



Photo courtesy: The Armed Forces Heritage Museum

The Armed Forces Heritage Museum Comes to Burlington, New Jersey

Military History Lives Here!

AFHM is an all-volunteer non-profit organization whose mission is to, "Preserve, Honor, and Educate the public on the history of the military in New Jersey and the neighboring regions".

The Armed Forces Heritage Museum recently opened its headquarters location at the Captain James Lawrence House, 459 High Street, Burlington, NJ. It is on the campus of the Burlington County Historical Society. The house is owned by the State of New Jersey. It was the family home of Captain James Lawrence, a heroic Naval officer during the War of 1812 known for his famous battle cry, "Don't Give Up the Ship!" AFHM Executive Director Roy Plummer provided the leadership for the renovation and transition to a military museum that features historical exhibits dating from the Revolutionary War through WWII. Future exhibits will be forthcoming that will focus on subsequent conflicts and key military history events designed to engage the public's interest.

(Visit www.afhmus.org for details and news.)

How did AFHM start and what is it about?

AFHM was formed in May 2010 with an initial vision to build a fixed brick and mortar museum at the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst that would have unrestricted public access. The plan was later halted when site plan reviews at the Pentagon level reached an impasse.

In a subsequent decision to "bring the museum to the people" AFHM transitioned to a 32 ft. mobile unit that travels to schools and community events in the region. The mobile unit chronicles our nation's military history over the past 100, from the building of Camp Dix in WWI to present day operations at the Joint Base. Another display panel features examples of modern day military technology. Compelling video oral history excerpts from AFHM veteran interviews are included as well.

Lawrence House Transition

The Lawrence House evolved from the desire to establish a fixed headquarters and museum experience in the Burlington County region. The opportunity to do so came about through a partnership with the Burlington County Historical Society in Burlington city where AFHM had conducted several of their Living History veteran presentations. This working relationship led to the availability of the Lawrence House where the Society has been the caretaker for the State-owned property.

The Lawrence House has been transformed into a venue that features permanent and rotating exhibits on military history and New Jersey's contributions to its success. In addition, AFHM plans include a unique military history "Immersive Experience Room" that will allow visitors to have an interactive, audio/visual journey into an aspect of our nation's rich military history.

It is also hoped to develop an Interview Room to record military members/veterans' personal experiences and military accomplishments.

Benefits to AFHM and Burlington County Historical Society Partnership

This partnership offers the use of the house to the AFHM with the goal of enhancing and expanding both organization's missions and programs. The relationship is designed to bring an innovative experience to the campus in downtown Burlington that includes: The James Fenimore Cooper House (renowned author), the Bard-How House (Colonial "please touch" children's playhouse) , The Delia Biddle Pugh Research Library, and the Corson-Poley Center, home to the Society's newest venture, the Children's History Center. (For more details, visit www.burlingtoncountyhistoricalociety.org.)

Why is the Lawrence House a good site for the museum?

Captain Lawrence spent his youth in Burlington City and later became a naval war hero who served during the War of 1812. He commanded the frigate Chesapeake, and during a heated battle in which he was mortally wounded, rallied his crew by saying, "Don't Give up The Ship!" This is now the motto of the U.S. Navy and the City of Burlington, NJ. Flags honoring Lawrence's words can be found throughout Burlington city and on the scenic City waterfront.

What are your future plans for the AFHM?

The immediate and near-term focus will be on promoting the Lawrence House Museum venue to the public, both locally and regionally. The objective is to develop engaging and interactive exhibits and programs for the public's enjoyment and education. This will be augmented by the continued use of the museum's mobile unit.

When is the Museum open, and what are the fees to visit?

How can people visit (book a tour, walk in, on-line)?

Currently the Lawrence House is open on weekends from 11am to 4pm. It is staffed by volunteer docents. No fee is charged at this time, but donations to AFHM's all-volunteer non-profit organization are greatly appreciated. Tours can also



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be arranged by appointment through our Executive Director Roy Plummer via an email request at:

roy.plummer@afhmus.org.

How can the public and supporters contribute?

Donations are always welcomed, both at the Lawrence House site and through our website at: **www.afhmus.org**. Additionally, AFHM is continually looking for sponsors for museum mission projects where we acknowledge such support formally by posting their name or business entity with the exhibit. It is also posted on our Facebook page and website. Such sponsorships begin at the \$1000 contribution level and above. Further information regarding them can be obtained by contacting Executive Director Roy Plummer at:

roy.plummer@afhmus.org.

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