

NJS MUSEUM AND ARTIFACT NEWS

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Summer 2015

In this Issue: The National Guard Militia Museum of NJ



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.

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 exhibits use artifacts, images, and narrative to relate the history of NJ as seen through the eyes of its military, focusing on the role and experiences of the state's "citizen soldiers," to the public. The collections include over 4,000 artifacts, photographs, and documents. The museum also houses the Center for U.S. War Veterans' Oral History Project, established in 2001, which records interviews of veterans from WWII to the present about their military experiences. These interviews, numbering over 500 at present, are available in DVD format and are

available to researchers and scholars; a number are also summarized on the museum web site.

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.

Mission

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 collection preserves and displays artifacts, documents, and memorabilia that have specific historical significance to the state's soldiers, particularly the Army and Air National Guard.

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The "Napoleon" artillery piece was named after French Emperor Napoleon III, and was widely used in the Civil War. Photo courtesy NGMMNJ. Article DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v1i1.14>

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:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Guard-Militia-Museum-of-New-Jersey/127004387321616>