



The Banner

Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum

SUMMER, 2005

VOL. XIX, NO. 3



"Great Joy in camp we are in view of the Ocian, this great Pacific Ocian which we have been so anxious to See. And the roeing or noise made by the waves brakeing on the rocky Shores may be heard distinctly." William Clark, November 7, 1805.

**The Friends of the Fort Lewis Military
Museum**

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The *Banner* is printed four times a year and is mailed to all members of The Friends of the Fort Lewis Museum. Articles may be submitted to the Editor or left with the Curator of the Fort Lewis Museum. The Friends assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or other materials submitted for publication.
Editor.....Alan Archambault

President's Report

The lead article in this issue of *The Banner* is a tribute to BG(R) Vasco J. Fenili, beloved President Emeritus of *The Friends* who passed away on 6 May 2005. Clearly, here was a man whose life was marked by service – to his country, his community, to causes he believed in. His personal belief in the importance of the Museum to Fort Lewis and to the community was carried out through service as president of *The Friends* for 16 years. The Museum and *The Friends* owe “Flip” Fenili an undying debt of gratitude. May he rest in peace.

Summer is normally the most active time of the year for the Museum and *The Cannon Shop*. This summer has been especially so. The Museum is busy with visitors, and business at *The Cannon Shop* is as good as we have ever experienced. Several events involving *The Friends* are also scheduled in the summer and early fall, which I will briefly highlight below. Details on each event are available elsewhere in this issue.

The nation and Fort Lewis continue to mark the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark “Voyage of Discovery.” The larger-than-life statue of Meriwether Lewis is complete and will be dedicated at a ceremony



Retreat at Camp Lewis in 1918.

on 30 September 2005. This is a major event for Fort Lewis, named after this great American soldier and hero. The *Friends* have played a major role in bringing this project to completion and we hope you can plan to attend.

Join us on 15 September 2005, when *The Friends* will sponsor a golf tournament at the Fort Lewis golf course to help raise funds for a statue of Sergeant John Ordway, the senior enlisted member of the Corps of Discovery. This statue will be a fitting complement to that of Captain Lewis. If you are a golfer, this event is for you! If you do not golf but would like to assist with the tournament, please call Carroll Dickson (253-566-5870) or me (360-866-7952).

We will hold our fall general membership meeting on 18 September 2005 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. David Markham, members of *The Friends*. David is well known as an expert on Napoleon and his home is a veritable museum of Napoleonic history. The meeting will start at 2 p.m. and will include the opportunity to tour the Markhams’ home. Refreshments will be served. Mark your calendars for a great afternoon!

A final event of interest will be occurring at the Museum on 10 September 2005 at 1400 hours. A contingent from the Canadian Korean War Veterans Association will present the Museum with some bronze plaques commemorating the Canadian Special Service Force that trained at Fort Lewis before deployment to Korea. The plaques will eventually be mounted on a memorial to be erected on Fort Lewis in a more formal ceremony. If you would like to meet and greet the Canadian Veterans, you are welcome to join in the program and honor our veterans and friends to the North.

Please plan to join us at any or all of the above events as your schedule permits. In the meantime, let’s continue to enjoy this beautiful Northwest summer.

Ian Larson

Curator's Report

I will make this report short, as you can see from this issue of the *Banner* we have many projects underway!

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the late BG Vasco “Flip” Fenili and his wonderful wife, Louise. They befriended my family and I when we moved to Fort Lewis in 1987. Over the years Flip and Louise could always be depended on to serve as a source of inspiration and support to me, and the museum, through many interesting times. In so many ways, they were true *Friends of the Fort Lewis Museum*. I will miss Flip, but I can truly state that his was “a life well spent.”

Alan Archambault

A Tribute to Brigadier General Vasco J. Fenili



Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum President Emeritus, Vasco J. Fenili, was a man who served his country, his friends, the Army and his family with integrity and good will.

Vasco, or "Flip" as he was known to his many friends, was born in Joliet, Illinois, on 12 February 1918. He was the youngest of four children born to Alfred and Della Fenili. The family later moved to New Jersey where Flip attended school. In June 1940, Flip received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Muhlenberg College. He then decided to attend the Military Academy at West Point where he excelled at sports, serving as the captain of the football and track teams. Flip graduated in January 1943 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the cavalry. His academy class was the last one to offer commissions in this colorful branch of service.

During World War II, Flip served with the 605th Tank Destroyer Battalion. He participated in the Central Europe and Rhineland Campaigns. During the Occupation of Germany, he served as an intelligence staff officer in the G-2 sections of the

3rd and 7th Armies and the U. S. Constabulary.

As an Army officer, Flip attended a number of schools to hone his military skills. He completed the Tank Destroyer School Basic Course, the Cavalry School officers Advanced Course, the Armor School Regular Army Officers Advanced Course, the Marine Corps School Senior Course, and the Army War College. In June 1953, Flip earned a Masters of Public Administration from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

During his distinguished career, Flip served on the faculty at the Armor School, Fort Knox, KY, and the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS. His military assignments included, Commanding officer, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, 1st Cavalry Division, Korea, Commanding officer, 1st Brigade 3rd Armored Division, Assistant Division Commander, 4th Armored Division, Germany, and Chief, National Security Agency/Central Security Service Office, Europe.

Flip had five tours of duty at the Pentagon in the Department of the Army and the Office of the Army chief of Staff. Among his awards and decorations are the Legion of Merit (1965 and 1968; two oak leaf clusters), the Army Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, World War II Victory medal, American Campaign Medal, Europe, Africa, Middle East Campaign Medal, Army Occupation Medal, National Defense Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, General Staff Identification Badge, and the Army General Staff Certificate. While a student at the Armor School, Flip served as a technical advisor to and made a cameo appearance in the motion picture, "The Tanks Are Coming." He was promoted to Brigadier General on 1 July 1967 and retired from the Army on 28 February 1973.

After retirement, Flip and his wife Louise moved to Lakewood, Washington. He led a busy and full life, becoming a Master Gardener, raising prize winning primroses, played a lot of golf, worked for the passage of levies for the Lakewood Fire Department, and served as President of the Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum. On 3 June 2001, the Friends named Brigadier General Fenili "President Emeritus" of the organization and dedicated the Museum's Hall of Valor in his honor. Flip passed away, at home, on 6 May 2005.

Flip is survived by his wife of 62 years, Louise; their children, Mary Lou (partner, Karen) and John (wife, Marianne) and granddaughters Erica and Becca.

Brigadier General Fenili was interred in the Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent, Washington. On 23 May, "A Celebration of Flip's Life" was held at the Weatherly Inn, in Tacoma. It was a wonderful time for his many friends to honor his memory. The family generously referred donations in General Fenili's memory to the Friends fund to support the Museum and its programs.





This watercolor painting depicts Captain Meriwether Lewis confronting the charging brown bear with his espartoon. Lewis cradles his empty flintlock rifle, careful to keep its delicate mechanism out of the water. Lewis is dressed in rough frontier hunting garb, saving his colorful military uniform for more formal occasions.

Captain Meriwether Lewis and the Bear

June 14, 1805

It is well known that Captain Meriwether Lewis was an avid outdoorsman and hunter. During the Expedition of Discovery he often went off to hunt by himself or with his Newfoundland Dog, Seaman.

The encounter with a bear, which he describes so vividly in his journal, indicates that he did not take his beloved dog on this hunting trip, perhaps because Seaman would scare off game. At any rate, the story illustrates the dangers of hunting big game with a single shot, muzzle loading, flintlock rifle, and the importance of having an edged weapon that is never empty. In this case, Lewis uses his "espontoon" to intimidate his furry attacker. The espontoon, or spontoon, was a spear-like weapon often carried by officers in the 18th and early 19th Centuries as a symbol of their rank. Lewis apparently carried his espontoon throughout the journey, as it is mentioned several times in his journal. The story also reflects how cool and resourceful Captain Lewis could be under stressful situations.

I selected a fat buffaloe and shot him very well, through the lungs; while I was gazing attentively on the poor animal discharging blood in streams from his mouth and nostrils, expecting him to fall every instant, and having entirely forgotten to reload my rifle, a large brown bear, had perceived and crept on me within 20 steps before I discovered him; in the first moment I drew up my gun to shoot, but at the same instant recollected that she was not loaded and that he was too near for me to hope to perform this operation before he reached me, as he was then briskly advancing on me, it was an open level plain, not a bush within miles nor a tree within less than three hundred yards of me; the river bank was sloping and not more than three feet above the level of the water; in short there was no place by means of which I could conceal myself from this monster until I could charge my rifle; I had no sooner turned myself about but he pitched at me, open mouthed and full speed, I ran about 80 yards and found he gained on me fast, the idea struck me to get into the water to such depth that I could stand and he would be obliged to swim, and that I could defend myself with my espontoon; accordingly I ran hastily into the water about waist deep, and faced about and presented the point of my espontoon, at this instant he arrived at the edge of the water within 20 feet of me; the moment I put myself in this attitude of defense he suddenly wheeled about as if frightened, declined the combat on such unequal grounds, and retreated with quite a great precipitation as he had just before pursued me.

THE SERGEANT JOHN ORDWAY MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

**We invite you to PLAY
the Sergeant John Ordway
Memorial Golf Tournament!**

The Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum are hosting a Golf tournament to raise funds to help erect a statue of Sergeant John Ordway, the senior enlisted soldier and First Sergeant of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery. The tournament will be held on 15 September 2005, at the Fort Lewis Golf Course.

Proceeds from the tournament will support a statue of Sergeant Ordway which will honor all Noncommissioned Officers and enlisted Soldiers of the U.S. Army. The statue will stand near the Fort Lewis Main Gate next to a similar monument to Captain Meriwether Lewis.

**PLEASE JOIN US IN THIS MOST
WORTHWHILE EFFORT!**



If you wish to donate prizes for the tournament, we will acknowledge you as a provider. The tournament is best of four balls scramble shot gun start at 1 p.m. on 15 September 2005. If you desire, we can provide golfers to complete your foursome. The awards dinner follows the tournament at 6 p.m. The cost is \$75 per player. Field limited to first 144 golfers signed up. Dinner only cost \$25 each.

Question? Contact: Carroll Dickson, 253-566-5870, carrollz@prodigy.net.

Make checks payable to Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum and send to Don Simpson, Treasurer, 6615 79th St. West, Lakewood, WA 98499-8338.

Name of Golfers

Handicap if known

Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum Membership Meeting and Special Open House

Place: Home of David and Barbara Markham

Date: Sunday, 18 September 2005

Time: 1400 Hours

Beverages and hors d'oeuvres will be served
View the internationally known Napoleonic collection of Friends live member

J. David Markham

President, Napoleonic Alliance

Executive Vice-President/Editor-in-Chief, International Napoleonic Society

Noted author and frequent participant on the History Channel

David has perhaps the world's finest private collection of Napoleonic snuffboxes and a premier collection of Napoleonic engravings, numerous other Napoleonic decorative arts, and a library of some 1,000 books on the subject. David will discuss specific items and provide tours to those who are interested. Many of you will remember the presentation he gave to the Friends on Napoleon as a commander.



Special Program

Initiation of Friends Vice-President
Tom Morgan, LTC (Ret)
as a Fellow of the International
Napoleonic Society

Presentation of the Eagle of the Society
in recognition of Tom's
contribution to Napoleonic scholarship

Please don't miss this very special opportunity to see David's collection and honor one of our most active members. Please RSVP by Thursday, 15 September to COL (Ret) Paul Knoop at (253) 279 2598, Cell Phone (253) 565-7359 or by e-mail at pknoop@earthlink.net. Alternatively you can e-mail David at imperialglory@comcast.net. There is no charge for this event.

Directions: David's address is 1841 52nd Way S.E., Olympia. From I-5 go south to Olympia. Take exit 105 and keep right toward Port of Olympia. At the first light, turn left and follow signs to Henderson Blvd. Continue south until you come to Yelm Highway (the YMCA will be on your right). Continue south on Henderson. Halfway down the hill, turn left on 53rd. Go up a short hill, taking the second left (Arlington). Then take the first right and go to the end of the cul-de-sac.

Museum Friends Dates to Remember

The month of September is a busy one for the Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum. We hope that you will be able to attend at least one, if not all of the following scheduled activities.

10 September: Donation of commemorative plaques by the Canadian Veterans of the Korean War. This event is a precursor to the dedication of a memorial to the Canadian soldiers who trained at Fort Lewis for service in the Korean War. The Canadian Veterans will donate the plaques at 1400 hours, followed by a tour of the museum.

15 September: Sergeant John Ordway Memorial Golf Tournament. This event will be held at the Fort Lewis Golf Course and will raise funds for the Sergeant Ordway Statue. See the flyer on page 5.

18 September: Friends Membership Meeting and Open House. This event will be held at David and Barbara Markham's home in Olympia. View David's magnificent Napoleonic collection and enjoy the company of Good Friends. Beverages and d'oeuvres will be served. Please see RSVP on page 7.



Camp Lewis soldiers take a little sport with their chow in 1918.

30 September: Dedication and unveiling of the statue of Captain Meriwether Lewis and his dog Seaman. This event will be held at the Main Gate of Fort Lewis. The program begins at 1330 hours. The Friends have been a major contributor to this outstanding project.



The highway to Camp Lewis in 1918.

**The Friends of the
Fort Lewis Military Museum**
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