

Coast Artillery Living History
Fort Hancock, NJ

On 24-26 October 2014, the National Park Service (NPS), in conjunction with the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) and other historic organizations, hosted "Fort Hancock Days" across the Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark. This annual event commemorated the formal naming of the "Fortifications at Sandy Hook" (also known as the "Military Reservation of Sandy Hook") as "Fort Hancock" by the US War Department on 30 October 1895. The Fort was named in honor of Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, an American Civil war hero.

It is important to note that all of Sandy Hook peninsula constitutes the Fort Hancock Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark. There are approximately 88,000 properties on the National Register, but only 2,500 Landmarks. National landmarks are the most historically significant places in the USA.

The last October event held at Battery Gunnison/New Peck by AGFA was the weekend of Hurricane Sandy in October 2012. The October 2013 event was cancelled due to the Federal Government shutdown. In the two years since October 2012, many restoration projects have been undertaken and completed at Battery Gunnison/New Peck.

The members of AGFA that participated in this year's event were Ron and Yvonne Brodzinski, Donna Cusano, Paul Cusano, Chris Egan, Max Kaiserman, Richard King, Kathleen Kluxen, Henry and Mary Komorowski, Anne Lutkenhouse, Mike and Nancy Murray, Eric Meiselman, Tom Minton, Kyle Schaffer, Jerry and Erika Still, Paul Taylor, Anthony Valenti, Gary and Deanna Weaver, and Shawn Welch. Our guests included Paul Casalese, Joe DiGiovanni, Larry Mihlon and his wife Susan Marco, Steve Rossi, Chris Moore and Bill Winslow. In addition, we had a very special guest, World War II veteran LT(jg) Robert Krause (USN 1942-1946) who provided detailed interpretation of his role as a Naval Aviator in WWII alongside our living historians.

The educational focus was interpreting the Coast Artillery mission at Fort Hancock specifically in the World War Two-era. The tactical focus of the event was the ongoing U-Boat war, known as the "Battle of the Atlantic" and the threat of saboteur activity or the shelling of Fort Hancock by German submarines using deck guns. The event 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. A key factor in our interpreting were the 13 separate times that the Battery fired upon ships entering the harbor after failing to follow the instructions of the HECP.

The photo below shows the majority of the participants on Sunday, 26 October behind Battery Gunnison/New Peck. The Jeep in the photo belongs to our guest, T-4 Steve Rossi. This day was the full NPS "Fort Hancock Days" event.



Friday was a day of work - cleaning, setting up and completing small projects. Below PFC Cusano prepares to paint the interior of lantern niches in the magazine.



Outside, SSG Weaver, 1st Sgt Murray, CPL Egan and PVT Schafer install telephone, time interval and electric wiring in preparation for the nighttime lantern tour which was to occur that evening. In the photo to the right, one of SSG Weaver's projects comes to life. The circa 1915 electrical light in the telephone booth is illuminated with electrical power for the first time in nearly 70 years.



The medical displays in the Chemical Warfare Room take a good amount of time to set up, as most of the material is stored off site. 1LT Lutkenhouse stands next to the 1943 Picker Field X-Ray machine as she assembles her displays.



The photos below show the remainder of the medical displays inside the Chemical Warfare Room. These items are interpreted by our nurses, 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano. The role of the interpretation is to discuss the unique types of injuries - concussion and fragmentation from shells exploding against concrete and blunt trauma injuries from heavy equipment like shells and gun parts during training and maintenance - all of which were prevalent to Coast Artillery personnel.



Below is a photo of individual medicines and bandages on display in the shelving units. These are original, unused WWII-era items in near pristine condition.



Additional items are shown below, to include a view to the right of the control unit to the 1943 Picker Field X-Ray machine. This X-Ray machine was intended to be used in field hospitals and aid stations close to the combat area to quickly locate bullets and shell fragments in a soldier's body for removal by a doctor, nurse or if required, a field medic. Battlefield medicine is serious business.



A very significant project that is currently underway is the restoration of the Chemical Warfare decontamination system inside the Air Lock room of Battery Gunnison/New Peck. Below, the project leader, SSG Weaver, stands with 1st Sgt Murray, each flanking the new decontamination stand pipe that was installed in September. Using the drill press and taps in the Battery Gunnison/New Peck machine shop, SSG Weaver's team built the pipe using original plans and diagrams from 1943. The National Park Service team (Pete McCarthy, Jen Cox and Bill Bickerstaff) were the driving force that put the pipe in SSG Weaver's care for completion and installation. The next major step in the project in 2015 will be the installation of the treadle-step and pulley mechanism that operated the system.



During our annual week-long work period, held in July, our tool room received a major overhaul, as it was the last room in the Battery that had not yet been restored. The two photos below show newly painted walls, new work benches to support the drill press and lathe, new parts cabinets, and a rack for the machine shop personnel's M1903 Springfield rifles and field equipment.



Below, T-5 Komorowski and T-5 King take a short break from public interpretation and working small projects during the setup period. Having a machine shop on site will facilitate the faster construction and completion of custom-made parts and components for the restoration of the Battery.



Below, preparation work continues as CPL Meiselman installs and tests EE-91 fire control telephones. He is using a TS-9 handset to talk to the other Soldiers in the Plotting Room.



As CPL Meiselman installed telephones, PVT Schafer installed the two gun platform lights. These fully-restored circa 1915 lights are the only known working examples of their kind in the country. Then and now, these lights provide illumination for the Coast Artillery gun crews during night time hours, and were showcased to the public during the Lantern Tour.



Throughout the afternoon work continued on setting up for the public. Below PFC Cusano, PVT Schafer and SGT Minton set up the Gun #1 emplacement for the Harbor Defense Lantern Tour.



As the team worked, the shipping in the harbor was very active as can be seen below, as a large container ship of the Maersk Line is illuminated in a sun beam as it slips into the Harbor on the Ambrose Channel, directly under the watchful eye of Gun Number 1.



Dusk finally fell, and it was time to move out. The photo below shows the Harbor Defense Lantern Tour team just prior to heading out to the Post Guard House for the tour start.



On the way to the guard house, the walking tour team stopped at the base of a fire control tower inside the HDCP / Mortar Battery structure. This tower was demolished in the 1960s.



In the photo below the public gathers on the steps of the Guard House as members CPL Egan and Miss Kluxen (in 1940s women's work attire) speak with Ms. Suzanne Moore, a USNPS Seasonal Park Ranger who was there to accompany the tour. The Lantern Tour is one of the most anticipated events of the year at Fort Hancock, and the 60-odd participants of the tour included student-members of the Monmouth University Outdoors Club.



In keeping with period authenticity, AGFA members were carrying both US Army issue and civilian purchase Coleman lanterns, all from the 1940s. They worked perfectly.



Below CPL Egan helps guide the public visitors through the first stop - the Mortar Battery, which became the Harbor Defense Command Post (HDCP) in 1941 and was extensively reconstructed inside to support this critical mission in 1941-42.



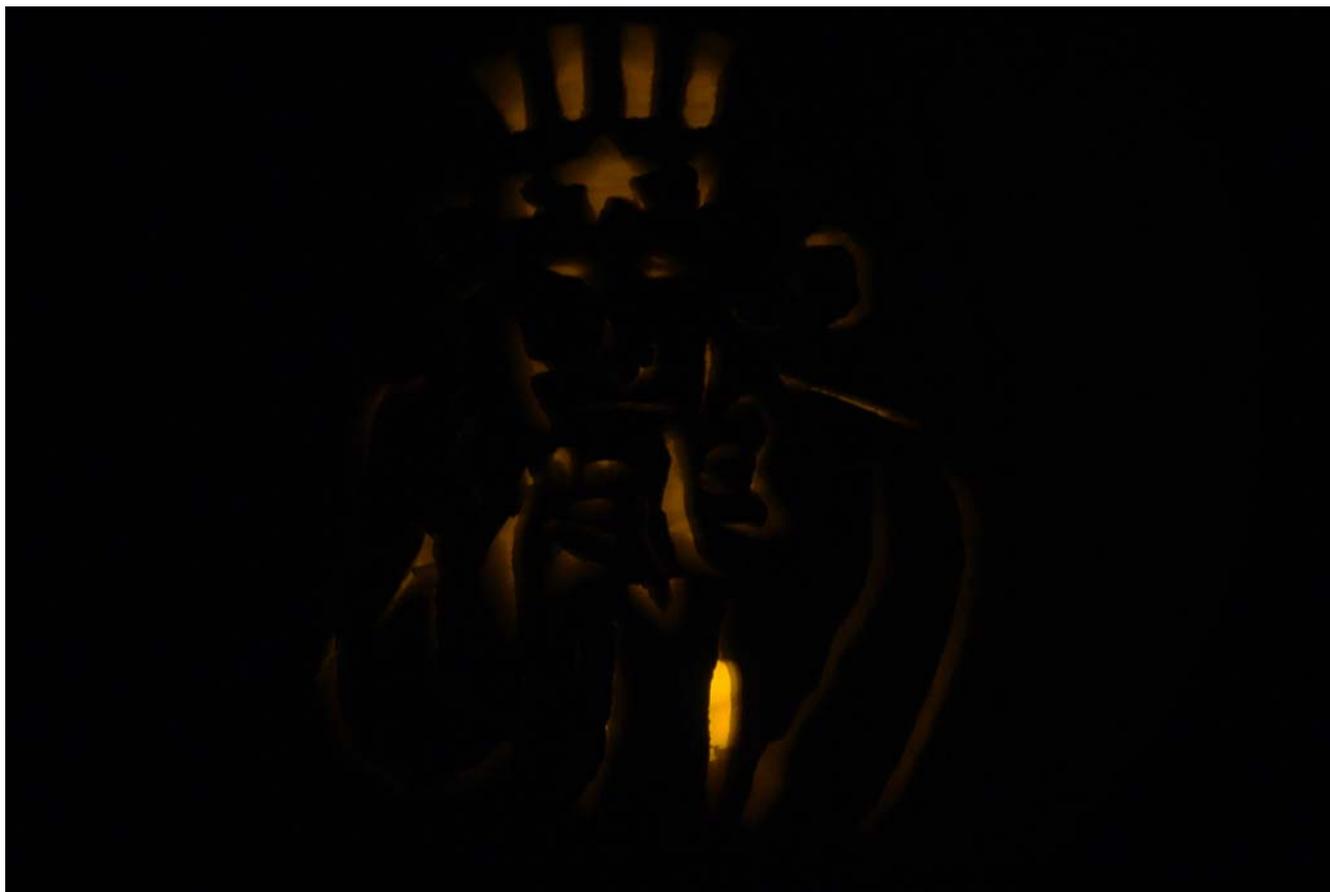
Once arriving at Battery Gunnison/New Peck, the 60 person tour group was assembled into four 15 person teams. Below, 2LT Cusano and 1LT Lutkenhouse discuss the tour with two living historians portraying WWI German U-Boat personnel and other public visitors.



Of course, an October event would be missing a key component if it lacked the Battery "Jack-O-Lantern"!!! For the past several years, the AGFA October event hosts a new wartime-themed Jack-O-Lantern design by member Kathleen Kluxen. During the Lantern Tour, it sits outside the Plotting Room.



In the photo below, this year's design shows quite plainly...it is Uncle Sam - and yes...He wants YOU!



In the plotting room below, Mrs. Komorowski (GE War Worker for radar units), Miss Kluxen (another war worker), BG Di Giovanni and LT(jg) Casalese (USCGR) explain their roles to visitors. BG Di Giovanni was interpreting the role of BG Philip S. Gage Sr, the commanding general of the Harbor Defenses of NY from 1941-44.



Below 2LT Taylor explains the fire control process of trigonometric calculations to visitors in front of the M3 Plotting Board as Mrs. Komorowski stands and observes.



As 2LT Taylor explains the intricacies of the plotting board, visitors, to include our WWI U-Boat officer (Kevin Titus), learns valuable information.



During the tour, the 15 person groups moved from station to station at Battery Gunnison/New Peck. Below, 1LT Lutkenhouse looks down the back sidewalk, or "Battery Parade," of the emplacement for the next group to enter the Chemical Warfare Room and the medical station.



The restored electrical lighting of the Battery is very evident in this photo, taken at Gun No. 1. The light at bottom center is the telephone booth light. Even at nearly a century in age, the phone booth light and the platform lights throw off a very impressive illumination, a testament to their fine craftsmanship from a bygone era.



This view was taken from the top of the Battery, looking down at the Number One gun-platform. The platform lights are very apparent in this photo as night gun drills are conducted with both AGFA members and the visiting public. Coast Artillery gun crews practiced day and night, and in all weather conditions, to be able to man the guns at a moment's notice in the event of an attack.



The photo below shows the team conducting gun drills. AGFA members were able to perform the drills in the proper 15 second intervals, just like our Coast Artillery counterparts did 70 years ago.



Below, SGT Minton prepares to insert an inert 'primer' into the gun after completion of the loading drill. A primer, similar to a blank rifle cartridge, is used ignite the powder charge in the gun. The leather pouch under his left arm is an original Coast Artillery primer pouch, dating from the 1917 era, and used to the end of WWII.



Another view below of a night gun drill shows the public joining in the drill by serving as elevation setters and loaders. AGFA members always ask for volunteer members of the tour groups to participate in the drills. Within a few shots, our visitors are almost always able to perform a loading drill in 15 seconds as well.



The back of the gun platform and its period illumination are very evident below. The two platform lights on either side of the stairs are very noticeable, as is the light from the telephone booth and the ammunition passage.



Inside the machine shop/tool room, T-5 Komorowski explains the WWII-era tools as well as his M1903 Springfield rifle to visitors. Regardless of one's job at Fort Hancock during WWII, every last Soldier was required to have his weapon and ammunition nearly at arm's reach at all times, which included the mess hall, movie theater and religious services at the Post Chapel.



Below, T-5 Komorowski talks about the 1943 lathe directly behind him. Mrs. Komorowski stands in the doorway looking in on the assembled tour group team.



After Battery Gunnison/New Peck, the tour headed to the Harbor Entrance Control Post (HECP) on top of the former Battery Potter. The HECP operated as a 'control tower' to control the safe and effective movement of ships into and out of the Harbor - no easy task in the WWII years. Below, 1st Sgt Murray explains the functioning of the HECP to our visitors as BM2 Kaiserman and SGT Minton quickly confer on the side before the tour continued on.



Below, PVT Schafer keeps an eye on the two German U-Boat crewmen from 1918 who washed up from the sea just in time to join the tour. Obviously a time-traveling photo, having the two German submariners with us gave a unique aspect to the Battle of the Atlantic during World Wars I & II, when German submarines wreaked havoc on the Atlantic sealanes.



The operation of the HECF was a Navy-lead operation with the support of the Army. Below, LT(jg) Casalese, USCG Reserve, and BM2 Kaiserman, USN, speak to the public about how the Navy and Coast Guard worked with the Army to keep the harbor safe and organized as shipping moved in and out at a rate of almost 100 ships per day. Magnetic cable loops and underwater hydrophones for ship detection, submarine mines and coastal gun batteries, anti-aircraft guns, and Navy and Coast Guard destroyers and patrol (PT) boats, all part of vast network of protecting the harbor, were tied into the HECF and HDCP at Fort Hancock.



This Lantern Tour featured a major change from previous tours - we had two M1910A1 seacoast artillery azimuth instruments, complete with electrical lighting, set up on top of the HECF. Below, BM2 Kaiserman explains the use of the instrument while SGT Minton finds an appropriate target for the public to view. The clear conditions made for excellent visibility.



Below, 1st Sgt Murray assists a visitor in using the M1910A1. This is the taller of the two instruments. The M1910A1's were used for observation, and to direct the fire of the seacoast batteries using degrees of azimuth. The public had just learned the basics of seacoast artillery fire control when they were in Battery Gunnison/ New Peck's plotting room earlier in the tour.



The lighting of the instruments is provided by a 12 volt battery and provides power to three lights - one on the azimuth scale, one on the subscale azimuth drum, and one inside the scope itself. The two azimuth indicator lights are visible below.



In the photo below, a visitor and 1st Sgt Murray are discussing a very special sight that is visible in the azimuth instrument.



Below LTC Welch takes a look for himself, given the level of excitement by everyone at what they are viewing in the scopes.



And what does he see?.....

...the Verrazano Bridge and New York City lights as taken through the telescope of the M1910A1 instrument above.



In the photo below, the tall apartment buildings in Brooklyn, at over 8 miles distant, are evident. A small boat is just above the "splash pointer". The red color of the reticle is also plainly visible. Notice the center line is "3", with readings moving towards zero to the right, and 4.5 to the left. This is for accurate azimuth departure from the centerline of the ship tracking azimuth, which enables the spotters to locate the actual fall of shot, or "splash," in relation to the target location and this centerline. This allows for accurate, real-time corrections during firings of the big seacoast guns.



The next morning, Saturday dawned bright and clear, and breakfast was a huge hit for a team that was up well past midnight. Below, Mrs. Weaver, our Mess Sergeant, speaks with hungry folks as they prepare for the day.



Once at the battery, small projects and limited public interpretation were quickly underway. Below, SSG Houck and T-5 Komorowski discuss a new storage crate in the process of completion as SSG Weaver talks with some of our visitors.



Another project completed Saturday morning was painting a vintage 1942 Marmite can, which is an insulated food container. Here, 2LT Cusano is working with two off-duty Navy personnel in scraping the rust off of the can, as 1LT Lutkenhouse speaks with Phyllis Weiselman, and SGT Minton welcomes some visitors.



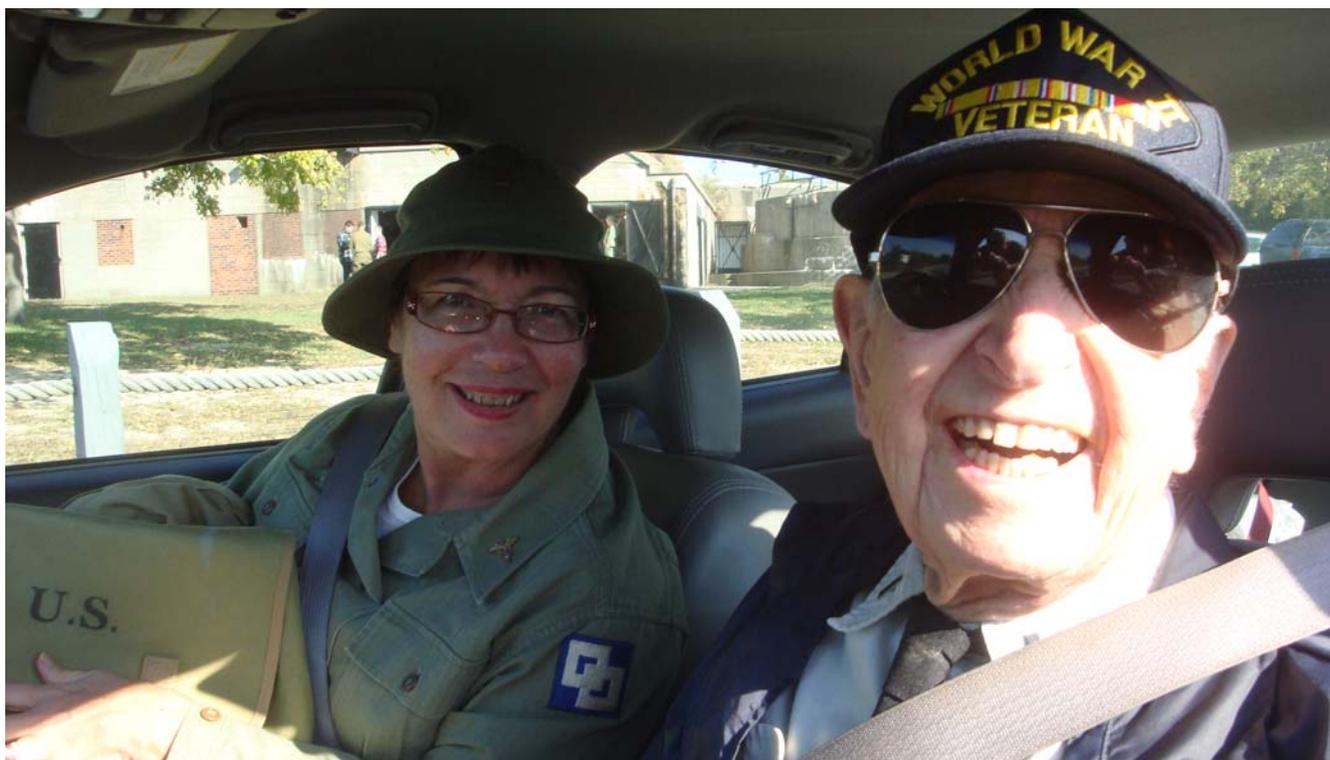
Below, 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano stand by the newly painted marmite can. For the medical team, this is important addition to the medical display. Aside from food items, these containers were vital when used to ship whole blood and blood plasma from the continental US to various military hospitals across the globe.



By noon on Saturday, the entire medical display was completed for the Sunday event. This view shows the chemical warfare room looking towards the air lock, with a vast and impressive array of WWII-era medical equipment.



At about 1330 on Saturday, our World War II veteran guest, Bob Krause arrived. Below, 1LT Lutkenhouse takes a ride with him to our barracks and get him settled in with us.



In the photo below, T-5 King, CPL Egan and PVT Schafer continue to get the battery ready for the Sunday event. T-5 King continues work on his new crate to hold various tools and items in the machine shop.



During the day, several members went with T-5 King to visit the Waterwitch Club, located in Monmouth Hills, overlooking Fort Hancock and the Jersey Shore. Sadly, our primary venue for our "WWII Christmas" event, History House, is still not operational, following damage from Hurricane Sandy. Waterwitch has been chosen for this year's event.



The Waterwitch Club is a magnificent structure, built in the 1880s and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



The view of Fort Hancock, New York Harbor and the Jersey Shore is spectacular from the Waterwitch Club, as can be seen below.



During a lull in Saturday morning's operations, AGFA members took a few moments to tour some of the other Batteries at Fort Hancock. Here, CPL Meiselman, CPL Egan, guest Anthony Valenti, BM2 Kaiserman and PVT Schafer tour the lower levels of Battery Peck, learning about the transitional period in 1943 when Peck's guns were moved to Battery Gunnison. Battery Peck was subsequently modified and rearmed with four 90mm Anti-Motor-Torpedo Boat (AMTB) guns as "AMTB Battery No. "8". It served in this capacity for the remainder of WWII.



During Saturday, many visitors arrived and 2LT Taylor provided interpretation in the plotting room. Visitors appear almost instantly at the plotting room as soon as we arrive at the Battery each morning during events and work weekends.



Saturday Evening was the Association's Annual Dinner and Business Meeting. We conduct this in Class A uniforms and period civilian dress attire. We also share our time with the people who make this all possible - the National Park Service. In the photo below we are joined by Jennifer Nersesian (Gateway NRA General Superintendent) and her family (husband Luis Maroto and children Dahlia and Avedis), Pete McCarthy, (Fort Hancock/Sandy Hook Unit coordinator), Joseph S. Green (Deputy Chief, Interpretation & Education at Gateway NRA) and his guest Audrey Jackson, Tim Hudson (NPS Hurricane Sandy Recovery Manager for NY/NJ), and Bill Bickerstaff (Ft Hancock Facility Engineering Manager). They are critical enablers of all the work we do at Fort Hancock as an Association.



The photo below is of all our members and visitors in period 1940s military and civilian attire. The Navy and Coast Guard personnel were key to Fort Hancock as a Harbor Defense; while an Army lead operation, the defenses as a whole were strongly supported by the naval services. The dual Army-Navy interpretation provides an awareness of the Navy's key role at Fort Hancock. This relationship is often overlooked.



As is Navy Custom, the two Enlisted Navy personnel (Anthony Valenti and Max Kaiserman) “pipe” LT(jg) Krause into the barracks for the dinner, escorted by the Army Nurse Corps (2LT Cusano), as other Army personnel (2LT Taylor and PVT Schafer) observe this custom.



Our home for the weekend was Building 41, which served as both our barracks, mess hall and meeting location. The building was originally constructed in 1941 as a post office; the NPS converted it to a barracks in the 1990s. Below, members and guests proceed through the chow line for dinner. In the center of the picture, Jennifer Nersesian, and her husband, Luis, prepare plates for their children, as 2LT Cusano gets drinks from the refrigerator and T-5 Komorowski awaits his turn in line.



The barracks has a central kitchen area that is essentially an island. Below CPL Egan and PVT Schafer look on as 1LT Lutkenhouse speaks with our guest Audrey. 1LT Lutkenhouse's ensemble is very unique 'early war' (1939-42) uniform of the Army Nurse Corps, denoted by its Navy and light blue colors as opposed to the officer's and later Nurse's dark Olive Drab.



In the photo below 1st Sgt Murray looks on with a broad smile as he enters the food line. Behind him, LT(jg) Krause and Joe Green talk as Jennifer Nersesian guides her children into the table area. Hanging on the wall behind her is a Coast Artillery Corps flag from the 1940s.



Below members and guests continue through the line. The three Soldiers below are, from left, T-4 Brodzinski, MAJ Winslow and T-5 King, who wears his Combat Infantryman's badge, earned while serving in the 9th Infantry Division in the Vietnam War. AGFA membership has a broad spectrum of former, retired and current service members from several branches of the US Armed Forces.



Below, Miss Kluxen ensures the sterno is lit to keep the food warm. Our meal was catered by Sal's Original (<http://www.salsoriginal.com/>) as it has been for over five years now. They are superb!



The dining area was tight but cozy. Our members got a good opportunity to talk with our guests and thank them for the hard work they did to facilitate our work.



The best part of the meal was that we had enough to serve seconds. Below CPL Egan and MAJ Winslow head out to get another helping as PVT Schafer, SGT Minton, Mrs. Brodzinski, 2LT and Mrs. Still enjoy their dinner and the camaraderie. With two primary events and several work weekends each year, AGFA members always make the most of our time together.



In the picture below, LT(jg) Krause, Audrey and 1st Sgt Murray enjoy dinner and conversation.



As the dinner wound down, all proceeded to enjoy a tasty dessert and continue discussions.



In this photo, 1LT Lutkenhouse, LT(jg) Krause and Audrey enjoy a laugh together.



After the dinner, we assembled for our Annual Business meeting. Below, while reviewing the meeting notes, the Army and Navy work together as BM2 Kaiserman uses his pipe as a pointer, while CPL Egan, SGT Minton and PVT Schafer look on with riveted interest.



During our meeting, members were recognized for contributions through the year. Below, 1st Sergeant Murray reads a certificate of recognition to PVT Schafer recognizing his contributions and announcing his promotion within AGFA. Congratulations, Kyle!



1st Sgt Murray smiles as Dinner draws to a close and the members find their seats for the start of the meeting.



At the close of the meeting, SSG Houck (board member), 1st Sgt Murray (board member), CPT Cusano, CPL Egan, SGT Minton, BM2 Kaiserman and PVT Schafer pose for a picture.



Sunday morning dawned bright and early. In the photo below, another piping hot breakfast is served. From left to right is 2LT Taylor, Mrs. Murray, 1st Sgt Murray, SSG weaver, Mrs. Still, T-4 Brodzinski, Mrs. Brodzinski and CPL Meiselman.



Breakfast is always the best start to the day. Below from left to right are our guest MAJ Winslow, 2LT Still, PFC Cusano, and LT(jg) Krause. Our meals were served on a mixture of WWII period field mess ware and modern disposable materials to minimize the KP work.



As we arrived at Battery Gunnison/New Peck, so too did our guest military vehicles and their owners. Below is A US Army staff car (a 1940 Plymouth) and its owner, SSG Chris Moore. Behind it is a WWII-era Ford 'Jeep' owned by T-4 Steve Rossi.



MAJ Winslow admires SSG Moore's Plymouth staff car, which has been a fixture at several AGFA events in the past. These vehicles were parked on the road out in front of Battery Gunnison during the day, drawing the admiring glances of many visitors.



As we prepared for the day's program, visitors would come up to the gun platform, sometimes in small groups. Below, CPL Egan and 2LT Still talk with visitors just as they completed the setup.



A majority of the interpretation at Battery Gunnison is done through a "first person" perspective, meaning that discussions are lead from a real-time, 1943 viewpoint. T-5 (Technical Sargent 5) Brodzinski, manning the Entrance Control Point, helped visitors transition into this unique environment, and reminded visitors to ask AGFA members to "remove our hats," meaning, to transition to 2014, to answer a modern-themed question.



The Gun #1 platform, as always, was a busy place all day long. We had visitors before we formally opened at noon, and stayed very active throughout the day. Below, 2LT Still stands with the check list and TS-9 telephone handset to talk with the plotting room and the Battery Commander. SGT Minton checks his primer pouch, PFC Cusano stands ready with the sponge, and PVT Schafer stands with the shell tray in preparation for loading the gun.



At the completion of loading, SGT Minton pulls the lanyard and “fires” the gun.



The gun crew takes a pause in the gun drill to explain the drill and the operation of the gun to a WWII veteran (standing at the breech of the gun, center) who visited the Battery.



The public, seen below, gathers around the crew near the equipment stands to discuss various aspects of soldier's equipment on the gun platform.



Many people helped to make this event possible. Jennifer Cox, the senior interpretive National Park Ranger, was critical to the success of the event. Our guests also added greatly to the special nature of the event. Below are COL Larry Mihlon (West Long Branch Police Chief - representing an Army Air Corps observer) and his wife Susan Marco (in period dress). PFC Cusano takes time out from the gun drill to join in the photograph.



In total, there were three period vehicles on exhibit at Battery Gunnison/New Peck. T-4 Steve Rossi's jeep is to the left, SSG Moore's staff car in the center, and COL Mihlon's 1938 Plymouth PG Sedan, which is equipped with both US and European police sirens from the 1930s, is on the far right.



Gun Drills continued at a rapid pace throughout the day. Below CPL Meiselman, PVT Schafer, CPL Egan and 2LT Still discuss the drill with the public.



Another view of the drill with SGT Minton closing the breach block.



The AGFA team eats well during events, and for Lunch at the battery, Mrs. Brodzinski and Mrs. Murray made sure all were "topped off" for the day. One of the best places to conduct mess operations at the battery is in the powder magazine. The meal was laid out on top of one of our large storage boxes, and each soldier served themselves.



Directly across from the mess layout, SGT Minton, 1st Sgt Murray, PFC Cusano and 2LT Still grab a bite to eat next to the powder cans. They use one of the three new storage boxes we made in July as an improvised table. Meals were quick and sharp, with members hurrying to get back to their respective positions for more public interaction.



All parts of the battery stayed busy through the day. At least 10 public visitors can be seen on top of the gun #1 platform, and two visitors and their dog can be seen in the entrance to the machine shop.



Inside the machine shop, T-5 Komorowski is busy explaining all the different machines to a very interested public.



Below we get a great view of LT(jg) Krause's display in the shell magazine, adjacent to Gun 1. The three aircraft modeled on the left side of the table were the types he flew during WWII as a naval primary flight training officer. Of note is the display for his brother Elmer, seen on the right. A fellow Naval Aviator, he vanished into the vastness of the Pacific Ocean in his F4U Corsair fighter in April, 1945. This is a very sobering reminder that our freedoms are not free, and many men and women have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country in times of war and peace.



SSG Weaver and LT(jg) Krause are ready for the public.



Many visitors were enthralled by LT(jg) Krause's display and his explanation of his duties during WWII as a primary flight instructor for float planes such as those flown off Battleships and Cruisers.



Below, as LT(jg) Krause explains various aspects of his duties in the Navy, SSG Weaver in the rear, explains the difference between armor piercing and high explosive six-inch projectiles.



In the photo below, LT(jg) Krause talks with T-4 Brodzinski, 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano outside of the medical station.



During the event we had several WWII veterans join us. We were especially lucky at this event, as we were visited by Monmouth County Freeholder Emeritus Mr. Ted Narozanick who served at Fort Hancock during WWII. Like many Soldiers stationed stateside, he was eventually sent overseas, serving in combat in Europe, where he was awarded a Bronze Star for his actions. His visitation with us was facilitated through his daughter Carole, the NPS and AGFA members. In the picture with him, from left to right, are CPL Egan, Tom Hoffman (NPS Fort Hancock Historian), SGT Minton, 1st Sgt Murray, Mr. Narozanick, PVT Schafer, PFC Cusano, 2LT Still and LTC Welch. We were honored to have him visit with us.



In the plotting room, 2LT Taylor moves quickly around the plotting board explaining its functions to a very interested public. MAJ Winslow provides additional context as he explains the difference between airborne field artillery and fixed seacoast artillery. His interpretation is that of a field artillery paratrooper studying US seacoast defenses in preparation to seize Italian defenses. In 1943, the invasion of the Italian mainland began in early September.



Below, MAJ Winslow explains the plotting board's "gun arm" to the public. The Gun Arm represents the physical line of sight from the seacoast battery itself to the target. By placing this arm on the "plotted point" of the target location, it gives the range, in yards, and azimuth, in degrees of the target to the battery. This 'raw' data tells the Battery which way they need to turn the guns, and how high or low they need to elevate the gun tubes to hit the target.



In the photo below, SGT Minton's father sights Gun #1 on incoming ships in the entrance to NY Harbor as SGT Minton's mother awaits her turn to see for herself.



Below, are the ships they are viewing, as seen through the M1904 telescopic gunner's sight. They are an outbound car carrier, and an inbound container ship. This scope, used by the gun pointer, allowed him to physically put "eyes on target".



The photo below showcases both guns of the battery sealed and weather proofed, and with their tubes elevated.



Below is a panoramic photo of the entire gun battery, showing both guns looking out to sea. Coast Artillery Forts and batteries provide views of some of the most beautiful coastal vistas in the nation. Battery Gunnison and Fort Hancock are no exception.



In this photo, Gun #2 is shown with the New York City skyline in the background. Sunday was a very cool and clear day. By late afternoon, the clouds that had formed allowed for the buildings of New York City to be silhouetted. Lower Manhattan's sky scrapers, to the far left, are illuminated in a sun beam that occurred just as the photo was taken. The range is about 18 miles distant, roughly 8-9 miles beyond the range of Battery Gunnison/New Peck's 6-inch M1900 guns.



At the end of the day, SGT Minton's father watches as members undertake the process of closing down the Gun #1 platform and moving all materials back to their storage location in the Magazines.



Below, SSG Weaver and 2LT Still take down the rifle rack as the last step to closing Gun Platform #1. Notice that the gun tube is elevated, muzzle cover affixed, and the breach cover locked in place.



As the day winds down, PFC Cusano helps 1LT Lutkenhouse secure and pack up her medical gear.



Sunset is always breathtaking at Fort Hancock. Below is Building 7 of Officer's Row, in front of the post flag. Notice the wonderful recently rebuilt porch. The National Park Service completely rebuilt the porch as part of Hurricane Sandy recovery. This building will soon be rehabilitated by the National Park Service for use as overnight accommodations - it is part of the ongoing efforts to revitalize the Main Post area of Fort Hancock.



Bldg #1, known as "History House", is captured at sunset in the photo below. AGFA normally holds a 1943 "WWII Christmas" event at the house. It is a highly anticipated event for the public, and one of the most enjoyable for AGFA members. However, due to damage from Hurricane Sandy, History House remains closed pending restoration. The NPS plans to restore the building in the near future and we expect to host a 1943 Christmas event in the next year or two. The NPS is already hard at work on the exterior of the building, as evidenced in the photo below.



Building #102, a large three story barracks built in 1902, is framed in the waning sunlight. During WWII it housed the Headquarters Battery of the 7th Coast Artillery Regiment - - approximately 150 soldiers, as well as serving as Regimental HQ. This building is on schedule to be restored by the National Park Service in the next two years. It will be used for seasonal employee, park-partner and volunteer housing through the year. The last time AGFA used this building was 2008 and we eagerly await our ability to use and interpret this wonderful building once again.



The photo below shows the post flag and the Bachelor's Officer's Quarters (Bldg 27) to the left. This building will be offered by the National Park Service for lease in the near future.



Sunset views of Sandy Hook Light house are always wonderful. This particular view has not changed since 1853, when the current lantern house and 3rd Order Fresnel Lens were installed. It remains the oldest standing and operational lighthouse in the United States, having turned 250 years old on June 11th 2014.



And sunset comes to Gun #1 of Battery Gunnison/New Peck, as well.



Viewed from the front of the battery's earthen berm, Gun #1 is a impressive sight. Here the gun tube is elevated to its maximum of 20 degrees and the muzzle is covered to protect the gun tube during the coming winter.



All secure with breach cover installed, Gun #1 points out to sea at sunset as another wonderful season draws to a close. We'd like to thank the over 1,000 visitors who came and joined us at our events and work weekends of 2014.



Throughout the winter and spring of 2014-15, AGFA will conduct work days preparing for May's Coastal Defense Days event. For additional information call the Visitor Center at Sandy Hook, the Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Landmark, at (732) 872-5970, or visit <http://www.nps.gov/gate/planyourvisit/index.htm>. For more information, visit the Army Ground Forces Association Website <http://armygroundforces.org>. Mark your calendars and we'll see you next year!!