

Fort Miles inaugurates art gallery

Gala raises funds for historic new feature

By Ann Sagi Ward, Special to the Cape Gazette | May 21, 2016

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Photo by: Deny Howeth

The art gallery is experienced by attendees.

The Fort Miles art gallery debuted May 14, showcasing the work of Howard Schroeder, Mary Marshall and Abraxas Hudson, in its home inside underground Battery 519 in Cape Henlopen State Park.

Two hundred guests attended the fundraising gala in the World War II bunker, mingling in rooms once used to store ammunition for the fort's big guns that defended Delaware's coast against enemy surface ships.

Wray added that Hudson will co-chair an art committee at Fort Miles.

"It's a big honor to be part of a capable team," Hudson said. "I consider this to be step one of an art presence at Fort Miles, to showcase the talent of local artists and bring awareness of the gem we have here."

Wray described the gallery's collection, including three large Schroeder murals; a portrait of Gen. Nelson Appleton Miles by Mary Marshall; and works by Hudson.

Schroeder's son John told the audience that his father, born in 1910 in Brooklyn, N.Y., was an artist and model before "he got his card from Uncle Sam" and began his career at Fort Miles in 1941. Howard Schroeder's responsibilities at Fort Miles were putting mines in Delaware Bay and painting art for soldiers' dayrooms.

The elder Schroeder's work depicting fellow soldiers planting mines in the bay was featured in LIFE magazine, then exhibited at the National Gallery of Art.

After the war, Howard Schroeder and his wife, Marian, stayed in Lewes, raising a family of six and guiding the fledgling Rehoboth Art League. Howard Schroeder taught at St. Andrew's School and "gave art lessons anywhere and everywhere in the state," John Schroeder said.

Howard Schroeder and his work were featured in a CBS News report by Charles Kuralt about four years before the artist died in 1995.

John Schroeder used oversized ceremonial scissors to cut the red ribbon to open the gallery, then led siblings Rob Schroeder, Carole Schroeder Short and other family members into the new gallery to see their father's work.

A glass display case contained Howard Schroeder sketch books, black-and-white photos of the artist at work and on his wedding day, and well-worn brushes and paint tubes.

His work, including a painting of two soldiers with a spotting scope in one of the fort's towers, hangs on carpet-covered wooden frames attached to vertical expansion poles.

Wray said volunteers who converted the storeroom into the gallery were not allowed to drill holes in the walls because that could jeopardize the fort's historic status. He thanked members of the Bunker Busters, a group of FMHA volunteers, for their work on the gallery, and their leader, FMHA board member John Roberts.

Wray praised the partnership between FMHA and Delaware State Parks, saying the continuing restoration of the fort is the product of a coordinated effort and thousands of volunteer hours donated by a dedicated group. The fundraising sale, sponsored by Tough

"We hope that you will tell your family and friends about us," he said. "Spread the word about this jewel we have at Fort Miles."

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Abraxas Hudson, John Schroeder, Carole Schroeder Short and Rob Schroeder prepare to cut the ribbon. (Photo by: Deny Howeth)



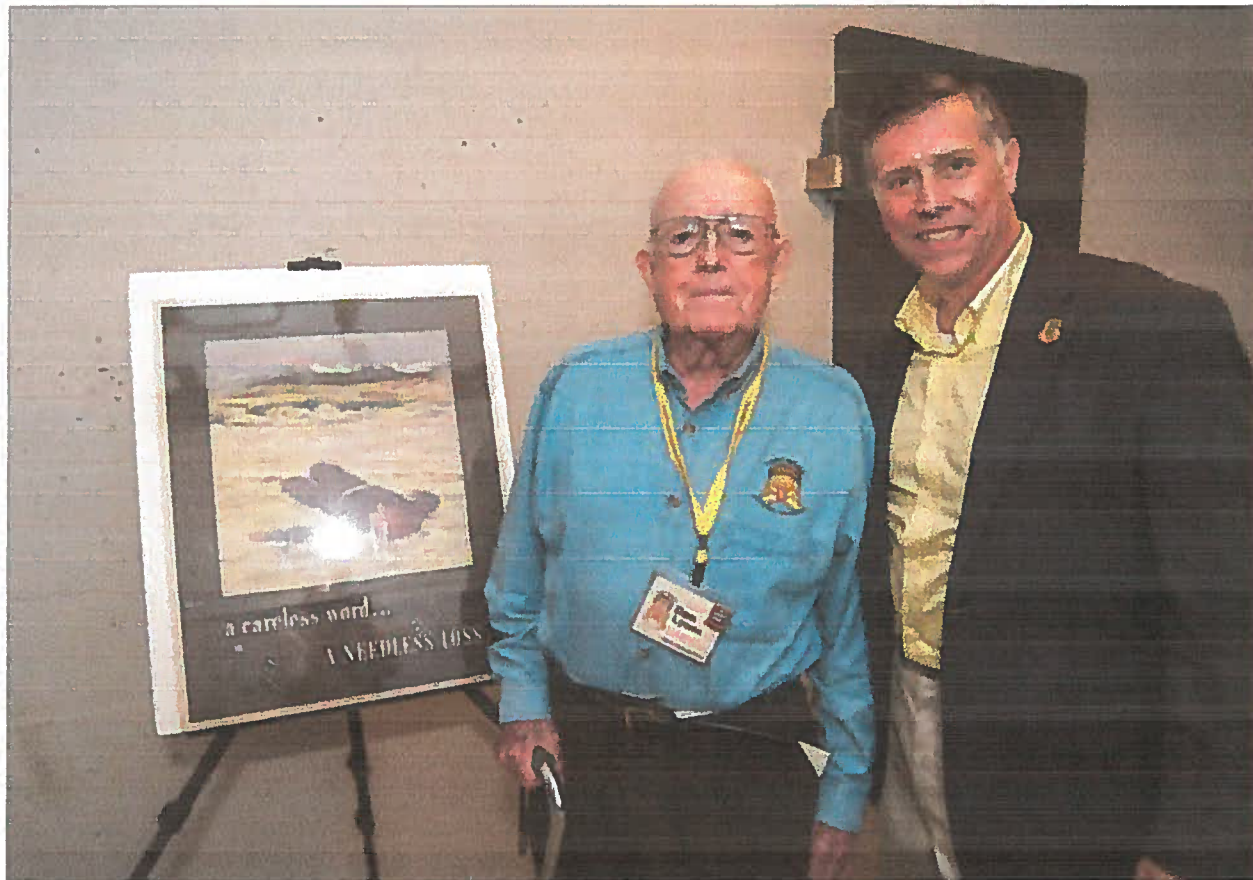
Fort Miles Battery 519 museum was open for everyone to enjoy. (Photo by: Deny Howeth)





John Schroeder, left, Carole Schroeder Short and Rob Schroeder stand in front of one of their father's paintings at the Fort Miles art gallery. *(Photo by: Deny Howeth)*





Fort Miles Historic Association's Dan Lyons and Rep. Steve Smyk, R-Milton/Lewes, talk about WWII history. (Photo by: Deny Howeth)





The Fort Miles art gallery showcases the work of Howard Schroeder, Mary Marshall and Abraxas Hudson, in its home inside underground Battery 519 in Cape Henlopen State Park. *(Photo by: George M. Ward/FMHA)*





Rob Schroeder poses with family members. (Photo by: Deny Howeth)

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