

Battery Gunnison/New Battery Peck
Magazine Powder Can Storage Display Evolution
Fort Hancock, New Jersey

This report documents the evolution of powder magazine from emptiness in 2006 to installation of proper storage racks in 2020. Prior to October 2006, the powder magazine of Battery Gunnison/New Battery Peck was empty as shown below. Notice one of two lights as installed by the NPS in 2004. This lighting system was replaced starting in 2011 with restored vintage lighting.



In October 2006 AGFA and the National Park Service obtained approximately 300 World War Two period 6-inch powder cans. Members of AGFA facilitated the donation of the cans to the NPS from the US Army's Joint Ammunition Command at Rock Island Arsenal. The Sandy Hook Foundation provided approximately \$2,500 to fund shipment to Fort Hancock. The cans arrived stacked on banded pallets and were placed inside the powder magazine upon delivery. Below 1st SGT Murray and 2LT Taylor stand by the pallet of cans with an original can for an M1897 6-inch gun from Fort Stevens Oregon on top.



The next step in storing the powder cans was to disassemble them from their shipping pallets and then restacking them inside the powder magazine. The photo below shows the team un-banding and moving the cans away from the magazine wall.



The photo below shows the team stacking the cans on their ends once the main wall was cleared.



In this photo the team restacks the cans on the flat portions of the pallets in "head to foot" order. This is not how the cans would have been stored in wartime, but, this enabled .



The photo below shows the center wall stack nearing completion. Approximately 220 cans were stacked along this wall. The remaining 80 cans were stacked on opposing ends of the opposite wall.



The photo below shows the stack along the front wall of the powder magazine as completed in October 2006.



The photo below shows the team that did the restacking and reorganizing within the magazine in October 2006.



Over the years the membership discussed various options to improve the storage of the cans. The photo below shows the powder magazine as it appeared in December 2019 with the left (center) wall unchanged from 2006 and the right (back) wall showing several storage boxes. This arrangement was problematic as the first thing the public would generally see was the storage boxes as they entered the room with the left stack to their back.



In November 2019, several members, led by T-5 Tom Morrison, began the process to design and build period correct storage racks. The team discussed with the NPS various approaches and settled on a basic design and a bill of materials. The NPS agreed to provide the wood and AGFA agreed to provide the fasteners and mounting materials.

The concept of execution was to first move the powder cans out of the powder magazine and into the Gun #2 powder passage. With right at 296 cans, this would easily fill the passage. The cans would all be moved December 2019 in order to facilitate layout and construction of the racks.

The layout for the cans was different from the one from 2006. There were to be three sets of racks. The long wall along the powder passage would have one long rack that would accommodate about 240 powder cans. This would be the first set of cans the public would see. The other two racks would be on either side of the storage boxes. These boxes were moved into the middle of the center wall and partially obscured by a rack of about 48 cans at each entrance door.

The Bill of Materials was developed in November 2019. The NPS ordered the wood and AGFA ordered the fasteners in late December once all the design factors were agreed upon.

In December 2019, the AGFA team began to move the cans to build the racks. This was accomplished over the History House 1943 Christmas public event weekend and completed on 20 December 2019.

The photo below shows the long "stack" along the shell room wall being reduced and the cans moved to the Gun #2 powder passage.



Below is the initial stack of cans into the Gun #2 powder passage.



This photo shows all cans moved from the powder magazine wall. Next step is to move the storage boxes into their place.



The two photos below show Gun #2 powder passage filled with cans (about 240).



During the 3-5 January 2020 Work Weekend, the powder magazine was cleaned and the walls were scraped and painted. Below CPL Cusano paints the wall after having scraped the loose paint off the wall.



In the photo below the walls are painted and preparations are underway to move the storage boxes from the locations below to the open wall on the left.



On 23 January 2020 the wood was delivered to the Battery.



The lumber company brought the wood up to the magazine and AGFA members then stacked the wood next to the 170 6-inch shells on display in the shell room.



On 5 February T-5 Morrison began construction of the first of the two small racks to enclose the storage boxes.



Below the rack is shown approximately half completed.



On 13 February 2020 the second rack is well underway. The space between the two racks where the saw table is located is the future home of the storage boxes. This is looking north towards Gun #2.



The photo below shows another view of the two racks from the northern end of the gun battery looking south (towards gun #1).



The photo below (looking north towards Gun #2) shows the storage boxes moved in between the two powder racks. The frame for the long wall rack is going into place.



Below is the same view looking towards Gun #1 (looking south).



The photo below taken 27 February 2020 shows T-4 King as he pauses from cutting wood to discuss the plan with Pete McCarthy, Sandy Hook Unit Manager.



The photo below from 7 March 2020 shows the long rack completed and ready for cans to be stacked.



Below PFC Budjos and 2LT Rodriguez begin to stack the cans into the rack.



In the photo below they continue stacking cans - with an added step of washing the dust off the cans.



Washing and stacking the cans continues with 2LT Rodriguez, CPL Cusano and PFC Budjos.



Below CPL Cusano stands by the long rack with can stack completed with the entrance to the Gun #2 powder passage behind him.



A view from the opposite side of the previous photo looking towards Gun #2 just after the can have been stacked on 7 March 2020.



Photo below shows the two end stack with storage boxes in the center. This photo was also taken 7 March 2020 before the area was cleaned and the area policed.



Both photos on this page were taken on 17 May after the area was policed.



The photo below shows the two end can racks and storage boxes in between. The new storage arrangement emphasizes the powder cans and reduces the conspicuousness of the storage boxes during public interpretive events.

