



Fort Miles Museum Dispatch

December 1, 2025

The Dispatch is a periodic newsletter shared with almost 2000 individuals who have participated in Fort Miles programming or have asked to be informed of what is happening at the Fort Miles Museum and Historic Area at Cape Henlopen State Park.

It chronicles news from the partner organizations that support Fort Miles: Delaware State Parks, the Fort Miles Historical Association (FMHA) and the Fort Miles Museum Board. Additionally, FMHA members receive Bunker Blasts that focus on FMHA activities and the history of Fort Miles.

Delaware State Parks (DSP) operates and staffs the Fort Miles Museum and other historical WWII structures in Cape Henlopen State Park.

The Fort Miles Historical Association (FMHA) is the 260+ member Friends group founded in 2003 and partnered with Delaware State Parks to spearhead and begin the restoration of the many structures that make up Ft. Miles, the largest WWII coastal defense installation in the country. The volunteer "Bunker Busters" do the restoration and maintenance of all the WWII structures, and acquire, restore and display historical artifacts in the Museum. FMHA also holds special events, operates the Museum gift shop, and assists DSP with opening and operating the Museum.

The Fort Miles Museum and Historical Area (FMM) was formed in 2021 to bring DSP and FMHA together with community members on a Board whose primary functions are fundraising for capital

projects such as the Museum expansion and publicizing and encouraging visitation through communications and advertising.

Fort Miles Museum and Historic Area

With the holiday season underway, don't miss your chance to share some local history with visiting friends and family! The museum is open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Interested in joining us for some winter programming? All programs can be found at [Upcoming Events & Programs – Delaware State Parks](#). Use the filter on the left to select "Fort Miles Museum and Historical Area".

Program Highlights

Gaming Under the Great Dune - Join other model wargamers to play scenarios in an underground WWII artillery position! Amateur to expert gamers are welcome. Some refreshments will be provided, and gamers are encouraged to bring their own models and terrain. Not sure of your skills? Don't worry! Staff will be available to support new gamers. Games will be played for 3 hours and participants are encouraged to join for as long or as little as they like! Programs should be posted by mid-November.

To learn more visit [destateparks.com/programs](https://www.destateparks.com/programs) and search for "*Gaming Under the Great Dune*" or give the museum a call at (302) 644-5007.

Coming Up

For more than 250 years, history happened here on the Cape! Join historical interpreters for "*History Happened Here*" a series of presentations in celebration of the nation's 250th birthday! This free programming shares some of the broader history of Cape Henlopen and Fort Miles.

Mark your calendars for our first installment, "*Conflicts on the Cape*". Lectures will begin in the Fort Miles Museum and space will be limited. Presentations will begin in December and should be posted by mid-November.

Details for each installment will be found at <https://www.destateparks.com/Programs/> under "*Fort Miles Museum and Historical Area*". Questions can be directed to the museum at (302) 644-5007.

250 Years of History

The Fort Miles Museum is happy to be partnering with Lewes250, sharing our history with the greater town of Lewes!

Throughout 2026 some of our programming will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, but we aren't the only ones celebrating! Other historical institutions, museums,

commercial and non-profit organizations are working with the city of Lewes to ensure the fun lasts all year with special events, programs, and initiatives throughout the year.

Those interested in learning more about Lewes250 or what's being offered through the partnership can visit <https://www.lewes250.com> to see a calendar of events or to sign up for their newsletter.

An Old Gun Finds a New Home

After more than 75 years a 155mm GPF artillery piece has found its way to Fort Miles!



For decades the Fort Miles Museum and Historical Area and the Fort Miles Historical Association have worked together to build an artillery park representing the many types of artillery present at Fort Miles in WWII. Two of the earliest pieces procured as part of that project were a pair of Vietnam War-era 155mm Howitzers. Although the guns were more modern and served a different function, their size was the same as the 155mm GPF artillery which came to Fort Miles and was once located at the current McBride Beach Bathhouse. Though the howitzers have served as excellent placeholders for the original guns the hope for many years has been to acquire a GPF.

Easier said than done! 155mm GPF guns were designed in France for WWI, eventually being built and used by the United States. But as the decades have worn on, these guns have become increasingly rare throughout the United States and finding an available one seemed nearly impossible.

Last year, through the hard work and dedication of members of the Fort Miles Historical Association a gun was found at an American Legion post in Ohio. Although it was in poor shape there was some hope that it could be repaired and refurbished.



In the end it took a massive partnership to bring this gun to Fort Miles. Delaware State Parks worked with the United States Tank Automotive and Armaments Command and the Fort Miles Historical Association to identify an available gun and determine which of the howitzers could be traded for it. Members of the Fort Miles Historical Association worked tirelessly to prepare one of the original howitzers for its move to Ohio.

The Mahan Collection Foundation, Inc. generously offered their services not only to pick the gun up from Ohio, but to take it back to their facilities to repair, rebuild, and refurbish the entire piece, bring it to its new home in the Fort Miles Museum and Historical Area's Artillery Park and take one of the howitzers back up to Ohio to fulfill the trade agreement. Finally, Coastal Towing and Heavy Hauling offered their services to carefully remove one of the howitzers and place the much heavier and less maneuverable GPF in its new location.



Through the hard work and generosity of many, the 155mm GPF was put into position on November 13th, 2025, marking the first time a new piece of artillery has come to the park in nearly a decade. The Fort Miles Museum is grateful to everyone who made this trade possible!

If you're in the area, don't miss your chance to stop by to see this old gun in a new home, the first 155mm GPF here at Fort Miles since the 1940's.

News From The Fort Miles Historical Association

Fall and Winter Lecture Series Continues

On November 15th over 100 people attended the lecture by Navy Capt. (Ret.) Bill Manthorpe on the U.S. Navy Sound Surveillance System which was a top-secret program of underwater listening devices 100 miles out in the ocean to listen for and locate Soviet submarines. One of the principal locations for this system was at Ft. Miles, and was managed in a building, long since taken down, in front of Battery Herring at Herring Point in CHSP.

Our next Lecture is:

January 17, 2026, The Berlin Airlift: First Victory of the Cold War by FMHA Historian Ed Paterline

The talk will cover the history of the Airlift and the impact of the Airlift on subsequent US actions in the Cold War era. Dover Air Force Base is the home of the Air Mobility Command Museum and houses a C-54 used during the Airlift. Ed's father flew the Berlin Airlift and Ed and his father attended the 50th Anniversary celebrations in Berlin and met many of the participants.

An invitation to this lecture will be going out in mid-December. Remember, FMHA Members get "first crack" to register for our lectures before the general public, so if you want to attend, please consider joining FMHA here. The last lecture was "sold out" before advertising and many non-members were disappointed that they could not attend.

Membership and Volunteering

Do you have experience in public relations/communications? How about merchandising? We have positions available in both areas:

- A professional who can be our liaison with print, television, radio and podcast media, who coordinates our speaker's bureau to present our story and promote events. This person would also write our press releases and develop and contract for advertising.
- A person who will become our merchandise manager in our gift shop who will develop fresh lines of merchandise, negotiate with vendors and maintain our inventory.

FMHA continues to grow its membership and volunteer corp. If you are interested in supporting the work of the FMHA, please consider joining or volunteering. Information can be found at:

<https://www.fortmiles.org>

FMHA member benefits include free admission to the Museum, free tours, early access to lecture/event registration, Bunker Blast newsletters, and special Member Days which are field trips to historical locations that may not be open to the public.



Learn More: [fortmilesmuseum.org](https://www.fortmilesmuseum.org)

Fort Miles is located in Cape Henlopen State Park.
15099 Cape Henlopen Drive, Lewes, DE 19958

Schedule a tour: destateparks.com/programs

