



The A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER

2022 2nd Edition

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Moira Furnace Museum 2022 courtesy Abigail Hooper (118th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry)

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Issue 204

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Reports

Hi Guys,

The excitement is building for our first outing of the season.



Guns and leatherwork already getting cleaned and polished in anticipation.

We have quite a few events this season, they maybe not what we have expected due to many factors. The war in Ukraine with Russia has had an impact on re-enacting this year also the residual effects of covid.

Thank you to the board for all you do. It is a thankless task until we see all of the members come together as a family !!

See you all soon, love to you all.

Helen Gibson

Chairperson ACWS

To all fellow Southern forces,



Well, we are about to start another season with what we thought would be clear of Covid 19, but alas, it is still hanging around and we must all be vigilant while away at the weekends.

I ask everyone to try and support the Society this year by attending events and joining as soon as possible. It is understandable that the current climate of the cost of living and fuel will deter travelling to certain events, but we can only do what is within our means.

You may have noticed some potential venues had been cancelled at the last minute, which have not been the fault of the Board. Mostly due to new management at certain places and details not passed on, not financially viable to attend due to what the sponsor was wanting but willing to pay and of course the ongoing uncertainty of the pandemic. With the absence of a recognised Events Officer certain Board members are working extra hard to secure venues and events and we all must be grateful and thankful for all their hard work.

Now, down to Army business and I must apologise for lack of communication both in the newsletter and social media platforms. This has been down to changes in both my personal and work life but hopefully now settled down.

I want to make changes on the camp with the introduction of a civilian street for those that wish to still come away and carry out displays for the public or don't partake in the Military set up of the armed forces of the Confederacy. Also, the Artillery will also have its own street/ area so the cannons can be placed close by to them. It is hoped that the top street/ Officer's row will consist solely of the recognised military personnel of Officers, Sgt Maj, Ordinance QM and if present Drum Major. Otherwise, this street will expand beyond its means. Normal Company streets will carry on as normal. Of course, all this depends on the area we are allocated at the weekends.

Hopefully, the 32nd Va. will be loaning the camp a Bonnie Blue as a marker flag for people arriving and locating our streets before the event starts. All other flags must be stowed overnight and not flown until the Confederate National flag is raised in the morning ceremony on the day. When the National flag

is lowered at the end of the authentic day all other flags are taken down so no flags should be flown through the night.

Can I ask all Regimental commanders to ensure, if needed all FSPC's are up to date and information given to the Health & Safety Officer to meet the requirements of the Society.

The Confederate camp on the evening is a quite unique experience and attracting re-enactors from other groups to come over and enjoy the life around the fire. Even though I love this and enjoy the fun, singing and frivolity that this generates I must press upon you all that there is a society curfew that comes into place at midnight and I ask that if anyone wants to stay and continue to have a chat with others to move away from the camp and allow those who have gone to bed to have a good night's sleep without having to get up and ask people to be quiet. I know this may sound contradictory from me as I'm one of the people that tends to stay up, but the society have had a few complaints over the last couple of years from other groups and sponsors which could jeopardise our participation at future events.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you all at the weekends that are able to

make and please ensure all licenses are up to date, kit is repaired, tents waterproofed, and your powder is dry.

So, let's get stuck into those damn blue-belly's, by putting on a fantastic show with them and carry on enjoying our fabulous hobby together.

See ya all soon.

Your obedient servant.

Major Glenn Gibson

Hey y'all,

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. It feels so good to be back on camp after the two horrible years we have had!



I must tell you all about a lovely letter I received off a lovely lady from the US called Dee Cody. I have since made contact with her on Facebook. It was beautifully written and was to draw our attention to "Remembering the Sultana". Dee, Thankyou very much on behalf of us all here in the UK for your lovely letter and for the outstanding work you do keeping the memory alive.

We still need an events director, or at least someone with some kind of sales experience to help out on the board and we also need anyone who has an up to date first aid certificate to let us know.

Can I also remind you all whilst public are on site that any modern or sharp objects ie axes, knives should be stored away and not on public view or available to touch.

Moira and Morley were both good events for the start of the season ahead, was lovely to see so many people that we haven't seen for so long. Marbury is next, lovely place with lovely locals. It is so nice to be returning there. Please keep your eye on the website as it is being updated almost every week with possible events, warning orders and such.

We are still closely in touch with SoSkAn, 24th Virginia and American Eagles and where possible they will be invited to join us at our events as they invite us also.

Thank you to the board for all you do and to you all for supporting our lovely family society.

Take Care Y'all,

Linda
(Company Secretary)

The Sultana -The Greatest Maritime Naval Disaster in United States History

Further info on ACWS website - <https://acws.co.uk/archives-military-sultana>

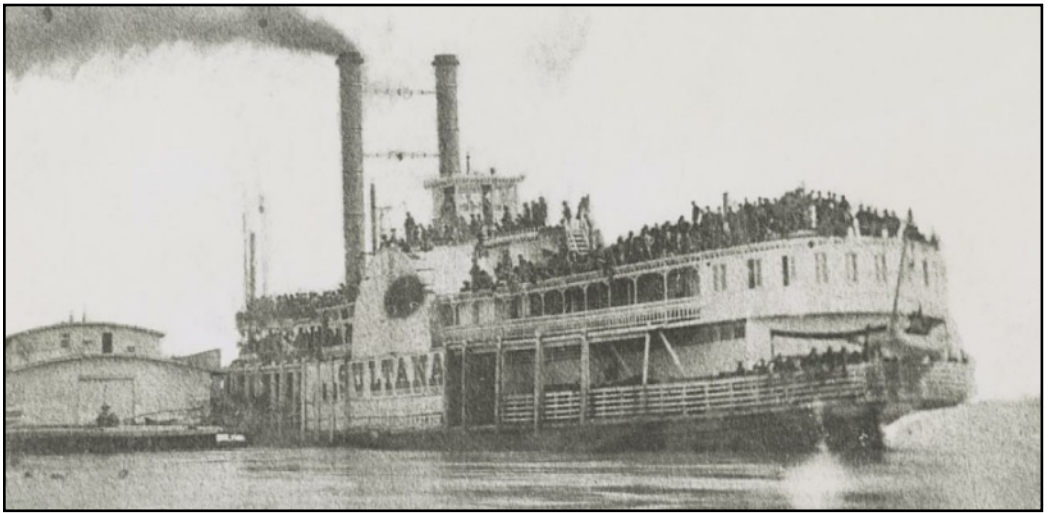
The Sultana was a commercial side-wheel steamboat which exploded and sank on the Mississippi River on April 27, 1865, killing an estimated 1,800 people in what remains the worst ever maritime disaster in United States history. The history of the Sultana and its huge loss of life at the close of the American Civil War is still a tragic episode that is often overlooked and forgotten by historians.

The Sultana was made of wood and constructed in 1863 by the John Litherbury Boatyard in Cincinnati, Ohio. She was built for the lower Mississippi cotton trade. She was launched on January 3, 1863 and she was the fifth steamboat to bear the name Sultana. She was purposely built for both speed and capacity with a crew of 85. She measured 260 feet long, 39 feet wide at the base and 42 feet wide at the beam. She registered 1,719 tons and had a 7 foot draft. Her two side-mounted paddle wheels were driven by 4 tubular (fire-tube) boilers.

These boilers were introduced in 1848 and they were capable of generating twice as much steam per fuel load as conventional flue boilers. Each fire-tube boiler was 18 feet long and 46 inches in diameter and contained 24 five-inch flues

which were tubes that ran from the firebox to the chimney. The economic advantages of the boilers came with a particular safety hazard. The water levels in a tubular system had to be carefully maintained at all times. The areas between the many flues clogged easily, and the sediment and mineral build up around the tubes and boiler sides, especially heavy when the river water used in the system carried much sediment, was particularly difficult to scrape off. Even the slightest variation in the water level could cause hot spots leading to metal fatigue, greatly increasing the risk of an explosion. The typical steamboat construction was made up of layers of highly flammable lightweight wood covered with paint and varnish. Any incident would be likely to be catastrophic.

Between 1863 and 1865, the Sultana ran a regular route between St. Louis and New Orleans and was frequently commissioned to carry Union troops during the American Civil War. Although initially designed with a capacity of only 376 passengers, she was carrying well over 2,500 when 3 of her 4 boilers suddenly exploded and caused it to sink near Memphis, Tennessee. Sadly, the disaster itself was overshadowed in the press by



events surrounding the end of the American Civil War including both the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and 10 days later his assassin John Wilkes Booth. In addition, Confederate President Jefferson Davis had just been captured and both General Robert E Lee and General Joseph Johnson had recently surrendered their respective Confederate armies.

With regards the background to the disaster itself, the Sultana left St. Louis on April 13, 1865, under the command of Captain James Cass Mason bound for New Orleans. On the morning of April 15, she was tied up at Cairo, Illinois, when word reached the city that U.S. President Abraham Lincoln had just been assassinated in Fords Theatre Washington, D.C. Immediately, Captain Mason grabbed an armload

of Cairo newspapers and headed South to spread the news, knowing that telegraphic communication with the Southern states had been almost totally cut off because of the recent end of the American Civil War.?

Upon reaching Vicksburg, Mississippi, Captain Mason was approached by Captain Reuben Hatch, the chief quartermaster at Vicksburg, with a startling proposal. He stated that 1,000's of recently released Union prisoners of war who had been held in the Confederate prison camps at both Cahaba near Selma, Alabama and Andersonville, Georgia had been brought together to a small parole camp called Camp Fisk just outside of Vicksburg to await their release and desperately needed transportation back to the Northern

states. Camp Fisk was a neutral holding pen for these prisoners of war where they were given basic food and new clothes prior to transportation up the Mississippi River. These prisoners had been held in Confederate hospitals and prison camps which were dirty, overcrowded and disease infested places and food and medicine were in very short supply.

This was of course true of prison camps on both sides in the North and South during the Civil War but life in the Southern camps had deteriorated towards the end when the Confederacy itself was having severe trouble feeding and caring for its own soldiers and citizens. A quick return North for recuperation for these paroled Union prisoners in poor condition was therefore imperative. As such, the U.S. government offered to pay US\$2.75 per enlisted man and US\$8 per officer to any steamboat captain who would take a group back up North. Knowing that Captain Mason was in desperate need of money, Captain Hatch suggested that he could guarantee Mason a full load of approximately 1,400 prisoners if Mason would agree to give him a reciprocal financial kickback in return. Hoping to gain much more money through this potentially lucrative deal, Mason quickly agreed to Hatch's offer.

Leaving Vicksburg, the Sultana travelled downriver to New Orleans, continuing to spread the news of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination. On April 21, she left New Orleans with 70 cabin and deck passengers, along with a small amount of livestock. She also carried her crew of 85. About 10 hours south of Vicksburg, 1 of her 4 boilers sprang a leak. Under reduced pressure, the Sultana eventually limped into Vicksburg to get the boiler repaired and to pick up her promised load of paroled Union prisoners mainly from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia.

As they were brought from the parole camp to the Sultana, a ship mechanic was brought down to work on the leaky boiler. Although the mechanic wanted to cut out and replace the ruptured seam, Captain Mason knew that such a job would take several days and cost him his lucrative load of prisoners. By the time the repairs would have been completed, the Union prisoners would have been sent home on other boats. Instead, Captain Mason and his chief engineer, Nathan Wintringer, persuaded the mechanic to make only temporary repairs by hammering back the bulged boiler plate and riveting a patch of lesser thickness over the seam that had

caused the leak. Instead of taking 2 or 3 days, the temporary repair took only 1. During her time in port, and while the makeshift repairs were being hammered out, the Sultana took on the paroled prisoners.

Although Captain Hatch had initially suggested that Captain Mason might get as many as 1,400 released Union prisoners, a mix-up with the parole camp books and suspicion of further bribery from other steamboat captains caused the Union officer in charge of the loading, namely Captain George Augustus Williams, to place every man at the parole camp on board the Sultana, believing the number to be less than 1,500. Although the Sultana only had a legal capacity of 376, by the time she backed away from Vicksburg on the night of April 24, she was severely overcrowded including now well over 2,000 paroled Union prisoners, 22 guards from the 58th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, 70 paying cabin passengers, some Confederate soldiers and 85 crew members making an estimate of nearly 2,500 people. Many of the paroled prisoners had been severely weakened by their incarceration and associated illnesses but had managed to gain some strength while waiting at the parole camp to be officially released back up North. As such, the men were packed

throughout the Sultana into every conceivable available space with the sheer overflow being so extreme that in some places, the wooden decks began to creak and sag and had to be supported with additional heavy wooden beams. There was standing room only for the vast majority.

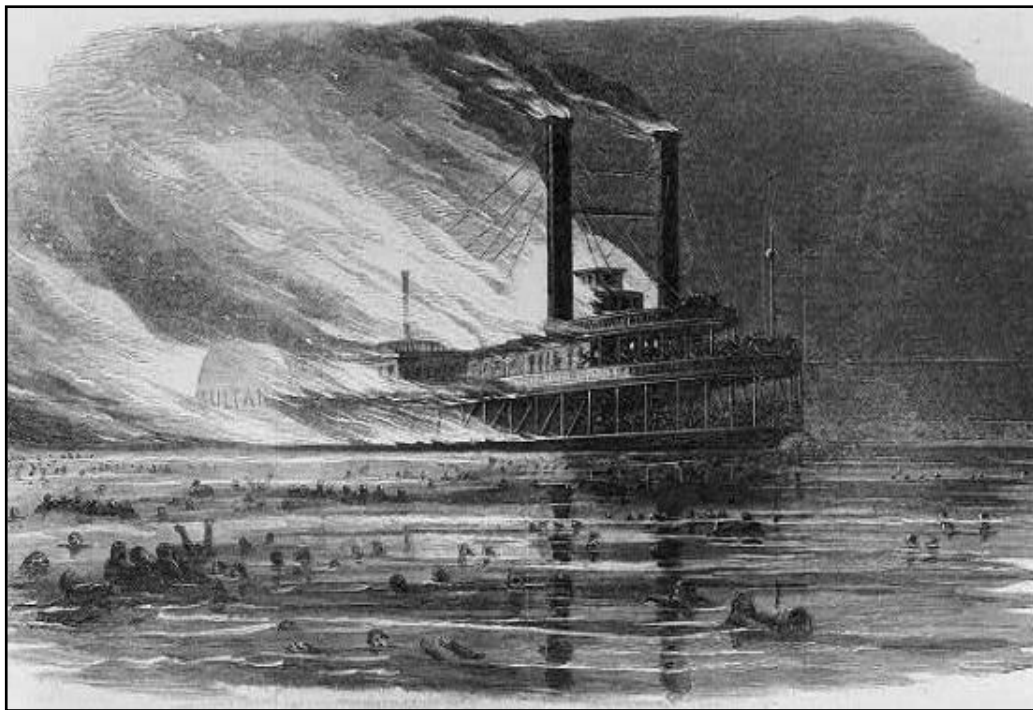
Once fully loaded, the Sultana then set off and spent the next 2 days travelling upriver, fighting against one of the worst spring floods in the Mississippi's history. At some places, the river which was in a state of flooding overflowed the banks and spread out some 3 miles wide. Trees along the river bank were almost completely covered, until only the very tops of the trees were visible above the swirling, powerful water. On April 26, the Sultana stopped at Helena, Arkansas, where photographer Thomas W. Bankes took the now iconic picture of the grossly overcrowded vessel filled to capacity with soldiers crowding the decks. The Sultana subsequently arrived at Memphis, Tennessee, around 7:00pm and the crew began unloading 120 tons of sugar from the hold. Near midnight, the Sultana left Memphis, leaving behind approximately 200 men. She then went a short distance upriver to take on a new load of coal from some coal barges and then at approximately 1:00am started North

again. She was now carrying far more than 6 times its design capacity and the ship struggled mightily upstream against the Mississippi's famously strong currents which had recently been exacerbated by the heavy spring snowmelt.

At approximately 2:00am on April 27, 1865, when she was about 7 miles north of Memphis, its boilers suddenly violently erupted. First 1 boiler exploded quickly followed a split-second later by 2 more boilers exploding. The enormous explosion of steam came from the top rear of the boilers and went upward at a 45-degree angle, tearing through the crowded decks above and completely demolishing the pilothouse. Without a pilot to steer the boat, the Sultana soon became an out of control burning and drifting blazing hulk. The terrific explosion had flung some of the deck passengers into the water and destroyed a huge section of the boat. The twin smokestacks toppled over; the starboard smokestack fell backwards into the blasted hole, and the port smokestack fell forward onto the crowded forward section of the upper deck. The forward part of the upper deck was collapsed onto the middle deck, killing and trapping many in the wreckage. Fortunately, the sturdy railings around the twin openings of the main stairway

prevented the upper deck from crushing down completely onto the middle deck. The men located around the twin openings quickly crawled under the wreckage and down the main stairs. Further back, the collapsing decks formed a slope that led down into the exposed furnace boxes.

The broken wood caught fire and turned the remaining superstructure into a blazing inferno. Survivors panicked and raced for the safety of the water, but in their weakened condition they soon ran out of strength and began to cling to each other. Whole groups went down together. It is estimated that 400 Union soldiers died instantly and many of these were from both Tennessee and Kentucky as they had been loaded by their state and tightly packed around the 4 boilers. Many others were also killed outright by the subsequent shrapnel, steam and boiling water created by the huge volcano like explosion. All the soldiers aboard the Sultana, having just survived a bloody Civil War and horrendous conditions during their incarceration as prisoners of war and soon about to see the loved ones, were now dealt with another traumatic blow as the boat exploded, caught fire and began to disappear into the flooded Mississippi River. It had become a raging inferno.



While this fight for survival continued, the southbound steamer the Bostana (No. 2), built in 1860 but coming downriver on her maiden voyage after being refurbished, arrived at approximately 2:30am, a half hour after the actual explosion itself and rescued scores of survivors. At the same time, dozens of people began to float past the Memphis waterfront, calling for help until they were noticed by the crews of docked steamboats and U.S. warships, who immediately set about rescuing the survivors. Eventually, the hulk of the Sultana drifted about 6 miles to the west bank of the river and sank at around 9:00am near Mound City and

present-day Marion, Arkansas, about 7 hours after the explosion. Other vessels joined the rescue, including the steamers Silver Spray, Jenny Lind and Pocahontas, the USS Essex and the sidewheel gunboat USS Tyler.

Passengers who survived the initial explosion had to risk their lives in the icy spring runoff of the Mississippi or burn with the boat. Many died of drowning or hypothermia. Some survivors were plucked from the tops of semi-submerged trees along the Arkansas shore. Indeed, there are confirmed reports and poignant stories that many were saved by Confederate soldiers on the river

banks who rescued them on makeshift rafts and picked other survivors off tree tops in the river. Nevertheless, bodies of victims continued to be found downriver for months afterwards, some as far as Vicksburg. Many bodies were never recovered. Most of the Sultana's officers, including Captain Mason, were among those who perished. The death toll of the Sultana is estimated at 1,800 and therefore exceeds the death toll of the RMS Titanic of 1,496 in 1916.

Since Memphis had been captured by Union forces in 1862 and turned into a supply and recuperation city, roughly 800 survivors were initially treated by the latest medical equipment and trained personnel upon being sent to numerous local hospitals. However, over 300 eventually died from their wounds and injuries adding to the overall casualty list. Newspaper accounts indicate that the Southern residents of Memphis had particular sympathy for the victims despite the ongoing Union occupation. In addition, the Chicago Opera Troupe, a minstrel group that had travelled upriver on the Sultana before getting off at Memphis, staged a benefit performance while the Union crew of the gunboat USS Essex raised US\$1,000.

In December 1885, the survivors living in the Northern states of Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio began attending annual reunions, forming the National Sultana Survivors' Association. Eventually, the group settled on meeting in the Toledo, Ohio, area. Perhaps inspired by their Northern comrades, a Southern group of survivors, men from Tennessee and Kentucky, began meeting in 1889 around Knoxville, Tennessee. Both groups met as close to the April 27 anniversary date as possible, corresponded with each other, and shared the title National Sultana Survivors' Association.

By the mid-1920s, only a handful of survivors were able to attend the reunions. In 1929, only 2 men attended the Southern reunion. The next year, only 1 man showed up. The last Northern survivor, Private Jordan Barr of the 15th Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment, died on May 16, 1938, at age 93. The last of the Southern survivors, and last overall survivor, was Private Charles M. Eldridge of the 3rd Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, who died at his home at age 96 on September 8, 1941, more than 76 years after the disaster. No one has ever been held accountable for the massive loss incurred during the Sultana disaster. In essence, the Sultana tragedy was a totally preventable tragedy which

was grounded by unbridled greed, bribery, war profiteering and blatant criminal negligence on a number of levels.

Theories of what caused the Sultana disaster

The official cause of the Sultana disaster was determined to be mismanagement of water levels in the boilers, exacerbated by the fact that the vessel was severely overloaded and top-heavy. As the steamboat made her way North following the twists and turns of the river, she listed severely from side to side. Her 4 boilers were interconnected and mounted side-by-side so that if the boat tipped sideways, water would tend to run out of the highest boiler. With the fires still going against the empty boiler, this created hot spots. When the boat tipped the other way, water rushing back into the empty boiler would hit the hot spots and flash instantly to steam, creating a sudden surge in pressure. This effect of careening could have been minimized by maintaining high water levels in the boilers. The official inquiry found that the boilers exploded because of the combined effects of careening, low water levels and the temporary faulty repair made a few days earlier. In essence, it is believed that the ship's rocking caused water to cascade out of the

highest boilers and come in contact with the red-hot iron of under-filled boilers below. Intense steam suddenly developed, producing a surging effect like the firing of gunpowder in a mine.

The most recent investigation into the cause of the disaster by Pat Jennings, principal engineer of Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company, which came into existence in 1866 because of the Sultana explosion determined that 3 main factors led to the disaster:

- a) The type of metal used in the construction of the boilers - Charcoal Hammered No. 1, which tends to become brittle with prolonged heating and cooling. Charcoal Hammered No. 1 was no longer used for the manufacture of boilers after 1879.
- b) The use of the sediment-laden Mississippi River water to feed the boilers. The sediment tended to settle on the bottom of the boilers or clog between the flues and leave hotspots.
- c) The design of the boilers. The Sultana had 4 tubular boilers filled with 24 horizontal five-inch flues. Being so closely packed within the 48-inch diameter boilers tended to cause the muddy sediment to form

hot pockets and were extremely difficult to clean. Tubular boilers were discontinued from use on steamboats plying the Lower Mississippi after 2 more steamboats with similar tubular boilers exploded shortly after the Sultana explosion.

However, there have been other alternative theories. In 1888, a St. Louis resident named William Streeter claimed that his former business partner, Robert Loudon, made a confession of having sabotaged the Sultana by the use of a coal torpedo while they were drinking in a saloon. Loudon, a former well known Confederate agent and saboteur who operated in and around St. Louis, had been previously responsible for the burning of the Union steamboat Ruth. Supporting Loudon's claim was the fact that what appeared to be a piece of an artillery shell was in fact actually recovered from the sunken wreck of the Sultana itself.

Two years later after Streeter's account came a claim that 2nd Lt. James Worthington Barrett, an ex-prisoner and passenger on the steamboat, had caused the explosion. Barrett was a veteran of the Mexican-American War and had been captured at the Battle of Franklin. He was injured on the Sultana and was honorably discharged in May 1865. However,

there is no apparent motive for him to have actually blown up the Sultana, particularly while on board himself. In 1903, another report indicated that a Tennessee farmer who lived along the river and cut wood for passing steamboats was responsible. After a few Union gunboats filled up their bunkers but refused to pay, the farmer supposedly retaliated by hollowing out a log, filling it with gunpowder and then left the lethal log on his woodpile for the passing steamboats and the log was mistakenly taken by the Sultana. However, the Sultana was predominantly a coal-burning boat and not a wood-burner.

An episode of the PBS series History Detectives on July 2, 2014, reviewed all the known evidence and thoroughly disputed any theories of sabotage and then focused on the question of why the Sultana was allowed to be crowded to several times its normal capacity before departure. The report blamed quartermaster Captain Hatch, an individual with a long history of corruption and incompetence, who was able to keep his job through powerful political connections.

Throughout the Civil War, he had shown incompetence as a quartermaster and competence as a thief, bilking the US Government out of thousands of dollars. Although

brought up on courts-martial charges, he had previously managed to get letters of recommendation from no less reputable personages than President Abraham Lincoln and General Ulysses S. Grant. Captain Frederick Speed, the Union officer who sent the 2,000 paroled prisoners into Vicksburg from the parole camp, was deemed to have been at the parole camp all day and had not personally placed a soldier on board the Sultana. Captain George Williams, who had placed the men on board, was a regular Union Army officer and the Union military authorities refused to go after one of their own.

Captain Hatch, who had concocted a bribe with Captain Mason to crowd as many men onto the Sultana as possible, had quickly quit the service to avoid any court-martial. Finally, Captain Mason of the Sultana, who was ultimately responsible for dangerously overloading his vessel and ordering the faulty repairs to her leaky boiler, had died in the explosion. In the end, therefore, no one has ever been held accountable for what remains the deadliest maritime disaster in United States history.

The Sultana Museum

In 2015, on the 150th anniversary of the disaster, an interim Sultana

Disaster Museum was opened in Marion, Arkansas, the closest town to the buried remains of the steamboat, across the Mississippi River from Memphis. The museum is only temporary until enough funds can be raised to build a permanent museum. Featured in the museum are a few relics from the Sultana such as shaker plates from the boat's furnace, furnace bricks, a few pieces of wood, and some small metal pieces. The museum also features many artefacts from the Sultana Survivor's Association, as well as a 14 foot model replica of the boat. One entire wall is decorated with the names of every soldier, crewmember and passenger who was on the Sultana on April 27, 1865. The current wreck of the Sultana is believed buried today under about 20 feet of soil beneath a soybean field in Northeast Arkansas. In nearby Marion (Crittenden County), a historical marker pays tribute to the Sultana disaster.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd NCV, ACWS

Sources : Wikipedia ; Various Internet accounts; Remembering the Sultana Explosion by Bruce Kaplin; The Sultana Tragedy by Jerry Potter ; Surviving the Worst and The Wreck of the Sultana at the End of the American Civil War by Alan Huffman

Marshall

Sadly, on the 26th of December 2021, one of our much loved previous battle horses, Marshall, passed away and joined his fellow battle buddies before him. He was retired to the fields a couple of years ago due his old age. He had a strong and sometimes frustrating personality but will forever be in the cavalry's heart as one of the best.

Marshall started his life as a circus horse then came into the KC Equine centre, he was used for a short while in riding lessons and he was eventually trained and tried as a reenactment horse, in which he thoroughly excelled and enjoyed. His time with the American Civil War group was much easier on him than the re-enactment he was used to doing with other battles, but enjoyed doing both. When not cantering around a battlefield, he was used in the equine centre as a disabled riding and carriage driving horse. He was always an incredibly gentle soul and always gave 100% of himself, always eager to please in any aspect, and would look after his riders first.

That is why he would always be used on the battleground with the Younger riders so the team knew everybody would get on and off that battlefield with no accidents, as I

know when rode him as a young teenager, he was a bit of a character but I soon progressed onto Alfie and CJ, who unfortunately is no longer with us, but now-marshall and CJ are together over the rainbow , Alfie is now retired , but as we all know all of the horses go onto the battlefield Happy to Participate knowing that all their riders are alongside them. Marshall was in his late 20 s when he passed quickly with no pain in his owner's Roy's arms in his stable, so good bye for now old friend.

Mounted Dutyman Tpr J Reed of the Queen's Lifeguards Household Cavalry and the ACWS Cavalry





Sadly today Marshall, followed the rainbow 🌈 to heaven's green fields, Marshall was a much loved horse, and was part of the re enactment. Horses He retired A few years ago, and has now joined his battle buddies that has passed before him, so swiftly my friend you will always be remembered as the first 🏰🐾💜



ACWS at Moira Canal Festival

All photos reproduced with kind permission from Abigail Hooper (118th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry)

The ACWS travelled to the Moira Canal and Museum Military History Festival, Leicestershire on the Easter weekend of 16th, 17th and 18th April 2022 and with the weather being particularly hot and sunny, it made for another very popular and busy weekend for both the re-enactors and the many public who attended.

The Moira Canal and Museum Military History Festival is held at the Moira Furnace Museum and Country Park at the heart of the National Forest. This excellent and picturesque site is dominated by the huge and impressive iron making furnace built by the Earl of Moira in 1804. It is now a protected monument and this is attributed to not being an iron making blast furnace for long which resulted in it being relatively well preserved and protected. This has now been fully restored and houses a fascinating museum of industrial and social



history. In addition, the passing Ashby canal which was abandoned in the 1940's has also been partially restored and narrow boat trips on the "Joseph Wilkes" now prove popular with the public. Other permanent attractions on the site include the well preserved Lime Kilns, a Craft Village, a Playground and an interesting Woodland trail with various sculptures, aquatic plants and wildlife. The Military History Festival Programme began on both Saturday and Sunday at 10.00am with the 2 ACWS artillery pieces being manned by both Union and Confederate crews loudly announcing the start of the Festival. These artillery displays proved extremely popular with both the public and all the other re-enactment groups present. Other re-enactment groups who attended and put on excellent displays included the Naval Bluejackets, the Coldstream Guards (1815), the American War





of Independence and the Royal Warwickshire Regiments WW2 group. The ACWS was by far the largest group and the main headline act.

The ACWS were contracted to provide activities and living history displays for the large amount of public who attended the festival over the weekend. The ACWS artillery pieces officially opened the festival which signalled the commencement of all the activities and for the ACWS the start of the living history displays. Both the well attended Union and Confederate armies took it in turns to perform full firing displays throughout the day as well as performing large scale infantry drills. All these loud and superb demonstrations again proved really popular with the public and Christian Sprakes, ACWS commentator, as usual kept the large audience enthralled throughout. Again, full credit must go to both armies as they demonstrated firing in close order and in 2 ranks. For both armies this

was part of the necessary FSPC (firing health and safety) regulations that all the ACWS re-enactors must undertake before taking the field and was an integral part of this first training weekend of the year. Both armies also had their officers and NCOS training or renewing the training for all their respective regimental members for both infantry and artillery.

It is always important at such events to also put on displays and a living history impression to keep the public interested and involved. Both the Union and Confederate camps did this with the Confederate Army



putting on their new and excellent Civil War Medical display as well as authentic cooking display. The Confederate Army also did the ever popular Ask a Soldier Quiz as well as a superb Kids Drill which really went down well with the public. The Union army and Union artillery also put on excellent infantry, music, horseshoe and artillery displays throughout the weekend. Well done to everyone in both armies who volunteered and helped out. There is no question that our living history displays are both gradually improving as well as becoming extremely popular with both the public and the Event organisers.

Other highlights of this event were the opportunity for both Union and Confederate armies to do a photo shoot with the Confederates marching off into the nearby woods to get some Wilderness like back drop. In addition, many of the living history and firing displays as well as the excellent flag raising displays by both armies were also videoed and recorded. Massive thanks to Abby (Union photographer) for stepping in and arranging everything. In addition, the War of Rights recording team attended in order to record all the sounds of infantry and artillery firing for their ongoing Civil War gaming project. This was similar to what occurred at Whittington Castle, Shropshire. Making such

connections is important to the ACWS. Finally, it was so nice to see the Easter Bunny arrive on the Sunday morning and deposit Easter Eggs throughout all the re-enactment groups and for all the children present! Well done, Joe Reed!

Nevertheless, the main enjoyment by all the re-enactors present at this event was the superb Saturday evening around the joint large campfire situated between the Union and Confederate camps. There was a superb array of accomplished musicians including John Bamber (CS), Catherine Conyard (US),



Christian Sprakes (US), Mike Crump (CS), Ron Harding (CS) and Tom Cutts (CS) who all took it in turns to sing music which everyone could sing along to throughout the evening. A number of ACWS re-enactors had also earlier visited the nearby Rawdon Arms local pub during the early balmy evening to enjoy some local real ales in the beer garden. Despite this being an ACWS training event, there was a very commendable attendance from both armies and a really fine weekend was enjoyed by all with the camaraderie between the 2 armies continuing to develop. Despite no living history on the Bank Holiday Monday, many ACWS re-enactors stayed over on the Sunday night due to the excellent weather and fine location.

The ACWS next travel to Morley for a one day St Georges Day Parade on Sunday 24 April 2022 and then

travel to Marbury, Cheshire on the 14th and 15th May 2022.

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



ACWS at Morley, West Yorkshire

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On Sunday 24th April 2022, the ACWS attended, like the last few years, the St George's Day festivities on Queen Street in Morley Town Centre, West Yorkshire. This is a prestigious event for the ACWS as this is the largest patriotic St George's festival in the North of England!

Throughout the weekend, the town of Morley itself is crammed full of activities and performances including a large street market and entertainment throughout the day from local businesses and performers as well as a large fun fair.

Other highlights included the Yorkshire Volunteer Band, the Swearing of the Oaths from 12pm at the Morley Rugby Club itself, live stage shows, clowns, mini club, scooters, fire engines and plenty of food and drink stalls. Apart from the ACWS, the Knights of the Realm Jousting Team, Northern World War 2 Association, a Country and Western group and the Vikings were also in large attendance.

Historically, the St Georges Day weekend long parade began in 2005 and is thought to be the biggest St Georges Day celebration in the

United Kingdom. It is organised by the Leeds Branch of the Society of St George. The focal point is a large parade by St George on horseback from the Morley Town Hall to the Morley Sports ground. A dragon is then slain. It attracts more than 20,000 visitors every year and includes additional activities such as archery, historical re-enactments, living history encampments, medieval combat displays, music and the singing of the National Anthem. Morley itself has resisted offers by Leeds for the city to hold the festival in future years with organisers saying that the host town is non negotiable and that it will not re-locate under any circumstances the largest patriotic St Georges Day Festival in the North of England.

The ACWS was contracted to take part in the massive parade from the Sports Ground to the Town Hall and perform some small firing displays in the arena at the Sports Ground itself. To our massive credit and led by St George on horseback, the ACWS had a fine turnout from both a Union and Confederate perspective and particularly looked impressive in the military contingent of the huge parade itself with our shimmering bayonets gleaming in the hot sunny weather. In addition, the large amount of public who attended thoroughly enjoyed the ACWS firing displays and our day long living history impression. There is not a big enough space to perform a small skirmish. Many thanks must go to Martyn Clarke, ACWS



commentator, who stepped in and kept the public interested and entertained throughout our excellent firing display. Interesting faces that were also present included MP Jacob Rees-Mogg and actor, Laurence Fox. Massive credit to those ACWS members who attended and particularly pleasing to see a couple of new Confederate recruits who fitted in really well with all the activities.

The ACWS next travel to Marbury, Cheshire for the Merry Days Festival on 14th and 15th May 2022.
Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina Volunteers





Events for 2022

May 14-15 MARBURY, CHESHIRE

CONFIRMED

Confirmed Full Society event at Marbury Merry Days, Hollins Lane, Marbury, nr Whitchurch, Cheshire, SY13 4LN.

Living History on SATURDAY & SUNDAY with infantry, artillery & pyrotechnics battle on SATURDAY.

Further details to follow.

Location Maps: SY13 4LN [Google Maps](#)

June 11-12 SEAHAM, CO.DURHAM

CONFIRMED

Armed Forces Weekend multi-period event at Edith Street, Seaham, Sunderland, SR7 7TT.

Members Camping from Friday 2pm until Monday 10am.

Infantry and Artillery displays on SATURDAY and SUNDAY.

Further details to follow.

Location Maps: SR7 7TT [Google Maps](#)

July 9-10 CHESTER-LE-STREET, CO.DURHAM

CONFIRMED

43rd N.Carolina Regimental event.

ACWS members must contact Goober ([click here](#)) if you want to attend this event.

Further details to follow.

July 16 STAFFORDSHIRE BALLOON FIESTA

POSSIBLE

Possible Living History Event at Staffordshire Balloon Fiesta, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Wood Lane, Uttoxeter, ST14 8BD, with a view to full event in 2023.

Further details to follow.

Location Maps: ST14 8BD [Google Maps](#)

July 30-31 EPWORTH, LINCS

POSSIBLE

Full Society Event at Epworth Showground, Wroot Rd, Epworth, Doncaster DN9 1EA

Further details to follow.

Location Maps: DN9 1EA [Google Maps](#)

August 27-29 WHITBY, N YORKSHIRE

CONFIRMED

Confirmed Full Society event at Whitby War Weekend, Hawsker Lane next to Whitby Abbey, Whitby, YO22 4JR.

Infantry and Artillery. No ACWS Cavalry in attendance.

Living History and Skirmish on SATURDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY.

Members camping available from Friday afternoon until Tuesday morning.

Further details to follow.

Location Maps: YO22 4JR [Google Maps](#)

September 17-18 BARNARD CASTLE, CO.DURHAM

CONFIRMED

End of Season event at Barnard Castle Showground

43rd N.Carolina Regimental event.

ACWS members must contact Goober ([click here](#)) if you want to attend this event.

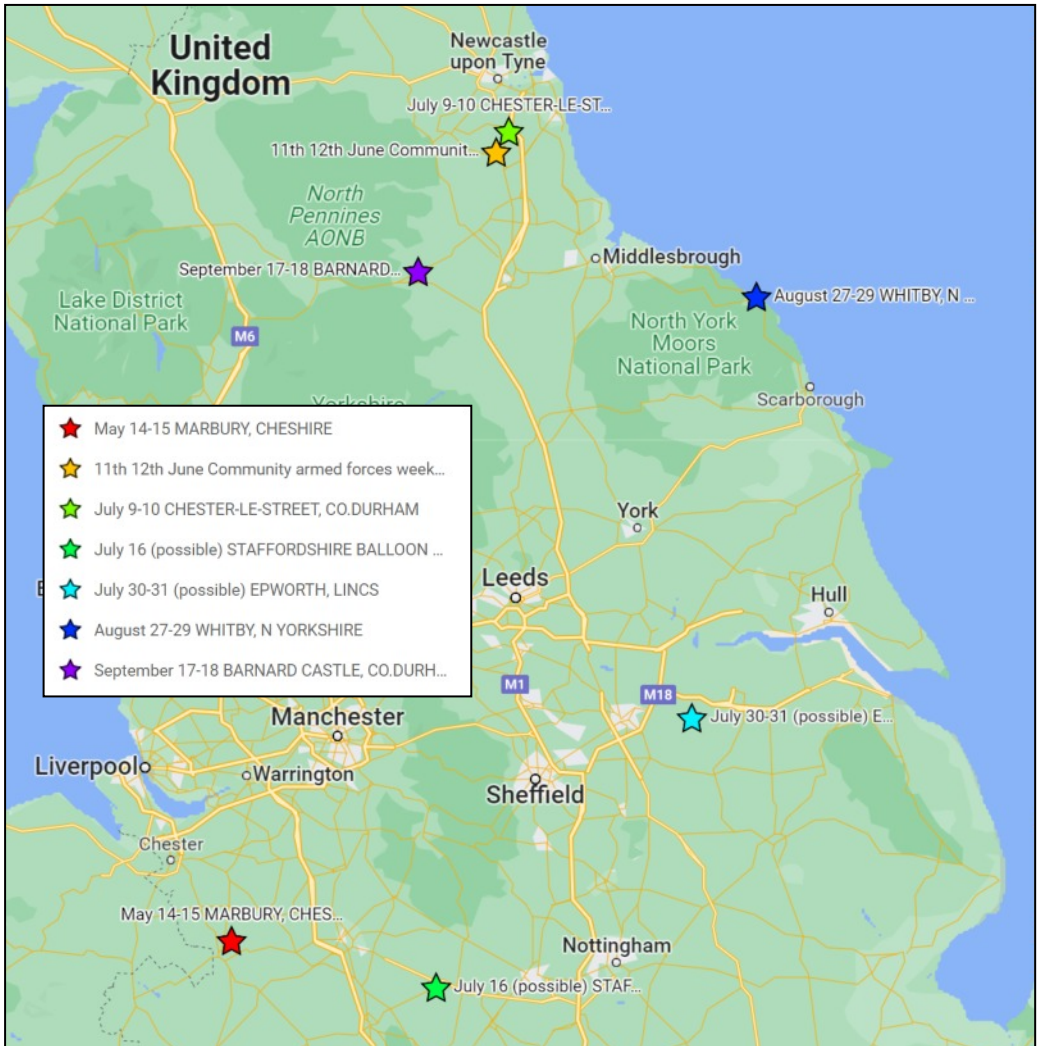
Further details to follow.

December 3ACWS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2022 ACWS Annual General Meeting (Virtual or In-Person - TBC)



EVENTS MAP 2022



[Click Here for Internet View](#)