Pennsylvania National Guard
Military Museum

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Curator Co-Authors Book

Museum Curator Charles Oellig, an expert concerning Marksmanship medals, has co-authored an authoritative book entitled Marksmanship Awards of the National Guard of Pennsylvania, 1878-1921. Together with Peter J. Eisert, and sponsored by the Orders and Medals Society of America, this fully indexed, comprehensive 190-page book covers the history and the origins of the marksmanship awards, details of the competitions, and statistics of marksmanship matches for the Pennsylvania National Guard over a 43 year period. Included are photographs of medals, badges, trophies, and soldier competitors and teams. There are also photographs of the ranges at Mt. Gretna, the National Guard training camp from 1885 until the mid-1930’s when the Guard moved to its present site at Fort Indiantown Gap. Collectors of marksmanship medals, awards, and history will find this book to be an excellent historical reference because of its extensive details. Copies are on sale at the Museum for $45.

Newsletter Staff

Ms. Rita Meneses, Editor, Cultural Resources Manager
SGT Damian J. M. Smith, Articles/Photos/Layout, Command Historian

Membership

We extend our sincere thanks to our members and "Friends of the Museum" for their dues and contributions. We are very grateful for generous extra donations, and we welcome additional participation as members, volunteers, and/or contributors.

Since the Museum is a non-profit 501 (C) (3) organization, your donations are tax-deductible. You may contribute in person or mail the enclosed application insert.

Wish List

3 Air conditioners, no less than 10,000 BTUs.

Archival Boxes

Metal bookshelves for historic books and military manuals storage.

2 Large showcases (6' or 8') for Range House

2 Flat showcases for books and patches.

Pennsylvania DUIs (unit crests) and military patches. There is great need to bring our military patch collection up to date, especially Army aviation and Air Guard squadrons and detachments - both current and past/obscure items.

HP Ink cartridges: #27 Black (C8728AN) and # 28 Color (C8728AN).

Archival shelving for video and film products.
Range House Needs Your Help!
by Museum Board President Frank H. Smoker

Renovation of the circa 1890s Range House is progressing well. However, an estimated $24,000 is needed to complete the interior with another $5,500 for display cases, counters, and tables to display artifacts once the building can be occupied.

We are appealing to our membership for substantial contributions to help complete the restoration of this historic building which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Your generous gift of $100, $500, or any amount will be greatly appreciated to help complete the restoration. We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, so your gift is deductible for income tax purposes.

In 2003, we obtained a grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to move the building next to the museum and for complete restoration of the outside. Using old photographs and plans, Restorations Unlimited of Elizabethville, PA, replaced the roof and replaced or repaired the shutters, repaired windows and exterior doors, and painted the outside.

The result was remarkable. (see picture below)

With the ravages of time, a badly leaking roof, and pigeons and other critters getting into the empty building, the interior was a mess. The walls, wooden floor, and steps had deteriorated from rain leakage and neglect.

Reservation Maintenance ran underground wiring to provide electricity for a heating/air conditioning system to provide the necessary climate-controlled environment for artifacts to be displayed.

Two small DCED grants provided a heating/air conditioning system and some interior work. However, the extent of the damage has exhausted the funds available.

We look forward to your very favorable response to our request for funds for this worthy cause and express our gratitude and thanks for your generosity.

Environmental Award

The DMVA environmental office was awarded 2nd place out of 54 States and Territories for the 2007 National Guard Bureau Environmental Security Awards Competition. The award for “Cultural Resource Management Installation” was presented at the 2008 NGB National Environmental Workshop in Orlando in May and recognized the installation for Cultural Resources Management of buildings, sites, and artifacts and for cost savings through the use of grants, interns, and retired military and museum staff. Shown above right is Rita Menezes, Cultural Resources Manager, and John Franke, Environmental Program Manager, accepting the award from COL Jeffrey G. Phillips, NGB Environmental Program Manager, and Ms. Barbara A. Sisson, Director, Installation Services, Office of the Chief of Staff for Installation Management, US Army.

Command Historian Hosts 4th of July Party in Afghanistan

SGT Damian Smith, our newsletter writer, Board Member, and Command Historian, took time and effort from his busy schedule in Afghanistan to put together a picnic to celebrate the 4th of July. He is shown above waiting for attendees. Unfortunately, no one from the museum was able to attend. We miss you Damian and hope you get home soon.
29th PA Civil War Flag Recovered
By Sgt Damian J. M. Smith

Throughout Pennsylvania's history, men and women have answered the call to arms. During the Civil War, more than 300,000 Pennsylvania soldiers served in 215 Infantry Regiments with an additional 30+ other independent companies and battalions, 5 Artillery Regiments with an additional 37 batteries and battalions, 54 Cavalry units, and 1 Engineer company. Many Pennsylvanians also served in the Navy due to the large naval port of Philadelphia.

The PA Legislature met in a special session to provide for the defense of the Commonwealth as well as to answer the call for troops from President Lincoln. Governor Andrew C. Curtin was authorized to procure battle flags for each regiment that PA provided the Federal Army. However, most regiments carried several flags issued by either the state or federal government. Capturing an enemy flag in battle was a great honor. While the prize might well be the flag, flag bearers often paid a deadly price. Flags were a focal point for regimental commanders to rally their men in battle and, at the same time, a target by enemy artillery and sharpshooters. Often, only scraps remained from the flags after being torn away by bullets and shrapnel.

First known as the Jackson Regiment, the 29th PA Volunteer Infantry Regiment was designated the Twenty-ninth of the Line. The regiment spent the year after its muster chasing Major General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley fighting in skirmishes as well as full-scale engagements at Winchester, Cedar Mountain, and Antietam.

While stationed at Aquia Creek, a beautiful blue infantry flag prepared by the Ladies of Philadelphia, was presented to the regiment. This is the flag that was recovered from the 107th Field Artillery located at Oil City Armory.

At the Battle of Gettysburg, the regiment fought at Culp's Hill on July 2. From there, they were detached from the Army of the Potomac and ordered to reinforce Major General Rosecrans at Chickamauga. Here the unit would receive its fame.

As the 29th Regiment moved up the side of Lookout Mountain and the deep ravines impeded by huge rocks, increased fighting occurred. The Second Brigade including the Regiment pressed forward on the right flank towards the top of the mountain. The Third Brigade attacked the enemy's breastworks outflanking them. As the Regiment planted the colors of the 29th on the highest attainable mountain point and the flag was unfurled, a cheer was sent up from the troops encamped below, awakening the echoes along all the hills, a fitting climax to the Battle Above the Clouds.

Colonel William Rickards of the 29th retained the flag. After his death, his son George Rickards had it framed and donated it to the Oil City Armory, where it remained for 92 years in the original frame mounted on the wall.

On October 10, 2007, PAARNG Command Historian Sgt Damian Smith and several members of the 107th Field Artillery from Oil City removed the flag from the armory wall, secured it in bubble wrap, and transported it to the PA National Guard Military Museum for storage. Here it will remain in a steady temperature and limited light to prevent damage to the fabric. The 107th Field Artillery is currently moving into a new readiness center and needed to have the flag removed to a safe place.

We would like to completely restore the flag to current museum standards including removal of all sacks and nails, vacuuming of the fabric, framing, matting, and the purchasing of UV filter glass. The flag will then be put on display for a limited time each year at the 107th Field Artillery as well as the Museum at Fort Indiantown Gap. The remainder of the time it will be kept in storage for preservation. Donations may be made directly to the museum designated for this restoration.

SOURCES


The Historical Society of Pennsylvania www.hsp.org www.hsp.org
Directions

From I-81, take exit 85B, Fort Indiantown Gap exit, and proceed north on Route 934. At the first red light on post, turn right onto Service Road. The museum is located at the corner of Service Road and Wiley Road, building number T-8-57. Look for the Civil War Cannon, World War II Tank, and the museum signs on the right hand side.

New Museum Website

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has been upgrading and improving the department's website for better public access. As such, the museum would like to thank IT as well as the Public Affairs Office for the help and design of the new museum website. The new address is:
http://www.milvet.state.pa.us/DMVA/1996.htm

Hours

Hours are 10:00-4:30 (Monday & Friday).
To schedule an appointment at other times, call the Museum Director, Mr. Charlie Oellig, Monday & Friday at 717-861-2402 or the Cultural Resources Manager, Rita Meneses, at 717-861-9415.

Volunteer Muster

Thank you to the volunteers who have helped with cataloging, repairs, tours, exhibits and research. The PNG Museum welcomes volunteers to ensure continued growth and success. If you have some spare time and talent to contribute, please contact us by phone at 717-861-2402 or 717-861-9415. It's the volunteers who make the museum projects come alive and ensure that the story of the Pennsylvania National Guard is told.