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## *The A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER*

**2017 4th Issue**



## **KELHAM HALL INTERNATIONAL 2017**

ACWS is a Member of NAReS

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# **A.C.W.S. CONTACTS**

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## **ACWS at Earls Barton**

The ACWS travelled to the Midland History Festival at Earls Barton, Northamptonshire on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017. This is a living history festival organised by re-enactors for re-enactors and is similar on a smaller scale to the multi period event at Spetchley. There was excellent weather on the Saturday and even though cloudy on the Sunday the rain held off until 4.00pm when people were leaving so this ensured a pleasant weekend for everyone and ensured a good public turnout. There was a large Dark Age presence with many Vikings and Saxons present as well as a large Medieval contingent. Both the Confederate and Union Armies had commendable turnouts of approximate equal size but this was complimented by 4 artillery pieces which really added to the display and filled the arena as they were all manned.

The ACWS were the headline act and were the last battle of the day in the arena. The battle on the Saturday was an excellent skirmish with the Confederates, supported by a lone artillery piece, attacking a larger Union force protecting 2 fast firing artillery pieces. The large battlefield allowed a lot of movement to take place and both armies infantry attempted to outflank each other and particularly outflank both sides artillery. As a result, quite a few small skirmishes developed all over the battlefield. The Confederates eventually won by attacking in force from 2 different directions and taking the Union artillery pieces after some close quarter action. On the Sunday, the ACWS were requested to perform an additional impromptu early morning skirmish as well as the main battle at the end of the day. Both these skirmishes were won by the Union as their fast firing artillery using double canister at close range as well as supported by Infantry inevitably caused lines of Confederate casualties the closer they got on both occasions. All the skirmishes were well received by both the public and other re-enactors and, as usual, our ability to take appropriate casualties at the right time added to the effect. Christian Sprakes, ACWS commentator, added to all the displays with his excellent and informative talks.

The ACWS was also asked at the last minute to help out in the

arena with other displays due to some other re-enactors from other groups being unable to make the festival. As a result, the ACWS band also did 2 excellent displays which the public thoroughly enjoyed. In addition, the Kids Drill, organised by Confederate Major Glenn Gibson, was enjoyed by most! of the kids and parents who took part. Some of the younger members of the ACWS also joined in the mixed period battle on the Sunday afternoon with all the re-enactors having a free for all. The sight of some of our younger ACWS members, despite being armed, running in vain for their lives whilst being chased by fast moving but heavily armed Vikings and Saxons was awesome!

The social highlight of the weekend was without doubt the big party in the Trolls Bottom Real Ale Beer Tent and the excellent band "Greenman Rising". These will be recognised from the Spetchley event. The excellent beers coupled with a free hog roast and lots of dancing by both Union and Confederate re-enactors mixing with all the other re-enactors made for a memorable night. Christian Sprakes also joined in with the band with some Civil War songs which was well received by all. Many other re-enactors joined the American Civil War camps after the party for more drinks and socialising which was indicative of the pleasant atmosphere over the whole weekend.

This Living History Event was well supported by the public and the site itself is excellent for re-enactment purposes. There were many traders and food stalls with re-enactor concessions but from an ACWS perspective, it was also nice to see Lisa, Civil War Sutlers and Derbyshire Arms present and get any last minute equipment/adjustments for the upcoming International Civil War Event. The site had plenty of camping and parking and it was nice for both ACWS armies to have their own regularly cleaned portaloos!

The ACWS next travel to the long awaited International Event at Kelham Hall, Newark on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas,  
43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina Volunteers

## **43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina, ACWS at Culzean Castle and Country Park**

The 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina Regiment travelled to Culzean Castle and Country Park in Ayrshire on the bank holiday of 26/27/28 August 2017 for the Forces in the Field 2017 multi period re-enactment. Although it did rain in parts on the Friday and Monday, the excellent weather on the Saturday and Sunday in such a superb and majestic coastal setting combined with a large, friendly and interested public made for a highly enjoyable weekend for everyone. Although the 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina and their handful of guests did not win the Annual Trophy, there was no question that they did put on a superb living history display combined with interesting and free flowing skirmishes in the main arena which was thoroughly enjoyed by the public and all the re-enactors present.

The Forces in the Field multi period event is never going to be a large scale re-enactment but there were groups representing Viking, World War 1, World War 2, Medieval, Napoleonic and Vietnam. As such, it was not a full ACWS society event but was advertised as an ACWS regimental event organised by the well attended 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina. However, it is to the credit of a small handful of other individuals from the Union ( 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana) and Confederate (1<sup>st</sup> Tennessee and 32<sup>nd</sup> Virginia) regiments who made the long trip that allowed a more varied and interesting display. Due to only 2 Federals being present, a couple of Confederates galvanised to put on a small fight. It is of course absolutely vital to attend such events to fully support all our Scottish members who regularly travel such very long distances, to gain new recruits which occurred and try and gain new Civil War events and Civil War interest in the North. Culzean Castle and Country Park in Ayrshire is one of the most beautiful sites that the 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina ever attended. The imposing buildings with numerous turrets and battlements are surrounded by buffeting seas, lush forests and secret gardens

Culzean Castle was the final masterpiece of the most famous architect of the day namely Robert Adam. It is set in over 242 hectares of stunning countryside with manicured gardens, delightful follies and numerous long woodland trails. It also overlooks stunning sands, pebbly beaches and coastal trails with excellent views particularly of sunset over the Isle of Arran. Other benefits and attractions were the swan pond (a 13 acre lake!), deer park, a Victorian vinery, pagoda, a large Orangery, cannon and mortar batteries, smuggling caves, the home farm visitor centre with a restaurant, a cafe, a shop and a large toilet block. The castle itself boasts a spectacular oval staircase, an armoury containing the largest collection and display of flintlock pistols in the world (716 and all used) and a large round drawing room. The top apartment of the castle was frequently used by US President Dwight D Eisenhower for relaxing and golfing purposes. All of these buildings enjoy a panoramic view of the Firth of Clyde.

Please see the 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina facebook page which has excellent pictures of the event. Due to the ongoing considerable kindness and generosity of the Scottish National Trust organisers, all the re-enactors were given free passes to visit the castle but the highlight for many was the long awaited trip to the Smuggling Caves which for the first time was allowed due to the tides. It was really well worth the wait for those who went. These necessitated hard hats, torches and an ability to scramble around in the dark without fear of unwanted creatures! These caves were the subject of a TV Programme called "Extreme Archaeology" if anyone is interested in exploring the subject deeper. Many, many thanks must go to our superb guides, Ian and Michelle as expert guides are both needed and required in such an environment and they took their own time to escort us. The 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina had 3 twenty five minute slots in the arena as on the Saturday the ground was too wet and soggy for the Military Vehicle display and we agreed to help out the Event Organisers by putting on an additional display. Full credit must go to Glen (1<sup>st</sup> Tennessee) who commentated for the very first time and did really well with all his Civil War knowledge. Also Steve (1<sup>st</sup> Tennessee) and Corporal

Mark (43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina) who took control and organised the actual displays and skirmishes by both sides. This event always provides an invaluable opportunity for others to take control, develop confidence and experiment with other scenarios which proved both informative and interesting for the public. General Sherman's 1864 March to the Sea was our particular backdrop. Apart from these very popular and loud skirmishes in each of these slots, the 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina did a Confederate and Union civil war soldier firing competition, an excellent firing display and a small drum display. As a static living history display, the 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina constructed a substantial log barricade surrounded by pup tents, shelter halves, flags, musket stacks and numerous authentic civil war accoutrements/items. In addition, the Ask a Soldier Questionnaire (over 50 given out!) again proved really popular with all the children but the superb Southern Women displays by Linda Reed and Jayne Booth was the highlight for many visitors. One of the other highlights of this multi period was an opportunity to socialise and meet other re-enactors. This proved very fruitful as the 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina gained 3 new recruits. Overall, the success of the weekend was due to the excellent site, the provision of everything required by the superb and friendly Scotland National Trust rangers, the camaraderie of all the different historical groups but above all the working together and co-operation of all the various different Civil War regimental re-enactors to make for such an enjoyable and memorable weekend. The finale of the multi period event was an awesome mass Pipe and Drum march and parade which superbly concluded the weekend. Hopefully, the 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina will return next year in a regimental capacity. There are provisional plans in the future to make both the arena and re-enactment camping areas bigger to accommodate and develop the growing popularity of this event.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina.

# **Mystery deaths of Confederate submarine HL Hunley crew finally solved after 150 years.**

The mystery of how the crew of the world's first submarine died has finally been solved due to recent evidence released in August 2017 following some ground breaking research. This article will summarise the findings. The Confederate HL Hunley sank on February 17 1864 after torpedoing the USS Housatonic outside Charleston Harbour, South Carolina during the American Civil War. She was one of the first submarines ever to be used in conflict and the first to sink a battleship. It has always been assumed that the blast from the sinking had either ruptured the submarine thereby drowning its occupants or causing suffocating following its sinking. However, when it was raised in 2000, the salvage experts were amazed to find all the 8 men crew poised as if they had been caught unawares by the tragedy. All the crew were sitting at their posts and there was no evidence whatsoever that they had attempted to flee or escape the floundering vessel. This is the amazing story of the bravery of the crew of the Confederate submarine HL Hunley and how they died.

After a full 22 years after their bodies were discovered, scientists have now come up with an explanation for the mysterious deaths of the crew of the Confederate submarine, HL Hunley. The HL Hunley was only discovered in 1995 and was found resting about 300 yards from where her victim, the USS Housatonic had come to rest in North Charleston, South Carolina. It was finally retrieved from the seafloor in 2000. When the submarine was opened up, the bodies of the 8 Confederate crew were found seated at their stations on the hand crank that powered the vessel. They showed no signs whatsoever of any struggle or trying to escape. They displayed no signs of any physical injury. In addition, the bilge pumps had not been used as would have been expected and there had been no attempt to reach or escape through the air hatches. They were discovered in a puzzling apparent peace.

Researchers at Duke University, North Carolina have now



concluded that the Confederate crew were killed instantly by the tremendous force from the torpedo blast and have published their in depth findings and recordings in the journal PLOS ONE to support their conclusion. The reports author, Rachel Lance of Duke University states “The disappearance of the Hunley has long stood as one of the great mysteries of American history. Finding the cause of death of the crew has finally allowed us to declare the mystery solved“.

Researchers now believe that the Confederate crew all instantaneously died on 17 February 1864 when they rammed a torpedo into the hull of the Union warship, USS Housatonic. The torpedo itself was a copper keg containing 61 kg of black powder and struck the USS Housatonic just below the waterline at the stern of the vessel. The torpedo itself was not fired through the water as with modern submarines but was held instead on a long pole that collided with the hull of the enemy ship. On impact, it immediately detonated. The 1,200 ton USS Housatonic sank within 5 minutes and 5 seamen were lost but the blast would have also instantly killed the crew of the submarine. Their deaths were so swift that they would not have had time to move from their stations on the crank. Rachel Lance concluded “All the physical evidence points to the crew taking absolutely no action in response to a flood or loss of air”. To back up her analysis, Rachel Lance built a scale model of the HL Hunley and recreated the fatal black powder explosion to calculate the actual impact. The researchers also shot authentic Civil War weapons at historically accurate iron plates to ascertain the exact damage that would have been caused to the vessel by the impact. Having rammed the explosive at an iron sheet, they could actually work out the exact blast energy the crew would have been exposed to. An internal pressure gauge measured a powerful shockwave within the submarine. The force of the explosion travelling through the crews soft tissue particularly the lungs and brains would have been brutal. The furthest a crew member was from the blast was just 42 feet (13 metres). This gave them an 85% chance of dying instantly. “This is the characteristic trauma of blast victims, they call it “blast lung”. You have an instant fatality that leaves no marks on the skeletal remains.

Unfortunately, the soft tissues that would show us what happened have decomposed in the past hundred years”, said Rachel Lance. In mathematical terms, the shockwave of the blast would travel about 4,920 feet (1,500 metres) per second in water and 1,115 feet (340 metres) per second in air. When it crossed to the lungs of the crewmen, the shockwave was slowed to about 100 feet (30 metres) per second. While a normal blast shockwave travelling in air should last less than 10 milliseconds, Rachel Lance calculates that the Hunleys crews lungs were subjected to 60 milliseconds or more of trauma. These sheer forces would have torn apart the very delicate structures where the blood supply meets the air supply filling the lungs with blood and killing the crew instantly. It is also very likely they suffered traumatic brain injuries from being so close to such a large blast. Following this explanation, she believes the crippled submarine would have slowly drifted out on a falling tide and slowly took on water before eventually sinking. The HL Hunley is currently housed in North Charleston, South Carolina. It is housed in a 75,000 gallon tank of water and chemicals. It is drained 3 times per week for several hours to allow restoration to take place. Since 2000, 2 scientists have spent the past 17 years collecting the crews remains and restoring the vessel as part of the clean up operation. They go to work in full protective gear and bend round nooks and crannies gently removing and chipping off the grime that encompasses the whole vessel. They have slowly, patiently and methodically removed a century and a half of sand, sediment and corrosion from the iconic submarine. Their long term goal is to get the submarine as close as it appeared on its mission as possible by removing all the concretion by using a mixture of sodium hydroxide and a mild electric current. This mixture gradually softens the concrete hard build up of sand, mud and shells that built up inside the vessel during the last 140 years it was buried off Sullivans Island so that the debris can be removed later. There have been some very interesting discoveries made recently during the restoration and excavation which I thought readers might be interested in. In June 2017, the researchers discovered hidden under the concretion that had built up over the submarine, a sophisticated set of gears and

and teeth on the crank in the water tube that ran the whole length of the submarine and was its main propulsion. It soon became apparent that these gears and teeth enabled the crew rotating the crank to propel the submarine much faster by moving water far more quickly through the water tube. In addition, another recent discovery made was that some of the men rotating the main crank had wrapped their particular crank handle with thin metal tubes covered in cloth. Obviously, this was designed to prevent blisters. Overall, the researchers have concluded that except for a hole in one of the conning towers and a small window that may have been broken, the submarine was remarkably intact.

Following the recovery of the HL Hunley and the retrieval of the bodies, the 8 crew members were buried in an elaborate ceremony at a Confederate ceremony in Charleston in 2004. The crew members were the submarine commander, Lt George Dixon of Alabama; James Wicks, a North Carolina man living in Florida; Frank Collins of Virginia; Joseph Ridgaway of Maryland and 4 foreign born men about whose lives less is known. One is still known as Miller.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43<sup>rd</sup> North Carolina Volunteers Goobers Notes: The Confederate submarine HL Hunley was actually on its 3<sup>rd</sup> trip when it sunk the USS Housatonic. It had sunk previously on 2 occasions. It first sunk in August 1863 whilst docked. Its hatches had remained open and only 3 of the 8 crewmen escaped and survived. It sunk on a second occasion in October 1863 when designer H.L Hunley led another 8 man crew who planned to show how the submarine could operate under water by diving under a ship in Charleston Harbour. It never resurfaced and was only found several weeks later. It was then brought back to the surface and all the crew were interred in graves that ended up below The Citadels Football Stadium for nearly 50 years.

Sources : Mystery deaths of submarine H.L Hunley crew finally solved by Martha Henriques August 23 2017; Wikipedia; Mail Online Mystery of how HL Hunley's crew died is solved after 150 year by Tim Collins November 3 2017.

It is always sad to hear of the passing of an old comrade, but that is what we have to do.



We recently heard of the loss of Andrew Nettleship, who was a member of ACWS in years past. Andrew served with the 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan and latterly with 2<sup>nd</sup> US Artillery Battery B. I am sure that many of our older members will remember Andrew fondly, and send their thoughts and prayers to his family.



We also have to say goodbye to Paul Draper, a much loved member of the Tennessee regiment and a drummer in the Fife & Drum Corps. Paul passed peacefully in the early hours of Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Margaret, and his family at this sad time.



On a happier note ACWS sends its congratulations and welcome to Finn Steven Brooks-Richards, born to Steven and Carrie on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2017 weighing in at 7lbs 15oz.

## The Ark Bilby Trophy



After much searching for the Carl Bilby Trophy, I finally located it and collected it from Birmingham in August.

Carl was born 9<sup>th</sup> June and worked as a research scientist for the atomic energy authority. Originally he was a member of the 19<sup>th</sup> Indiana (us) Gordon Clifford who was then commanding officer of Battery B 2<sup>nd</sup> US invited Carl to join the artillery which gave him a new lease of life in re-enactment.

When I contacted Carl's son, Nigel, with the good news, he was overwhelmed that the trophy had been located and was back in the society's possession.

Carl died on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2006 and was in charge of Battery B by then and the trophy was dedicated in his memory.

Battery B were the first winners of the trophy that year. The following year it was awarded to the Rockbridge Artillery. 2017 saw Rockbridge win again. This is the first time in ten years it has been competed for. The trophy has been engraved and will be presented at the AGM in December or at the first event next season.

Linda Reed, Secretary.

### NOTICE

The funeral of Paul Draper will be held at 3.30pm on Tuesday 19th December 2017 at Peterborough Crematorium, Mowbray Road, North Bretton, Peterborough, PE6 7JE. ACW Uniform or Bright colours (no black please).

A donation box will be available at the funeral for anyone wishing to make a donation, charity to be confirmed.

There will be a wake afterwards and further details will be announced soon.

At the request of Paul's family, if you are wanting to attend, please contact Linda Reed to help with numbers for catering.

# **American Civil War Weapons**

The American Civil War is often referred to as the first “modern war”. It involved the most advanced technology and innovations of war at the time including the mass production of war material, the rifling of barrels, the use of the minie ball, the introduction of repeating firearms and metallic cartridges, ironclad ships, advances in medicine, communication (especially the telegraph), advances transportation (especially railroads) and the gradual decline of tactics from previous centuries. There were a wide variety of weapons used including edged weapons such as knives and swords, firearms such as rifled muskets, breech loaders and repeating weapons, various field guns such as artillery and new weapons including grenades and machine guns. The Civil War was by far the most deadly war in American history and resulted in over 620,000 dead and a further 1.1 million wounded. This sheer number of casualties is remarkable considering the machine gun, aircraft and tank had not been invented or perfected yet. As such, this article is about 5 of the most lethal weapons of the American Civil War.

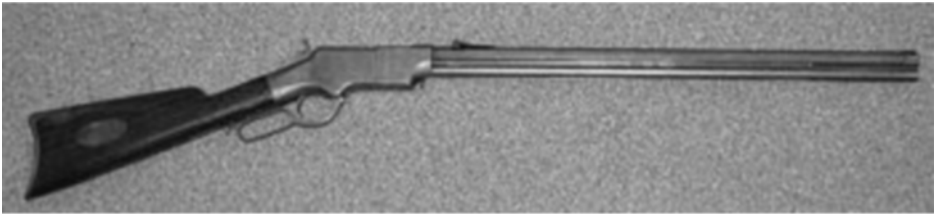
## **1) The Springfield Model 1861 Rifle**

This was the most widely used standard infantry weapon of both sides and was responsible for the majority of combat deaths. Roughly a million Springfield Model 1861 rifles were made and it was particularly favoured by the Union forces due to its range, accuracy and reliability at the time. The Springfield was a .58 calibre rifle with a forty inch barrel. It had a range of 200 to 300 yards but could hit a man over 500 yards away if used by a specialist marksman. It also fired 3 shots per minute if used by a well trained soldier. It had 2 flip up leaf sites, one for 300 yards and one for 500 yards. Due to its relative inaccuracy over distance and the lack of general marksmanship training for the individual soldier, it was usually used in massed fire tactics which depended on large numbers of troops firing simultaneously to saturate a target area. When fired, the .58 caliber bullet followed a rainbow like trajectory

and many Union troops early on in the Civil War did not adjust their sights and consequently fired high over the heads of the Confederates. Union officers were therefore ordered to encourage their troops to aim low. The Springfield rifle cost \$20 each at the Springfield Armoury where they were officially made for the Union forces. Due to overwhelming demand, the Springfield Armoury opened its weapons patterns to over 20 private contractors to fulfil the demand. The most notable private contractor was Colt who made several minor modifications. The Springfield Model 1861 was equipped with a square socket bayonet. By contrast, the Confederate troops favoured the British Pattern 1853 Enfield rifle

## **2) The Henry Repeating Rifle**

The Henry repeating rifle is a lever-action, breech loading, tubular magazine rifle that is famed for its use at the Battle of the Little Big Horn as well as being the basis for the iconic Winchester rifle that tamed the American Wild West. It was designed by Benjamin Tyler Henry in 1860 and produced throughout the Civil War by the New Haven Arms Company. It is estimated that approximately 14,000 Henry rifles were made during the Civil War. The Henry repeating rifle was the assault weapon of the time and it was the fastest firing weapon a Civil War soldier could carry. It was adopted by the Union in the Civil War and was favoured above the standard issue Carbine. More Henry rifles were purchased privately by Union soldiers than the US Government and they were particularly favoured by Union General Sherman's western troops. They were regarded as a source of great pride by the Union Civil War soldier with many believing they would help save their lives. The Henry repeating rifle was used by scouts, guards, flank guards and raiding parties rather than in regular infantry fighting formations. To the amazed Confederate soldier that had to face this deadly "sixteen shooter weapon", it was "a rifle that you could load on Sunday and shoot all week long!" Unlike the Springfield Model 1861 which was limited to 2-4 shots per minute, the Henry rifle incorporated a lever action loading system to lower the bullets into the breech and had a tubular magazine that ran parallel to the barrel that held 16 rounds which could all be fired in less than a



minute. A single man with a Henry rifle thereby had the firepower of an entire squad of musketeers! The Henry had many innovative features. Whereas a musket required separate black powder, a percussion cap and a bullet, the Henry combined all three in a single .44 caliber metallic cylinder. This was the forerunner of today's modern cartridge. The highly prized Henry rifle was later made by the Volcanic Repeating Arms Company. Those few Confederates who managed to get hold of a captured Henry rifle had little way to resupply the special ammunition required by the weapon thereby making its use impractical. However, Confederate records indicate that the Henry rifle was used on occasions by Confederate units in Texas, Virginia and Louisiana as well as the personal body guards of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Of historical Civil War significance, 2 Union regiments used their Henry repeating rifles to devastating effect against large Confederate attacks at the Battle of Franklin in 1864 and these Henry rifles were also later used by Sioux and Cheyenne warriors at the battle of the Little Big Horn where they annihilated Colonel George Armstrong Custer's Seventh Cavalry Regiment.

### **3) The Lemat Pistol**

This was a very unusual pistol design and was also known as the "Grape Shot Revolver". It was designed by Jean Alexandre Le Mat of New Orleans in 1856 and fully backed by P.G.T. Beauregard who later became a Confederate General. Although fewer than 100 were made before the war in Pennsylvania, it is estimated that 2,900 were later made in Leige, Belgium and Paris, France. They were then initially shipped to the UK for proofing in Birmingham before being shipped to the Confederacy through Bermuda.



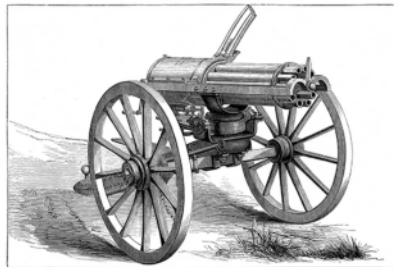
Therefore, this pistol saw particular action with the Confederate Army who received over 900 and the Confederate Navy who received over 600. In theory, it was the most lethal handgun of the Civil War. Confederate Generals Jeb Stuart, Braxton Bragg, Richard Anderson and Henry Wirz all favoured the Le Mat. The Le Mat was a nine cylinder .42 caliber revolver. These nine cylinders meant it could hold fifty per cent more rounds than a typical Civil War revolver. The Le Mat was actually 2 guns in one because it also had a second, larger, single shot – barrel capable of firing 20 gauge shot gun/buckshot rounds. A selector switch on the Le Mat allowed the user to switch back and forth between handgun and shotgun modes. Due to these modifications, the Le Mat was unusually rear heavy for a pistol but this would have assisted in aiming. Overall, it proved quite unreliable and difficult to manufacture but was unquestionably lethal at short range. The Confederate Cavalry preferred to carry several pistols including if possible the Le Mat as it was faster to draw another loaded weapon than load one whilst in close quarter combat.

#### **4) The Model 1857 12 Pounder “Napoleon” Gun**

This 12 Pounder cannon was the most popular smoothbore cannon of the American Civil War. It was named after Napoleon 3<sup>rd</sup> of France and was widely admired for its reliability, safety and killing power especially at close range. The 12 Pounder Napoleon light field gun was a muzzle loading smoothbore cannon that fired a 12 inch round. Initially designed by the French artillery, it was introduced into America in 1857 and was the last bronze gun used by an American army. It was widely used by both sides in the Civil War and could fire solid metal shot, explosive shells, grape and canister rounds. The barrel was 66 inches long and had a bore diameter of 4 ½ inches. It had a range of 1,619 yards and could fire up to 4 rounds per minute making it particularly deadly against massed infantry assaults at close range. The Federal version of the 12 Pounder cannon can be easily recognised by the flared front end of the barrel called the muzzle-swell. The Confederates had 6 different variations most of which had straight muzzles but

133 which survived the War had muzzle swells. In early 1863, Confederate General Robert E Lee sent nearly all of the Army of Northern Virginia's bronze 6 Pounder cannons to the Tredegar Ironworks in Richmond to be melted down and recast as Napoleon 12 Pounder cannons. Copper for casting bronze Napoleons by the Confederacy became increasingly rare during the War and eventually ceased in January 1864 and the Tredegar Ironworks began producing purely iron Napoleons. A Confederate artilleryman remembered "Our guns were 12 Pound brass Napoleons, smooth bore, but accounted the best gun for all round field service then made. They fired solid shot, shell, grape and canister, and were accurate at a mile. We would not have exchanged them for Parrott Rifles, or any other style of guns. They were beautiful, perfectly plain, tapering gracefully from muzzle to "reinforce" or "butt" without rings, or ornaments of any kind. We are proud of them and felt them almost as if they were human.....".

## 5) The Gatling Gun

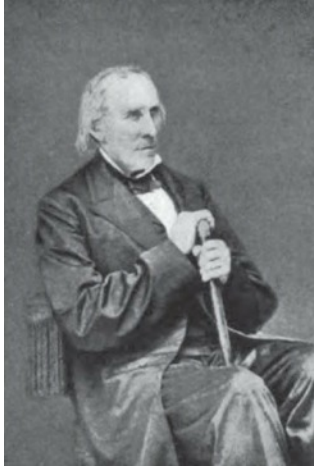


The Gatling gun was designed by the American inventor, Dr Richard J. Gatling, a physician living in Indiana, in 1861 and patented on November 4, 1862. He designed it with the intention of reducing the size of armies and thereby reduce the number of deaths through combat and disease and thereby demonstrate the total futility of war. Whilst trying to sell the Gatling gun to the US Government during the Civil War, it is known that Dr Richard J Gatling was also under close surveillance by Union spymasters as he was also an active member of the Order of American Knights, a secret group of Confederate sympathizers and saboteurs. It is speculated that this may have been one of the reasons why he

never managed to sell any of his guns to the US Government. The Gatling gun was initially designed as a .58 caliber, six barreled gun that worked by turning a hand crank that rotated the barrels. Each barrel could fire a single round before completing a full rotation and the gun mechanism was continually fed bullets by a gravity-fed hopper system. Its real innovation lay in the use of multiple barrels to limit overheating, a simple rotating mechanism and a gravity feeding reloading system which allowed unskilled operators to achieve a very high rate of fire for the time. The result was the deadliest weapon to date. When working effectively, it could fire up to 600 rounds per minute which was the equivalent of 150 trained infantrymen. The Gatling gun represented a huge leap in firearm technology and was the predecessor of all modern day multi barreled machine guns and cannon. The Gatling gun saw very limited service in the Civil War as the Union Government did not purchase any until after the War in 1866. However, Union Generals Benjamin Butler, Horace Porter and Winfield Scott Hancock all privately purchased Gatling guns. General Benjamin Butler purchased 12 Gatling guns at \$1,000 each and used 2 effectively at the siege of Petersburg Virginia (June 1864 – April 1865) to repel Confederate attacks. He also placed 8 Gatling guns on Union gunboats. General Horace Porter purchased a single Gatling gun. General Winfield Scott purchased 12 Gatling guns for his 1<sup>st</sup> (Veteran) Corps. In addition, on July 17 1863, Gatling guns were purportedly used by Union soldiers to quell and over awe anti draft rioters in New York. The Confederates used a more basic but similar hand cranked single barrel design called the Williams gun and the Vandeburgh volley gun. Following the Civil War, the Gatling gun was used in various military conflicts including the Boshin War, the Anglo - Zulu War and the assault on San Juan Hill during the Spanish – American War. Gatling guns were famously NOT used at the Battle of the Little Big Horn as former Union General George Armstrong Custer chose not to bring them with his main force.

Article by Stewart “Goobar” Douglas

Sources: Wikipedia; Most Lethal Weapons of the Civil War – Kyle Mizokami (Sept 2016)



## **Rediscovered Letter from the “Angel of Andersonville”**

On 26th October 1861 Kerry native Andy Moriarty made his way to Fort Leavenworth to join the United States Regulars. The 26 year old had been making his home in Kansas Territory's Davis County, where he ran a small farm. But now Andy had taken the decision to leave his wife and two small children behind to don Union blue. He had married fellow Irish emigrant Mary Breen in Cincinnati, Ohio on 24th April 1856, where their daughter Kate was born the following year. Probably tempted by the promise of the land, the young family had moved to the Kansas Territory by the time their son Daniel was born in 1860.

Andy wasn't motivated by patriotism, or even by financial reward. Apparently he had been “involved in an unfortunate difficulty, which, in his estimation, made it expedient, for the time being, to assume another name than his own and enlist.” What the “unfortunate difficulty” was isn't known, but Andy thought it prudent to use his wife's maiden name for the duration of his enlistment. So it was that Andy “Breen” marched off to war as a private in Company F of the 2nd United States Infantry. Upon joining he was described as a labourer, with blue eyes, brown hair, a fair complexion, and standing 5 feet 5 1/2 inches tall. The Irish

emigrant spent his service in the Eastern Theatre, where the 2nd ultimately became part of the Army of the Potomac and were involved in some of the most famous battles of the conflict.

It was sometime during the Mine Run Campaign in late 1863 that Andy was taken prisoner. Sent first to Richmond, he was later moved to Andersonville in Georgia, where he succumbed to dysentery in mid-August 1864. For many months Mary was unaware of what had become of her husband. Then, as the war wound down in April 1865, her employer— Kansas Bishop John Baptist Miège— received the following letter in Fort Leavenworth:

Savannah, GA, Apl 26th 1865

Rt Revd & Dear Bishop

I attended the Federal prisoners at Andersonville GA until they were removed last October. I attended hundreds of Catholics, I baptised hundreds, and received into the Church very, very many Protestants. The deaths during my stay were over 11,000.

Andrew Breen (prisoner), whose wife is your house keeper, died about the 16th of last August. The enclosed form of will he handed to me, requesting that I would forward to you, and that you would look to his wife & children. He was a good man, and died satisfied with the will of God. This Civil War has had its sad effects, pray for me.

I am dear Bishop

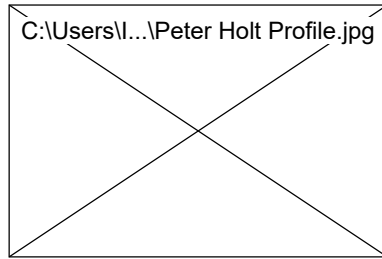
Yrs Truly in Ct

Peter Whelan

The correspondent, Father Peter Whelan, is often referred to as “The Angel of Andersonville.” Born in Clongeen, Foulksmills, Co. Wexford around 1802, he was roused by a call for priests from the Bishop of Charleston and departed for America in the 1820s. Ordained in Charleston in 1830, Father Whelan began his ministry in Locust Grove, Georgia, and was stationed in Savannah by the time war approached. An ardent secessionist, at the outbreak of the conflict he became chaplain of the Irish Montgomery Guards at Fort Pulaski, with whom he was captured in 1862. Following exchange Father Whelan became responsible for providing religious support to Confederate posts in Georgia, and it was in this capacity that he first visited Andersonville.

The Wexford priest was described by fellow Irish Confederate Chaplain James Sheeran as “an Irishman of the old style or fashion, with a big heart and some peculiar intellectual qualities”. His efforts to provide spiritual care for the prisoners at Andersonville proved memorable to many who had been incarcerated at Camp Sumter. He ministered to the Andersonville Raiders prior to their execution and in September 1864 raised money to buy flour so as to supply prisoners with much needed bread. Whelan was fondly remembered in the memoirs of a number of former POWs. Among them was John Vaughter:

I will not omit the ministry of a Catholic priest. He visited the prison regularly, giving the consolations of his church to the sick, shriving the dying, and sprinkling holy water on the dead. He was willing to talk to anyone who cared for religious conversation. He seemed very industrious and earnest in his work. Suppose that of the thirteen thousand buried in that old field, there will be one who will at last arise justified through Christ. And suppose that the judgment shall be as Jesus described it. If so, of all the ministers in Georgia, accessible to Andersonville, only one could hear this sentence, “I was sick and in prison and ye visited me,” and that one is a Catholic. One of those that Father Whelan ministered was Andy Moriarty. His letter was likely one of many he wrote at the war’s conclusion regarding the fate of former prisoners. The correspondence, though brief, contains interesting insights into his time at Andersonville, particularly how he advanced adherence to the Catholic faith within the camp. Whelan had undoubtedly suffered great emotional strain during his time caring for the prisoners, and the experience had dampened his early war enthusiasm. Despite what he had witnessed, he did not blame those in charge of the camp, later seeking to come to the defence of the Andersonville commandant, Henry Wirz. Father Whelan died in 1871 and is buried in Savannah. Mary Moriarty used the Wexford priest’s letter, together with the testimony of Fort Leavenworth Irish– men like Henry Sugrue, and former 2nd U.S. Infantry soldier Michael Lannan to prove her husband’s identity and fate. Mary, who had emigrated to America at the height of the Great Famine in 1848, passed away in Des Moines, Iowa on 11th January 1921.



## **Events Report**

Here we are at the end of another season, which turned out to be a very busy season. Ending in the culmination of the International at Kelham Hall.

It was good to see so many old friends coming together to make it such a wonderful event. Let's hope we can do it again sometime in the near future.

Now is the time for me to start looking for events for next season, I have several possible events for discussion in the pipeline, e.g. Sedgefield.

Provisional dates for Spetchley is 11th 12th August 2018 with the normal camping arrangements and living history and skirmish each day. Cavalry and artillery attendance is yet to be decided.

We have been invited back to Bloxham for their actual 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event on 23th and 24th June 2018. Camping will be from Friday to Monday and consist of Living History with Infantry and Artillery skirmish each day.

Any new dates and events will be posted on the website and our Members Page on Facebook.

Wishing you all Season's Greetings for a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Peter Holt  
Events Director.



## **EVENTS CALENDAR 2018**

**Bloxham**

**Banbury Steam Society,  
Banbury,  
Oxfordshire,**

**23<sup>rd</sup> and 24th June 2018.**

**Spetchley Park and Gardens**

**11th 12th August 2018**

**Watch this space for future events**