

Searchlight Arrives at Fort Miles

22 October 2007

Fort Miles' latest artifact purchase arrived today from Michigan. The fort has taken possession of a 1942 Sperry 60-inch 800 million candlepower searchlight. The unit is mounted on a trailer with a 6 cylinder Hercules engine providing the electrical power. The light is generated by a carbon arc system and is focused on to a polished 60 inch concave mirror. The unit can fire a 5 foot wide beam 5 miles into the sky and can be seen from over 30 miles away.



The unit was purchased by the Fort Miles Historical Association from a searchlight company in Michigan for \$4500. Jeff and Roger were kind enough to make the 12 hour drive to deliver the light to Fort Miles and instruct us on how to properly use it! Maintenance materials will be donated by Manlove Auto Parts in Milford, Delaware.

It is our intention to use this light as a powerful interpretation tool. Fourteen of these lights were used to illuminate the bay entrance for visual fire control plotting at Fort Miles, as well as other coastal fortifications across the US. They were also used all over the world for illuminating the night sky in search of enemy aircraft. Each light was manned by a crew of 8 men, and the unit had to be monitored constantly.

Our searchlight will undergo restoration to its original olive-drab color and is currently in perfect working order. It will be available during re-enactment events for interpretation as well as for venues around the local area. For an hourly rental fee (100% of which will go to the Fort Miles restoration project) the light can be brought to an event and operated by a searchlight crew in period uniforms. For information on having the light at your event, contact the Fort Miles office at (302) 644-5007.

Tower 3 Restoration Officially Begins

13 October 2007

The official ribbon cutting ceremony for the Tower 3 Restoration Project was held on 10 October 2007 at the base of the fire control tower which is located at Delaware Seashore State Park. Several local newspapers and TV news crews attended the ceremony - giving the campaign strong local media support.

Attending were Delaware State Parks representatives from Delaware Seashore State Park as well as Fort Miles. Board members of the Fort Miles Historical Association, and the Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation were also there.

Restoration of the tower is expected to take 3 years and will feature an upper observation deck much like that of [Tower 7](#) at Cape Henlopen State Park. One of the levels of this tower will feature a restoration to its historically correct configuration, complete with an azimuth instrument and telephones making it possible to plot ocean-going vessels with [Tower 7](#) serving as the other base end station.

Tower 3 will also feature a veteran database. Those wishing to enter a WWII veteran into the database would pay a one-time fee which would include an online accessible entry with information on the veteran, as well as a brick inscribed with the veteran's name to be placed in the walkway surrounding the base of the tower. Total projected cost of restoration is approximately \$500 - \$800 thousand dollars.



*Tower 3 at Delaware Seashore State Park.
Photo Credit: Mike Rogers*

On the web	Technical Information
SaveTheTower.org	Fire Control Towers
Fort Miles Historical Association	Fire Control Tower 3
Delaware Seashore State Park	Fire Control Tower 7
Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation	

Roof Construction to begin on Orientation Building

30 September 2007

The Fort Miles Orientation Building was constructed in the 1980's as an all-purpose building. It served as a recreation facility, mess hall, and theatre, just to name a few. Once the Army ceased use of the area in the early 1990's, the building sat abandoned in the quiet corner of the park that would become Fort Miles.



Once historical programming began at Fort Miles in 2005, this abandoned building was an obvious choice as a lecture facility for the area. However, the years had taken their toll on the building - especially the steel roof.

The Fort Miles Orientation Building (FMOB), as it is now known, will be our modern-day facility. This building will be home to offices, a small gift shop, and a lecture area. But before this can become reality - a new roof is needed. Construction on the new roof is scheduled to begin 01 October and will take most of the month to complete.

New M4 Ground Mine Arrives

30 September 2007

Fort Miles recently received a donation from "War Relics," a local militaria vendor in Milford of an original M4 ground mine once used in the Delaware Bay. The mine was obtained by War Relics at the end of the war and has been located outside of the Milford area store.

The mine was demilled at the end of the war by Fort Miles personnel by torch cutting a large hole into the side of the casing. They also cut a section away from the detonator tube inside of the mine casing. The shell of the mine is still in excellent shape today, largely due to the fact that it was painted yearly by the previous owner. There is some very minor surface rust in a few areas which will be addressed during restoration.



M-4 Ground Mine at Fort Miles

[Click here](#) for information on the Mine Field

The restoration plan for the mine is as follows:
Media blasting and refinishing of steel shell.
Plexiglas reconstruction of cut away section to offer a window into the mine.
Interior of the mine will be restored with mock-up powder bags and detonator assembly.
Interpretive signage added for explanation of function and purpose.

The mine is currently on display at the gun park in the Fort Miles Historic Site. Restoration is being done by the Fort Miles Historical Association.

CNN Shoot

14 August 2007

Using Fort Miles as a backdrop, CNN ran a piece in remembrance of VJ day - August 14, 1945. The segment, roughly 2 minutes long, contains interviews with Horace Knowles, a veteran that served with Battery C, 261st Coast Artillery at Fort Miles, as well as interviews with Lee Jennings, State Parks historian and Gary Wray, President of the Fort Miles Historical Association. The segment was shot on 6 July 2007.

On the web:

[CNN Home](#)

[Fort Miles Segment on CNN](#)

[Fort Miles Historical Association](#)