



COUNCIL ON AMERICA'S MILITARY PAST - U.S.A.

PRESERVING, INTERPRETING AND SHARING OUR MILITARY HERITAGE

presents

The Persistent Pandemic Preservationist

January 2021

Editor's Note: *This is Number 1, Volume II of a monthly newsletter featuring historic sites across the country responding to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The intent is to stay in touch with old and new members, and to share information that is interesting and useful, perhaps to build a community of practice. Each issue will focus on one or more sites. The original Persistent Preservationist was a newsletter produced by esteemed long-time CAMP member Col. Hal Youmans, USA (Ret).*

This issue is a little bit of a departure from the norm in that we focus more on activities than places — what can the history-minded individual do during the Pandemic? Two groups in the DC area have great answers. History-themed board games are one way to keep yourself occupied during the Pandemic. We feature a virtual interview with the founder of Fort Circle Games and a review by my colleague JAMP editor Vincent Rospond, an experienced gamer, of the company's most recent product. I note that upcoming games feature places worth preserving and visiting, including Ft. Chapultepec in Mexico City, a cover story for JAMP some 20 years ago.

The National Cryptologic Museum, a short drive away from DC, is our other feature. The staff of this museum is doing everything it can to stay connected with its visitorship in many imaginative ways. I myself am a grateful user of their library's on-line resources, which enable researchers to keep working despite the Pandemic.

Last but hardly least we include a call for papers for our Journal, another thing you can do during the Pandemic.

So don't forget to write — if you have an article in the hopper or just want to send me feedback or ideas for this newsletter!

Happy New Year! — Nick Reynolds, history-maker@comcast.net.

Fort Circle Games

I. Interview with Founder Kevin Bertram:

NR: How did you pick the title for your company?

KB: We needed a name that was geographic in nature and paid homage to the District of Columbia. Initially I wanted something to do with Rock Creek, but almost every conceivable domain name was taken. Then my sister-in-law got on the case, discovered that Fort Circle was the name of the Civil War fortifications that surrounded the city, and *boom* we had a company name.

NR: How did you get into gaming?

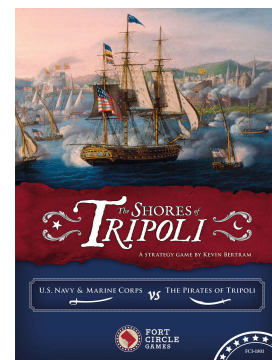
KB: I started playing board games when I was about six – but my father wasn't the kind of guy to play *Candyland*. Instead, we started with *Feudal* and then moved on to chess and *Risk*. When I was twelve, [the World War II strategy game] *Axis & Allies* opened up a new vista.... From fifth grade on, I was designing computer games on my TI-99/4A and then my Apple II.... For a high school project I designed a board game that used a computer program to determine the combat results and track the units' strength and morale. As an adult, I played a lot of board games but I didn't give much thought to designing them. Then in 2016, I read a book on the first Barbary War and was shocked there was not a game on the subject – so I did my research and put together a first design. And now, after four years, the game is available!

NR: How do you go about developing a game?

KB: I start with the topic. When I find an era, a battle, or a historical event that interests me I do a bunch of reading on the subject from different perspectives. Then I think about what game mechanics fit the goals of the protagonists in the game. I prefer to work with another designer who is interested in the topic ... and bounce ideas around with them, and then put together a first prototype of the game. I have some great graphic designers, there's usually a lot of back and forth there while we do extensive playtesting. For example, *The Shores of Tripoli* had over 300 play testers. I try to integrate all the feedback and continually refine and test the game until it is ready.

NR: What games do you see coming down the road?

KB: I am really pleased with *Votes for Women* – it covers the women's suffrage movement in the United States and the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment (1848-1920). The designer, Tory Brown, really knows her history and it was a joy to work with her on this game. We are in the final stages of play testing, so if anyone is interested, please have them contact me. [CAMP members ordering games at fortcircle.com can get a 10% discount by using the code "CAMP."] ... For *The Halls of Montezuma* (and a future game on the War of 1812, *The Dawn's Early Light*), there is a greater opportunity to visit battlefields – but that is an evolving discussion about how to make it interesting and educational and not lose too much money doing so.



Fort Circle founder Kevin Bertram and his most recent board game.

II. Game Review by JAMP Editor Vincent Rospond:

The Shores of Tripoli by Fort Circle Games was funded as a Kickstarter project and is in the midst of sending copies out, but we received a copy to review. The first thing you notice about the game is the quality of the production. The box is sturdy and well-illustrated. The components, like the

game itself, are well put together, simple, but subtle. The board has nice graphics and is sturdy. The playing pieces are wooden, not stylized or detailed, but functional. In addition to the glossy rule set, there is also a historical background guide to give context to the game. The game is played using cards that allow you to move and take actions. Dice are rolled to resolve combat. This is a two-player game, but if you want you could have a third person play the Barbary allies. The game is about the Barbary Pirates raids on shipping in the Mediterranean and the US reaction. For the US to win they have to capture Tripoli. For the Pirates to win they have to collect enough tribute or US ships. It is tougher for the US to win, but it is fun and most games can be played in about an hour. *Tripoli* is a simple, yet nuanced game with many layers and opportunities which means the games don't play the same each time. The rules are concise, but I had trouble with some areas. Luckily, if you go to youtube, there are several videos on how to play that clear up the gray areas. This a fun game, worth the price and a lesson in history.

COVID Brings New Birth to the National Cryptologic Museum

By Louis J. Leto, Public Affairs Officer, NCM

The COVID virus continues to be our greatest enigma at the National Cryptologic Museum (NCM). And as most museums and institutions did, the NCM closed its doors in March when the pandemic took hold. But, when our doors closed, our virtual windows opened. As the only completely public museum in our nation's Intelligence Community, the staff realized its obligation to museum patrons. The NCM would remain engaged with its followers. And so it has.

The NCM also acquired more staff during COVID: a new chief, Sally Lockley, and a new director, Dr. Vince Houghton, who came to the museum after more than six years at the International Spy Museum. "People ask me why I left the Spy Museum to come to the National Cryptologic Museum," Houghton laughs. "I came here because of its enormous potential. While amazing stories and artifacts are already being told here through tours and programs, this museum has the potential to go miles further in how it tells the story of cryptologic history."

As the staff began developing and transforming material for virtual delivery, weekly Boredom Busters appeared on the NCM Facebook page. Using various ciphers suitable for virtually any age, we challenged page visitors to work with their families to discover the plain text. Hopefully, these puzzles would help relieve their boredom and encourage them to look forward to the next puzzle.

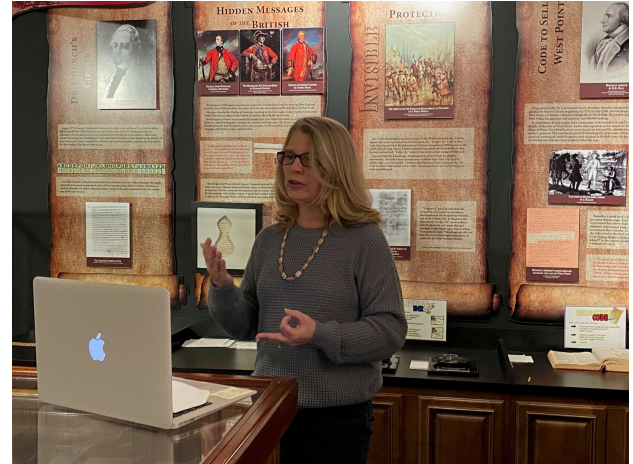
Meanwhile, as the puzzles kept coming, so did the virtual programming. Visitors to the NCM's web page and Facebook page see a host of new virtual programs. Events coordinator Catie Hoffman created live and recorded events on Facebook and other virtual meeting platforms starting with "Artifact Spotlights" featuring the NCM's registrar showing off rarely seen artifacts. Next, younger viewers enjoyed "Crypto Story Time," where children watched and listened to live readings of children's books chosen from the museum library's collection. The list of events grew to "Library Spotlights" featuring rare books; trivia nights; cipher workshops, presentations and lectures on various cryptologic topics; movie screenings followed by a "Reel-to-Real" discussion with NSA's historian Dr. Dave Hatch; and Escape Room challenges. One of the more popular lectures offered was "The Ciphers of the Zodiac Killer" with guest speaker David Oranchak.

Let's not forget tours. Tours were the NCM's biggest concern. Tens of thousands of people came to the NCM every year for tours. When the museum closed, the curator asked docents, mostly retired NSA employees who bring a unique perspective to the subject matter, if they were willing to do live, virtual tours. Many, not all, said they would, and they have.

What else has the NCM done for its patrons in the days of COVID? The museum's librarian, Rob Simpson, has worked assiduously to replace an old, stagnant, library catalog with the new Museum Collection Database that allows visitors anywhere to research NCM's entire collection

of articles, books, documents, and photos thorough a variety of search techniques (5099.sydney-plus.com/final/Portal/Default.aspx?lang=en.US).

We also continued to obtain new exhibits, such as a model of the Abbottabad Complex where Osama bin Laden was killed in May 2011. When the NCM's doors finally reopen, visitors will see new displays and artifacts and older displays repackaged and moved to different locations. Meanwhile, here are some activities you can do at the NCM right now: www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic-heritage/museum/ and Facebook.com/NationalCryptologicMuseum.



The most popular exhibit at the NCM and virtual learning: Before the pandemic, visitors could actually encrypt and decrypt their own messages on two authentic World War II German enigma machines. During the pandemic, visitors can still see exhibits and learn, as demonstrated by NCM Education Coordinator Jennifer Wilcox giving a virtual talk on cryptography during the Revolutionary War to a school group. (Photos courtesy NCM.)



Happy New Year!!! Show us your papers!!!

CAMP looking for a few good authors for our Journal! The ideal paper will be related to America's military past at the intersection of military history and historic preservation, and might feature old posts (forts, ships and airplanes), battles or battlefields, biographies, units, or equipment. Papers should conform to the Chicago Manual of Style, include footnotes, and be between five and ten thousand words long. Please go to <http://campjamp.org/publications> or email the editor at editorjamp@gmail.com with questions or submissions.

Founded in 1966 as the Council on Abandoned Military Posts, its name was changed in 1981. CAMP is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization whose members are interested in the identification, restoration, preservation and memorialization of old military installations and their history and traditions. All persons sharing these interests are invited to join. CAMP publishes an academic journal (The Journal of America's Military Past) and a newsletter on recent developments in historic preservation (Headquarters Heliogram), and holds an annual conference. Find out more at: www.campjamp.org.