Battery Smith plotting room in the Primitive Campground on Jan. 30. Fred Noll had spent months building these doors.



at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab and now are back on site and ready for display.

In March, Tyler Dreiblatt went to Alabama to be certified in black powder through the National Park Service's Historic Weapons Training to prepare for this season's live artillery demonstrations.

FMHA and Cape Henlopen State Park worked hand

Fort Miles was a very popular destination during the mild winter. Fort Miles Interpretive Staff hosted a 1st Day Hike on New Year's Day. Record attendance in past years was about 50. This year, more than 100 participants listened as Mark Wilson talked about the riflery range, 519 Plotting Room, revetments for the 8-inch gun, and drainage ditches for the Parade Field while they walked Pinelands Trail.

This winter, FMHA and Delaware State Parks got together in the rebranding of the April event, now called Delaware Defense Day. Although this event was postponed, Fort Miles and DSP rallied to create new and exciting presentations for the event, including an exhibit refresh. Adding to our exhibit refresh, we completed the two-year preservation of the M2 mine case and anchor found in the park in 2016. For the past year, the mine and anchor have been



in hand to honor former FMHA board members and volunteers. On Jan. 25, rain stopped just in time for the dedication of a memorial bench to honor former FMHA volunteer and board member Brian Lindsay. Brian was a board member from 2004-2014 and was extremely active in the early days of FMHA. His wife, Roberta, is pictured second from the left. We thank Brian, Roberta and their family for their many years of support.

Merlin Beil, Fort Miles service member from 1957-1958 and FMHA board member, passed away Dec. 2, 2019. We are working his wife, Yvonne, for a memorial bench for Merlin.



On Thursday, Feb. 6, FMHA volunteer and Bunker Buster Tom Anderson passed away. Tom had been an avid volunteer with FMHA almost since its inception and was the 2018 recipient of the Lee Jennings Award. On Saturday, March 7, Tom's family and friends celebrated his life in the event venue.

This is a snapshot of the partnership between FMHA and Delaware State Parks that has continued to make Fort Miles grow and thrive. This joint effort deserves a big round of applause.

4 German U-Boats, Fort Miles Share History

By Dr. Gary Wray

Fort Miles was built to stop the German surface fleet, ships such as the great battleships Bismarck and Tirpitz, from attacking the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Four large gun batteries were established on the Delaware side of the entrance to Delaware Bay and River, and several others were installed on the New Jersey side. A large minefield was planted at the entrance to Delaware Bay to block passage. Huge Sperry 800-million candlepower searchlights were placed along the beach to light the entrance at night. But, unknown to U.S. planners, it was never the German intent to send large warships into the western Atlantic to attack our East Coast. It was Germany's goal, however, to send its submarine fleet to attack allied shipping. Fort Miles was ill-prepared to stop that attack with its big guns. The defenders at Fort Miles did get involved with a few German submarines sent to our coast. Here is that history.

U-123

This submarine was one of the most famous German U-boats of World War II and lead boat of the

original German attack on the East Coast of the United States (Operation Drumbeat). It was a long-range Type IX boat that led the five-boat Drumbeat attack. Captained by Reinhard Hardegen (1913-2018) from May 1941 to June 1942, this boat sank 42 ships (218,813 tons) on 12 war patrols. In January 1942, Hardegen wrote in his ship's log about the lights on the Delaware coast at the mouth of the bay that were backlighting ships he was targeting. Hardegen claimed he sank a ship Jan. 17, 1942, near Fort Miles (the San Jose). This U-boat had three captains in its service career and all three won Germany's highest military award, the Knights Cross of the Iron Cross. (Typically, a submarine captain would be awarded the KC for sinking 100,000 tons of enemy shipping). U-123 was scuttled by the Germans at the end of the war but was raised by the French and, refreshed, served in the French navy until 1959.



U-373

This was a Type VIIC boat that served on 13 war patrols, nine under the command of Paul-Karl Loeser (1915-1987). This boat was ordered to lay a minefield near Fort Miles at the entrance to Delaware Bay on its fifth war patrol in June 1942. On June 24, 1942, the 396-ton tugboat John R. Williams from Cape May Naval Station with a crew of 18 hit a mine laid by U-373 and immediately sank, killing 14 of her crew, including her master. Four crew were rescued from the bay and taken to Beebe Hospital in Lewes, Del. This was the last ship sunk by U-373 and the only ship sunk in Fort Miles waters by mine. U-373 survived until two days after D-Day (June 8, 1944) when it was

attacked and destroyed in the Bay of Biscay by a British Liberator bomber, killing four of its crew. The remaining 47 German sailors were saved.

U-853

This Type IXC/40 U-boat was the last sunk in American waters in WW II and was the sister boat of U-858, which surrendered at Fort Miles. U-853 left Norway in February 1945 to attack the U.S. homeland. It arrived off the coast of Maine, where it attacked and sank by torpedo the U.S. Navy Eagle Boat 56 near Portland, killing most of its crew. U-853 moved south to Rhode Island Sound. On May 5, 1945, U-853 attacked the collier Black Point and sank it with a torpedo, killing 14 of its crew. The U-853 stayed in the sound, giving time for U.S. hunter-killers, including two blimps from Lakehurst, N.J., to arrive the evening of May 5 and start an attack that destroyed

U-853 and its crew. Many years later, Sussex County businessman Melvin Joseph from Millsboro sent a team to Block Island, R.I., to dive the wreck. The dive team brought up the entire Flak 38 twin barrel 20mm gun that is on display in Fort Miles Museum. Dr. Gary D. Wray, FMHA president, found the weapon in a wooded area of Georgetown in 2004. The gun was taken to Fort Miles, where it was restored by FMHA board member Joe Kosaveach. The gun is the largest surviving piece of the last U-boat sunk in WWII.

U-858

This U-boat was commanded by Thilo Bode for its entire career. U-858 was a Type IXC/40 boat like its sister boat, U-853, and was on three war patrols but sunk no ships and fired no torpedoes in anger at enemy ships. U-858 left Norway for the U.S. East Coast in spring 1945 to attack shipping. Arriving off Canada, U-858 moved

down the coast until May 5, 1945, when it was ordered by German High Command to cease all offensive operations and return to base. Germany surrendered May 8, 1945, and U-858 was ordered to surrender to Allied forces immediately. It surfaced and announced its location. U.S. forces off New Jersey accepted the boat's surrender. U-858 was taken to Fort Miles, where it surrendered again at the Mine Wharf (now the fishing pier) on May 14, 1945, to Army forces. The boat's 61 crew members were sent to Fort DuPont, Delaware's main POW camp. The boat was towed to Philadelphia Naval Base. The Navy destroyed U-858 off Cape Cod in 1947.

The German navy sent more than 35 U-boats to attack the U.S. East Coast during WWII. These four boats and Fort Miles share a history. We tell their stories at Fort Miles Museum.



Sharing Fort Miles Stories Online

By Tyler Dreiblatt

The outbreak of COVID-19 has disrupted all areas of life, and Fort Miles has not been immune. All of our normal programming has been canceled until May 15. We are still dedicated to sharing the stories of Fort Miles and are making an effort to increase our online interpretive content.

Since the beginning of 2020, our Facebook page has featured weekly Mystery Monday and Throwback Thursday posts. For Mystery Monday, we post an image from the historic area and invite our followers to guess what it is. The answer is revealed the next day. Mystery Monday is a good way to engage our Fort Miles followers. Throwback Thursday posts feature historic images of Fort Miles and the people who served and as a brief fort fact. These pictures have been some of our most-liked content. Throwback Thursday is also featured on our Twitter profile.



Fort Miles has a presence on Instagram. We are posting scenic shots of Fort Miles Historic Area on the Cape Henlopen Instagram account. Our Instagram posts focus on the current state of Fort Miles, allowing people to see the progress we all continue to make.

DSP marketing department has devised an initiative called #DailyDEStateParks. Every park is working to create interpretive content that goes beyond the usual picture and fact posts. We at Fort Miles

have uploaded two #DailyDEStateParks posts: a blog article about drones during the 1940s, and a narrated presentation on the women of Fort Miles. Look for more Fort Miles-related #DailyDEStateParks content on Facebook and Twitter at 11 a.m. every Wednesday.

Our team is determined to continue informing the public of the amazing history of Fort Miles despite the current health emergency. Taking our interpretation online is an exciting opportunity. We can reach new people, explore new stories, and try new things. If you have ideas for content, contact me at tyler.dreiblatt@delaware.gov.





By Jim Pierce

A 640-pound piece of historic steel arrived at Cape Henlopen State Park on March 23. Thanks to the generosity of Federal Express, the relic from the USS Arizona, which was sunk Dec. 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, was flown from Hawaii to BWI Marshall Airport, then trucked to Fort Miles. FedEx donated the fast and efficient service to FMHA and Fort Miles Museum.

Maintenance personnel from Cape Henlopen State Park helped move the crated artifact into temporary storage. The final step used a creative pallet conveyor designed on the spot by Lewes artist Brax Hudson, a longtime enthusiastic supporter of Fort Miles Museum. We appreciate the work of parks staff and management.

BACKGROUND:

The USS Arizona/BB39 was a Pennsylvania-class battleship commissioned in 1916. At the time

of the Pearl Harbor attack, eight battleships were anchored in the harbor. The Arizona was one of the first to be struck and suffered a catastrophic explosion that sank the ship, killing 1,177 sailors and Marines. Only 337 crewmen survived the explosion of nearly 1 million pounds of gunpowder. The blast was caused by a 1,760-pound armor-piercing bomb that struck the forward magazine of the Arizona. The attack on Pearl Harbor and the sinking of the USS Arizona marked the formal entry of the United States into World War II.

The acquisition of this relic completes a nine-year vision of FMHA President Dr. Gary Wray to exhibit artifacts representing the beginning of WWII and the end of the war. The initial artifact, acquired in 2016, is a 16-inch gun barrel from the USS Missouri that was shipped from Virginia by barge, then transported by

rail to Fort Miles. The barrel was refurbished and painted by FMHA Bunker Buster volunteers and mounted on a gun carriage in the museum's Artillery Park.

It is this barrel from the center gun of the forward turret of the Missouri under which the Japanese prime minister surrendered to Allied forces represented by Gen. Douglas MacArthur. World War II ended in the shadow of the barrel on display at Fort Miles.

FMHA contacted the administrators of the USS Arizona Relics Program. This program, established in 1995, authorizes the Navy to sanction delivery of pieces of the Arizona wreckage to qualifying educational institutions and not-for-profit organizations.

Fort Miles Museum and FMHA qualified for this program. That began a two-year effort led by



FMHA board member Cliff Geisler to work with the Navy to identify a piece of the Arizona wreckage to be transported to Fort Miles.

LOGISTICS:

The wreckage from the Arizona was flown from Pearl Harbor to Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, then transported by truck to Fort Miles. To begin the shipment, Navy Seabees stationed at Pearl Harbor cut the 10-foot by 3-foot, 640-pound section of the aft deck superstructure from Arizona wreckage in the foothills of Waipio Peninsula, which juts into Pearl Harbor. During the construction of the USS Arizona Memorial, which was dedicated in 1962, wreckage from the ship’s main deck and superstructure was moved to the Waipio foothills.

The Seabees from Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 303 Detachment Pearl Harbor were directed by Jim Neuman, history and heritage outreach manager of the Arizona Relics Program, to cut and crate this large relic to prepare it for shipment. CBMU 303 did a fantastic job.

Because of the efforts of FMHA board member Mike Dunkes and FMHA Bunker Buster volunteer Jeff Schellinger, Federal Express offered to fly and truck the crated artifact to Fort Miles. Below, Mike Dunkes greets the FedEx personnel who drove the relic from BWI to Fort Miles. A job well done and our thanks.

FMHA received a certificate of authenticity and a schematic of where the relic was on the Arizona. The schematic confirms this piece of the aft deck superstructure was



located beneath a wooden stand that was placed so a U.S. flag could be raised and lowered daily on what remained of the ship.

NEXT STEPS:

This large piece of wreckage from the Arizona will be moved inside Fort Miles Museum this spring. Planning and fundraising will begin to design and build a permanent home for the relic adjacent to the USS Missouri gun barrel. This location will enable thousands of visitors to see and appreciate the significance of the exhibit when Fort Miles Museum is open to the public.

Once the permanent exhibit is completed, Fort Miles Museum will be one of only two places in the United States where visitors can see in close proximity relics from the day World War II started and the day the war ended.



FMHA board members Cliff Geisler (left), Dr. Gary Wray, Jim Pierce and Mike Dunkes proudly hold a flag that flew over the USS Arizona in 1980 donated by Lewes City Councilman Dennis Reardon.

Bookends of World War II

Fort Miles and Battleships Arizona and Missouri

By Dr. Gary Wray

Perhaps the two greatest battleships in the Navy were (and are) the Arizona (BB-39) and Missouri (BB-63). The Arizona was destroyed Dec. 7, 1941, the greatest one-ship disaster in the history of the Navy with the loss of 1,177 sailors and Marines, the beginning of World War II. The Missouri was the last battleship commissioned in the Navy and the one on which the Japanese surrendered Sept. 2, 1945, to end the war. Securing a key artifact from each for our museum at Fort Miles became my goal 10 years ago.

When four of us (Lee Jennings, David Main, Bob Frederick and I) created Fort Miles Historical Association in August 2003, we knew we needed to set our little state and new museum apart from

others. How do we accomplish that? We spent much of our early time restoring the old casemate and grounds to their 1943 appearance. That involved demolition and paint and cleanup. But the question lingered: What can we do to make our mark and set us apart from other museums?

When Lee Jennings died in March 2010, our goal became more focused. I wondered if I could find a piece of the battleship Missouri and a piece of the battleship Arizona and bring them to our Fort Miles Museum in Delaware. Could that be done? Lee and I had found a gun from the old battleship Wyoming (BB-32) and brought it to Fort Miles so the idea was not that farfetched. I went on the hunt for a piece of the battleship Missouri. Terry

McGovern of Coast Defense Study Group (CDSG) was a great help to me in the quest. I wanted a 16-inch barrel from the Missouri for two reasons: the Japanese surrender was signed on the Missouri's decks in September 1945 and it was the last commissioned battleship in the Navy.

In 2011, I learned that 15 Iowa-class battleship original 16-inch/50 cal/ Mk 7 barrels were stored in the California desert. I contacted the Navy and was told it was targeting the barrels for destruction, selling them for salvage. These were the original barrels from all four battleships and included six of the original barrels from the Missouri, the very barrels that were on board when the Japanese delegation surrendered in 1945. (All the Iowa-



class battleships shot out their barrels in Korea and they were replaced in the 1950s). I found out I had to apply to the Navy for one of the barrels and I didn't have much time. The Navy was informative but my time ran out. The Navy sold all the barrels except one for surplus and they were destroyed. I was really bummed out, but all was not lost.

In early 2012, I was contacted by Jim Poyner, an employee at Dahlgren Navy yard who was a good friend to Fort Miles when Lee and I worked with him years ago to secure a 12-inch gun from the battleship Wyoming. Jim told me he had found the eight remaining barrels from the Iowa class on the ground near Norfolk Navy yard at the St. Julien's Creek storage area. Wow! Eight barrels only 200 miles from Delaware. Of the eight barrels at St. Julien's, three were

from the Missouri, four were from the New Jersey and one (the actual proof barrel of the series) was from the Iowa. No barrels from the Wisconsin were in the mix because they were destroyed in the 2011 surplus sale. Interestingly, all three of the Missouri barrels were the center barrels from each of its three turrets.

I informed our FMHA board and our state partners that I wanted one of the barrels for our Fort Miles Museum. I wanted one of the three Missouri barrels to have "bookends" from World War II: a barrel from the end of the war and, I hoped, we could acquire a piece of the Arizona from the beginning of the war. After much discussion, the FMHA board and our state partners agreed with my "bookends of WWII" vision. But we had no money to make the project happen.

I put together a committee led by Nick Carter and Mike Rawl of Lewes and several others and we worked to raise the money to transport the barrel. I worked with Jim Hall of Delaware State Parks to develop the logistical and funding plan that the Navy required. Within six months, our fundraising group led by Nick and Mike raised more than \$150,000 of non-state money to move the barrel to Delaware. Although we had three plans, we decided that shipping it by rail was the only viable option. We were ably helped by Terry McGovern of CDSG. None of our efforts would have been successful without the support of Chazz Salkin, Delaware State Parks director.

We worked with several other groups, including the state of Arizona, which had heard we were on the hunt for one of the barrels. Arizona wanted to put together a





state park dedicated to the fallen WWII heroes from that state. The Arizona secretary of state asked for my help. I related that on one of my trips to Dahlgren, I had tripped over a barrel lying in weeds and asked Jim about it. He told me it was the last remaining 14-inch barrel from the Arizona. I told Arizona officials that we would work with Jim to get that barrel and one of the Missouri barrels for their WWII memorial planned for outside Legislative Hall in Phoenix. We made it happen for Arizona and Fort Miles: we moved our middle barrel of Turret 1 to Delaware in 2012. Several years later, it was placed in our new artillery park outside the entrance to Fort Miles Museum.

We still needed the Arizona artifact. Two years ago, I started the active hunt for it to finish my “bookends of WWII” vision. I asked board member Cliff Geisler to lead the

effort. He worked with the Navy at Pearl Harbor for almost two years. Within the past six months, our persistence paid off. Contacts at Pearl started to be more responsive and I created an FMHA Arizona Task Force to plan the work on our end for the artifact. Leadership at Pearl changed. Phone calls and emails were answered on a regular basis. Several members of our task force were very involved, including Mike Dunkes of our board who led the shipping effort, and Jeff Schellinger, one of our active Bunker Busters. Jeff is a retired Air Force colonel who has contacts with his old pilot buddies at FedEx. Mike and Jeff worked directly with FedEx. Fred Smith, chief executive officer and FedEx founder, got involved and the project moved quickly.

The Navy at Pearl asked us what size artifact we wanted. The Navy sent us three choices: one the size

of a shoebox, one about the size of a small table, and the third a large piece about 10 feet long and 3 feet wide. We decided that bigger is better and went for the large piece. A local family made a nice financial donation to ensure the Arizona artifact shipping costs would be covered. Navy Seabees crated our piece and FedEx picked it up at Pearl Harbor for air freighting to Baltimore on Saturday, March 21, 2020. It arrived and was FedEx trucked to Fort Miles on Monday, March 23, 2020. Our team welcomed it with a flag donated to us by Lewes City Councilman Dennis Reardon, who purchased it at the Arizona Memorial in 1980 when he visited Pearl Harbor. The nine-year plan had come together. What a great team effort.

Now work begins to design a final resting place for the Arizona artifact. We want it to be close to the Missouri gun barrel so the two bookends of WWII will be together. We are planning how the display will look. Our Fort Miles Museum is the only place east of the Mississippi River that has a piece of the beginning of the war and a piece of the end of the war. And not just “pieces” but valuable artifacts from the two most important Navy battleships in WWII, the famous BB-39 Arizona that was at the beginning of the war and BB-63 Missouri, where the war ended. A plan that started with a vision in 2010 has come together in 2020 and was accomplished by the FMHA and Cape Henlopen State Parks team, a great job by all. This summer, when the Covid-19 emergency subsides, we will announce the debut of the Arizona display in our museum. Bookends of WWII are together forever at Fort Miles Museum.



“Fire Mission–Fort Miles” Painting

By Jim Pierce

Thanks to Milton-based artist Paul Rendel, a number of whose works are on display at the Visiting Artists Gallery inside Battery 519 at the Fort Miles Museum, Fort Miles Historical Association is pleased to announce the receipt of a newly donated painting entitled “Fire Mission – Fort Miles.”

This oil painting began life as a sketch of the 12-inch artillery gun exhibit in the South Gun Room of Battery 519. The initial sketch was transformed into this painting. Paul added a gun crew who manned one of the two the 12-inch artillery guns in place at Fort

Miles during World War II. The painting depicts a fire mission as it may have occurred during the war should a German warship have tried to breach the American coastline and waterways leading to Wilmington and Philadelphia.

Sequentially, the Officer-in Charge (left forefront) is likely looking at a shell (out of the painting) that is being transported by the overhead rail system from the adjoining shell room in the battery. As can be seen, the next shell to be shot is held in place by two members of the gun crew and will then be placed on the wheeled shell cart.

In the meantime, the breech of the gun is being swabbed to prepare for the shell to be inserted into the gun tube once it is placed on the shell cart.

FMHA thanks Paul Rendel for this excellent addition to our growing collection of World War II art and other memorabilia. Graphic prints of this painting will be available for purchase at the Fort Miles Museum this summer and a print signing event, with Paul on hand to sign purchased prints, will also be scheduled.

Presenting new membership guidelines

We need you ... to volunteer

A new membership structure went into effect Jan. 1. FMHA membership levels are:

- Student:** \$15 annually, receives 10 percent Museum Gift Shop discount and newsletters* *this level is for ages 17 and younger
- Captain:** \$30 annually, receives 10 percent gift shop discount and newsletters
- Major:** \$100 annually, receives captain benefits and a museum challenge coin upon joining or upgrading an existing membership
- Colonel:** \$250 annually, receives captain benefits, a museum challenge coin and a \$25 gift certificate for the Museum Gift Shop upon joining or upgrading an existing membership
- General:** \$1,000, one-time lifetime, receives captain benefits, two museum challenge coins and a \$50 gift certificate upon joining or upgrading an existing membership

Many of you who renewed this year have taken advantage of our one-time renewal promotion. This promotion is for those who were designated sustaining members. Sustaining members whose memberships expire January 2020 to December 2020 may choose to renew for a one-year or two-year period by paying a membership fee of \$20 per annum. To receive this benefit, the renewal fee must be received before the end of the month after which the renewal was due.

For example, if you are a sustaining member whose membership expires in June 2020, you may renew at the captain level until June 2021 for \$20 or until June 2022 for \$40, subject to FMHA receiving the renewal fee no later than July 3, 2020. Also note the upgrade incentives above if you wish to renew at a new level.

Why members join

We're grateful to all the new members who joined in the past 12 months and existing members who renewed their memberships. Your support is greatly appreciated. Members who continue their support by renewing year after year say:

"I joined because I believe the accomplishments of FMHA and Delaware State Parks warrant my on-going support."

"My visit to Fort Miles was a complete surprise. I had no idea Fort Miles was such an important United States coastal defense installation during the war and post war. I joined to help support the maintenance and expansion of this great museum."

"I joined because my visit gave me real insight into World War II and the role Fort Miles played in the war. My father served in WWII and my brother is a Vietnam-era veteran. My membership is in honor of my family's veterans and veterans of all wars and conflicts."

We need you ... to volunteer

FMHA volunteers now help with event planning, our art initiative, graphic design and historical research and writing. This is in addition to volunteer docents, gift shop ambassadors and, of course, Bunker Busters.

We ask all members interested in volunteering at Fort Miles to step forward or recommend our volunteer program to friends and neighbors. If you, or someone you

have met who is new to our area, would like to discuss FMHA's many volunteer opportunities, email info@fortmiles.org.

This year, FMHA will continue mailing our newsletters three times a year and will continue our new, more robust communications via regular eBlasts members have been receiving. If you have not received information via email and would like to, send your email address to info@fortmiles.org. To update your email address: info@fortmiles.org. We prefer to communicate via email to operate efficiently and economically.

The most current information on FMHA and museum events is available through the FMHA website, www.fortmiles.org, and on the FMHA Facebook page. We are posting daily on Facebook. We soon will be introducing a refreshed homepage on the website.

Thank you again for continuing to support FMHA.

We look forward to seeing you at Fort Miles Museum this year.



Bunker Busters are Staying Busy, as Usual

By John Roberts

Bunker Busters have notched many accomplishments, in spite of COVID-19 shutting us down. We will re-engage as Delaware State Parks policy and respect for our safety allow. This is an unusual threat and we will deal with it properly. Every Thursday, we have had about 35 or more Bunker Buster volunteers at the fort. I remember when we had to work two days a week, sometimes three, because we didn't have enough people. We've come a long way.

The new venue

Our crew has been busy supporting improvements to the venue. Our electrical crew, made up of folks from the electrical contracting field, have done a great job adding the myriad of circuits to the venue, including the power feed to the new geothermal system for the north gun room.

Crew members are providing wiring for A/V needs, security system concerns, phone wiring, lighting, up-and-coming Wi-Fi, fiber and Ethernet service, and many other needs. Nicely done. We're very proud of this crew, which is saving us a bunch of money and working in a very professional manner. We have a pair of large-format video monitors, ready to install, a far better PA system, thanks to Pat Bragdon, and a huge thanks to Mark Chura for helping make this all work seamlessly.

Barracks

A mild winter helped the crew working on the restoration and security of the barracks. Crew members replaced rotted wood, reglazed windows, and added shutters and locks. The barracks are secure with few vandalism problems.

Battery Smith

This is where our shop is located. We've made the bathrooms functional again, a daunting task because the original domestic water supply was unusable. Fortunately, the Navy ran water lines into the gun blocks from existing fire hydrants, probably in the early 1950s. We ran a line up the corridor, rebuilt all flush valves, added a new water heater and all new pipes. All the fixtures are working now. Thanks to JROTC, we also prepped and painted these rooms. They look brand new.

We've improved working conditions in the building. We have more space in the south gun room after a major haul-out of junk, most of which was left by the Navy after it vacated in 1996.

We've improved the long-neglected electricals. We now have less guesswork and more reliability for our needs. We won't engage in an en masse rewiring as we did in Battery 519 because this isn't a public space. The Navy left us are more in Smith, and far more modern than we found in Battery 519.

We added shelves for artifact storage, added locks on the doors of the former powder and shell rooms, and improved dehumidification and the overall climate.

Our shop is getting more organized and productive, thanks to Jeff DiBella. No other Parks/Friends

group in the state has these capabilities.

Golf carts

All of our golf carts now are olive drab, a paint color that makes them appear military. It also makes them harder to see. We've added strobe lights for added visibility. Now we can travel on public paths and be seen by other vehicles for improved safety. That's a job well done.

Securing other bunkers

Our team of metalworkers, headed by Fred Noll, has been doing a great job of securing the mine casemate, Smith's PSR and 519's PSR. PSR means Plotting, Switchboard and Radio room. We're working with Delaware State Parks on this project. I believe we have more than half of these openings secured. Vandalism in these locations has been out of control. We've been pushing for this for a long time, and progress has been excellent. Well done.

Other work

Our team also spends quite a bit of effort cleaning, organizing, painting, changing lightbulbs, and other maintenance activities to keep Fort Miles standing tall. This is very serious work. It maintains the appearance of the facility and shows the public how dedicated we are to making this a world-class museum.

Fire Control Tower No. 3

This isn't exactly an FMHA project, but we've been working with DSP and Delaware Seashore

Preservation Foundation on Fire Control Tower No. 3. Our first effort was to clean out the interior a few years ago. That motivated other efforts to get this project up and running. We're installing upgraded electricals, working with contractors to run conduits under the new sidewalk entrance. This spring, schedule permitting, we'll install a new 100-amp service, bringing power to the tower and enough power to operate welders, plasma cutters and other construction equipment.

Overall, we've done well. At the end of each year, we look back and never thought we would get as much done as we always do. I expect this year to be no different, despite the challenge of COVID-19.



Main Museum Exhibit Room Gets a Major Upgrade

By Mark Chura

The museum's primary exhibit room is getting an exciting overhaul. New storylines, exhibit cases and additional artifacts will soon be on display. Originally planned to open as part of the annual Delaware Defense Day scheduled April 25, the grand opening is postponed until the museum reopens. Here is an exhibit preview:

Barracks Life

The barracks at Fort Miles are from the 600, 700 and 800 series of military buildings. They were designed to be temporary, and few remain in the United States. Ours still stand because of the dedicated work of Fort Miles Historical Association and Delaware State Parks.

The 261st Coast Artillery Battalion

Fort Miles' main mission was to defend Delaware Bay and River from enemy warships. Thirty-two artillery pieces were placed at Cape Henlopen, and members of the 261st Coast Artillery Battalion manned most of those guns.

Mining Delaware Bay and River

Fort Miles was built primarily to defend Delaware Bay and River against attacks by surface ships.



German submarines, however, proved to be the true threat. In January and February 1942, German submarines sank 28 ships in American waters. To help defend against submarines, a mine command was activated at Fort Miles on Jan. 5, 1942.



The Role of Civilians at Fort Miles During Wartime

Fort Miles could not have existed without help from civilians. The Army Corps of Engineers was responsible for building Fort Miles, but civilian contractors did much of the work.

Civilians worked at Fort Miles after construction ended. Several local women were clerks and switchboard operators, keeping the fort connected and managing paperwork. Local men served as auxiliaries to military police.



As part of the upgraded space, the room's walls have been painted and museum lighting is being installed. This photo is a sneak preview of the room's evolution.

FMHA's docent cadre continues to grow

By Will Short – Docent Program Manager

Since 2020 began, two more docent candidates joined the fold of Fort Miles tour guides. After they complete training, our program will have 21 docents. In 2019, we qualified six new docents to raise our total last year to 19. Our expanding number lets us support more programs and tours. This is particularly important during summer Sunday tours when many of our docents are on vacation. It also provides flexibility during program changes or unexpected docent absences.

FMHA's 2019 summer Sunday tour program was a great success. It began Memorial Day weekend and concluded Aug. 25. Every Sunday we opened the orientation building at 9:30 a.m. and the museum at 10 a.m. Both closed about 2:30 p.m. We staffed the orientation building with a docent and kiosk cashier, and the museum with two or three docents and a gift shop cashier. Most Sundays an FMHA board member opened the museum's north art room as an extra attraction for our visitors. DNREC's Parks and Recreation division helped each Sunday with two staff. The gift shop, art room and north exhibit room were open throughout the day, but the rest of the museum was closed to the public except for guided tours at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. We occasionally conducted an extra

tour on exceptionally busy Sundays. More than 2,000 people visited the museum on 14 Sundays of our 2019 summer program.

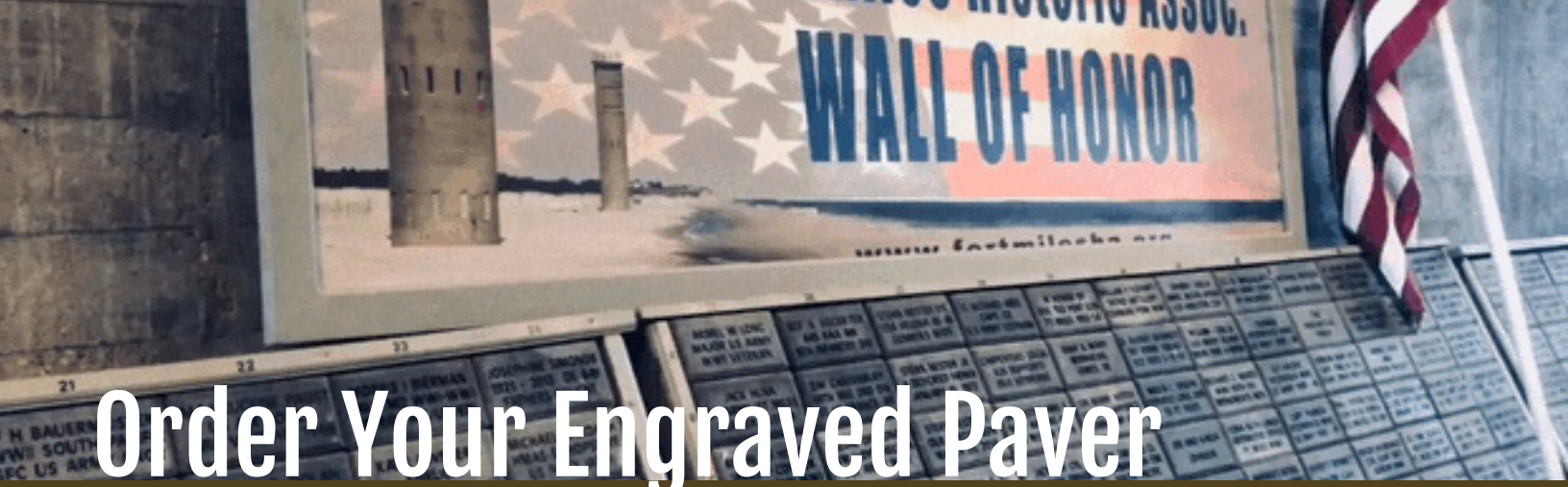
Other programs supported by FMHA docents last year included our winter lecture series the fourth Saturdays of January, February and March; Big Oyster's Big Gun Run in April; Delaware Goes To War event in April; FMHA's VJ Day ceremony on Labor Day; SEAs the Day in September for wounded warriors; and a Veterans Day open house in November.

2020 began with the prospect of a busier year than 2019. DNREC and FMHA have undertaken an exhibit overhaul that provides an exciting new look to the museum. The north powder room is officially classified as an exhibit room. FMHA Bunker Busters painted the walls and installed lighting and we have created five distinct exhibit spaces that will tell a more complete story of Fort Miles during World War II. New interpretive signs are being prepared and several exhibits will have full backdrops. FMHA has also acquired an artifact from the battleship USS Arizona, which was sunk by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor during their attack Dec. 7, 1941. This artifact will be temporarily displayed in the north art room until June when it will be

displayed in the north event (gun) room. Other exhibits have been relocated in the museum.

These changes created new challenges for our docents. FMHA convened our first 2020 docent program meeting March 5 to review the 2020 event schedule, discuss exhibit changes, and conduct a museum walkthrough to preview new exhibit layouts. We concluded from this meeting that we need to refresh our tour guidelines, update source materials, and complete a final museum walkthrough when the exhibit refresh is finished.

Just nine days after this meeting, the hammer of COVID-19 began to drop. FMHA canceled the March film and lecture. DNREC's Parks and Recreation Division soon closed all buildings at Cape Henlopen State Park, including Fort Miles. Although the governor also closed the beaches, the park remains open for walking, running and cycling. All Fort Miles programs and events through May 15 have been postponed or canceled. It's too early to tell what impact the COVID-19 pandemic will have on later events but FMHA's crackerjack team of docents, Bunker Busters, and other volunteers will be eager, ready and willing to get our programs back up to speed in short order as soon as we get the green light.



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Line 1 _____

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Line 2 _____

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