Pigeons played a vital part in World War I, because the U.S. Army used specially trained homing pigeons to carry messages. Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, served as the home of the U.S. Army Pigeon Breeding and Training Center from 1917 until 1957. Pigeons were considered an undetectable method of communication. Because pigeons have been known to fly hundreds of miles in a day, averaging one mile per minute, they proved to be an extremely reliable way of sending messages.

A small capsule would be placed around the leg of the pigeon, which contained paper messages, maps, photographs or cameras. The bird would then be released to fly to its home loft with the message. Military historians claim that ninety to ninety-five percent of all messages sent by the U.S. Army using pigeons were received. Pigeons were so vital during the war that more than 100,000 were used, but the Army has since discontinued their use in favor of faster communication methods.

Pictured below is a recently donated PPSh-41. This Soviet submachine gun was designed by Georgi Shpagin as a cheaper, simplified alternative to the PPD-40 submachine gun. This weapon contains a 71-round drum magazine as used in World War II. The gun is dated 1944 and was donated anonymously.

Pictured below is a piece of the “Dragon’s Tooth” from the Siegfried Line acquired April 30, 2008, by Mr. Allan Atwell, a World War II veteran of the 28th Infantry Division. Atwell attended this year’s reunion for the 28th Infantry Division held in September.

The above golden tone pyramid presentation plaque was presented by Major General Nasser Assi, Director of the Egyptian Training Authority, Egyptian Army, to the 28th Infantry Division, Task Force Spartan, for participation and support of Bright Star 2018 on September 19, 2018. Major General Andrew P. Schafer, Jr., the current commanding general, transferred the item to the museum in October of 2018.

Pictured above is a set of general officer’s military vehicle license plate attachments. These were placed on a vehicle occupied by a general to indicate his rank. The box is stenciled for the Transportation Motor Pool (TMP), Indiantown Gap Military Reservation (IGMR).

Donated, but not Pictured:


A collection of seven land deeds of Lebanon County properties with local names. Donated by Ms. Doris Ditzler.

PA State Guard Enlistment Form (c. 1945), 4th Regiment State Guard Patch and two Corporal Chevrons. Donated anonymously.
MUSEUM ACQUIRES DANIEL B. SHEPP COLLECTION

by Charles B. Oellig

The museum recently acquired the uniforms of LTC Daniel B. Shepp. He served as Aide-de-Camp on the Staff of Governor William Stone when the Pennsylvania Commission visited the Charlestown Exposition in 1902.

He was reappointed Aide-de-Camp on the Staff of Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker, 1903-1907. Shepp again served as Aide-de-Camp on the Staff of Major-General Henry C. Corbin on the occasion of the dedication ceremonies of the St. Louis Exposition in 1903. He was appointed Assistant Quartermaster General on the Staff of Governor Edwin S. Stuart in 1907, National Guard of Pennsylvania (NGP).

Shepp’s service ranged from approximately the Spanish-American War (1898) to 1910. The collection includes two coats made by John G. Haas, a military uniform supplier in Lancaster, PA. The officer’s coats and vest all have brass state staff officer’s buttons. These uniforms and caps are in mint condition. It is very unusual to find uniforms more than 100 years old that are this well preserved.

10th Annual Major General Frank H. Smoker, Jr. Foxhole Invitational Golf Tournament

Please see Board Bulletin article on Page 4

Below: Cultural Resources Manager Stephanie Olsen and interns Jeremiah Kreider and Kerry Buffenmeyer.

Below: Museum Board Member Capt. Jonathan Williams (USAF, Ret.).

The Museum Board would like to thank all of its amazing volunteers!
As the year comes to a close, and on behalf of the entire Board of Directors, we sincerely thank each and every member of the museum and all who have donated to the museum, the car show, and the golf tournament. The success of the museum is completely dependent on you, and we greatly appreciate and value your membership and contributions!

We have had an exciting and busy year collecting new artifacts such as the LTC Daniel Shepp uniform collection noted on Page 3, adding new displays, improving our response to members and contributors, operating a best-yet golf tournament, and adding a car show to the annual picnic. Again, none of this would be possible without your continuing support. We encourage you to come see our new displays and enjoy a museum tour at your leisure with Mr. Charlie Oellig. The museum at Fort Indiantown Gap proudly showcases the valiant service of Pennsylvania National Guardsmen. It is open to the public Mondays and Fridays or by prior appointment and has no admission fee.

The Pennsylvania National Guard Military Museum was honored to host its 10th Annual Major General Frank H. Smoker, Jr., Foxhole Invitational Golf Tournament on September 8, 2018, at Blue Mountain Golf Course in Fredericksburg, PA.

For the second year, Mike and Jamie Saphore, owners of the Fredericksburg Eagle Hotel, hosted the tournament. This was our most successful year to date, with an impressive $11,300 raised!
UPCOMING 2019 MUSEUM EVENTS

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TOUR GROUPS
by Mr. Charles B. Oellig

PNGMM Annual Picnic and Car Show
(108 people)

Green Ride Retirement Community of Newville, PA
(20 people)

WOCS Class 18-001
(21 candidates & staff)

Pine Grove Senior Citizens Group
(20 people)

Hope Spring Farm
(6 people)

Model T Antique Auto Club
(23 people)

335th Radio Research Company, Vietnam Veterans Reunion Group
(43 people)

28th Infantry Division Association Reunion
(30 people)

95th Infantry Division Association Reunion
(75 people)

March for the Fallen (Family members)
(30 people)

Auburn Boy Scout Troop & Cub Scout Pack
(14 people)

Harrisburg Area Community College Professors
(8 people)

PA History Tour Group
(33 people)

Boy Scout Troop 35
(25 people)
The Loyalty Day Parade in Scranton, Pennsylvania, was the first appearance of the new Pennsylvania Reserve Militia (PRM), also known as the Home Guards. The photograph above is of a patriotic parade in Scranton, Lackawanna County, on April 6, 1918.

The photograph shows the entire Second Regiment of the PRM, which replaced the 28th Division. The PRM was training at Camp Hancock, Georgia, in preparation for combat in France during the Great War. Leading the parade is the band (partly shown), then the companies of the Second Regiment, including: Headquarters, Wilkes-Barre; Company A, Easton; Company B, Allentown; Company C, Scranton; Company D, Scranton & Honesdale; Company E, Pittston; Company F, Wilkes-Barre; Company G, Plymouth and Nanticoke; Company H, Williamsport; Company I, Harrisburg; Company K, Lock Haven; Company L, Pottsville and Tamaqua; and Company M, Pine Grove and Lebanon. Patriotic military parades are far less frequent today than they were in the past.

Photo courtesy of Museum Collection

This is the 53rd in a series of historical photographs of Pennsylvania National Guardsmen of the past, submitted by Mr. Charles B. Oellig, curator of the Pennsylvania National Guard Military Museum at Fort Indiantown Gap. For more information about artifacts, hours or appointments, please call 717-861-2402.
WORLD WAR I
SOLDIER OF THE QUARTER
LTC JAMES A. SHANNON


“Perhaps at no other time during the Meuse-Argonne offensive did the fighting become more spectacular than about Hill 244. Here soldiers climbed up the almost insurmountable cliff in order to make secure the possession of the slope and crest of that strongly held German position. Owing to German resistance on Hills 244 and 223 these were not taken and the positions were not consolidated until 8:30 A.M. Wire that had remained untouched by the heavy artillery fire from the American guns had to be cut on Hill 244, and this was done only through heavy losses. In the attack on Hill 244, Lieutenant Colonel James A. Shannon received a wound from which he died the same day. The command of the 112th Infantry then passed to Major Smathers, who was the following day evacuated. The command then went to Captain John F. Graff, Jr., who acquitted himself exceptionally well in this position.

General Nolan, in command of the 55th Infantry Brigade at this time, in his operations report, made the following reference to Colonel Shannon...: ‘Lieutenant Colonel James A. Shannon was assigned to the command of the 109th Regiment on the 30th of September and remained in command of this regiment until the morning of October 3, when he was assigned to the command of the 112th Regiment of the 56th Brigade, being relieved by Colonel Prescott. While in command of the 109th Regiment, and later in command of the 112th Regiment, attached to the Brigade for the attack on Hill 244, he displayed extraordinary qualities of leadership. Calm and resourceful in action, he was an inspiration to his officers and men. In his death the Army has lost one of its best young officers.’”

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive took place from 26 September to 11 November 1918 and was considered the greatest American battle of WWI.

THE ARMISTICE


“With the rest of the 28th Division the 112th then proceeded to the Thiaucourt sector. There was now a general feeling that the war was about to end and a spirit of elation was abroad. The vigorous patrols in the Bois de Dampvitoux, in which detachments and companies from all battalions of the Regiment at one time or another participated during this period, resulted in securing valuable enemy information on strength, morale, and front-line conditions. These patrols also resulted in the capture of three German officers, and two hundred and sixty men.

While preparations were being made for what was considered to be the final battle of the war, an attack upon the city of Metz, the Regiment received what proved to be the last battle order of the World War. This contained the plan of attack upon the enemy’s line in which the 28th Division was to play a large role. The order had scarcely arrived when a telephone call was received directing the attack to be held up until further orders. After hours of waiting, at 8:25 A.M. on November 11, word was received that the Armistice had been signed and that all hostilities would end at 11 A.M. on that day.

Although the command to attack had been annulled, there was no prohibition of artillery fire, and the next three hours were filled with a terrific bombardment from both sides. Fortunately, not a man of the 112th was killed or wounded during this fire. Of this artillery fire, Colonel Rickards said a few days later: ‘I think the most terrible gunfire that I had witnessed was that last three hours of the war. I estimate that in the area occupied by the 111th Infantry about three thousand shells fell, and most remarkable to state, not a casualty from one of them. This seems almost impossible, yet it is a fact. The last gun that I heard fired from our side was just three seconds to eleven o’clock. The last shell that I heard coming from the enemy was a six inch one that fell within seventy-five yards of my P.C. but fortunately it was a dud. This was at eleven o’clock.’”
HOW TO DONATE
www.pngmilitarymuseum.org
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HOWS
Hours are 10:00-4:30 Mondays & Fridays
Special Events by Appointment
Closed on Major Holidays

For more information, please contact:

Mr. Charles B. Oellig
Museum Curator
717-861-2402

SGT Damian J. M. Smith
Command Historian
717-861-2464

Ms. Stephanie L. Olsen
Cultural Resources Manager
717-861-6793

Email: RA-MVPNG-Museum@pa.gov