

NJS Presents**Teaching NJ History****In this Issue:*****InfoAge Science and History Learning Center: A Guide for Teachers*****By Timothy O'Shea****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v2i1.39v>**

The Information Age (InfoAge) Science and History Learning Center exists at a site known for much of its history as “Camp Evans.” Located in Wall Township, NJ, this one-time satellite of the larger nearby military installation called Fort Monmouth witnessed some of the greatest military and technological feats in military history. As I walked the halls of the non-profit museum as an undergraduate student and aspiring teacher, I was astonished to learn about all of the history that occurred within the fences of the camp. Growing up no more than ten miles away, I had never heard of Camp Evans. Who knew that the Army’s radar research was consolidated there during WWII? Who knew that a radar located at the site had facilitated man’s first contact with the moon? Who knew that Joseph McCarthy had walked the steps of Camp Evans, demanding access to the top secret research facilities during the Red Scare? Who knew that the site was, in its day, famous for harnessing the brainpower of the best and the brightest, regardless of gender or race? It occurred to me as a future educator that this hidden treasure of New Jersey needed to be shared with a wider public. Inspired by an instructional packet that my professor from Monmouth University (Susan Douglass) had created to facilitate educators’ visits to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Education Center, I began devising one for use at Camp Evans. Before I knew it, I had created a lesson plan and several activities that could bring to life the WWII-era history of Camp Evans—all, importantly, tied to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies. As

any educators reading this will know, by Grade 12, NJCCCS creates the expectation that students will be able to evaluate the role of New Jersey and its citizens in World War II. The InfoAge Science and History Learning Center is the perfect place to achieve this goal.

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Brief Site History

The newly formed Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America purchased a ninety-three acre farm in New Jersey from the Woolley family at the turn of the twentieth century. Located



in Belmar, this was to be the site of their receiver equipment for commercial transatlantic radio operation. From 1913-1914, the company built the 45 room Marconi Hotel for unmarried employees

(pictured here and currently the centerpiece of InfoAge).

During WWI, the U.S. Navy took over control of American Marconi. At the war's end, U.S. industry returned to the site but by 1924 had moved on, because new transatlantic receiver stations farther north were showing great advantages. For some years, the main Marconi building served as state headquarters for the Ku Klux Klan. Then, in 1937, Reverend Percy Crawford, a protestant evangelist from Philadelphia, purchased the tract for a school which he called King's

College. He outgrew the site at nearly the same time that the U.S. Army Signal Corps (headquartered at nearby Fort Monmouth) realized that they, too, needed more building space and acreage. Accordingly, in November 1941, the Signal Corps announced the purchase of King's College, including the original American Marconi buildings and the surrounding ninety-three acres as a start. The Army planned to close its temporary Fort Hancock radar laboratory and to expand substantially in Belmar. Camp Evans and the Signal Corps Radar Laboratory were thus established as a center for radar development in WWII (note that the facility underwent several name changes over the years). The U.S. Army stayed at the site until a 1993 Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) decision ordered the closing of the Evans Area, as it was then known. With this order began the rather lengthy process of closing down the site, a process plagued by environmental remediation issues. As the site was segmented and reutilized piece by piece, the all-volunteer, non-profit InfoAge Science and History Learning Center stood up and began its tireless fight to preserve Camp Evans' history.

As this process unfolded, the Evans Area was in 1999 deemed an official project of "Save America's Treasures," a public-private partnership between the White House and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. That same year, the Evans Area was one of only 100 sites in the nation selected for the White House Millennium Project (which included only five other sites in New Jersey, including the Edison Laboratory). In the year 2000, the national not for profit organization *Landmark Volunteers* selected InfoAge as one of its 59 sites for the summer 2000 program. *Landmark Volunteers* provides "selected high school students with the opportunity to provide service to worthy organizations throughout the country." InfoAge was the only New Jersey site selected. That same year, Camp Evans was officially designated a New Jersey Historic District by the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. Portions of Camp Evans, to include the old

Marconi Hotel and several other buildings, were then placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

The exhibits at InfoAge, originally conceived to preserve the history of the military at Camp Evans, grow annually. Today at InfoAge, you can find the following: a Computer Deconstruction Lab; Electronic Warfare Exhibits; a Fallout Shelter; the Garden State Central Model Railroad Club; an Institute for Exploratory Research (IXR); a Research Library; a Military Technology Museum; the National Broadcasters Hall of Fame; the New Jersey Shipwreck Museum; the Ocean/Monmouth Amateur Radio Club; a Radio Technology Museum; and a Vintage Computer Museum. See more at <http://infoage.org/wp/infoage/exhibits/>. The staff is happy to help you select which exhibits you would like to incorporate into your trip. The lesson plan that follows in this issue of *New Jersey Studies* presumes an interest in the WWII period.

Lesson Plan

Lesson: Class Trip to Infoage / Camp Evans

Objectives:

Students will be able to (SWBAT) engage in a firsthand look at equipment from WWII including radios, weapons, radar equipment, vehicles, and beacons.

SWBAT compose a reflection of the trip and the impact New Jersey had on the country's war effort, as well as articulate how radar and other technologies helped assist in the Allied Victory of WWII.

Standards:

6.1.12.B.12.a, Explain the role that geography played in the development of military strategies and weaponry in World War II.

6.1.12.C.11.b, Relate new wartime inventions to scientific and technological advancements in the civilian world.

6.1.12.D.11.b, Evaluate the role of New Jersey (i.e., defense industries, Seabrook Farms, military installations, and Battleship New Jersey) and prominent New Jersey citizens (i.e., Albert Einstein) in World War II.

6.1.12.D.12.b, Explain why women, African-Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and other minority groups often expressed a strong sense of nationalism despite the discrimination they experienced in the military and workforce.

8.2.12.C.1, Technology across the Curriculum.

5.1.12.D.1, Science across the Curriculum.

5.1.12.D.2, Science across the Curriculum.

Procedures:

1. Load students onto the bus and depart to Camp Evans, 2201 Marconi Road, Wall NJ.
2. On the bus ride, give a brief history of Camp Evans.
 - a. Include the Marconi Period.
 - b. Explain the KKK at the site, and the fact that the building they will be entering was known as the “Imperial Hotel” when the KKK held their meetings there. They moved out in 1929 due to economic collapse and failure to pay rent.
 - c. Note the King’s College period.
 - d. Explain the purchase of the area for Fort Monmouth and how it was used from WWII up to and including the Gulf War in the 1990s.
3. Arrive at the location, take attendance.
4. Enter the Marconi Hotel facility, be sure to remind the class that the site is both a Living WWII Museum and a National Historic Site. Explain the significance of both and that proper behavior is expected.
5. Meet with and follow the appointed Guide through the Museum.
 - a. Be sure that the Guide is aware of the class’s focus on WWII technology and that the exhibits being visited are relevant.
6. Make your way into the WWII Military Exhibit.
 - a. Focus on the motorcycle in the center of the display (Fig. 1)
 - b. Next focus on the Jeep Wrangler and its legacy as a military vehicle, draw a correlation to the necessity for an all-terrain vehicle due to geography of the war (Fig 2 & 3)
 - c. Bring attention to the propaganda posters on the wall and how they pushed towards the war effort (Fig 4)

- d. Point out the picture of the officers at Camp Evans and see if they can find the female. Acknowledge that Camp Evans was a racial and gender neutral military base (Fig 5)
 - e. Finally, direct the students to the enlarged picture of the news article that showed how radar contributed to the sinking of Japanese ships. Use this as a transition to the Radar Room (Fig 6)
 - f. Before leaving, allow the students to look at the rest of the exhibit.
7. Head to the Radar Exhibition.
- a. Have the guide explain the science of the radar and the impact of all the different tubes used in its creation. (We are history teachers, not science teachers, leave some areas for the experts.)
 - b. Reinforce the fact that these items were created right there at Camp Evans and in New Jersey. It happened in their backyards! (Fig 7 & 8)
 - c. Bring attention to the necessary design of this equipment, having to work in all conditions and under all geographic variables! (Fig 9)
 - d. Have the Guide share the story of how the tubes were sent out and received the day before Pearl Harbor, and how the scientists at Camp Evans were scared that their radar had not worked upon attack.
 - e. Seek out the beacon and have the Guide share the importance and history of the beacon, and its impact in both the Battle of the Bulge and D-Day. Again, reinforce that this was invented in New Jersey! (Fig 10)
 - f. Allow the students to ask questions and view the remainder of the room.
8. Head over to the Radio Museum where students can view the radios of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Review the impact of FDR's Fireside Chats.
9. Let the students roam around the large display of antique radios, and even let them play with the Morse Code receiver.
10. Leave and head down to the Military Vehicles exhibition.
- a. Give a brief lesson and review on the huge importance of all-terrain vehicles and let the students point out vehicles which would be suitable in certain terrain.
 - b. Allow the students to roam around and view the weapons, clothing, and other equipment used by soldiers at war.
11. If time allows, take a tour of the Space Race exhibits for a preview into the Cold War, the next unit after WWII.
- a. Camp Evans was home to radio transmissions to space, hurricane tracking, observations of Sputnik, and satellite imagery.

Assessment: Student Preparation and Activity Sheets

InfoAge has created a teacher's guide with a number of activities and work sheets to ensure pre-visit preparedness, to facilitate structured investigations of the exhibits, and to assess comprehension, post-visit. A variety of investigative activities and critical thinking materials are included in this guide, which encourages users to establish connections between the war overseas and the contributions made at home. The activities link together all the major events of World War II, ending with the introduction of the race to space during the Cold War. All activities have been correlated to fit the standard State of New Jersey lesson plan format. For this expanded teacher's guide to InfoAge, including detailed exhibit descriptions, artifact photos, activities, and worksheets, please see: [http://infoage.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Teacher Guide to InfoAge Science and History-Center.pdf](http://infoage.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Teacher_Guide_to_InfoAge_Science_and_History-Center.pdf) .

For more information on the history of the site, see also the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command Historical Office website at <http://cecom.army.mil/historian/index.php>, to include the Camp Evans timeline at http://cecom.army.mil/historian/pubupdates/EVANSAREA_032205.doc . Also of interest will be Robert Giordano, editor, *Camp Evans: The Untold Story* (RFG Incorporated, 2010); and Wendy Rejan, editor, *A History of Army Communications and Electronics at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey* (Government Printing Office, 2008).

For more NJ History Lesson Plans, see: http://www.njdigitalhighway.org/modules_lesson_plans_educ.php