

FALL 2017

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THE BATTERY

Improvements continue

By Mark Chura, FMHA Executive Director

FMHA is working on the design and engineering of exciting new indoor and outdoor improvements after raising \$600,000 in foundation and other capital funding for Fort Miles Museum.

Work is focused on construction of an entrance road and parking lot for museum visitors. Also, the area around the north gun block room will be transformed into an indoor/outdoor venue for programs, events and other activities. FMHA is working with Delaware State Parks to coordinate design and construction. The new outdoor space will feature two 2,400-square-foot concrete platforms sited to take advantage of the area's amazing waterfront views. The space will be available for event rentals and programs.

The existing block exterior wall of the museum's north gun room, which was built for security after World War II, will be removed. A glass wall similar to the one in the room housing the museum's 12-inch gun will be added. The indoor space will contain new audio-visual equipment. The entrance road upgrades the historic road to Battery 519. A conceptual drawing is available on page 7.

A fee booth and 113-space parking lot will be added. The parking lot will be built on the loop road adjacent to the museum's Orientation Building.

Mark Chura, FMHA executive director, is leading the design team and will be project manager.

Gov. Carney makes second visit to Fort Miles



Governor John Carney visited Fort Miles for the second time in three months and saw many of the improvements that have been made. Photo includes FMHA Bunker Buster leader John Roberts, Delaware State Park staff including DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin and State Parks Director Ray Bivens with Cape Henlopen State Parks Fort Miles interpreters.

3 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

**1 BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER
AND VOLUNTEER**

**2 GIVE A DONATION
TO SUPPORT OUR
RESTORATION WORK**

**3 REMEMBER A HERO
ON THE WALL OF HONOR**



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



After busy summer, busy-ness as usual at the fort

For the first time in its history, Fort Miles Historical Association operated Fort Miles Museum on Sundays during the summer. Thanks to the organizational skills of board member Will Short, our wonderful volunteers worked tirelessly each Sunday to open the museum and give hundreds of tours. And, thanks to the leadership of board member Frank Ali, our museum gift shop was open with that team — a successful endeavor. We opened a new kiosk in the Orientation Building that did well this summer. The summer Sunday effort by the team proved that opening during the day, staffed by volunteers, can work well for Fort Miles Museum. (See Frank's and Will's articles in this newsletter for details.)

Another big effort this summer was with Tower 3 at Dewey Beach. Working with our Delaware State Parks partners and the Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation "friends" group, we have been working for 10 years to improve Tower 3 and open it to visitors. In 2007, the two friends groups signed a Memo of Understanding with DSP to rehab the tower.

Our DSPF friends began fundraising and this summer we started removing graffiti from the tower, installed a new sidewalk and cleaned out the interior. Much of the labor for the tower power washing and clean out was provided by the FMHA Bunker Busters led by board member John Roberts.

In the fall, Bella Terra Landscaping and Lighting of Lincoln, Del., will install cobalt blue lights around the base of the tower, lighting it for the more than 5 million travelers who pass it every year. Our goal is to open a pavilion between the tower and the bathhouse to explain to park visitors the importance of the towers and how they worked as part of Fort Miles during World War II.

One gun project ends ...

Our excellent Bunker Buster team has been involved in many other projects. One has been the exemplary work on the 90mmM2 gun we recently acquired from the National Electronics Museum in Maryland. Our Bunker Busters worked diligently to get the gun to Delaware. Dan Brown traveled to Maryland to photograph the gun to help us devise a plan. We put a financial package together, funded by FMHA and DSP, to bring the gun to Fort Miles. Once here, our BB team worked tirelessly to get the gun in fighting trim, with Pat Bragdon putting the final coat of olive drab on it. In late August, we moved it to its temporary gun pad beside the Orientation Building at the base of the Artillery Park. It will be a key part of our fundraising campaign to find a final pad for it.

... The next begins

FMHA is on the hunt for a 155mm GPF, either a 1917 or 1918 model. These were the first heavy weapons at Fort Miles and four of them were placed on Panama mounts to the north of the present Cape Henlopen State Park bathhouse.

DSP used the southernmost Panama mount as the foundation when it built the bathhouse years ago. We have formed a 155mm Committee to find the most promising potential 155mm's in the United States. We also are raising funds to bring one or two to our Fort Miles Artillery Park. This two-year project will add the last big gun we need to complete our artillery park.

Model ships and planes

We have gone into the WWII model business. We were offered many wonderful, large (3 feet and over) professional models of WWII ships and airplanes recently by Tony DeSantis of New York. Tony kindly donated the models to our museum and they will be a super addition. One is a Coast Guard Utility 40' boat, a model of the boat stationed at the Indian River Coast Guard Lifesaving Station. We are very excited to have that one. Others are destroyers, carriers, submarine hunter-killers and CG cutters. Several have history off Delaware and the East Coast during WWII which we will tell in our Fort Miles Museum. Many thanks to Tony.

A second excellent model maker from Millsboro, Del., Bob Parsons, has generously donated his wonderful WWII model collection to the Fort Miles Museum. Bob's models include ships of the major fleets of WWII (U.S., British, German, French, Italian and Japanese) and are a welcome addition to our collection. These models open up many avenues of interpretation for the Fort Miles Museum staff. Thanks, Bob.

Continues on page 4

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MISSION

The Fort Miles Historical Association is a nonprofit group that has its mission to preserve, protect and defend all aspects of Fort Miles working with community and state stakeholders and other interested parties. The FMHA also has its goal to work as an active partner with the State of Delaware to develop the historical potential of Fort Miles.

To learn more, visit

www.fortmiles.org



Facebook: FortMiles1942

Shop at the museum store, kiosk

By Frank Ali, FMHA Board Member



The Fort Miles Museum gift shop and its new cart/kiosk are open for business. The museum gift shop opened in Battery 519 during the Nov. 11, 2016, open house that celebrated veterans and their families. That was the first time the gift shop had a permanent home.

The gift shop sells hats, polo and denim shirts, hooded sweatshirts and T-shirts with Fort Miles and our new museum logos. The store also sells night lights and bird feeders that are models of fire control towers.

The store has added decals, wall clocks, rubber duckies, dog tags, piggy banks, magnets, flashlight bottle openers, coffee mugs and silicone memorial bracelets and children's gifts for less than \$4.

Other favorites for sale include autographed books, canvas tote bags, WWII spotter playing cards, children's helmets, canteens and toy binoculars.

The cart/kiosk is in the Orientation Building but can be moved to other areas of the park for events. FMHA members and Bunker Busters receive a 10 percent discount on their entire order. Volunteers are needed at both locations.

Capital campaign committee is reopen

By Larry Boyer, Treasurer



FMHA needs many sources of funding to perform its daily tasks and reach its goals. It relies on donations, store sales, an annual Grant in Aid from the state and membership dues to cover operating expenses.

The association depends on grant partners such as the Longwood and Crystal Trust foundations to kick-start major construction efforts such as the Artillery Park, major-event venue, access roads and parking lot.

The other critical source of funding that will allow FMHA to complete what it started with grant monies is derived through the association's capital campaign.

Our capital campaign began in May 2016 when we outlined our longer-term plan and capital needs. Our intent was to begin to familiarize our potential donor community with the capital requirements needed to reach our mission of creating the only WWII museum located in a WWII facility. Foundation grants get us started. Part of the grant submission is to delineate that the total cost will be shared with the state and capital campaign contributions. Other priorities and limited resources (people and financial) have caused this work to lie dormant over the year or so since that event.

I am happy to report that our board has re-instituted the capital campaign committee. Look for news on our website and future newsletters for fundraising opportunities and events. Anyone who wants to help us raise funds or at events can email fmhamembers@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continuing support of FMHA.

From the Desk of The President

(... Continued from page 2)

Spotting shed

We have also been working hard to secure a WWII aircraft spotting shed that was part of the early war Aircraft Warning System (AWS) before radar. An elaborate early-warning system for aircraft was established along both U.S. coasts, including Delaware and Maryland. Fort Miles has been offered one of the few remaining spotter sheds from the Simmons family of Hoopers Island, Md. Our Bunker Buster team, led by Pat Bragdon, is going to strengthen the shed (which is in surprisingly good shape for 1943) that the family used to spot aircraft during the war. Then we will move the shed to Fort Miles, thanks to our friends at Coastal Towing, the company that helped us move the Flak 38 from Georgetown to Lewes in 2004. The Simmons family has the history of the AWS shed and how it was used during the war. The family has kept it in fine shape. Working with our parks partners, after the shed is stabilized and a new roof installed by our Bunker Busters, we will decide its role in the Fort Miles Museum complex.

Capital plans

Mark Chura, our FMHA executive director, has been busy working with our recent Longwood grant building project. We want to completely rework the old entrance road to the back of the museum that will lead to a new 100-car parking lot behind the Orientation Building. Parking is at a premium and this new lot will greatly expand visitors' accessibility to the Fort Miles Historic Area and Fort Miles Museum. This will be a paid parking lot that will provide income for CHSP and FMHA and provide parking for our many events. Mark is also working on a new venue outside the northeast museum door that we can rent out for reunions and weddings overlooking the beautiful Delaware coast. Our grant to support these capital improvements was the largest from the Longwood Foundation this year.

Celebrating V-J Day

On Sept. 2, 2017, we held our second VJ Day celebration centered on the big Missouri gun barrel. The weather did not permit us to hold the event at the gun pad but we had a wonderful celebration in the Wall of Honor room in Fort Miles Museum. Thanks to our local Delaware legislative delegation led by Ruth Briggs King and Steve Smyk, FMHA was presented with a Delaware legislative proclamation. We honored several fallen FMHA comrades this past year, including board member Dan Lyons; member Horace Knowles; reporter Molly Murray; supporter Robert Sauppee, who served on the battleship Missouri; and Bunker Buster Jack Bolin.

The Sauppee and Bolin families were presented with awards recognizing their contribution and service to FMHA. Our state parks partners, including DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin and Cindy Todd, leader of the DSP engineering department, spoke about the day's celebration. Being surrounded by hundreds of our FMHA Wall of Honor inductees, many who served in WWII, was a fitting setting for the event.

Thanks to FMHA board members Jim Pierce and Cliff Geisler, our art initiative continues full speed ahead. This summer, we had noted local photographer Kevin Fleming's art displayed in our new northeast art gallery. We will display our new ship models in the room with FMHA awards and the Paul Rendel aviation art. The famous Schroeder mural of the men in the fire control tower was copied by our state parks partners and will become part of an interpretive display inside Tower 3 at Dewey Beach.

Films, lectures next year

We are busy planning the 2018 film/lecture series for Fort Miles Museum. The series was very successful this year and will be continued with new topics next year. The series will be the fourth Saturday of the month from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Fort Miles Media Room. Admission is free with donations suggested. Each fourth Saturday will be an open house from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with the film/lecture beginning at 1 p.m.

The first film/lecture series begins **Saturday, Jan. 27**, when we will tell the story of the 500,000 German prisoners of war in the United States in WWII. We will talk about the 10 POW camps in Delaware, including Fort Miles. We will tell the interesting story of Lydia Wagamon and the painting that was presented to her by a POW at Fort Miles in 1946.

On Saturday, Feb. 24, the topic will be the German U-boat attack on the East Coast beginning in early 1942. This film/lecture will feature Robert Ballard (of Titanic and Bismarck fame) diving on U-166 in the Gulf of Mexico.

On Saturday, March 24, we will present the U.S. Marine attack on Iwo Jima in February-March 1945 and the importance that invasion had on the later nuclear attack on Japan.

On Saturday, April 28, we will hold our Big Spring Event at Fort Miles and our film/lecture series will honor the war service of our fallen soldiers who are buried overseas. Tim Nosal, chief of external affairs for the American Battle Monuments Commission, will explain how the ABMC manages the overseas cemeteries for our fallen heroes.

Open house

I would like to invite all of our supporters to our next open house on Saturday, Oct. 28 at Fort Miles Museum from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. We will have a Wall of Honor induction at 3 p.m. that day. Join us at the best WWII museum inside a WWII facility in the country. Thanks for all your support.

SUMMER SUCCESS, PLANNING FOR 2018

By Sean Carrow, DNREC

We had a busy 2017 summer, the busiest recently, because FMHA and Delaware State Parks worked together to improve the site and museum.

This summer, we held special programs focused on Battery 519 to mark the 75th year of its construction and military use.

One of our big summer events was hosting the WWI Mobile Museum to note the 100th anniversary of World War I. We welcomed 4,683 museum visitors from Aug. 15 to 19. We brought in guest speakers, including retired Navy officer and author Bill Manthorpe; John P. McCarthy, DNREC cultural preservation specialist (archaeologist/architectural historian); and others to discuss WWI locally and around the world.

This free event was so well-received that we want to add special exhibits each year. This winter, we'll work on spring and summer programs with great new additions to Fort Miles.

The Orientation Building is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. We are running programs until Nov. 18. For program information or to register: 302-644-5007 or www.destateparks.com/attractions/fort-miles/.

All of these wonderful men will be greatly missed for their valuable contributions to the vision and reality of Fort Miles and our new Fort Miles Museum.

We have been very busy with the museum and improving the Fort Miles Historical Area. As always, I would like to thank our FMHA board of directors for its leadership and support. During the past year, our team has volunteered more than 17,000 hours to further the vision of the Fort Miles Museum and help us make it the best WWII museum inside a WWII facility in the country. See you April 29, 2017, at our big spring event. Visit us every fourth Saturday for our open houses.

FMHA OFFERS SUNDAY MUSEUM TOURS

By Will Short, FMHA Board Member

FMHA members volunteered to conduct tours of Battery 519 on Sundays this summer. Volunteers opened the museum and gift shop at 10:45 a.m. every Sunday and conducted at least one docent-led tour each hour until 3 p.m. As the summer progressed and word spread about Sunday museum openings, FMHA docents were conducting as many as six tours each opening. Summer Sundays ended Sept. 2.

Sunday visitors were not charged a fee to enter the museum and were free to view historical displays in the north gunroom, artwork in the north shell room and visit the gift shop. FMHA volunteers in the north quadrant of the battery explained the tour schedule, answered questions and provided an overview of the Fort Miles experience. Visitors who wanted to take a guided tour paid \$5 in the gift shop, received hand stamps and were directed to the starting point of the tour led by an FMHA docent.

Faced with the challenge of having enough volunteers and qualified docents each Sunday in the summer, the board initially announced two, then three tours each Sunday. But when our docents and other volunteers stepped up week in and week out, half-hourly tours were added. Many of our volunteers participated almost every week to ensure our Sunday openings succeeded.

FMHA will spend the off season planning an even more active museum opening schedule in 2018 that will require intensified docent recruiting and training. This will ensure that we can adequately staff an increasing number of museum openings with well-qualified volunteers without placing unreasonable demands on their time during the summer.

The board of directors wishes to express its sincere gratitude to all FMHA volunteers who enthusiastically and selflessly gave so much of their time and energy to make the 2017 summer Sunday tour a smashing success.



BUSTERS RESTORE NEWEST GUN, LABOR AT TOWER 3

By John Roberts, FMHA Board Member

We have been very busy in the past several months. I want to thank our volunteers for all their hours and very hard work.

90mm mobile torpedo boat gun

We had to restore this important piece of history before we could introduce it to our visitors. We took lots of pictures and discovered this gun was nearly complete in all its details and accessories when we acquired it.

The first step was cleaning. Cassidy Painting sandblasted the gun. Then the BBs spent several days with air guns and vacuum cleaners to remove the sand from the weapon.

The next step was paint. Pat Bragdon painted the entire gun, a job that took him longer than painting the Missouri gun because of the project's intricacies. When Pat was covered with overspray, I would joke that he should be a member of the Olive Drab Man Group.

This is a mobile gun. We removed the wheels and installed new tires. Our crew for this, led by Greg Thompson, dismantled and restored wheel bearings and brakes. Tires and brakes give us the capability to tow this weapon safely in parades and take it to outside events.

Delaware State Parks brought in a 6x6 Army truck able to tow 60,000 pounds. After two days with jacks and cribbing, our team attached axle assemblies under the weapon. The truck towed it to its temporary home just east of the Orientation Building. It is truly a sight to behold. All of this was accomplished in time for our annual event Sept. 2. Everyone loves having their picture taken next to this display. A huge success and, once again, many thanks to all who made this happen, from DSP, FMHA and the others who brought this home. Well done.

Working on T6033

This spring, we finished rehabbing our mess hall. Our next project is Barrack T603, next to the mess hall. We removed all doors and windows, restored the original window openings and are refitting this building.

We've been very busy in our shop in Battery Smith. We have an assembly line of woodworking and sash rehabilitation, an assembly area and a painting area. We are also making new doors for T603. In the past month, we have nearly all of these completed and probably will have them installed before it's too cold to work outside. To see this level of activity is impressive. We should all be proud of the quality and efficiency of this work. It's a great example of how a well-coordinated effort can deliver. Once again, nicely done.

Continues on page 7



Photos courtesy of Mike Dunkes and Jill Hudson (Cape Gazette).

REMINDER: Please send an email, with your name in the subject line, to fmhamembers@gmail.com. We must confirm the email addresses of all members.

Busters restore newest gun (... Continued from page 6)

Gates, doors for mine casemate and 519's PSR

We received a grant from Coastal Defense Study Group with matching funds from DSP to secure Fort Miles structures outside our museum area. Although we and our parks partners have been busy with other projects, we have made progress here. We have secured Battery Smith's PSR and 519's PSR. The mine casemate is next, and may be secure by the time you read this.

Many thanks to Fred Noll and his crew.

Fire Control Tower #3

This project is supported by the Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation and Delaware Seashore State Park. We, however, have the manpower to get this off the ground.

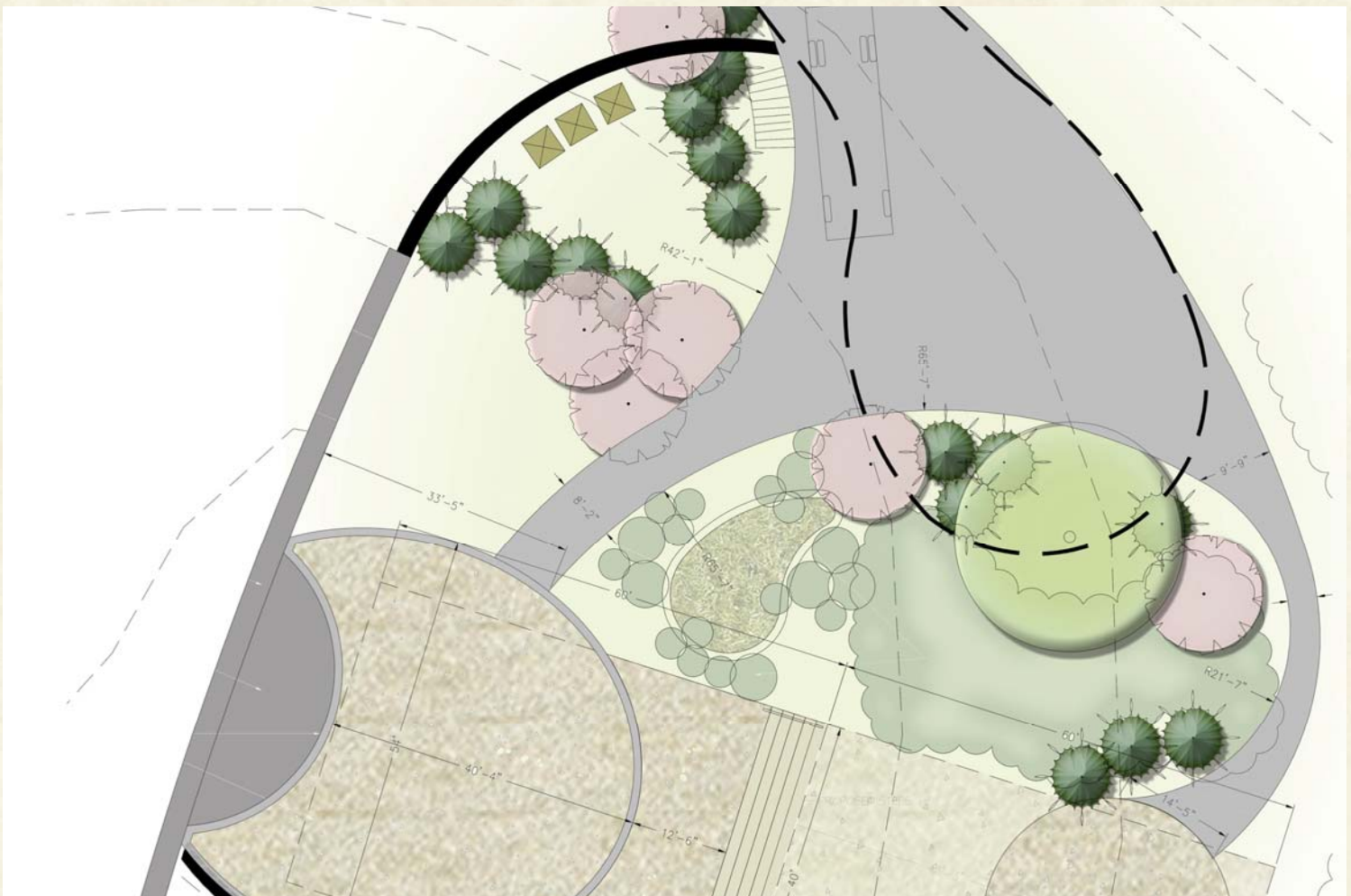
Parks installed a temporary door in the bottom of the tower and a sidewalk around the base.

Bunker Busters power-washed moss and most of the graffiti from the tower base. We also hauled out, by hand, about 4 tons of sand, debris and bird guano. Not the most pleasant task, but we got it done. DSSP provided a front-end loader and dump truck to haul the debris away. This was a great opportunity to jumpstart this project. Landscape lighting for the tower exterior is next. We are working hand in hand with DSPF and DSSP on this project. Another round of thanks for our crew.

DSP asks the Bunker Busters to work on facilities and equipment unrelated to Fort Miles because the busters we have the skills and talent, and DSP's resources are stretched very thin.

We've accomplished a lot.

Thank you to our volunteers, Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware Seashore State Park, Friends of Cape Henlopen and the many others who take part in this amazing venture.



FMHA is working on the design and engineering of exciting new indoor and outdoor improvements. See details and article on page 1.

ART GALLERY DRAWS MORE GIFTS, EXPOSURE

By Jim Pierce, FMHA Board Member

Fort Miles Museum added to its art collection this month with a contribution from a World War II fort employee and her relatives.

On Sept. 8, several FMHA board members gathered in Battery 519 to accept a World War II painting from **Lydia Wagamon** and her family. Lydia, a Rehoboth Beach resident, worked as a PBX operator and administrative aide at Fort Miles during the war. As WWII ended, several German prisoners of war remained at Fort Miles to maintain the base. One prisoner created an oil painting and gave it to Lydia. That painting is on display in Battery 519.

This summer, FMHA housed an exhibit by nationally known Lewes photographer **Kevin Fleming**. This exhibition ran through early September, and several of Fleming's art books are available for purchase. We plan to work with Fleming to offer more shows featuring his photography. Fleming allows FMHA to use selected photographs on its website, www.fortmiles.org.

FMHA began its art initiative last year when the Art of Fort Miles gallery, highlighting the work of **Howard Schroeder**, opened in Battery 519. The paintings assembled by FMHA and Delaware State Parks were introduced at a reception May 14, 2016.

This permanent collection features Schroeder's work from World War II, and paintings by **Mary Marshall** and **Abraxus Hudson**. Thousands of visitors have viewed these artworks.

Second gallery opens

FMHA opened a second gallery in Battery 519, with the working name the Battery 519 Artists' Gallery. This gallery has displayed original oil paintings of WWII aircraft and battle scenes painted by **Paul Rendel** of Lewes. Rendel is a world-renowned military aircraft artist who was commissioned by the Air Force to paint individual aircraft. The Battery 519 Artists' Gallery gives Rendel and other artists an opportunity to sell original paintings and prints to Fort Miles Museum visitors.

Our objective with this initiative at Fort Miles Museum is to present through art military and nonmilitary life at Fort Miles.

We are broadening our initiative to encourage Delaware's art communities to bring revolving shows featuring local artists to the museum. We hope to announce the first of these shows soon.



Lydia Wagamon and her family pose next to the painting on loan to Fort Miles Historical Association.

With appreciation to so many supporters

FMHA is grateful for:

The generous support of the **Schroeder family**, especially his children John, Carole and Rob.

Rendel's donation of an original oil painting, "Liberty's Silent Sentinel," saluting the men and women of our armed forces from the Revolutionary War to World War II to astronauts.

The work by **FMHA Bunker Busters**, who designed and installed noninvasive walls where the artwork hangs and added viewer-friendly lighting for the paintings.

The generous time and expertise contributed by **Abraxus Hudson**, our outside art consultant. He designed the Art of Fort Miles gallery and added his painting of Fire Control Towers 5 and 6 to the collection.

The time and efforts of **Sean Carrow** and **James Bell** of Delaware State Parks to introduce the gallery to museum visitors.

The time and effort spent by board secretary **Mike Dunkes** to research the Lydia Wagamon painting and work with the Wagamon family to add the painting to the Fort Miles Museum collection.

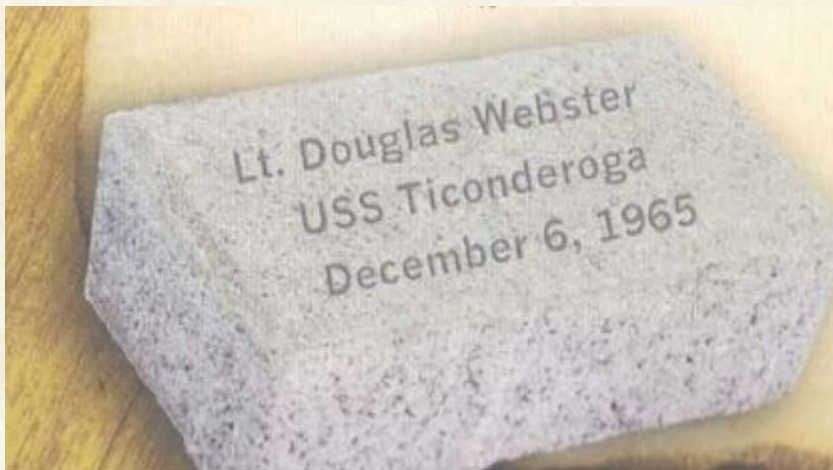
The planning and insight of the FMHA Art Committee headed by board member **Cliff Geisler** to stock the galleries and broaden the FMHA art initiative.

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 in a well-lighted entrance area. This phase of the Wall of Honor will accommodate 500 pavers. Orders are accepted on a first-come basis. Please use the form below to reserve your paver.



Engraving Instructions

LIMIT 3 LINES OF 16 CHARACTERS PER LINE spaces, punctuation and symbols count as characters

line 1 _____

line 2 _____

line 3 _____

line 1 _____

line 2 _____

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.

Name

Phone

Street

City

State

Zip

Email

Send orders to:

Fort Miles Historical Association
Dr. Gary Wray, President
120 E. Wild Rabbit Run
Lewes, DE 19958

MEMORABLE FORT MILES MOMENTS



Many thanks to the individuals and groups who support the work of Fort Miles Historical Association.

JOIN & RENEW ONLINE: IT'S EASY!



FMHA is developing a world-class World War II museum at Fort Miles, in conjunction with Delaware State Parks.

Our membership program and the related fees enable FMHA to make continuing progress toward the expansion and restoration of the Fort Miles Museum comprised of the cantonment buildings, Artillery Park and main museum building, Battery 519.

Please check one:

- General level, (life member) \$1,000
- Colonel level, \$500
- Major level, \$250
- Captain level, \$100
- Sustaining \$20
- Student \$15
- Please check the box to keep your donation private. It will not appear in any FMHA communication.

Make checks payable to:

Fort Miles Historical Association
Dr. Gary Wray, President
120 E. Wild Rabbit Run
Lewes, DE 19958

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____, State _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Email: _____

Are you a current member? Please renew your membership online. If you have any questions about membership, send an email to fmhamembers@gmail.com. We would like to handle as many membership renewals as possible via the website.

WWW.FORTMILESHA.ORG/MEMBERSHIP



Fort Miles Historical Association
120 East Wild Rabbit Run
Lewes, DE 19958

