

Coast Artillery Living History Fort Hancock, NJ

On 20-22 May 2016, the National Park Service (NPS) conducted the annual spring Coast Defense and Ocean Fun Day (sponsored by New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium - (<http://njseagrant.org/>) in conjunction with the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) and other historic and scientific organizations. Coast Defense Day showcases Fort Hancock's rich military heritage thru tours and programs at various locations throughout the Sandy Hook peninsula - designated in 1982 as "*The Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark*".

AGFA concentrates its efforts at Battery Gunnison/New Peck, which from February to May 1943 was converted from a 'disappearing' battery to a barbette carriage gun battery. The members of AGFA who participated in the event were Doug Ciemniecki, Donna Cusano, Paul Cusano, Chris Egan, Francis Hayes, Doug Houck, Richard King, Henry and Mary Komorowski, Anne Lutkenhouse, Eric Meiselman, Tom Minton, Mike Murray, Kyle Schafer, Paul Taylor, Gary Weaver, Shawn Welch and Bill Winslow. AGFA guests included Paul Casalese, Erika Frederick, Larry Mihlon, Chris Moore, Grace Natsis, Steve Rossi and Anthony Valenti.

The event had three major components: (1) the Harbor Defense Lantern Tour on Friday evening; (2) the Fort Hancock Historic Hike on Saturday afternoon and (3) Coastal Defense Day on Sunday, which focused on Battery Gunnison/New Peck operations in 1943, in conjunction with Ocean Fun Day.

The educational objective was to provide interpretation of the Coast Artillery mission at Fort Hancock in the World War Two-era with a focus on the activation of two 6" rapid fire M1900 guns at New Battery Peck (formerly Battery Gunnison). The guns were relocated to this site to provide a greater field of fire in the defense of the Ambrose Channel at the entrance to New York Harbor. The tactical focus of the event was the ongoing U-Boat war, and the threat of saboteur activity or the shelling of Fort Hancock by submarines using deck guns. The event also addressed the operation of the Advance Harbor Entrance Control Post ("HECP") Number 1, which was located at Fort Hancock, and the role that Battery Gunnison/New Peck played as Advance HECP #1's Examination Battery. The Historic Hike and Lantern Tours focused on fortifications and other structures across Fort Hancock (Sandy Hook) in World War Two, as well as components of the Sandy Hook Proving Ground.

The photo below shows the majority of the participants on Sunday, 22 May in front of the machine shop and Gun #1 of Battery Gunnison/New Peck.



Every event begins with cleaning and set up at the Battery. Below, SGT Minton, CPL Meiselman and 2LT Valenti string telephone wire to Gun No. 1 on Friday morning.



There is a lot that goes into operating and maintaining a seacoast cannon. Seen below are the “implements” such as the rammer, sponge, sponge bucket and shot tray, as well as the several chests and footlockers that contain optical instruments, telephones and tools. The AGFA team had Gun No. 1 ready in less than an hour.



Our medical displays, a key component in our interpretation, are ever increasing in size. Here, much of the equipment has been laid out, prior to being carefully assembled for display inside the Chemical Warfare Room.



Below, PVT Frederick, 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano begin the display process by storing boxes in the back area of the room and placing original 1940's era medical items upon the shelves.



Some maintenance work was also accomplished as we set up for the weekend. Below, the muzzle of Gun #2 has just received a fresh coating of red primer.



After the primer dried, CPL Cusano applied Olive Drab paint to the muzzle.



As preparations continued, SSG Weaver works on our newly-acquired vintage blower motor and impellor assembly. This equipment is part of our ongoing project to restore the Battery's Chemical Warfare decontamination system.



This very heavy assembly, probably over 100 pounds, had to be taken apart to clean and inspect the parts. The motor, which is still in working order, is 2-Phase Direct Current (DC), and AGFA members are brain-storming on how to best utilize this system to operate with modern electrical components. Any ideas?



The day quickly flew by, and Mrs. Komorowski pulled together our evening meal at Battery Gunnison/New Peck as we prepared for the Friday Harbor Defense Lantern Tour. Evening chow is traditionally served in the Powder Magazine.



1LT Winslow, PVT Natsis, PVT Frederic, PFC Schafer, T5 Komorowski and PVT Ciemniecki move through the "chow line". We had to eat fast!



The membership enjoyed their dinner at the base of Gun #1 as we reviewed the coming evening's tour itinerary.



Shortly after the evening meal, the team assembled for a quick photo behind Gun #1 and the machine shop. The members leading the tour departed shortly after.



We proceeded down the "Multi-Use Path" from the Battery, heading to the Fort Hancock Museum to greet our participants. One question was on our minds - how many visitors would we have?



We paused for a quick photo inside the Harbor Defense Command Post (HDCP) protective wall. The team is positioned around the remains of a fire control tower base. The remnant of the concrete column shown below was actually the support for the optical fire control instrument that would have been mounted atop it.



We anticipated a large group, and were not disappointed. Some thirty visitors were waiting for us as we arrived, with many more joining us shortly after. Here, SGT Minton provides a historic introduction prior to beginning the tour.



We departed the Museum, making our way to the HDCP. Here, SGT Minton provides a glimpse about a Soldier's daily life at Ft Hancock by "interpreting" or describing the operations of the Post Exchange, or "PX," which is the building to the left.



Along the way, we stopped at a group of several historic 10-inch and 12-inch armor-piercing projectiles, set as a display by the NPS. CPL Egan explained the various types of ammunition used by the big coastal guns at Fort Hancock to our visitors.



SGT Minton explains the role of the Harbor Defense Command Post at its entrance. This would have been the nerve center of the Harbor Defenses of New York during an actual battle.



Following the HDCP, the tour headed north along Hudson Drive. SGT Minton is seen describing the Fort's athletic track, which is far off in the woods to the left.



Our next stop was Battery Potter, which was used as the Advanced Harbor Entrance Control Post No. 1. SGT Minton points to the remnants of the structure as he describes how it helped arrange the safe passage of over 100 vessels a day into the harbor.



As so often happens, our group grew as we walked. Nearly 100 visitors joined us for the Lantern Tour, one of the most anticipated events of the year at Fort Hancock.



As we walked, we passed “9-Gun Battery.” This imposing fortification, built between 1898-1902, once held nine 10-inch and 12-inch guns on disappearing carriages, making it the largest ‘heavy caliber’ gun line built in the United States. The four Batteries that comprised 9-gun were Batteries Alexander (2x12-inch M1899 rifles on M1896 disappearing carriages), Halleck (3x10-inch M1899 rifles on M11896 disappearing carriages), Bloomfield (2x12-inch M1888 rifles on M1896 disappearing carriages) and Richardson (2x12-inch M1895 rifles on M1901 disappearing carriages). Its overlapping fields of fire stretched from the southernmost approaches on the ocean, across lower New York Harbor, and due west into Sandy Hook Bay. It was deactivated during World War Two, as its guns were obsolete, and the steel was needed for the war effort.



This year's Lantern Tour featured a stop inside the Sandy Hook Proving Ground. Visitors were extremely interested to hear about its impact on American weapons development from 1874-1919. Here, the crowd listens as SGT Minton talks of the loss of life - over half a dozen deaths - due to accidents at the Proving Ground. It was a somber reminder of the price that's been paid for our national security.



A historic view of the Proving Ground is shown below, somewhere around 1908. The array of weaponry in the photo includes a variety of seacoast and field artillery weapons brought here for testing.



After visiting the main gun line of the Sandy Hook Proving Ground, we visited AGFA's contribution to the NPS Centennial Celebration. On this site in 1916, the Army tested its two M1909 14-inch gun turrets destined for Fort Drum in the Philippines. The testing of these turrets was exactly 100 years ago and thus the perfect Centennial gift for the NPS. From January to April 2016, AGFA members cleared the area of at least 12 large trees, thick undergrowth which included tenacious Poison Ivy, and shoveled out the interior space - about 30 days of work. The NPS assisted by helping with debris removal and using heavy equipment to pull up some of the larger stumps and root systems. We anticipate dedication of the site in September 2016 during the Centennial Celebration.



The turrets weighed about 500 tons each, and the size of the bolts to anchor the turrets during testing clearly indicates the stresses that firing the 14-inch guns would have created on the turrets. For scale, note the 1940's era portable radio sitting on the edge of the concrete pad, at right. The test block sits adjacent to Parking Lot I for "North Beach" at Fort Hancock.



The photo below shows one of the turrets assembled on the block for testing in 1916 at the Sandy Hook Proving Ground. The massive size of the two M1909 14-inch guns is very apparent in this photo. The two turrets and their four 14-inch M1909 guns were the only ones of their type manufactured for the US Army.



The photo below, taken in 1941, gives a good view of Fort Drum. The concrete walls are over 30 feet thick. The two side guns were 6-inch M1908 rifles in casemates. Fort Drum and its two 14-inch gun turrets still exist today in Manila Bay, Philippines.



Our last stop was Battery Gunnison/New Peck, where the tour was broken up into groups of roughly 7-12 people. Here, one such group visits the "Aid Station" as LTs Lutkenhouse and Cusano explain the role played by Army Nurses at Ft. Hancock.



Another group is shown inside the Plotting Room. Here, 1LT Taylor, using the M3 Plotting Board, explains how trigonometry would be used to hit a moving target out on the open ocean. This room always amazes our younger visitors, who learn that math can indeed be done without calculators!



Inside the Powder Magazine, SSG Weaver explains how individual powder bags, called "charges," would be stored inside sealed metal canisters prior to firing. This was to "keep the powder dry," as seacoast batteries were notoriously damp.



Below, Gun No. 1 hosts a group of our visitors. The M1900 seacoast rifle is always a major hit with the public, and our visitors were treated to gun-drill demonstrations by AGFA members throughout the night. Several of the drills were conducted with public participation. Notice the lights on the gun platform. These lights were restored by AGFA in the 2009-2010 time period and are the only ones of their type still operating in the United States.



Such a gun drill is shown here, with visitor participation. Our interpretation of the Coast Artillery is always very hands on, and you can see some very young "Cosmoline Soldiers" assisting with the drill.



We also had a guest - COL Larry Mihlon of the US Army Air Forces came out to join us with his vintage 1938 Plymouth P-6. Here, some of our younger visitors pose for a photo. The USAAF had a significant presence at Fort Hancock, and operated in support of the Harbor Defense Commander within the Harbor Defense Command Post (HDCP).



We also manned a station on the Gun. No 2 platform. Here, visitors were able to “track” vessels in the Harbor with an M1910A1 azimuth instrument. These instruments were used in pairs and were the “eyes” of the Coast Artillery. They were used to track target ships, with another pair spotting the fall of fired projectiles about the target ship, known as the “splash”.



Here, LT Winslow shows a visitor how to use the scope. The visitor is looking at the Coney Island skyline, some eight miles in the distance. Looking through the M1910A1 at ships and the skyline is one of the most anticipated highlights of the Lantern Tour for the public.



COL Mihlon took this photo through the M1910A1, just as darkness was settling over the harbor. The structure is the Freedom Tower, and is about 18 miles away in Manhattan. Notice also the numbers in a line across the center of the field of view. This is the "reticle" within the Azimuth Instrument telescope.



Within the Battery, LT(jg) Paul Casalese of the US Coast Guard operated a station as well. Standing with his displays, he provided insight to our visitors about the untold part played by the US Coast Guard in defending New York during World War Two.



Here, he tells the Coast Guard story to several of our visitors. Protecting the Harbor in World War Two was a joint effort between the Army, Navy, Air Corps, and the Coast Guard.



Due to the large tour size, there was no shortage of visitors at any station. Here, 1LT Lutkenhouse talks about the medical displays inside the Chemical Warfare Room.



Meanwhile, outside, 2LT Cusano continues the interpretation. It's a tight squeeze inside the Chemical Warfare Room, so we rotated members of each group through in segments.



A group of our younger visitors listens intently to 1LT Taylor and T-5 King as they continue the interpretation of pre-computer mathematics.



Inside our Machine Shop, T-5 Komorowski shows his M1903 Springfield rifle to a visitor. It is always a major shock to our visitors to learn that everyone - cooks, clerks, machinists, and Artillerymen - were "under arms" at all times at Fort Hancock in 1943.



Below is a look inside the Machine Shop as seen from outside. As many of the components needed to restore the Battery simply no longer exist, we make what we can't find. T-5's Komoroski and King have provided yeomen's service by manufacturing parts for the Battery and the M1900 rifles, all of which is completed on 1940's era machinery and tools.



There was no break in the action at Gun 1. Here, another drill is about to be run. As a fitting homage to the Coast Artillerymen, AGFA members can perform a loading drill in the prescribed time of 15 seconds - even in the dark.



Here, one of our visitors joins in on the gun drill and helps CPL Cusano "swab" the barrel out to extinguish burning powder embers before the next round is loaded.



After the drill was completed, our visitors look at their handiwork. Helping to “load” an M1900 coastal rifle is an experience that can only be had here at Fort Hancock’s Battery Gunnison/New Peck.



Soon, it was time for the tour to end, and our guests to return home to 2016. Here, we thank our participants for attending and answer any final questions prior to escorting them back to their cars at the Fort Hancock Museum.



Prior to departure, LTC Welch took a moment to thank our visitors for attending, and encouraged them to come back and visit us over the next two days.



After saying goodnight to our guests, CPL Egan, 2LT Valenti and PVT Frederick prepare to return to our barracks. A very long but wonderful day had drawn to a close.



Saturday morning, like all AGFA mornings, dawned very early for us. Here, we enjoy a quick breakfast prior to assembling for the "Historic Hike," scheduled to start at noon and last until about 1630 or 4:30PM.



Once at the Battery, we quickly "geared up" in anticipation of our guests arriving. To our relief, the weather was cool and overcast, and not hot and humid.



Prior to our visitors' arrival, 1SG Murray confers with SSG Houck on the tour route, and itinerary.



As our guests arrived, AGFA members made an official welcome and LTC Welch provided the introduction to our visitors to include a historic overview within the abstract of May, 1943.



And off we go! AGFA members step off into history, as this tour was the first of its kind in the Park's history. Our objective: The central portion of Fort Hancock's peninsula.



Our first stop - the auxiliary generator power plant for Battery Gunnison/New Peck, and its supporting 60" searchlight. Here, SGT Minton explains the operations of the plant to our visitors.



Leaving the power plant behind us, we continue our trek south, following Atlantic Drive



Here, LTC Welch describes the use of a “Fire-Control Tower,” which once stood on that spot. These towers would hold several azimuth instruments, and would be used in tracking targets. Fire Control towers once stood all along Fort Hancock, yet sadly, none remain.



Like all of AGFA's tours, this Hike was conducted in a 'tactical setting.' In the very real approach to life at Ft Hancock in 1943, CPL Meiselman and SGT Minton provide a 'tactical screen' for the tour group... One can never be certain if the Nazis have snuck ashore! This provides a historic feel for the tour time period.



Below, LTC Welch discusses the Generator Building which provided the electrical power to one of the disappearing searchlights that we were to visit. Only the foundation remains, as the building was demolished when the towers were scrapped following World War Two. At center, with the video camera, is local historian and videographer John Schneider, who accompanied us on both the Lantern Tour and Historic Hike to chronicle the role AGFA plays in preserving the Army history at Fort Hancock.



Deep in the hinterland of Fort Hancock, many secrets awaited us. Here, SGT Minton and CPL Weiselman stand atop a concrete counterweight for one of two “disappearing” searchlights that once stood here during the 1940’s.



Here, SGT Minton describes the operations of the tower. The size of the counterweight is very evident. The tower was scrapped following World War Two, and the concrete counterweight was simply left where it sat.



The tour continued on, following the natural trails as they wandered deep within the heavily wooded Fort Hancock peninsula (or Sandy Hook as it is better known today). Our next objective was "Fishing Beach."



SGT Minton describes one of the "Mine Magazines" on Fishing Beach Road. The Army once used this structure to store up to 300,000 pounds of powdered explosive (flake TNT), which would be used to fill and arm the underwater mines that would stretch from Fort Hancock to Breezy Point in Brooklyn. Each mine weighed almost 1000 pounds.



The tour continues on. By this time, a light rain had begun to fall. Luckily, it was enough to dampen the shirts, but not the spirits, of the tour participants.



Our destination and picnic site: Emplacement No. 1 of Battery Kingman. One of the two largest batteries built at Fort Hancock, a mighty 12-inch M1895 gun once protruded from this position. The Battery once mounted two such guns, as did Battery Mills, located nearby. Batteries Kingman and Mills are closed to the public, and we received special permission from the NPS to visit this area during the Hike. Below, 1LT Taylor offers a salute as the tour arrives.



A treat for our visitors was a “period-correct” luncheon inside the casemate. All of the items served were from companies that existed during the 1940’s, and that are still in business today. These companies include “Tasty Kake”, “New England Confection Company” (NECCO), Mars Candies (M&Ms), “Mary Jane”, and Ritz Crackers, to name a few.



Battery Kingman’s guns were unfortunately scrapped in 1946. To help with the educational perspective, SGT Minton uses his laptop to show a 1942 training film about the M1895 12-inch gun mounted on the Long Range M1917 Barbette Carriage to our visitors. This gun and carriage combination was also used at nearby Battery Mills. The training film was very well received by the public.



To further outline the historic context, AGFA members answered questions throughout the showing of the film, which was about seven minutes.



Prior to departing, AGFA members and our visitors pose for a photo in front of Battery Kingman's #1 Gun casemate.



The visitors had a flood of questions for us, and there was constant discussion throughout the tour. Many of our participants had no idea that the history of Fort Hancock ran so deeply throughout all parts of the peninsula.



The tour followed both natural and man-made trails. We made good use of Fort Hancock's "Multi-Use Path" to avoid vehicular traffic.



As we returned the way we came, we passed by the Battery Gunnison power plant again. SGT Minton explains, to our visitors' surprise, that the original generator still exists, and that it is on temporary loan to the Fort MacArthur Museum, in San Pedro, CA. Fort MacArthur was a Coast Artillery fort as well, which defended the port of Los Angeles.



After the tour, AGFA members take a moment to reflect on the day and discuss how the tour was executed. Overall, we were very happy with the Hike, as were our visitors. Everyone was encouraged to return on Sunday for Coast Defense Day.



Although the Hike had officially ended, two visitors stayed at Battery Gunnison/New Peck with T-5 Komorowski for nearly an hour, asking very detailed questions about the Machine Shop.



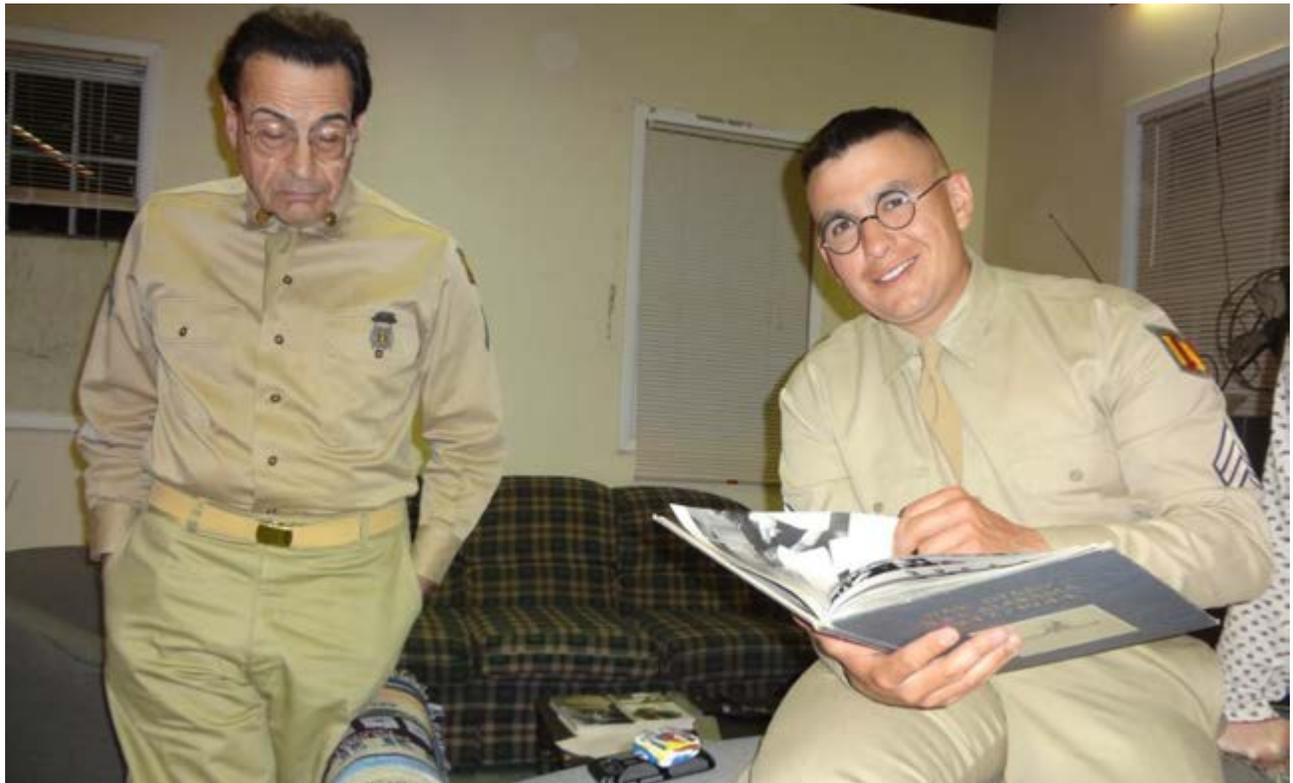
For dinner on Saturday, AGFA members and guests treated themselves to a relaxed evening of "Dining Out." It was a welcome moment for some well-earned 'down time.'



Even off-Post, the dinner conversation revolved around the event. Here, SGT Minton makes a point to T-5 Komorowski as LT Cusano listens in.



Back at the Barracks, AGFA members wind down for the evening, with period-correct - i.e., May, 1943 - radio broadcasts and reading material such as TIME, NEWSWEEK, COAST ARTILLERY JOURNAL and AMERICAN RIFLEMAN magazines. Here, SGT Minton reads the USS Alabama's (BB-60) 1944 Cruise Book, a 'year-book' of sorts, for her combat operations up to that date.



Before turning in, LTC Welch, SGT Minton and PFC Cusano pose for a quick photo under our 48-Star flag and Coast Artillery Banner.



Sunday morning dawned early, and AGFA members quickly headed to Battery Gunnison to prepare for Coast Defense Day. Along the way, several of us stopped to pay our respects at "Guardian Park," located at the southern end of the Fort Hancock Main Post. Located there is this monument, erected in memory of a tragic accident at a nearby Nike Air-Defense Missile Base in 1958 that claimed the lives of ten Soldiers and civilian technicians. Coast Defense Weekend coincides with Armed Forces Day, and is the week prior to Memorial Day. This year's Coast Defense Day was May 22nd - 58 years to the day of the accident.



At Battery Gunnison, we commenced with preparations for Coast Defense Day. Here, PVTs Natsis and Frederick carry in items for Francis Hayes, a WWII Army Combat Veteran, who would be displaying items and photos of his Army service with us.



As we opened Battery Gunnison/New Peck for the day, CPL Meiselman uses the Gun Commander's telephone to conduct a communications check with the plotting room.



On Sunday we inducted our newest member to AGFA, Mr. Francis Hayes. Growing up in the area, he spent a lot of time at Fort Hancock during the 1930's into 1943, when he was drafted into the US Army as an infantry soldier. He served in the 94th Infantry Division and was captured during the Battle of the Bulge. Here, LTC Welch describes Mr. Hayes' military service to visitors and AGFA members alike. Nearly 20 visitors were on hand to witness the induction.



We are deeply honored to have him join us in public interpretation and helping to educate our fellow citizens. He is shown with LTC Welch, left, with his official AGFA membership certificate, and with his son Glenn, right.



Throughout Sunday, Francis was busy helping the public better understand his participation in WWII, and the war's impact upon our country.



At 1030, SGT Chris Moore and T-4 Steve Rossi arrived with their vintage vehicles, a World War Two Jeep and a Plymouth Staff Car, to join us in the interpretation. Below, they set up a 'fly' for exhibiting their historic items, and to provide shade from the sun.



Both the staff car and the jeep were parked on the Battery Gunnison Parade and saw extensive visitation throughout the day.



Their display is seen here, from the Gun 1 platform. Also in the photo is a bus that ran every 15 minutes, shuttling visitors all around the Fort to many locations to participate in both Ocean Fun Day and Coast Defense Day.



Rejoining us as well was LT(jg) Paul Casalese, who continued his interpretation of the US Coast Guard's role in protecting New York during World War II. He enjoys a cup of coffee in a vintage US Quartermaster Corps mug as he awaits his first round of visitors.



A detail of his displays is shown below. The Coast Guard role in protecting New York Harbor was a vital one, and it could not have been done without them.



A very nice surprise were the two gentlemen who had joined us during the Historic Hike, and who came back on Sunday and spent the better part of the day working on projects with T-5 Komorowski. Here, they are working on the milling machine, making hinges for the plotting board arms. Both young men are degreed engineers and find this work fascinating. We hope to see more of them in the future!



Our visitors were not long in coming. As always, the Plotting Room was very busy, as visitors learned about the finer points of accurate "fires," or, putting accurate artillery strikes on moving targets miles out on the open ocean.



The latest project undertaken for the M3 Plotting Board is the new plotting board station arms. Last fall, we began to replace the aluminum arms with historically correct brass arms. The two brass station arms are shown below. Next is the Gun Arm Bracket, Gun Arm Yoke, Gun Arm and Radar Station Arm. We anticipate completion of those projects by spring 2017.



A detail of the scale and numbering on the brass arms is shown here. The scale is that for every 1 inch on the arm, it equals 500 yards out on the ocean. The arms are graduated from 2000 yards to 29,000 yards. Each arm takes about 10 hours to fully engrave.



Below, AGFA guest PVT Grace Natsis operates the Battery's BD-95 switchboard, which controls all of the fire-control telephones. Her skillful interpretation of the board was a fitting testament to the service of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) which filled many duties until the summer of 1943 when they became the Woman's Army Corps (WAC) and were fully integrated into the US Army.



She is seen here, contacting Gun No. 1 on the Fire-Control telephone network. She manned this station throughout the entire event, helping visitors and AGFA members alike 'speak' to one another throughout the day.



Always of great interest to visitors is our Wind Component Indicator. This device, built in 1906, was used through WWII to determine the effect that varying wind speeds and directions would have upon the flight of a projectile.



A detailed view of our Plotting Room, the only one of its kind restored in the nation, is seen below. The "Wind Component Indicator" is seen to the left of the wall clock. The Plotting Room, the "brain" of the Battery, has been under restoration now for over 13 years.



In the Aid Station, AGFA guest PVT Frederick looks on as a young man dons the harness and helmet of an Army Medic.



After "suiting up," 1LT Lutkenhouse instructs him on the type of bandages and materials he would be carrying.



A clear view of part of the medical display is shown below. To the right of the center shelf is our 1943 X-Ray machine. Fort Hancock had a vast medical and dental support network for its garrison of 5,000 Soldiers, as well as providing medical care for Soldiers returning home from overseas service.



Below, with the help of 1LT Lutkenhouse, another young visitor tries on Army medical gear, to the delight of her parents.



The National Park Service was also very busy on Sunday. They were conducting an open house for people interested in leasing a historic building in the Fort Hancock Historic Post. To learn more about this, please visit www.forthancock21.org and <https://www.nps.gov/gate/learn/management/fort-hancock-rolling-rfp.htm>. Here, AGFA guest T-4 Rossi, who was doing some “advertising” by driving around in his Jeep, poses with NPS Ranger and Gateway public affairs officer Daphne Yun and her husband Shawn at the open house tent area.



Below, Ocean Fun Days, held primarily on the Ft Hancock Parade Ground, are in full swing with over 600 visitors during the day. NJ Sea Grant operates out of a restored enlisted Barracks, Bldg. No 22. To learn more, visit <http://njseagrants.org/>.



Below, we received a visit from NPS Ranger Jen Cox, with whom we work very closely to present accurate and effective programming. In the background, the shuttle bus arrives with our next round of visitors.



As always, the gun platform was a scene of constant activity, and saw an unending stream of visitors throughout the day.



AGFA members are seen just prior to the start of a gun drill for our visitors.



During the drills, our younger visitors joined in. Here, SGT Minton instructs a young cannoneer on how to properly hook up the lanyard into the M1900 firing device.



After the drills, the public is invited to have a closer look at the gun and ask questions. The young man in the gray shirt, standing on the Gun Pointers' platform on the right side of the gun, has fixed a "target" in his sights.



And here it is. Seen through the 100-year old M1904 Warner & Swasey telescopic sight, a large container ship slips out of the harbor in the Ambrose Channel. The ship, some 700 feet in length, is about five miles offshore.



Sadly, all good things must come to an end. The event ended at 4:30 pm, and we quickly had to set about packing up our displays. We were hot and tired, but it had been a wonderful day. Below PVT Frederick, SGT Minton, CPL Meiselman and PVT Ciemniecki bring out the medical packing boxes.



Below, CPL Cusano gives Gun No. 1 a final look to make sure all the equipment and components have been secured. Of note, is the direction, or azimuth, that the gun is pointed. Coast Artillery regulations stated that the guns - regardless of caliber - were to be constantly rotated, or "traversed," on their carriages, and never left in any one position for too long, as this would produce flat spots on the roller bearings.



CPL Cusano poses for a quick photo as we prepared to lock the trailer of medical equipment and depart 1943 to return to 2016.



Below the sun begins to set over Gun #2 and New York Harbor as the last of our members head home to the 21st century. Coast Defense Weekend proved to be an enjoyable and successful weekend for AGFA and the NPS. We would like to thank all those of you who came out to visit us over the course of the weekend.



The summer of 2016 is the NPS Centennial (1916-2016) Celebration. Please visit the NPS website (<http://www.nps.gov/gate/planyourvisit/index.htm>) for additional scheduling information or call (732) 872-5970. AGFA will be hosting several work days this summer, so please be sure to visit the Army Ground Forces Association Website for our schedule at <http://armygroundforces.org>.

And you can get all of our latest updates on the Battery John Gunnison Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Battery-John-Gunnison-168775819848014/?fref=ts>