

# Boy Scouts of America Troop 280



## November Fort Mifflin Trip

For the start of November, the troop thought it would be fun to do something scary because of Halloween having just passed the day before. The destination was decided to be Fort Mifflin, a supposedly haunted site after its periods in the Revolutionary War and Civil War. You can find more about the history of Fort Mifflin at <http://www.fortmifflin.us/the-history/>.

On Saturday around 1:00, we met at Bede's. This trip was very short and it lasted about 24 hours. There were eleven scouts and seven adults attending, and we left at 2:30. The drive was short as Fort Mifflin was close (in Philadelphia near the airport). Through clouds and rain, we arrived at 3:00. The fort walls were off to the left of the parking lot where the dining hall was.



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**November 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014**

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Everyone got their gear and unpacked. We saw the magazines and buildings/structures for the first time and also realized that no one else was with us but our tour guide Mary, her trainee Emily, and the caretaker Wayne. The barracks, rows of large rooms with bunks and heaters where the troop was staying, were spacious and well-kept. The floor boards had heavy echoes and the fireplaces old brick-work. Scouts and adults were settled within a half hour of our arrival.

For the next hour and a half, the troop continued to adjust to the fort and everyone took the opportunity to explore. The scenery could be summarized in photos, but I'll indulge. Fort Mifflin was in the shape of a crude star (it has twenty sides). The perimeter is a wall that can be walked from the inside on pathways of grassy earth along it. Where the walls drop down are slopes gentle enough to walk on. Across these are magazines, large mounds of dirt with growing grass. They are the tops to underground cave systems where casemates, a powder room, a solitary confinement room, halls, and such are kept. On the grounds are the barracks to sleep in and hold museum pieces, plus bathrooms and a gift shop in another building next to that. There are stables, a workshop, and a center building that is empty and unfurnished in brick or stone. It is a pit of dirt with beams of wood networking around in it. There are three exits, one in the front which is a small round tunnel, and two on the sides. The left goes to open hills and

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more magazines along the Delaware River, and the other goes into the banks with high weeds and mud. All have heavy wooden doors with intricate iron locks.



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At five, our tour guide Mary showed us a weapons demonstration of an old musket and signal cannon. Everyone enjoyed them very much (including Mary).



Thirty minutes brought us to the dining hall, where after an hour and a half of cooking we ate a very bountiful meal. Since there were two patrols and the adults, three separate menus were prepared. One had white rice, beef teriyaki, snap peas and mixed vegetables. The other had hot dogs, hamburgers and fried potatoes. The adults shared a wonderful

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jambalaya and salad. Mary, Emily, and Wayne joined us for dinner.

We left at eight and gathered after fifteen minutes for a historical/ghost tour with Mary. We started in the museum room where most historical points were shared. Fort Mifflin, though in only one battle, had an interesting background that all seemed to enjoy. Afterwards, we went outside to visit the buildings and stables where many tales of ghosts and their pasts were told along with stories of how they've been seen in modern times. At around 9:30 the tour finished and everyone was either frightened or excited.

Everybody slept in the barracks but three scouts and two adults; Jake, Tom and I, plus Mr. Dodel and Dan. The scouts slept in Casemate Number 5 and the adults slept in Casemate Number 1. From experiencing this first-hand, I can say it was eerie throughout the night, though strangely peaceful and comforting when going to sleep.

The clocks went back that night, and the first ones up were those in the barracks at around 6:30. Thirty minutes later, word got to the scouts in the casemate. The new day was beautiful. The clouds were high and condensed, so the sun shined through all the world. It was cold, but it kept many awake and alert. All packed up and cleaned around camp before heading to the dining hall for a breakfast of bagels, orange juice and apples. For an hour until nine, everyone ate. After, we left and

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attended 11:00 mass at Bede's. Once finished there, the troop dispersed with their gear on their own ways.

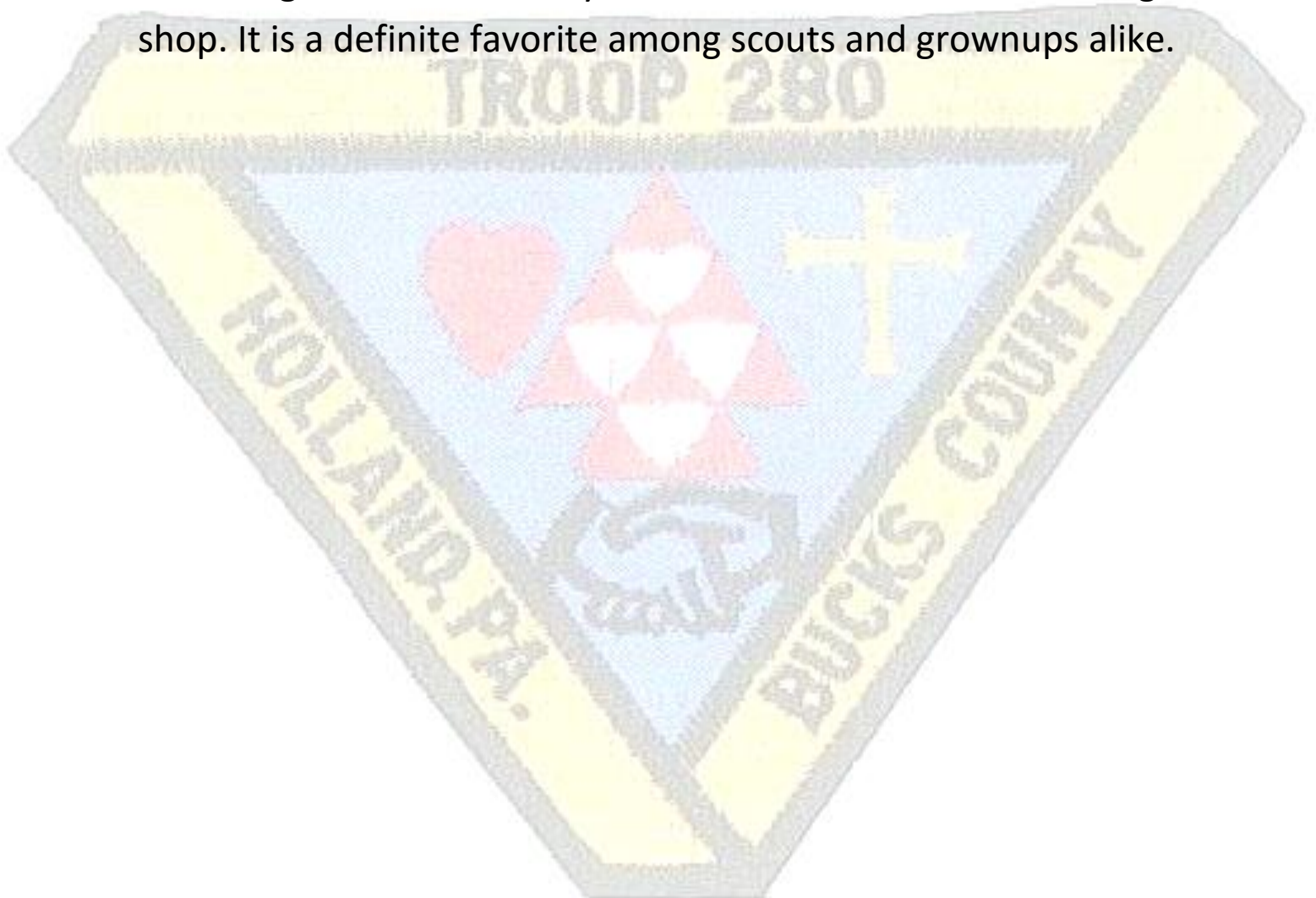


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Fort Mifflin was a wonderfully scary and fascinating destination for the Halloween season. It is genuinely scary and everyone loved the trip for the little time that we were there. Suspicious pictures and memories are there along with the knowledge of some history and a few souvenirs from the gift shop. It is a definite favorite among scouts and grownups alike.



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