In this Issue: The National Guard Militia Museum of NJ

By Joe Bilby, NGMMNJ

History and Collections
The National Guard Militia Museum of NJ, founded in 1980, operates under the auspices of the state’s Division of Military and Veterans Affairs and is located at the National Guard Training Center in Sea Girt. The museum’s Lawrenceville armory annex includes displays of weapons, uniforms, military memorabilia and other equipment from different eras, as well as outdoor exhibits of armored vehicles, tanks, and artillery. The museum’s mission is to preserve and explain the military history and heritage of New Jersey and enhance public understanding of how armed conflicts and military institutions have shaped our state and national experience. To this end the museum’s collection preserves and displays which records interviews of veterans artifacts, photographs, and documents, and from WWII to the present about their memorabilia that have specific military experiences. These interviews, historical significance to the state’s numbering over 500 at present, are soldiers, particularly the Army and Air National Guard.

In each issue of NJS, we will feature a different NJ museum and one unique artifact therefrom. Shown here is a prize NGMMNJ artifact, a US Model 1857 “Napoleon” artillery piece. Read on for more information. Photo courtesy NGMMNJ.
Featured Artifact
A prize museum artifact is a US Model 1857 “Napoleon” (named after French Emperor Napoleon III) artillery piece, a type widely used in the Civil War. The cast bronze smoothbore cannon features a 4.62 inch bore and fired a 12 pound cannon ball to a range of over 1,600 yards. It was also used with exploding shells and canister shot for closer range combat.

The barrel of the gun on display in the museum’s main gallery was forged by the Ames Company of Chicopee, Massachusetts in 1861, and is one of only 36 cast with handles, a feature dropped from production early on. It was one of two mounted outside the East Orange armory for many years. When that building was sold, both barrels were brought to the museum for storage. In 2010 museum volunteers, using original 1857 plans, built an exact reproduction of the gun’s original carriage. It is the only Civil War artillery piece mounted on a carriage in any New Jersey museum.

Main Museum
National Guard Training Center
Sea Girt Avenue & Camp Drive
Sea Girt, NJ 08750
(732) 974-5966
Seven Days a Week (closed holidays)
10:00AM - 3:00PM

Lawrenceville Annex
151 Eggerts Crossing Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
(609) 530-6802
Tuesdays & Fridays
9:00AM - 3:00PM

Website:
http://www.nj.gov/military/museum/
Facebook Page: