



The A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER

2018 4th Edition

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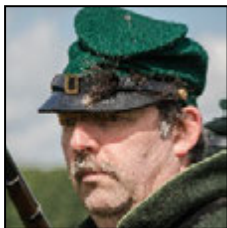


Spetchley Hall 2018

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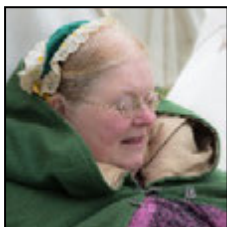
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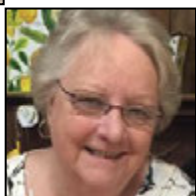
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ACWS at the M5 Multi Period Event at Spetchley

The ACWS travelled to the M5 Multi period Event at Spetchley Park Gardens on 11th and 12th August 2018 for the 12th anniversary of this increasingly popular event. This year's event attracted well over 1,000 re-enactors from approximately 100 different re-enactment societies and approximately 2,000 spectators and all these have commendably increased over the recent years.

There was another excellent turnout by both ACWS Union and Confederate re-enactors and I will always continue to state that that the ACWS turnout at this event is particularly commendable due to the significant distance many people still

have to travel alongside the inevitable delays/speed restrictions on our appalling motorways. Nevertheless, for many people, it was certainly worth it as this was another superb M5 festival despite the varying weather and full credit to everyone turning up regardless of the doom laden forecast which did not materialise in full.

The M5 Multi period Event is run by the Worcester Re-enactors for the benefit of other re-enactors and yet again sees this prestigious event just getting bigger and better every year. Everyone now agrees that it is fast becoming the new Kelmarsh/Kirby Hall. Despite the dire forecast, there was great sunny weather over the



118th Pennsylvania at Spetchley 2018

Friday and Saturday which allowed for a cracking public attendance. The presence of so many other excellent displays by other re-enactment societies ranging in time from the Greeks to World War 2 as well as the ever popular Real Ale beer tent run by Trolls Bottom, an authentically



recreated 1940's World War 2 prefab pub (The Wheatsheaf - which donates all its profit to military charities), excellent food stalls and various Sutlers (inc the Civil War Sutlers) made it a great place to look around, shop, eat, drink and socialise. One particular trader, namely cobbler and clog maker, Andrew Burk fixed my metal heel and repaired my brogans at the cost of just a pint in the Real Ale beer tent which is indicative of how friendly and helpful we re-enactors are to each other.

Overall, the M5 Event organisers as well as the owners and staff of Spetchley Hall should be really commended for all their continued voluntary efforts, unbelievable friendship and hard work which makes for such an enjoyable, pleasant and full multi period event. This is particularly important with the steady decline and now absence of

many larger multi period events over the recent years.

As usual, the ACWS was required to perform a 30 minute skirmish each day in the main arena as well as do additional drill displays and the 2 Grand Parades at the end of both days. Personally, I thought both ACWS skirmishes were above our usual high standard as there was so much action, firing and movement from all the infantry, artillery and cavalry. The Union Army had a cracking turnout with all their Federal regiments namely the 19th Indiana, 69th New York and 118th Pennsylvania all fielding really good numbers and having the ACWS Union cavalry and the ACWS Union artillery. A large body of fast moving green jacketed USS Sharpshooters really made their presence felt and it was also pleasing to see down my musket sight a few Union Soskan "Bucktails" in the blue ranks as well.

The Confederate Army also had a cracking turnout fielding 5 separate regiments namely the 1st Tennessee, the 32nd Virginia, the 43rd North Carolina, the 24th Virginia and Hoods Texas Brigade. For once, the Confederates had enough camping space for these long regimental lines but let's hope next year that they are a little straighter! These Confederate regiments were supplemented by our Confederate Soskan friends who joined in and filled the ranks. Both these big skirmishes were thoroughly enjoyed by all the public, by all the Civil War re-enactors themselves and many other re-enactors watching due to all the different and impromptu scenarios being employed at the same time. On the Saturday, the battle started with Major Tim Davis, the Union Commander, sending in the Union cavalry and a large body of USS Sharpshooters deploying in skirmish lines from the top end of the field and sweeping downwards towards the large Confederate Army.

Major Glenn Gibson, the Confederate Commander, responded by sending in 2 regiments of skirmishers who were ordered to press hard and drive the Federals from the field. This resulted in some excellent skirmishing tactics by both sides. Both the Union and Confederate Commanders then sent in their main forces behind the

skirmishers and these soon clashed thereby filling the whole field with lots of firing, movement and flanking.

There were some real close up and stand up slugfest fights right in front of the crowd with no side prepared to retreat or fall back. The field was covered in the smoke of battle as the rattle of continuous musketry fire and cannon fire filled the air. Both sides took casualties but eventually the Union infantry, cavalry and artillery started pressing and pushing down the flanks and the rebels were forced to very slowly retreat suffering lines of casualties on the way as the Union volleys poured in. The result was a Union victory but not before a lot of further hard fighting by the Confederates indicated by the large amounts of grey clad bodies scattered all over the battlefield by the end.

On the Sunday, the battle started off in a similar vein with both sides deploying their skirmishes before sending in their main bodies of troops. On this occasion, both main bodies of troops refused to give ground on clashing in the middle and long lines of infantry poured their fire into one another causing a lot of overheated muskets. However, the Confederate lines were significantly strengthened by their fast firing artillery piece steadily moving up and keeping in line with the rebel

infantry and making the firepower so much more deadly.

Eventually, the sheer volume of rebel firepower told as the Union casualties started to mount. The Confederates continued to press thereby forcing the Union forces to retreat leaving long lines of blue clothed soldiers behind. As usual, both sides took appropriate casualties on both days and the public were particularly entertained as most of the action took place right in front of them. The confusion, noise, orders and screams of battle enhanced the large clouds of fog from the black powder that hung over the battlefield throughout. The ACWS always try and do realistic casualty scenarios and this event was no exception. Many other re-enactors and public commented on this excellent aspect particularly at the visible human carnage at the end of both battles. This is not always the case with other re-enactments so we

must ensure we continue to do this to enhance the reality and experience for the public.

There are always unexpected highlights with the ACWS at Spetchley so I will mention a few. The main highlight for many of course was the continuation of the Texas War of Independence. This resulted from the outstanding success of the M300 Alamo event at Weston Park in 2017 and the creation of the Remember the Alamo Association (RAA). As such, the first event of this newly created society saw the Battle of Coleto Creek being re-enacted with re-enactors from many different societies including the ACWS taking part in both the Texian and Mexican ranks.

Overall, the Texian's looked superb in their varied authentic and mixed coloured coats including buckskins, coon hats and many Kentucky long

rifles and flintlocks and the Mexicans displayed all their pomp and ceremony with their shakoes, red, yellow and blue frock coats, blaring bugles/drums and numerous banners/flags. Both battles had creditable numbers and the colourful display was



enjoyed by everyone who participated and watched. Long may this new society continue to grow.

From a very personal perspective, I do feel that the massacre of over 430 Texian's that occurred at the Goliad after their surrender at the Battle of Coleto Creek could have been re-enacted but I am fully aware of all the powerful emotions behind this event and the reasons why it may not have been felt appropriate at this particular stage of time. Other highlights for the ACWS included the making by Daz Paul (Union) and formal presentation of 2 superb Cavalry Guidons for both the Union and Confederate cavalry. They are really awesome additions to the overall ACWS flag displays.

Andy Farnsworth (32nd Virginia) deservedly won the Confederate Soldier of the Year Award. Martin Clarke (Sergeant - 2nd South Carolina) was a close 2nd and must get immense praise for both recruiting and re-establishing the 2nd South Carolina Regiment and getting them back on the field as a unit. A great sight and another regimental addition to the Confederate Army. He was also instrumental with all his hard work and effort in getting the Remember the Alamo Association off the ground. As usual, the ACWS also excelled during the 2 Grand Parades.

Overall, this was another highly enjoyable and packed weekend and pleasing to see the socialising and camaraderie between the Union and Confederate re-enactors continue.

The ACWS singalong in the Real Ale Tent on the Saturday night due to the poor weather was well received by all. It is to the ongoing credit of the ACWS that both armies continue to have excellent attendances and particularly pleasing to see both armies now visibly consolidating after a number of relatively lean years. Nevertheless, it is still important for everyone to make and encourage ant new recruits. Another big thanks to Christian Sprakes who commented superbly throughout the weekend for all the other societies. Just stop and listen to Christian when commenting on other societies and you will realise just how knowledgeable and interesting he is despite working all day long!

The next ACWS event is a small society event at Lincoln Castle on 18th and 19th August 2018. There is also a smaller ACWS regimental event (organised by 43rd North Carolina) at the Forces in the Field multi period event at Culzean Castle, Scotland on 25th and 26th August 2018.

article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina Volunteers.

Spetchley Images



The FBI and the search for Union Civil War Gold

In March 2018, the most powerful law enforcement agency in the United States namely the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) suddenly turned up in a very remote part of Pennsylvania and having cleared the area of any prying eyes spent the next few days and nights digging. They eventually left leaving a large hole and were seen at the end of the dig loading 2 big armoured trucks.

They have refused to publish or publicly state what they were doing there and what they found. However, what is known is that 2 local treasure hunters had been digging in the area for years in search of long lost Union gold bullion from the American Civil War and the FBI had suddenly muscled in on their operation. This is the amazing story of the long lost Union gold bullion and the FBI.

The story begins in June 1863 during the American Civil War when a small detachment of Union soldiers left Wheeling, West Virginia with 2 wagons full of hay. However, its real purpose was to deliver a lucrative cargo of gold bullion in order to replenish the fund used for Union Army payroll purposes. It was headed for the Philadelphia mint at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and was supposedly authorised by both the

Union Army hierarchy and President Abraham Lincoln. The party was to take a particular circuitous route through the wilds and dense timberland of northern Pennsylvania to avoid Confederate scouting parties. The wagon train consisted of 2 wagons, 8 cavalymen, a civilian guide named Connors and a Union Lieutenant named Castleton. Significantly, Lieutenant Castleton was the only person in the party who knew about the gold bullion as it was secreted in a hidden compartment in a false bottom in one of the modified wagons.

The gold bullion consisted of between 26 to 52 bars of gold worth \$2 million. In current dollars, it would be worth \$50 million. The legend goes that soon after the journey had started, Lieutenant Castleton developed a fever and before the detachment reached St Marys in Elk County, he suffered a seizure.

Whilst talking in his delirium, he revealed the real purpose of the mission as well as the secret contents of the wagon hidden beneath the hay. The following day, the detachment left St Mary's and headed for Driftwood. This was the last time either Lieutenant Castleton or the 8 Union soldiers were ever heard of again. However, according

to one account, the civilian guide was later found disorientated and hysterical some 40 miles southeast claiming that the detachment had been attacked, wiped out and all the loot taken. The Union Army questioned this account and asked the Pinkerton Detective Agency to investigate further. They were unable to find any further information appertaining to either the missing party or the cargo.

However, several years later, the authorities did find several human skeletons at a spring near Dents Run in Elk County. They presumed these remains to be those of the missing Union soldiers. In addition, they also found the remains of dead army mules nearby. Another report states that 2 gold bars were recovered nearby in 1865. Nevertheless, the missing gold was nowhere to be found. Ever since this time, treasure hunters have been searching for the missing gold bullion.

In 2005, a local man named Dennis Parada set up a company called Finders Keepers to locate the lost treasure and in 2012 he suddenly declared that he had actually found the location of the gold bullion with a high powered metal detector at Dents Run. However, federal law would not allow him to dig or excavate the site and he was

subsequently banned from the area. Suddenly, in March 2018, the FBI appeared at Dents Run and cleared the whole area, closed the only road to the site and began excavating and digging the alleged site identified by Finder Keepers.

They would not allow Finders Keepers to actually view the excavation as they were confined to their motor vehicles well away from the site itself. Following the 2 day excavation, the FBI revealed nothing except that they had been merely conducting court authorised law enforcement activity and nothing at all had been found. They left a large hole which they allowed Finders Keepers to finally view as being confirmed as totally empty.

Finders Keepers fully believe something was actually found but they were not told. Numerous petitions and Freedom of Information Act appeals have since followed to force the FBI to disclose further details and information about the dig but nothing has been forthcoming.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas.

Sources : The Lost Patrol, Tom Rizzo ; The Guardian 17/3/2018 ; Fox News 17/10/2018 ; CBS 17/10/2018

ACWS at Lincoln Castle

On the weekend of 18th and 19th August 2018, the ACWS travelled to the prestigious site of Lincoln Castle to participate in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Horse Circus Show. This Event commemorated the 250th anniversary of the origins of Circus as part of the Circus 250! Initiative. Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show itself stepped back in time to the turn of the century and was once performed in front of Queen Victoria herself. This small society ACWS Event was programmed to be busy during both days and so it proved.

Lincoln Castle itself is a beautiful and historic site and it was a real pleasure and privilege to be able to camp inside. Lincoln Castle itself is a major Norman castle which was constructed in Lincoln, England during the late 11th century by William the Conqueror on the site of a pre existing Roman fortress. The castle is particularly unusual in that it has 2 mottes. It is only one of two such castles in the whole country.

The other is in Lewes in Sussex. Lincoln Castle is a scheduled ancient monument and is one of the best preserved castles in England. It has been mainly used as both a prison and a law court in modern times. Lincoln Crown Court still continues to this day. Part of the

prison has been open as a museum and it has been used as a film set most notably for Downton Abbey. On the highest part of the castle grounds, there is a small enclosed graveyard where there are the graves of those who were executed for their various crimes. They have very simple markers featuring only their initials and the date of death and it is quite an emotional and thought provoking place.

Nevertheless, Lincoln Castle is a beautiful site overall and all the ACWS re-enactors were given the added bonus of visiting the 3 main attractions. Firstly, we were given free access to walk all around the medieval walls. This walk provided superb views of the castle complex, Lincoln Cathedral, Lincoln City itself and the surrounding countryside. Secondly, we had a private tour of the Victorian prison and particularly the visually amazing "separate system" prison chapel where all the prisoners were secluded from each other in individually enclosed wooden pews looking up at the pulpit.

This was enhanced by the use of numerous mannequins and is the only surviving example in the World. The prison itself has 3 restored floors (both male and female) with

individual cells which gives a unique insight into the Victorian penal system. They have video screens telling the stories of all the inhabitants. Thirdly, all the ACWS re-enactors were allowed a special private visit to see an original copy of the Magna Carta in the specially created Magna Carta vault within the castle grounds. Many of the principles enshrined in the Magna Carta still influence our society today. Only 4 still remain. All 3 attractions were well worth the travelling distance alone.

The ACWS was contracted to be busy throughout the weekend and so it proved. The Union Artillery opened the show with a 2 gun battery fire display. The public who queued early to get in and turned up in their droves on both days were both woken up and exhilarated by the awesome fire, noise and display which reverberated all over the city.

The Union Infantry then performed some excellent drill and a firing display in the main arena. The Confederate Infantry, following a short period of drill, then organised the ever popular Kids Drill which due to the sheer numbers and keen enthusiasm of both children and parents resulted in some of the best ever Kids Drill scenarios. There were so many participants that they had to form up in 2 lines! Finally, both the

Union and Confederate Armies then performed a fast moving skirmish in the main arena. Both skirmishes involved the use of 2 cannon by the Union Army. On the first day, the Confederates managed to take one of the cannon and turn it on the Union but the Union Infantry held their lines and in a last minute engagement and despite being outnumbered managed to blast all the remaining Confederates at close (but safe) range with their remaining cannon.

The second skirmish involved the same scenario but on this occasion the Confederates managed to take both cannon off the Union and take them back to their lines. The sight of all the remaining Confederates running back to their lines hauling 2 cannon and waving all the rammers, wormers and spongers in front of the crowd was a very memorable sight and cheered by all the public present. Both these skirmishes involved infantry and artillery in fast movement, loud firing and close action fighting which were particularly well received by both the large amount of public and the organisers.

Credit must go to Major Tim Davis, Union Commander and Major Glen Gibson, Confederate Commander for organising and planning these exciting skirmishes in a relatively

small arena. In addition, credit must also go to Martyn Clarke who took over the ACWS commentary duties and really excelled with his knowledge and enthusiasm. The other main activity in the main arena was the Wild West Show which included some really mind blowing and amazing stunts, jumps and leaps on horseback which were thoroughly enjoyed by all the ACWS re-enactors and the public alike. Other activities included the Quack Doctor and Have a Go Hammer Throwing.

Despite some excellent performances in the main arena, the ACWS really excelled with their Living History displays, regular drill sessions and Encampment during this event. The Union Army provided Guard Duty on the main gate during both days and the Confederate Army did drill both inside and outside the castle walls. The Living History Encampments contained 2 brand new and exciting displays.

The first was the Union Barber/Dental Surgeon display which was superb and went down really well with all the children readily queuing up for an authentic shave and a tooth extraction! The second was the Soap/Candle Making display by Confederates Gary and Sandy Scott. These only added to the many other but more well known

displays such as the Southern Women's Homespun Spindle Wheel display, Martyn Clarke's Civil War Visual displays and the Ask a Soldier Questionnaire which actually ran out of quiz sheets as well as all the respective lollypop prizes! Over 150!

Overall, this was a superb event which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended. Lincoln Castle is a superb secure location and the overall event was very well organised. It was an event that was really well attended by the public who thoroughly enjoyed the whole weekend. The ACWS clearly enhanced their superb reputation to both the English Heritage Event organisers and Lincoln County Council.

We all hope that this will lead to bigger and better events in the future. Above all, however, massive credit must go to every Union and Confederate re-enactor who attended due to the mutual friendship, co-operation, hard work and camaraderie that continues to grow and develop within the ACWS. Needless to say, both campfires enjoyed their usual merriment, singing and banter!

Article by Stewart "Goober"
Douglas, 43rd North Carolina

Civil War Limb Pit Discovered

The Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862 was a significant but high-casualty Confederate victory. The 1st day involved continued lines of Union soldiers fighting uphill and attacking General Stonewall Jackson's forces who were dug in along a railway grade. The 2nd day involved Union General John Pope ordering another ill-fated attack on Jackson's position but this time being subject to a massive Confederate flanking counter attack by Confederate General James Longstreet causing the whole Union army to retreat.

To-day, this battlefield near Manassas, Virginia is a closely protected site under the oversight and management of the National Park Service. The policy is to let the ground remain undisturbed and allow all the countless bones and bodies lie in peace. Preservation of the land is the top priority. However, in late 2015, in the process of clearing a narrow trench for a utility service project, Park personnel inadvertently stumbled across an archaeological treasure trove.

This is the amazing story of the 1st ever discovered intact surgeons "limb pit" by the National Park Service. Experts state that the finding is a pivotal development in

understanding Civil War combat injuries and medical practices during the course of the Civil War.

On this battlefield, in 2014, side by side and in a shallow pit, 2 Union soldiers were hastily buried. They were buried not with flowers or memento's but 11 arms and legs. The limbs belonged to their fallen Union comrades and were very likely gathered from the amputation tables of overworked Union Army surgeons as they strove to save lives on that Civil War battlefield. 1 of the Union soldiers was a Caucasian male aged in his late twenties. His skeleton still had a .577 calibre Enfield bullet still lodged in his upper thighbone.

This type of bullet was almost exclusively used by Confederate troops and the bullet is believed to have slowed down as it rotated through his cartridge box before lodging sideways in his body. The other Union soldier was a Caucasian male aged in his early 30's. He is believed to have died from a Confederate .31 calibre lead buckshot round as he had 3 separate injuries in his shoulder, groin and lower leg. His body was found with Union Army eagle imprinted jacket buttons. Isotope analysis revealed that during their

growth and development, both soldiers had consumed food and water from the Northern states. The 11 smaller bone remains have clean cut cross sections at the thigh. This was suggestive of the fact that these soldiers had sustained serious shin and foot wounds requiring amputation.

The precise nature of the cuts indicate that the surgical operations were performed by a highly skilled surgeon. With regard the finds, it is felt that overall "these surgeons had to work very quickly and make really difficult decisions without great supplies or resources "said Katie Liming, National Park spokeswoman "The 2 almost full sets of remains, buried very hastily, tell us that surgeons probably saw these men and said, "There`s nothing we can do".

It would appear that both men were taken to the field hospital but due to the severity of their injuries were not operated on. Researchers are currently tracking down Union Army amputation records from the battle to try and match up the identities of the 11 amputees. It appears that it is easier to identify partial limbs than full bodies due to Union surgeons documentation which can narrow down which troops were where when they were operated on and

thereby discover their possible identifications.

The remains of the 2 Union soldiers were transferred to the Army on 19th June 2018. The 3rd U.S Regiment, "The Old Guard", moved their remains from the Manassas battlefield to Arlington to await their internment. To prepare for this, 2 custom made coffins were made from the wood of a wind-felled oak tree from the Manassas battlefield.

The coffins were designed in the Civil War fashion of "toe pincher" design namely wider at the shoulders and narrow at the head and feet. The remains were then wrapped in reproduction Civil War blankets. They were formally buried with a full military ceremony on September 6th 2018 at the Arlington National Cemetery.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina Volunteers.

Sources:

New York Times, 20/6/2018;
Smithsonian.com 20/6/2018;
National Park Service: An Unexpected Discovery; Various Internet sources and articles.

43rd North Carolina ACWS at Culzean Castle



The 43rd North Carolina Regiment travelled to Culzean Castle and Country Park in Ayrshire on the bank holiday of 25/26/27 August 2018 for the Forces in the Field 2018 multi period re-enactment. Although it did rain heavily in parts on both Sunday and Monday morning, the excellent weather on the Saturday in such a superb and majestic coastal setting combined with a huge, friendly and interested public made for an overall enjoyable weekend.

Although the 43rd North Carolina and their handful of guests did not win the Annual Trophy despite their real efforts over the whole weekend, there was no question that they did put on superb and interesting 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 clearly starting to grow and this was clearly evident by the numerous groups representing Viking, World War 1, World War 2, Medieval, Napoleonic and Vietnam. As usual, this was not a full ACWS society event but was advertised as an ACWS regimental event organised by the well attended 43rd North Carolina and their new recruits. However, it is to the real credit of a small handful of other individuals from the Confederate (1st Tennessee and 32nd Virginia) regiments who made the long trip that allowed for a more varied and interesting display. Due to no ACWS Federals being present, quite a few

Confederates very kindly galvanised to put on a small fight. Personally, I thought the effort they put into their Federal display and uniforms were excellent.

As I always say, it is absolutely vital to attend such events in the North/Scotland to fully support all our Scottish members who regularly travel such very long distances and gain new recruits which occurred in both the Confederate and galvanised Union regiments!

From a historical perspective, Culzean Castle and Country Park in Ayrshire is one of the most beautiful sites that the 43rd North Carolina ever attended. It is owned and run very efficiently by the Scottish National Trust. 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. A few members of the ACWS visited the Isle of Arran prior to the re-enactment as part of their holidays.

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 43rd North Carolina facebook page which has excellent pictures of the site.

Due to the ongoing considerable kindness and generosity of the Scottish National Trust organisers, I am always able to book something different and interesting for all those who make the trip. As such, it was the memorable and highly interesting Ghost Tour (Please see You Tube Most Haunted Culzean Castle for a sound bite). This involved a specialist guide who told loads of wonderful and interesting stories about the castle and all the haunted comings and goings of the



castle, its rooms and the surrounding area.

It was really enjoyed by everyone who attended. A trip around the grounds and parks had also been very kindly arranged but due to the continued poor wet weather had to be postponed. But do not worry, we will do this trip around the grounds some other time as people would really like this.

Although initially the 43rd North Carolina had a 30 minute slot in the main arena on the Saturday and Sunday both the elements and other societies pulling out left us with far more time to fill and as usual the 43rd North Carolina always agree to help out the Event Organisers by putting on additional impromptu displays.

On the Saturday, the Napoleonic Society were very restricted in their display time so the 43rd North Carolina put on both a skirmish and some other displays to stretch out the time. Much credit must go to

Glen Pepper (1st Tennessee) who devised 2 different scenarios for both days and commentated during these. In addition, much credit must also go to Steve Brooks(1st Tennessee) and Corporal Mark Moody (43rd North

Carolina) who took control and organised the actual displays and skirmishes from both sides.

As usual, 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. On the Saturday, the back drop was similar to last year and involved General Shermans 1864 March to the Sea.

This was a cracking display involving all the Federals coming onto the field fully laden with boxes, baskets and booty from their foraging and being surprised by a body of Confederate troops. The Union troops quickly took cover behind their looted baggage and a fierce fire fight ensued. However, unbeknown to the Federal troops was that there was another body of Confederates hiding nearby. These suddenly appeared on the Union flank and being attacked from 2 sides ensured their eventual defeat

and wipe out. Following this skirmish, there was a Union Soldier versus a Confederate Soldier firing competition, a Firing display, a Confederate Flag display and the ever popular Kids Drill led by Glenn Gibson. All of these were thoroughly enjoyed by all the huge amount of public who attended.

Sadly, on the Sunday, the forecast proved all too correct with heavy and continuous rain and a few re-enactors packed up and left. However, it did clear up in the afternoon and full credit must go to the ACWS as they stayed and put on both a spontaneous pistol fight as well as a brand new scenario/skirmish to help the Event Organisers out.

This involved the back drop of the Gettysburg Campaign 1863. A lone Union Cavalry Scout is dismounted, wounded and lost and is soon surrounded by a roaming band of Confederate skirmishers. On being captured, he is searched and found to be in possession of some valuable Union battle plans, maps and Federal troop dispositions. The Confederates now need to get these invaluable items back to Confederate General Robert E Lee as quickly as possible.

However, the Union Cavalryman manages to escape when nearby Union troops come to investigate the

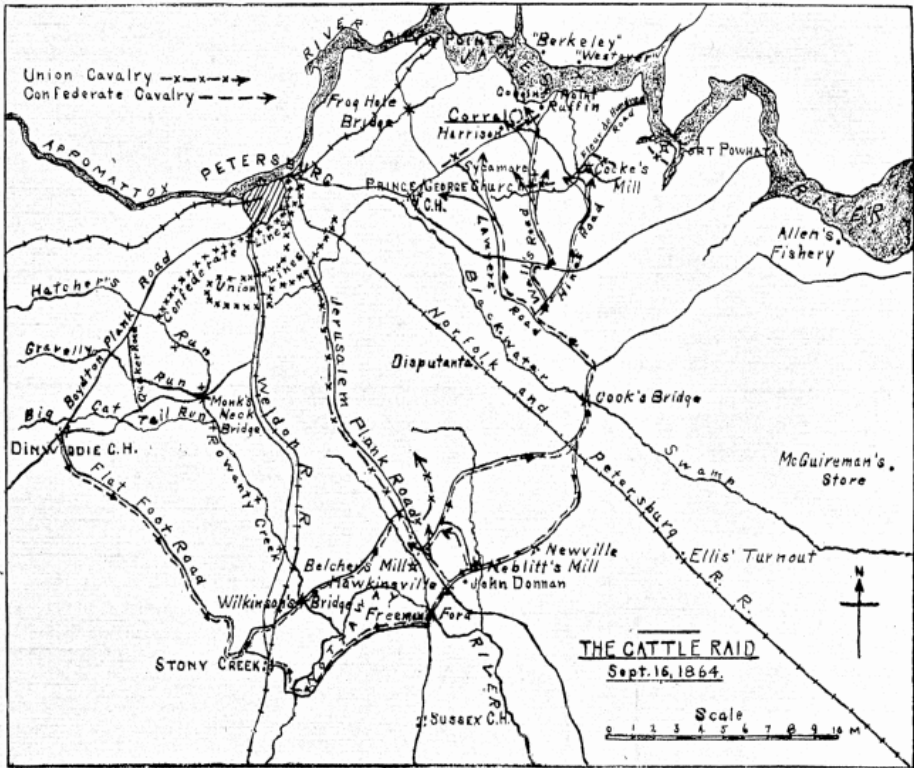
firing and surprise the Confederates with the important lost papers. A fierce battle ensues. This particular fire fight involved some close up fighting as well as some cracking pre arranged hand to hand fighting. This skirmish was really appreciated by the public who braved the elements and well done to those ACWS re-enactors who rolled around in the mud!

One of the other highlights of this Forces in the Field multi period was an opportunity to socialise and meet other re-enactors. Again, this proved very fruitful as the 43rd North Carolina introduced some new recruits to the ACWS and hopefully they will return and stay.

Overall, despite the poor weather on the Sunday and Monday, it was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend 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 ACWS re-enactors. The finale of the multi period event was a Pipe and Drum march and parade which concluded this enjoyable weekend.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina.

The "Great Beefsteak Raid" - 14th - 17th September, 1864



It is suggested that readers save this map in order to follow the concluding account of the cattle raid in next Sunday's edition.

The "Great Beefsteak Raid" was a Confederate cavalry raid that took place in Prince George County, Virginia between 14th and 17th September 1864 as part of the siege of Petersburg during the American Civil War. Confederate Major General Wade Hampton led a force of 4,500 Confederate troopers on what was to become a 100 mile ride to acquire cattle that were intended for consumption by the Union Army which was laying siege to both Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia at the time. This is the amazing story

of one of the greatest cavalry raids of the American Civil War.

By September 1864, the Union siege of Petersburg was entering its third month. Always lacking in supplies, the Confederate forces defending both Petersburg as well as Richmond, Virginia in 1864 were beginning to run out of food. A report by Confederate General Robert E Lee on 22nd August 1864 stated that the corn necessary to feed his starving troops was fully exhausted.

In addition, the Union Army of the Potomac was tightening the noose

around the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia by cutting all the road and rail supply lines from the South. Nevertheless, south of Petersburg and away from the main battle lines, the country was the setting for ugly guerrilla warfare. Confederate cavalry ranged deep behind the lines regularly raiding isolated Federal outposts and rebel scouts and spies roamed the land gaining invaluable information and looking for weaknesses. It was during this time that one of these sources of information, a Confederate scout called Sergeant George D. Shadburne of the Jeff Davis Legion submitted a very detailed and thorough report on the Union defences east of Petersburg as far as Coggin's Point on the James river on September 5th 1864.

He also informed the recipient of his report, Confederate General Wade Hampton that there were 3,000 lightly defended cattle behind Union lines at fire eater Edmund Ruffin's plantation on Coggin's Point, only 5 miles away from Union General Ulysses S Grants Headquarters. He also stated that the cattle were in a corral and only protected by 120 Union soldiers and 30 unarmed civilians.

However, in reality, there were more but the herd was still poorly protected by about 250 men of the

1st District of Columbia Cavalry and a small detachment of about 150 men from the 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry. Confederate General Wade Hampton had only recently taken over full control of the Confederate cavalry after Confederate General J.E.B Stuart's death at Yellow Tavern in May 1864. The latters fondness for riding behind and around Union lines would appear to have rubbed off on Hampton as he immediately started making plans to relieve the Union of their numerous unguarded cattle.

Therefore, following a consultation with Confederate General Robert E Lee and gaining his tacit approval, Confederate General Wade Hampton organised an overall force of over 4,500 Confederate troopers for the expedition. The force consisted of a 2 brigade cavalry division led by Major General H.F "Rooney" Lee.

This included Barringer's brigade of North Carolinians and Lucius Davis brigade of Virginians. In addition, there were 2 independent cavalry brigades led by Rosser and Dearing and 100 hand picked cavalry troopers from Young's and Dunovant's brigades led by Lt Col Miller of the 6th South Carolina Cavalry. This force also purposefully included "several certified Texas cattle thieves".

The dates of 14th -17th September 1864 were specifically chosen by the Confederates as it was well known that US General Ulysses Grant was visiting General Sheridan who still had control of most of the US cavalry in the Shenandoah Valley at that time.

On September 14th 1864, the Confederates headed to the south of Petersburg and the Union trenches in order to eventually turn north behind the Union lines. On this first day, they travelled along the Boydton Plank Road and bivouacked at Wilkinson's Bridge on Rowanty Creek. Leaving early on the morning of September 15th, Confederate General Wade Hampton chose to cross the Blackwater River at Cooke's Bridge.

This was key to the success of the operation as this had been previously destroyed by Union forces and would therefore be a totally unexpected crossing point. He had earlier sent some hand picked Confederate "mounted engineers" to reconstruct the bridge for the crossing and as it was being repaired, his Confederate troopers rested and watered their mounts.

On the very early morning of September 16th , Hampton succeeded in arriving 10 miles off

Coggin's Point totally undetected and immediately divided his command into 3 separate parts for the attack. The smallest part namely Dearing's brigade would take up a blocking position to the East to guard against any Yankee interference from that direction. The largest part namely WH Rooney's division would scatter the Yankees around nearby Prince Georges Court House and guard against any Yankee interference from the West as this was the nearest to the main Union lines at Petersburg.

Finally, the last column namely Rosser's brigade and the 100 hundred hand picked troops would strike in the centre directly north, overrun the 1st District Of Columbia cavalry and capture the whole herd. By 5.00am on September 16th , all the 3 Confederate columns were in position and the attack commenced. Rosser hit first and after a spirited defence drove off the Union cavalry guards and liberated the cattle.

Both Rooney Lee's division on the left and Dearing's brigade on the right took their blocking positions successfully thereby also ensuring the cattle were successfully hemmed in. After 3 hours, all 3 columns broke off their attacks and left with 2,486 cattle, 11 supply wagons and 304 Union prisoners. All the cattle were quickly rounded

by the additional use of a large number of shepherd dogs that had been brought along by the Confederates to help with the herding. Hampton returned back to Cooke's Bridge on the Blackwater river and successfully re-crossed. A Federal force of 2,100 troopers under Brigadier General Henry Davies Junior lay ahead but were easily held off by Rosser's Confederate brigade that had been immediately sent northward after the raid to scout ahead.

The Federals were then dispersed before Hampton arrived with all the 2,486 cattle, wagons and prisoners to the Confederate lines the next day on 17th September. The total losses for the Confederates were 10 killed, 47 wounded and 4 missing.

In his after action report, Hampton wrote "the command returned to their old quarters after an absence of 3 days, during which they had marched upward of 100 miles, defeating the enemy in 2 fights, and bringing from his lines in safety a large amount of captured property, together with 304 prisoners.

Of the 2,486 cattle captured 2,468 have been brought in, and I hope to get the few remaining ones. 3 guidons were taken and 11 wagons brought in safely, several others having been destroyed. 3 camps of

the enemy were burned, after securing from them some very valuable stores, including quite a number of blankets. My loss was 10 killed, 47 wounded and 4 missing".

Despite the raids success, its strategic impact was not as great as the sheer amount of cattle taken would indicate. For whereas the Union could easily replace the cattle, the Confederates lacked the corn and grain to actually sustain and feed them. As a result, the majority were quickly slaughtered and eaten by the starving Confederate troops in the trenches.

For many days afterwards, the Confederates would taunt the Union soldiers opposite thanking them for their dinner and inviting them to come on over to share their spoils. There was so much fresh beef available that even unauthorised exchanges were made with Union soldiers for luxury items the Confederates were unable to acquire. Eventually, as the beef was consumed or became spoiled, the Confederates were forced to return to their meagre and dire food situation.

Union President Abraham Lincoln called the Great Beefsteak Raid "the slickest piece of cattle stealing" he ever heard of. Confederate General Robert E Lee's adjutant, Lt Col. Walter Taylor, said the raid made up

for the disruption of Confederate supply lines caused by the recent loss of the vital Weldon Railroad to Union forces. Union General Ulysses Grant was more circumspect. On being asked a few days later by a press reporter when he thought he would actually take Petersburg, he brusquely replied "Never, if our armies continue to supply him with beef cattle!"

The "Great Beefsteak Raid" was undoubtedly one of the greatest cavalry raids of the Civil War. At a cost of 60 men, Hampton had secured nearly 2,500 beef cattle for Lee's nearly starving troops, totally embarrassed the Union high command, captured 100's of Federal troops and secured much needed arms and supplies including 100's of Henry Repeating rifles which had recently been issued to the 1st District of Columbia Cavalry.

The latter were coveted weapons seen as trophies by the victorious Confederates and Hampton himself took possession of one on which he scratched his name on the brass receiver as a memento of his achievement. Although one of the greatest raids of the Civil War, it would also prove to be one of the last hurrahs for the proud Army of Northern Virginia.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina Volunteers

Goobers Notes:

- 1) The 1966 film Alvarez Kelly starring Richard Widmark portrays a fictionalised depiction of this event.
- 2) The Prince George County Historical Society has commemorated the raid every year with a massive steak dinner each September.

Sources: Wikipedia; The Beefsteak Raid, Petersburg Campaign; The Beefsteak Raid, Petersburgsieg.org; Wade Hampton and the Great Beefsteak Raid.

Thank You ACWS

Lincoln Castle

"Yes your people did a cracking job and I wouldn't hesitate to use them again! Regards Alan Larson"

"We enjoyed having you all at Lincoln Castle and it's great to hear that your members had such a good weekend. We've had some really positive feedback regarding the event and please pass on our thanks to the ACWS. Thank you Stephanie Beacher"

Legend of the Lost Civil War Cannon on Cotton Hill

Most Civil soldiers both Blue and Gray lost many personal and military items during the American Civil War. However, 1 Confederate captain lost something a little bit bigger. He lost his precious bronze cannon and it's whereabouts still remain hidden up to this very day. This is the fascinating story of the long lost Confederate cannon on Cotton Hill.

In an official post war Civil War account the details are as follows. Captain Joel H Abbott, Co. H, 8th Virginia Cavalry recalls that on September 9th 1862, the overall Confederate commander, General Loring had begun to move his Confederate army down to confront General Cox's Federal army then based in the Fayetteville area.

Confederate Captain Joel Abbott was subsequently given orders to take a detachment of his 8th Virginia cavalry through the woods to the Cotton Hill area and cut any telegraph wires and hold the road leading to a temporary bridge across the River Gauley to obstruct the Federals.

However, on September 10th a regiment of Union cavalry crossed the river and climbed Cotton Hill and cut off Captain Abbott and his rebel cavalry detachment forcing them to

retreat back to the main Confederate army which was eventually achieved with difficulty. On September 11th, General Cox's Federal army suddenly retreated and Confederate General Loring ordered all the Confederate forces to pursue the retreating Federals and Captain Abbott and his troopers to take with them a bronze cannon back up to the cliffs on Cotton Hill overlooking the River Gauley to destroy a temporary bridge the retreating Federals were using and generally harass them.

The subsequent action was successful with the bridge being hit and demolished by the cannon as well as knocking out a munitions magazine that was in the mouth of nearby Zoll's Hollow. However, in his post Civil War account, Captain Abbott fully recalls that after this engagement "and then trying to get the gun back and finding it a difficult job, we hid it in a deep ravine, and it is there yet".

All the Confederate forces then left the area in pursuit of the Federal forces resulting in the battle of Charleston on September 13th 1862. However, all the conversations since this successful engagement by Captain Abbott have centred not on the actual operation

itself but what happened afterwards to this lost Confederate cannon. Because he was such a respected and dependable captain it was believed he would not make up such a tale. So, is the cannon still out there and if not, where is it now?

To back up his story, several people in the local community have their own stories about the missing bronze cannon. In the early 1900's, a local coal miner found the cannon and due to a miners strike at the time in 1902 was desperate to put the cannon back to good use by using it against the coal companies. However, his friends declined to participate in such a foolhardy venture and refused to help retrieve the cannon.

It remained where he found it. In addition, a young child called Jimmy Blevin's remembers finding the cannon whilst out playing and his young siblings who accompanied him at the time fully recall this. However, being unable to move it or get it home, they just left it where it was in the dense undergrowth. In addition, a couple of hunters have also stated that they have come across the cannon whilst out hunting.

However, none of these parties have been able to positively identify the actual location of the cannon and it

would also appear to have been spotted in different areas in the vicinity whilst still covered in dense undergrowth. As such, if it is still out there, it lies somewhere in the New River Gorge area, West Virginia. So if you ever go rock climbing or hiking in the area keep your eyes peeled as you may across a valuable piece of American Civil War history!

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina.

Sources : Find the Lost Civil War Cannon in the New River Gorge, June 10 2011 by Leigh, Summit Blog Staff; Account of the lost cannon on Cotton Hill. A Civil War Narrative as told by Captain J. H Abbott (Gauley River Book Company)



2018 At a Glance





EVENTS CALENDAR

2018

2018 ACWS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2018 ACWS Annual General Meeting is to be held at The Rubery & Rednal Royal British Legion Club, 64 New Road, Rubery, Birmingham, B45 9HY

2019

Confirmed

10th - 11th August - **Spetchley Park** - with camping from the Friday to the Monday

24-25 August - **Tilston** - Tilston Wakes Country Fair The Playing Field, Church Road, Tilston, Malpass, Cheshire, SY14 7HB
Members camping from Friday afternoon to Monday morning.

On SATURDAY, a parade followed by a firing display of infantry and artillery on the event field & Living History.

On SUNDAY, the show will open with a cannon round, during the afternoon a firing display, kids drill finishing with a short skirmish in the arena.

Note the event is only on SATURDAY & SUNDAY of this Bank Holiday

Possible events 2019 - Unconfirmed

Sedgefield June, Ibstock on the 18th Aug and Shackerstone 7th-8th Sept