

FORT MACON RAMPARTS

A publication of the Friends of Fort Macon

Volume IX Issue 2 Summer 2002

DID FORWARD OBSERVERS WIN THE BATTLE OF FORT MACON?

Before the days of rifled artillery, most cannon had a range of little more than one mile. Artillery pieces were always emplaced within sight of the enemy target. Gunners were expected to aim at the target and make appropriate adjustments if their shots missed the target. It was fairly easy to see if you were hitting right or left of the target. But much more difficult to tell if your rounds were passing over the target, especially when your vision was obscured by the smoke produced by the black powder charges in your own and adjacent guns.

In more recent times, when artillery ranges had been extended to 8 to 10 miles or more, targets were almost always out of sight of the gunners. It then became necessary to have forward observers on the ground or in aircraft who could see where the rounds were landing, and communicate needed adjustments by radio or land lines to the Fire Direction Center at the guns.

Before the Union attack on Fort Macon began on April 25, 1862, the Federals established several signal stations in order to facilitate communications and coordination between General Parke's attacking forces and General Burnside's command aboard the *Alice Price* in the sound. One of these semaphore signal stations was located on the top porch of the Atlantic Hotel in Beaufort. Although it hadn't been

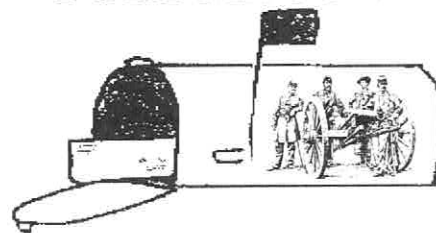
planned, the Beaufort signal station was in a position to see that most of the artillery rounds fired by the smoke blinded Union gunners were passing over the Fort and splashing harmlessly in the water of the sound.

The following report filed by the signal officer in Beaufort after the battle describes what happened on April 25, 1862.

*Report of Lieut. William S. Andrews,
Ninth New York Infantry,
Acting Signal Officer*

Beaufort, N.C., May 1, 1862
Major: Fort Macon fell on the 25th of April. I believe that never in the history of warfare have signals been used with more complete success or to greater advantage than during the siege of that place. When operations were commenced against Fort Macon, between four and five weeks ago, I was ordered to open a station at this place to communicate with General Parke's headquarters via Morehead City and with the blockading squadron. From that time until the 25th instant all orders were sent and received by signals. At times no other communication was had with headquarters, it being unsafe for boats to cross the harbor except under cover of the night. From my station (less than 2 miles distant from the fort) I could with

LETTERS FROM FORT MACON



The writer of these letters, James A. Graham, was a member of the 27th North Carolina Infantry, Company G (Orange Guards). This unit arrived at Fort Macon in April 1861. The unit was transferred in January 1862, when it joined in the defense of New Berne, NC, against an expected attack by the Union forces of General Ambrose Burnside.

*Fort Lane, N.C.
Feb 17th 1862*

My Dear Mother

I received your very welcome letter by Alex on Saturday night.

I did not get my box and bag until yesterday evening, as Mr Whitted left them at the depot in Newberne, thinking that I very likely would not be out at the crossing when the train passed. I had them brought over from Newberne in the wagon yesterday. I will send brother Joseph's and Willie's things to them today.

I was over at Willie's camp yesterday and spent three or four hours there.

I delivered your letter to him and told him to send after his things.

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the aid of glasses observe distinctly the movements of the enemy, as, for instance, should a force go out to attack our troops at work on the siege batteries or any alteration be made in to be immediately known at headquarters, and of which our men could have no knowledge from their position. On my representing this fact to General Parke he ordered a station to be open on Bogue Banks, near our batteries, to receive official messages only, having reference to observations made from my station (this station was at different times worked by Lieutenants Marsh, Lyon, and Palmer, and was several times fired upon the enemy). By this arrangement the enemy were held under a complete surveillance during daylight. I was the only officer on the Beaufort station until the 21st instant, when Lieut. Marvin Wait reported for duty.

On the night preceding the bombardment a number of important official messages were sent and received in communication between General Burnside's headquarters on board the steamer Alice Price lying in Core Sound back of Beaufort and General Parke.

The bombardment commenced on the 25th instant at 6 a. m. I had expected to receive special instructions to watch and report the accuracy of fire; but not receiving them, I determined to act upon my own responsibility. My station was at very nearly a right angle with the line of fire, so that I was enabled to judge with accuracy the distance over or short that the shot fell. The 10 inch shell were falling almost without exception more than 300 yards beyond the fort. Lieutenant Wait and myself continued to signal to the officer in charge until the correct range was obtained. The 8 inch shell were falling short; we signaled to the officer in charge of that battery with the same effect. The same was the case with the Parrott guns, which were much elevated. From the position of our batteries it was impossible for the officers in charge of them to see how their shot fell; but owing to the observations made by Lieutenant Wait and myself and signaled to them from time to time, an accurate range was obtained by all the batteries, and was not lost during the day. After 12 m. every shot fired from our batteries fell in or on the fort. The accuracy of fire astonished ourselves equally with the enemy. From that time until 4 p. m., when a white flag appeared upon the fort and the firing ceased, a greater amount of execution was done than could have occurred in twenty-four hours further bombardment without the aid of signals.

The proposition to surrender and the reply, with terms

of capitulation, were sent to and from General Burnside through this station by Lieutenant Wait and myself. I saw General Parke immediately after the occupation of Fort Macon by our forces. He spoke in the highest terms of praise of the system of signals used, and extended his thanks to the signal officers for the services they had rendered.

Constant signaling during a period of over four weeks across a sheet of glaring water has injured my eyes somewhat.

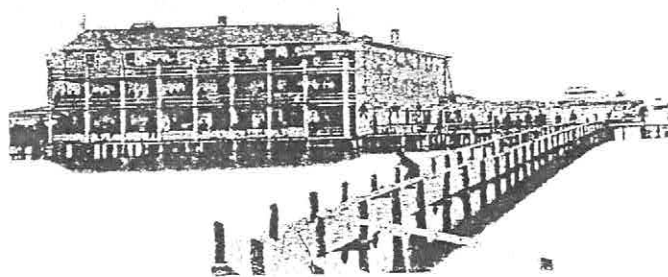
Very respectfully,

W. S. ANDREWS

Second Lieutenant, Ninth N. Y. Vols.,
Acting Signal Officer

Maj. Albert J. Meyer

Signal Officer, U. S. Army.



Beaufort's Atlantic Hotel served as a signal station during the battle of Fort Macon. It was also used as a military hospital for Union soldiers during the war. In 1879 it was destroyed by a hurricane.

REENACTMENTS SCHEDULED

The 1st NC Volunteers and 11th NC State Troops will reenact Civil War events on Saturday and Sunday, July 20 and 21, and September 28 and 29 from 10AM to 4PM.

Flag talks, uniform talks, women's dress talks, close order drills, and musket and cannon firings are but a few of the programs to be performed. A simulated skirmish will be conducted each afternoon.

The reenactors will be cooking and sleeping in the Fort just as their ancestors did more than 140 years ago. This will be an interesting opportunity for both young and old to witness a realistic portrayal of an important part of our nation's history.

SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS AT PARK

Following is a list of nature programs conducted by Park Rangers at Fort Macon State Park during July and August. For more information about program content and meeting place, call the Park office Monday through Friday at (252) 726-3775.

| | | |
|------|-------|------------------------------------|
| 7/2 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 7/5 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |
| 7/9 | 10:00 | Barrier Island Nature Hike |
| 7/9 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 7/12 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |
| 7/16 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 7/19 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |
| 7/23 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 7/24 | 10:00 | Creatures from the Intertidal Zone |
| 7/26 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |
| 7/30 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 8/2 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |
| 8/6 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 8/9 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |
| 8/13 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 8/14 | 10:00 | Creatures from the Intertidal Zone |
| 8/16 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |
| 8/20 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 8/23 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |
| 8/27 | 9:00 | Wild Flower Hike |
| 8/27 | 10:30 | Little Ranger* Discovery Program |
| 8/30 | 9:00 | Seining the Sound |

PROGRAM NOTES:

*Little Ranger Coastal Discovery Programs are environmental education programs for children 3-6 years old.

Tuesdays. Different program each week. Call Park office 726-3775 to make a reservation. Limit 15.

Fridays. Seining the sound. Pull a seine net through shallow waters of Bogue Sound and identify what we catch. Wear shoes appropriate for wading. Call Park office 726-3775 for a reservation. Limit 25.

Barrier Island Nature Hike and Wild Flower Hike - Meet at the bathhouse for a leisurely walk to observe and learn about the natural attractions of Fort Macon State Park.

Creatures from the Intertidal Zone. Meet at the bathhouse to learn hands-on about these creatures that live "between the tides".

SONGS OF THE CIVIL WAR

The War Between the States was the bloodiest war in American history. Yet it inspired some of the most beautiful music ever written. This patriotic music was an important factor in sustaining the morale of the soldiers on both sides of the conflict. The Bonnie Blue Flag was perhaps the most popular of all of the Southern marching songs.

The Bonnie Blue Flag

We are a band of brothers
And native to the soil,
Fighting for our liberty,
With treasure blood and toil.
And when our rights were threaten'd
The cry rose near and far,
Hurrah for The Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star!

(Chorus)

Hurrah! Hurrah!
For Southern rights hurrah!
Hurrah for The Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star

And here's to brave Virginia
The Old Dominion State,
With the young Confederacy
At last has linked her fate.
Impell'd by her example,
Now other states prepar',
To hoist high The Bonnie Blue Flag,
That bears a single star!

(Repeat Chorus)

Then here's to our Confederacy
Strong we are and brave,
Like patriots of old
We'll fight our heritage to save.
And rather than submit to shame,
To die we would prefer',
So cheer for The Bonnie Blue Flag,
That bears a single star!

(Repeat Chorus)

Words by Harry Macarthy.
Music by Valentine Vousden.
1862.

SHOW YOUR COLORS

Keeping the public aware of the Friends of Fort Macon is one of the ways our members can help. The window decal shown below is part of our ongoing campaign to support the Fort.

While we could distribute it to all of our members, there are many who have a "no car stickers" policy. Since the decals are not inexpensive, we've decided to distribute them to only those members who request them. They will be available at the monthly luncheon meetings or you can send a request by postcard to P.O. Box 651, Beaufort, NC 28516. Be sure to tell us how many you would like to have. We will include them with our next mailing of your Ramparts.



CONTROLLING MAILING COSTS

The recent increase in postal rates has caused us to give the subject our renewed attention. We already receive the lowest possible mass mailing rate, so there is nothing more to be done there. What we can do, however, is to consolidate some of our separate mailings.

With this issue of the Ramparts, we have enclosed membership cards, the luncheon meeting notices for the next four months (the "yellow cards") and the window decals for those who requested them. That saves us about \$330 over separate mailings, not to mention the savings in volunteer labor of addressing and sorting separate mailings.

If this meets with general acceptance, our plan is to include with the three-times-a-year Ramparts mailing the luncheon meeting notices and any other enclosures that there may be.

MEET YOUR FORT MACON STAFF



Meet Jody Merritt - the Superintendent of Fort Macon State Park.

Fort Macon is usually the busiest state park in North Carolina, with an average of more than one and a quarter million visitors each year. It is the only state park with a significant historic site, as well as a very popular public beach area. Jody also has responsibility for the Theodore Roosevelt Natural Area on Bogue Banks.

Jody supervises seven full time employees, as well as many summer seasonal employees, including life guards. It is a job that requires management skills in the area of administration, interpretation and education, natural resource management, Ranger skills and maintenance. Over the past three and a half years he also had to oversee the major restoration and construction work taking place at the Fort. Jody also works very closely with the Friends of Fort Macon, the park's volunteer support group.

Jody began working with the state parks as a park attendant while he was still in college. After graduating from N.C. State University with degrees in Natural Resource Management and in Conservation, he became a park ranger at Raven Rock State Park. From there he went to Eno River State Park near Durham. After leaving Eno River, he went to Morrow Mountain State Park at Albemarle where he remained for more than 5 years. In 1980 he went back to Eno River as the Park Superintendent before coming to Fort Macon in 1981. For the past 21 years he has served as Park Superintendent at Fort Macon.

Jody is the proud parent of two daughters, Carrie and Heather. Both young women have grown up in the North Carolina state parks. Carrie is a graduate of UNC, and now lives in Durham. Heather graduated from UNCW this past May, and plans to make her home in the Wilmington area.

The Friends of Fort Macon have been proud to be associated with Jody from the very beginning of our organization's history. We will help you meet the other fine members of the Fort Macon staff in each of the future issues of the Ramparts.

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I saw Capt. Brem's Light Artillery drilling last Friday. Brother Joe was there, but I did not get a chance to speak to him. Their company is splendidly drilled, in fact I think the Light Artillery drill is the prettiest drill there is anyhow. We can get no particulars from the Roanoke Island fight, as to who was killed or wounded. The Richmond and Petersburg papers mention no other company than the Richmond Blues and one or two other Virginia Companies. I suppose they were there, but I think it nothing but right that the North Carolina Regiments who were there should get some credit for the part they bore in that hard fought battle; for our men certainly did fight well and bravely, but somehow or other North Carolina never seems to have a special correspondent to puff her up and thus other men get all the credit while we do our full share of the work and fighting.

Cousin Lizzie Sloan came down last Friday night and will remain for a week or two with the Colonel

We had a little fair weather last week and I thought the ground would get dry once but it has been raining now for about three days and our camp is getting to be almost a mudhole again.

Please hurry Carmichael up with our uniforms for the Orange Guards, for I would like to have mine very much, but I do not want it until they all get them. I am very sorry that my blue pants are lost, for I wanted them, but I reckon I can do without. Excuse such small paper, for it is the best and only sort that can be had about here and, as small as it is, it cost 50 cents per quire.

I must close as breakfast is ready and the train passes immediately after breakfast.

Love to all. Write soon to

Your affectionate Son
JAMES A. GRAHAM

P. S. Col. Sloan says please send him a glass of syllabub the next time you send a box; for you make the best he ever saw.

J. A. G.

Fort Lane N. C.
Feb 25th 1862

My Dear Mother

I received your very welcome letter a day or two ago and as Lieut. Whitted is going up to Hillsboro tomorrow morning I will answer it by him. I received my

uniform last night. It fits very well, in fact I think it is as good a fit as I ever had. Capt. Webb's and Lieut. Whitted's fit very well also.

I wish you would make me two or three shirts like you sent to Willie. He was over here this afternoon and I saw his. I have not seen brother Joe within the past week, but will ask him about the shirts when I see him. I wish mine trimmed with blue instead of yellow.

I have not used up all the hominy you sent me. We think it very good. We will not need any more just now.

Our company, together with the Guilford Grays and Goldsboro Rifles, was moved up from Fort Macon day before yesterday.

They are now camped here with us and I suppose will remain here till our time is out.

Please tell Father that if he will see Capt. Jo Turner perhaps he can get the horse he bought from Hedgepeth, before he puts him in the service of the state.

It is the horse that Robert wrote to me about a day or two ago. Capt. Turner gave \$135.00 for him. We have heard nothing from Burnside's fleet in a day or two. I do not know where it is now.

As it is very late and I am very sleepy and besides, I have to get up to Dress Parade at day break in the morning, I must close.

Love to all. Write soon to

Your affectionate Son
JAMES A. GRAHAM

March 1st

P. S. Please tell Father that I received his letter this morning and that I will see about the horse to-day or tomorrow. It is the same horse I wrote about in the first part of my letter. If Capt. Turner will consent to let me have the horse before he turns him over to the state there will be no trouble about getting him, but if he is already put into the service it will be rather a hard matter to get him as we will have to go such a round-a-bout way to get at him. I will write to Father in a day or two.

Your Son
JAMES A. GRAHAM

James A. Graham was a member of a politically prominent family of Orange County, North Carolina. These letters are part of a collection previously published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1928.

FORT GETS NEW MUSEUM EXHIBITS

Fort Macon's new museum consists of six rooms of exhibits dedicated to the history of the Fort in addition to the restored rooms which previously existed before the renovation project began.

Casemate 3 (the Fort's old museum room) is now devoted to telling the story of the Fort's construction. It includes facts and figures about the Fort's construction, tools and artifacts, and surviving examples of original wood and metalwork. One map puts the Fort in perspective with other forts along the U. S. coast, and another exhibit features a cut-away section to show how the Fort was constructed.

The restored Enlisted Men's Quarters and Restored Commandant's Quarters remain as they were in Casemates 4 and 5, respectively.

Casemate 6 will eventually feature weapons of the period through the War Between the States. It will have exhibits of firearms, artillery implements and ammunition. One exhibit will show the kind and location of various types of cannon used in the Fort. However the exhibits in this room will not be installed until after the proposed Visitor's Center is constructed since the room is currently in use as a Ranger Office.

Casemate 7 has the story of the Civil War and the siege of Fort Macon. Included are exhibits describing the siege and battle of Fort Macon, along with photographs and illustrations of the battle. Exhibits also discuss the damage done to the Fort, the significance of rifled artillery, the impact of the battle on history, and how the battle fits in with other military operations in the state during the war.

Casemate 8 deals with soldier life. It has examples of personal artifacts used by soldiers, military equipment and late 19th century firearms.

Other exhibits display photographs and sketches of the Fort while in use during the 19th century. Also included are exhibits about the Fort's use as a prison, and the role of women in the Fort's history.

The Gunpowder Magazine exhibit which existed before the restoration project began is once again back in service in the Southeast Gunpowder Magazine, which leads off from Casemate 8.

Casemate 8A is a soldier exhibit featuring manikins dressed in period uniforms from different wars and phases of Fort Macon's history from 1834 to 1944.

Casemate 9 portrays the Fort's later history from the Spanish-American War to World War II. It is filled with artifacts used

during these two wars, and will discuss the history of the all-black 3rd North Carolina Volunteer regiment at the Fort. Exhibits also illuminate the frequently overlooked role the Fort had in World War II. The World War II exhibits include a number of historic firearms which have been purchased by the Friends of Fort Macon or donated by individual members of the Friends, including former soldiers who served at the Fort during World War II. Also included are exhibits detailing how the Fort became a state park before WWII, as well as many photographs of how the Fort was later abandoned by the Army and then restored to a public park.

Casemate 10 now houses the restored World War II Barracks which existed before the renovation project began. Displayed in this room is a large exhibit featuring original World War II uniform items.

The final new exhibit is devoted to the Fort's Bake Oven. The original oven had been demolished during World War II but has been rebuilt with the help of the Friends of Fort Macon and TEMCO, Inc. The exhibit details how the oven was used, how bread was baked for the soldiers and the importance that food item had in the diet of the soldier.

All of these outstanding new exhibits were designed with specifications provided by Fort Macon's Ranger/Historian, Paul Branch.

HISTORY TOURS AT FORT

Interpretive tours of the Fort are conducted three times daily, April through October, by Friends of Fort Macon volunteer tour guides. Musket firing demonstrations are given at 10:30 and 2:30 on summer weekends.

Membership Form

Check One: ☐ New Member(s) ☐ Renewal ☐ Gift Membership

Fee Enclosed \$ _____ Date: _____

Member's Name(s) _____

Street or P.O.Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of Donor, if gift _____

Membership Categories and Fees

Individual/Family - \$10.00 Lifetime (Individual) - \$100.00

Business or Organization - \$25.00 Business Lifetime - \$500.00

Friends of Fort Macon, P.O.Box 651, Beaufort, NC 28516-0651