



47th Annual POCI Convention - July 16-21, 2019 Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

previews by Cary Schuck

Welcome Night is a POCI convention tradition that will continue in Gettysburg. This event provides an opportunity for members to make new friends, renew old acquaintances, exchange ideas, and make plans for the upcoming activities.

The 2019 Welcome Night will offer all of that and much, much more, thanks to the extraordinary venue we have chosen for this special evening.

The Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center offers a unique overview of the Civil War, the Gettysburg campaign, and the impact of the three-day battle on the area. With 22,000 square feet of area, the museum includes exhibits to enlighten those with a casual interest or satisfy the most serious historian or Civil War buff. Displays and dioramas illustrate many facets of military life including uniforms, equipment, medical supplies, and weapons of all types.

Video displays walk the visitor through the tactics and troop movements before, during, and after the three-day battle that marked the turning point of the war.

Field artillery pieces used by Union and Confederate troops are displayed at various locations on the battlefield but the cannon inside the museum is perfectly detailed to the degree expected by a POCI judging team. The vast array of artifacts from one of the largest Civil War collections in the world allows many different subjects to be explored in depth.

An excellent 20-minute film entitled "A New Birth of Freedom" is shown every half hour in the museum theater. Nar-





This is the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor center, the venue for this year's POCI Welcome Night. We look forward to greeting you at this outstanding facility!

rated by award-winning actor Morgan Freeman, this movie places the Civil War and the battle of Gettysburg into historical perspective and is highly recommended for those not familiar with this part of our history.

While the museum makes full use of modern technology, what many consider the most dramatic exhibit is a “low-tech”



survivor from the 19th century. The Gettysburg “Cyclorama” is a circular oil painting that stretches 377 feet in circumference and 42 feet tall. Standing on a platform in the center of the circle places the viewer on the battlefield during the Confederate advance against Union positions that came to be known as “Pickett’s Charge.” The 360-degree panorama shows the troops in action, activity in the rear areas, and the surrounding countryside. Various areas are illuminated during a brief narration of the encounter on the final day of the battle.

Cyclorama paintings, typically depict-

ing battles or natural disasters, were popular in the late 19th century but fell out of favor with the advent of motion pictures. This is the only survivor of four nearly identical paintings done by French artist Paul Philippoteaux in 1883 after extensive research and interviews with veterans. Originally exhibited in Boston, it fell into disrepair, was brought to Gettysburg in 1913, and has been restored several times before finding a permanent home in the new museum in 2008. Jaded as we have become by three-dimensional iMAX movies, this simple oil painting still has the capacity to impress.

The Visitor Center and Museum hosts an average of 5,000 visitors per day and is even more crowded and noisy in the



**2019 POCI Convention
Overflow Hotels**

**Gettysburg Comfort Suites:
800-334-6912**

**Gettysburg Country Inn & Suites:
717-337-9518**

**Gettysburg Hampton Inn:
717-338-9121**

**Gettysburg Hilton Garden Inn:
717-334-2040**

summer months. However, POCI members who purchase Welcome Night tickets will have exclusive access to this world-class facility between 6pm and 10pm on Wednesday night. The museum, movie, and Cyclorama as well as the food court and the excellent bookstore and gift shop will be all ours to enjoy at our leisure!

The food court offers a wide selection of hot and cold menu items, sandwiches, salads, drinks, ice cream, and snack foods. Indoor and outdoor seating — weather permitting — is available so there is no need to go elsewhere to eat. This event has been scheduled so as not to interfere with any other convention activities or tours. Those wishing to drive will find adequate and secure parking. Free shuttle busses will also run every half hour between the host hotel and the Visitor Center.

Your convention hosts look forward to greeting you at this very special “Welcome Night” event. ...Yet another reason to make Gettysburg *your* address in 2019! **JSN**