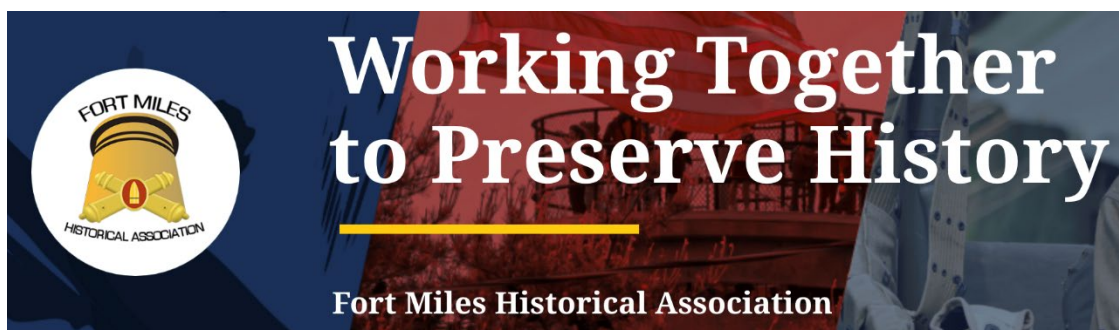




Since 2003, Fort Miles Historical Association and Delaware State Parks have worked as partners to renovate, operate and expand the Fort Miles Museum and surrounding historical area.

Bunker Blast

June 20, 2025

A short and frequent communication to keep you, our loyal members, informed of what's happening with your association.

In today's Bunker Blast we highlight the museum summer hours, recap our D-Day celebration and reveal dates for our fall and winter Lecture Series.

Summer is Here

The annual influx of visitors has arrived at the Delaware Beaches and Fort Miles is on many of their bucket lists of things to do. For the first time the Museum is open seven days per week. Fort Miles employed interpretative staff have never been able to open the Museum more than 5 days per week, even in the summer, because of budgetary constraints. For 5+ years FMHA volunteers have stepped in and opened the Museum on Sundays from May through September.

This summer FMHA has expanded our role, and we are now opening the Museum on Mondays, as well as Sundays, through Labor Day. Four or five FMHA docents and greeters open the Museum from 10-3 and offer tours at 11 and 1. While we don't accept reservations, we don't turn anyone away if they are onsite 10 minutes before tour times.

An example of our impact, this past Sunday we had 302 visitors and gave tours to 30 people. We ask every person if they have visited us before and fully 95% of people are first time visitors, with the remaining number bringing their friends to see us. If we do the math, FMHA volunteers are sharing our story with 1000's of people who otherwise would not have access to the Museum.

As you know, we have a large volunteer pool, but since we are now open on Mondays we could use some more history focused volunteers to help us on Sundays and Mondays.

If you are interested please sign up at this link: <https://fortmilesmuseum.org/fmha/#volunteer>

D-Day Remembrance

by Will Short, FMHA Vice President and Event Director

The Fort Miles Historical Association conducted its fourth annual D-Day ceremony on Friday June 6th at the Fort Miles event venue overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. With a large crowd of over 100 people in attendance, FMHA honored the forty Delawareans who were killed during the June 6, 1944 Allied invasion of northern France and two-month Battle of Normandy.

Among the many guests in attendance were City of Lewes civic leaders, Delaware legislators, and senior representatives from local veteran's service organizations. Also attending was 101-year-old World War II Army Air Corps veteran George McCarthy. FMHA's Will Short served as Master of Ceremonies.



Air Force veteran Lani Spahr opened the ceremony with a prelude on the bagpipes; VFW Post 7234 Honor Guard presented the colors after which Cape Henlopen senior Mason Fyock played the National Anthem on trumpet. Lewes St. Peter's Episcopal Church Reverend Carol Flett delivered the invocation.



Following Short's opening remarks and recognition of special guests, Bill Szymczak paid tribute to his father, a WWII U.S. Navy sailor who survived the invasion after his ship was sunk off the Normandy coast on D-Day while supporting Allied invasion forces.

Local artist Paul Rendel described the inspiration and techniques he used in painting his Tribute to D-Day's Heroes, which is on display inside the museum. Also on display in the museum was a U.S. Army Chaplain's Kit, on loan from St. Peter's, which went ashore with Army Chaplain Capt. Morris Arnold on D-Day. FMHA Historian Ed Paterline then gave the keynote address, "Action by U.S. Army's 29th Division on June 6, 1944".

The highlight of the ceremony was the reading of the names of the forty honored Delawareans who died during the Normandy invasion and battle. After each name was read, a ship's bell was tolled by Nicholas Schimmel, grandson of FMHA founder and long-serving president Gary Wray, who passed away in 2022. After the last honoree's name was read, the VFW Post 7234 Honor Guard gave a rifle salute and played taps.

The ceremony concluded with a benediction by Reverend Flett and the playing of Amazing Grace by bagpiper Lani Spahr. Guests were then invited into the museum, which was open until 4:00 P.M.



Photos by Chuck Payette, FMHA Photographer

Fall and Winter Lecture Series

Our Lecture committee is putting together what we anticipate will be another great series of talks for this coming season. While we are not ready to announce the subjects or speakers, we do have the dates, as follows:

October 18, 2025

November 15, 2025

January 17, 2026

February 21, 2026

All of the lectures will be held this year in the CHSP Officers Club. Remember, members get first "crack" at registering for all lectures. Tell your friends that a basic membership at \$30 per year is a small price to pay for early access to lectures, exclusive admission to Member Day historical excursions, and to support the work of FMHA in the restoration, maintenance and shared operation of the Museum and other Fort Miles historical structures.

Stay Tuned

For news about new restoration activity at Fort Miles and articles of interest by FMHA's Treasurer and historian Terry McGovern on details of the Fire Control Towers and a personal letter from a soldier at Fort Miles to his commanding officer about conditions at Fort Miles during WWII.

A Note about the “Dispatch”

Soon you will be getting another newsletter from the Fort Miles Museum called the Dispatch. This newsletter has articles from the Fort Miles Museum Board, Delaware State Parks and FMHA. It goes out to almost 2000 contacts, and FMHA members are part of that group. So, while the FMHA component may be redundant, the other articles are fresh, and we hope that you will find them informative.

FMHA volunteers work almost 25,000 hours a year: as Bunker Busters restoring and maintaining the buildings, developing and building displays; as Docents giving tours and guiding visitors at special events; and as Associate Staff managing the gift shop, lecture series, special events, membership, website and electronic displays.

If you would like to volunteer in any of these areas, please send us an [email](#).



Learn More: [fortmilesde.org](https://www.fortmilesde.org)
Fort Miles is located in Cape Henlopen State Park.
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