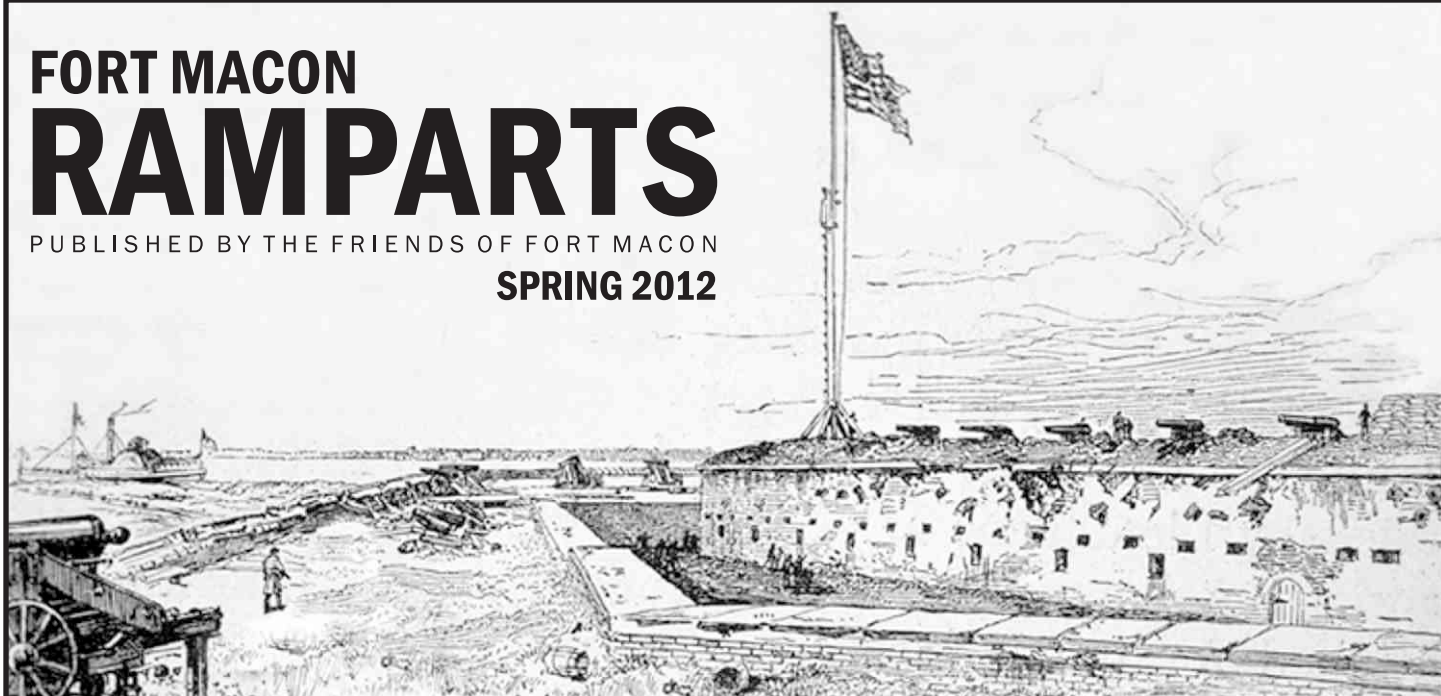


FORT MACON RAMPARTS

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www.friendsoffortmacon.org

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mailing label indicates
the month and year
that your membership
expired or will expire

THE SIEGE OF FORT MACON: 150 YEARS AGO

We are now in the midst of the Sesquicentennial of the War Between the States. Observances are being held nationwide until 2015 to recognize and commemorate the events of 150 years ago that plunged our country into its most tragic period. In the Fall 2011 edition of The Ramparts, the article "Fort Macon in 1861" chronicled the story of Fort Macon in Confederate hands and the events that followed during the remainder of 1861. The following article continues with the story of the siege of Fort Macon and the events of 150 years ago.

During much of 1861, Confederate soldiers in and around Fort Macon had experienced a discouraging sense of inactivity and boredom with coastal garrison duty. They had waited for months in vain for an enemy attack. Still, they felt confident that should the enemy ever appear they would prevail.

Their confidence was not unwarranted because the environs of Beaufort Harbor was as secure as it would ever be against a Union attack. Fort Macon itself boasted a formidable armament of heavy guns to guard the harbor entrance. It was garrisoned by three heavy artillery companies of the 10th North Carolina and three infantry companies of the 27th North Carolina. Nearby, three additional artillery companies were stationed on



General Ambrose E. Burnside

Harker's Island manning two batteries that guarded the approaches through the sounds to the northeast. Infantry support was also close at hand. On the mainland between Morehead and Carolina Cities, the 26th North Carolina was camped in winter quarters. The Seventh North Carolina was also camped in winter quarters near Newport. All these forces totaled 103 officers and 1697 men present for duty.

By the beginning of 1862, however, the Confederates had received disquieting rumors of a large Union amphibious force commanded by General Ambrose E. Burnside being formed to attack the North Carolina coast. The capture of Fort Macon would certainly be one of its objectives. It seemed that the long days of watching and waiting for an enemy attack might soon become fulfilled. Sure enough, in mid-January, Burnside's powerful force appeared off the North Carolina coast. It turned out that following the success of a Union amphibious attack that captured Hatteras Inlet, N.C., in August, 1861, a larger, more powerful Union expedition had been formed during the fall of 1861 to attack other key points on the eastern coast of North Carolina. Commanded by Brigadier General Ambrose E. Burnside, the expedition involved the use of about 12,000 Union soldiers who would be moved about on the rivers and sounds of eastern North Carolina to points of attack aboard a fleet of transports, supported by Army and Navy gunboats.

There were three objectives of the Burnside Expedition. One was the capture of Roanoke Island, a Confederate base and key to the northeast sound region. Another was the capture of New Bern, second largest city in the state. The third objective, as Confederates had speculated, was indeed the capture of Fort Macon. The fort's capture would place the fine harbor of Beaufort in Union hands for use by both the Union Army and Navy.

On January 11, 1862, Burnside's fleet of almost eighty vessels left Hampton Roads bound for Hatteras Inlet, N.C. After arriving here, a series of delays in getting the vessels through the inlet into Pamlico Sound delayed Burnside until February. Once his forces were all finally massed on



General John G. Parke

the sound side, Burnside moved north and succeeded in capturing Roanoke Island during February 7-8, 1862. After securing the northeastern sounds, he then turned his attention to New Bern in March.

The Confederates now tried to marshal all available forces to save New Bern. The 7th and 26th North Carolina regiments were withdrawn to New Bern, as were the three companies of the 27th North Carolina in Fort Macon and one of the artillery companies on Harker's Island.

The batteries on Harker's Island and the two remaining artillery companies there were withdrawn back to Fort Macon. The fort was left with a garrison of five heavy artillery companies of the 10th and 40th North Carolina regiments, which was the largest number of troops that could be sheltered within the fort during a siege.

Despite these preparations, New Bern fell to Burnside's overwhelming forces after a hard-fought battle on March 14, 1862. At this point, Burnside turned his attention to his third objective, Fort Macon. On March 19 he dispatched a portion of his Third Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General John G. Parke, to capture it.

At Fort Macon, meanwhile, the fort's commander, Colonel Moses J. White, found himself in an unenviable position. The fall of New Bern left White and his five artillery companies in the fort as the only large Confederate force on the North Carolina coast north of Wilmington, and they were now cut off from the rest of the state. Still, the fort had a fair supply of ammunition and gunpowder on hand, along with a six-month supply of provisions. He hoped to be able to hold out against Union attack until relief forces could come to his aid.



Colonel Moses J. White

Anticipating the Union advance from New Bern, White made his preparations for resistance. He had the railroad bridge over the Newport River burned and part of the railroad torn up in Morehead City in an effort to slow down the Union advance. Ammunition was prepared for battle and all extraneous buildings around the fort that would hinder the fort's field of fire were destroyed.

The fort's armament of 54 cannons included two 10-inch and five 8-inch columbiads, and five rifled cannons,

with the rest being 24- and 32-pounders. This would easily stand up to any attack by the Union Navy. The fort's Achilles Heel was the landward side, however. The Confederate infantry regiments that had protected Bogue Banks during the fall from the landing of enemy forces were now gone. If Union troops landed on the banks and besieged the fort from the unprotected landward side, Colonel White could do little harm to them because the fort lacked mortars. With mortars, the fort would have been able to lob exploding shells into any Union trenches or siege positions where regular flat trajectory cannons could not reach. Unfortunately, the fort never received any mortars and would therefore be at a serious disadvantage.

Union General Parke, meanwhile, advanced from New Bern toward Beaufort Harbor with the Eight Connecticut, Fourth Rhode Island and the Fifth Rhode Island Battalion. They soon came to the destroyed railroad bridge over the Newport River. The loss of the bridge would prove a serious setback that hindered Parke in bringing up supplies for his men and artillery to use against the fort. Leaving the Fifth Rhode Island Battalion to rebuild it with all speed, he pressed on with his remaining two regiments, reaching a settlement known as Carolina City (three miles west of Morehead City) on March 22.

Morehead City was quietly taken by Parke's forces on March 23 and a demand for surrender was conveyed over to Fort Macon. Colonel White refused and Parke was forced to begin siege operations. He continued efforts to completely invest and cut off the fort. Beaufort was captured on March 26, followed by the first landing of Parke's troops on Bogue Banks on March 29. These forces, along with four gunboats of the Blockading Squadron off the inlet and another gunboat in the sound near Harker's Island, now had Fort Macon totally surrounded.

On March 29, the railroad bridge over the Newport River was finally rebuilt by the Rhode Island troops, enabling Parke to bring up a regular flow of supplies and also a siege train of heavy guns that would be used to bombard Fort Macon into submission. Over the next two weeks, Parke transported nineteen companies of infantry, two artillery companies, and three batteries of siege guns across Bogue Sound to Bogue Banks at Hoop Pole Creek, about five miles from the fort. A camp was established here.

During April 11 and 12, Union troops advanced from their camp eastward along Bogue Banks toward the fort. Along the way they skirmished with the fort's picket forces and drove them back into the fort. The main Union siege positions were then established in the sand dunes about 1200 yards from the fort, with advanced rifle pits placed 300 yards closer to the fort.

Work began next on emplacements for the three batteries of siege guns intended to batter Fort Macon into surrender. A battery of four 8-inch siege mortars was established 1280 yards from the fort; along with a battery of three 30-pounder Parrott Rifle cannons 1480 yards from the fort and yet another battery of four 10-inch mortars 1680 yards from the fort. On April 23, General Burnside himself arrived in his flagship, the *Alice Price*, in the sound off Harker's Island to be present for the final stage of the siege operation. With him were two floating batteries intended to add their fire on Fort Macon from the northeast.

In Fort Macon, Colonel White was unable to halt the Union siege operations. One-third of the 403-man garrison was on the sick list, and sorties from the fort lacked the strength to drive Union troops from their entrenched position. Efforts to sweep the sand dunes with artillery fire from the fort's cannons were likewise



10-inch Mortar Battery

unsuccessful in disrupting the operations of the well-hidden Union troops because the fort lacked mortars. Since it had not been possible to acquire mortars for the fort before the siege, there was no means with regular cannons of achieving the high-arc, lobbing fire of a mortar in reaching behind sand dunes and into trenches where the Union troops were working.

In desperation, the Confederates attempted to fire some of the fort's regular cannons at high elevations as a substitute for mortars. These included six 32-pounder carronades and two 10-inch columbiads angled at a forty-degree elevation. The efforts were largely ineffective, however. Yet, despite a virtually hopeless situation, Colonel White and the garrison refused two more demands to surrender offered by General Burnside on April 23 and 24.

General Parke's forces completed the finishing touches on his siege batteries during the night of April 24. At 5:40 a.m., April 25, 1862, the three Union artillery batteries opened fire on Fort Macon. The fort returned fire at 6 a.m. and the bombardment raged almost eleven hours.

About 8:30 a.m., the four gunboats of Commander Samuel Lockwood's Union Navy Blockading Squadron (*Daylight*, *Chippewa*, *Gemsbok* and *State of Georgia*) joined in the battle from the ocean, adding their guns to the fray. Confederate gunners concentrated on the ships and hit two of them with cannonfire, forcing Commander Lockwood to order the ships to retire after being in action only an hour and a half. The fort had thus won the first round.

The other threat from the water, the two floating batteries with Burnside's flagship near Harker's Island, never became a serious issue. Only one floating battery was able to get into action because of heavy winds and soon had to withdraw after firing only a few shots at long range.

During most of the morning, the fort's fire was heavy, silencing the Union 10-inch mortar battery for a time. Union gunners, on the other hand, were missing the fort because it was obscured by the smoke from its own guns. However, the turning point of the battle came when Union signal officers established in the Atlantic Hotel on the Beaufort waterfront saw the Union cannon fire missing the fort and began signaling range corrections to the three batteries. These corrections brought the Union fire on target and by noon almost every shot from the three Union batteries hit in or exploded over the fort. Confederate gunners were frequently driven to cover, causing the fort's fire to slacken. The protective smoke cloud disappeared and thereafter the Union gunners could clearly see where they were shooting.

During the afternoon, the Union Parrott Rifle battery caused great destruction to the fort. The battle of Fort Macon was only the second time in history rifled siege guns had been used against a fort in combat. Rifled cannons represented the latest technological advance in artillery at the time, giving astounding power and long-range accuracy that totally eclipsed anything regular smoothbore cannons could ever hope to achieve. This power and accuracy surprised Union and Confederate gunners alike and allowed the Union gunners to both

knock out the fort's guns and also to breach the tiny strip of the fort's walls exposed above its surrounding earth glacis.

Knowing there was a gunpowder magazine in the walls behind the fort's southwest angle (remember, the fort had been a U.S. Government fort years before the war), the Union gunners concentrated their fire on the wall at this point to endanger the magazine, which contained 10,000 pounds of gunpowder. By 4 p.m., the walls adjacent to the magazine were cracking from so many hits by the Parrott guns, threatening the entire fort with total annihilation. After

holding a council with his officers, Colonel White knew there was no choice but to surrender.

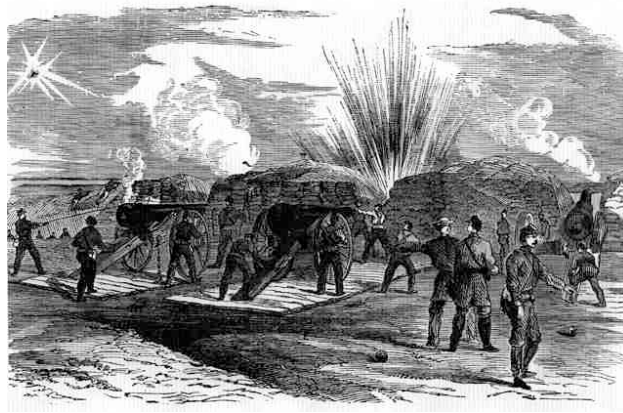
Around 4:30 p.m., the guns fell silent when a white flag was displayed from the fort. Parties from both side met under a flag of truce between the two lines to discuss terms for surrender. A suspension of hostilities was granted throughout the night to allow time for General Parke to confer with General Burnside and draw up surrender terms. Early on the morning of April 26, Colonel White met with Generals Burnside and Parke to sign the terms of surrender for Fort Macon. When this was done, Union troops marched up from their trenches and

formally took possession of the fort. The Confederate flag was lowered at 10:10 a.m. Twelve minutes later it was replaced with the Stars and Stripes. Once again, Fort Macon was in possession of the United States. Thus General Burnside had taken the third and final objective of his expedition.

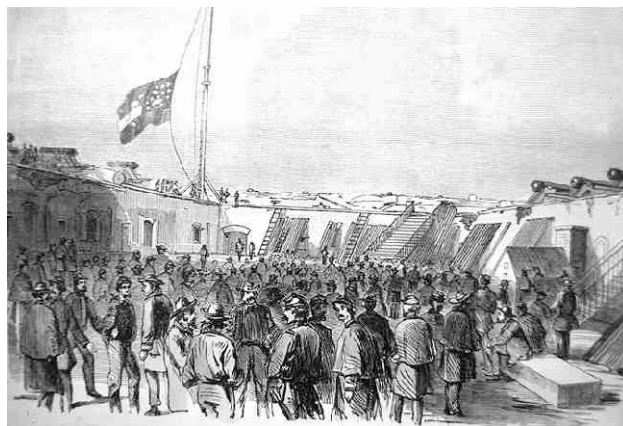
Casualties during the battle had been light: seven Confederates and one Union soldier killed, 18 Confederates

and three Union soldiers wounded. Fort Macon had been badly damaged. Of 1150 shots fired by the three Union batteries, 560 hit the fort. Seventeen guns were knocked out. Three of these were disabled by a single Parrott shot that passed through each one, killing three men and wounding five.

A reporter for the New York Daily Tribune noted the fort's condition: "On every side were the evidences of a



Parrott Battery



Surrender

violent cannonade; and shattered walls and dismounted guns attested the terrible efficiency of rifled guns and heavy mortars. In the parade were a score of great pits dug by bursting bombs, of which the fragments were strewn on every side. The casemate fronts were scarred and shattered by Parrott shot. The coping was broken in many places. A solid stone step in one of the staircases which covered the magazines had been bored through and through by one of these terrible projectiles; and the earth of the rampart was ploughed in furrows and scooped out in mass where they had passed.”

According to the terms of the surrender, Colonel White and his men were paroled and allowed to return to their lines until they were exchanged. Upon being exchanged later in the year, most of them returned to fight out the remainder of the war.

Over the months that followed, Union soldiers repaired the damage done to the fort and continued to use it for the rest of the war. Beaufort Harbor was now in Union hands and served both the Union Army and Navy for the rest of the war.

One hundred and fifty years later, one can stand inside the peaceful expanse of Fort Macon today and hardly believe these terrible events ever took place here. The smoke and deafening explosions of battle as desperate soldiers struggled within these walls have all faded into the past. Yet there are a few reminders of battle still etched upon the fort's silent walls if one knows where to look. With the Civil War Sesquicentennial upon us, we are called to look back at the struggle that embroiled our country a century and a half ago, of which Fort Macon was a part.

A list of events to celebrate the
**150th Anniversary of the
Battle of Fort Macon**
is on page 7.

SUPERINTENDENTS UPDATE

Randy Newman

I would like to express my appreciation for the over 600 park visitors who attended "A Stroll through Time" program offered by the Friends of Fort Macon. The park continues to receive positive feedback from the program. I have spoken to most of the over 60 volunteers who made this possible. However, I have not seen everyone, and would like to take this time to thank the members of the Friends of Fort Macon and Boy Scout Troop 130 for all their time and professionalism in making this program such a success for the second year in row. Most of all, "A Stroll Through Time" demonstrates the importance of the Friends of Fort Macon in assisting staff in promoting the vast cultural and natural history of Fort Macon.

On December 17th, 2010 the park placed its first fireable 32-pounder cannon on top of the fort. The addition of this cannon enhanced the park's interpretive potential with firing demonstrations throughout last summer. I would like to thank the U.S. Coast Guard for partnering with the park by providing gun crews to make this a reality. The park, working with the Friends of Fort Macon, has purchased a 30-pound Parrott Cannon to be placed between the visitor center and the fort. Arrival date for the Parrott is this April. State Park staff has been working with Wayne Community College in the construction of two additional 32-pounder carriages. The carriages are complete and two 32-pounder cannons have been acquired, and will be placed on the fort in March. I would like to thank East District Superintendent Adrian O'Neal and the east district staff for their hard work in making this a reality. These cannons will serve as the centerpieces of the Park's Sesquicentennial Civil War event on April 21st and 22nd.

Last year our park goal was to place a 32-pounder on the lower ramparts for visitors who cannot access the upper ramparts. In 2010 the two fiberglass cannons were removed from the top of Fort Macon, because of structural decay on the carriages. The park maintenance staff, in working with the Friends of Fort Macon, were able to repair the cannon donated by Mr. and Mrs. Dean Proper. In January park staff placed the cannon on the lower ramparts so all of the park's visitors can appreciate these massive sea coast guns, and access will not be limited by a visitor's disability. The park would like to again acknowledge Mr. and Mrs. Dean Proper's generosity and the Friends of Fort Macon for making this cannon a reality.

This year our park's goal is to add an Artillery and Small Arms Museum in the fort. The park is well underway with the design, and we hope to have the museum open by the end of the summer.

The park still needs volunteers to assist in staffing the visitor center information desk, and guides to give tours of Fort Macon. If interested, please contact the park office at 252-726-3775.

Thank you again for your support, Randy

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PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Tom Kelly

2012 Another Busy and Productive Year for the Friends

New cannons about to be delivered, the sesquicentennial events in April, a new summer concert season, monthly lunches with speakers, fort tours getting ready to start in April with several new volunteer guides, some new advertising and promotion efforts for Ft. Macon...2012 is shaping up to be another busy year for all of us who love Ft. Macon and enjoy helping the staff to keep the place vibrant! We need more guides and information desk volunteers—spread the word—this is the best place around to spend a little time volunteering! We also are short on Board volunteers...Secretary, VP, help with events, the newsletter...lots to do...anyone interested can call me at 252-354-5259.

In these times of tight budgets and short staffing at the Fort, our volunteer help is needed more than ever. Superintendent Randy Newman, Paul Branch, and their staff always appreciate the Friend's efforts, and the payback we get in enjoyment and satisfaction is very high!!

After a few discussions with the state parks design people, we are moving toward getting final plans drafted for the Exhibit Pavilion. They have invested a lot of time and expense to get this off the ground and to the final planning stages...next will be raising about \$75,000 for construction. It would be great to target sometime next year for completion...will keep you posted and will be asking for you help/advice when we get to the fundraising stage.

See you at the Fort.....
Tom

Please visit our new website:
www.friendsoffortmacon.org

and like us on Facebook:
Friends of Fort Macon

SUMMER CONCERT SCHEDULE 2012

Looking forward to the warm summer, and always hoping for good weather, the Friend's Summer Concert Series continues this year with 7 shows:

June 1
Carteret Sunshine Band
(Large Orchestra)

June 15
Unknown Tongues
(Zydeco)

June 22
**Samantha Casey and
the Bluegrass Jam**
(Bluegrass)

June 29
Scearce & Ketner
(Carolina Beach Music)

July 13
Wild Honey
(Acoustic Folk, Country, Blues)

July 27
Morehead Brass Consortium
(Classics and Pop)

August 10
Conch Stew
(Country, Rock)

**Shows are free, start at 7 p.m.
in the Fort's Parade Grounds**

150th Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Macon CALENDAR of EVENTS

During April 21-26, 2012, an observance will be held at Fort Macon State Park to mark the Sesquicentennial of the battle of Fort Macon, where Union forces lay siege to the fort and the garrison of Confederates who defended it. The siege ended with an eleven-hour bombardment of the fort by Union artillery on April 25, 1862, in which the fort was heavily damaged. The Confederates were forced to surrender the fort the following morning. The following observances are planned to commemorate these events of 150 years ago.

150th Civil War Reenactment of the Battle of Fort Macon

Saturday, April 21, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Living History events will be performed throughout the day by soldiers of the North and South. Flag talks, Civil War music, Civil War uniform talks, musket firing demonstrations, drills and children's activities are a few of the programs being performed. The bombardment and surrender of Fort Macon will be reenacted at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Night Cannonade

Saturday Night, April 21, 8 p.m.

On April 21, 1862 a large body of Federal troops could be seen in the darkness up the beach of Bogue Banks toward Fort Macon. Fort Macon State Park will reenact the continuous artillery fire that dispersed the Union troops and drove them away. Spectators will be able to experience the sights and sounds of the bombardment just as the people of Beaufort and Morehead City thronged the waterfront areas watching the dazzling spectacle of the night bombardment 150 years ago.

150th Civil War Reenactment of the Battle of Fort Macon

Sunday, April 22, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Living History events will be performed throughout the day by soldiers of the North and South. Flag talks, Civil War music, Civil War uniform talks, musket firing demonstrations, drills and children's activities are a few of the programs being performed. The bombardment and surrender of Fort Macon will be reenacted at 2 p.m.

Observance of the 150th Anniversary of the Bombardment of Fort Macon

Wednesday, April 25, 4 p.m.

Meet at the fort to commemorate the 1862 bombardment of Fort Macon by Union forces, and the men of both sides who fought and died in the siege of Fort Macon.

150th Anniversary Surrender of Fort Macon Flag Ceremony

Thursday, April 26, 10 a.m.

Meet at the fort to commemorate the surrender of Fort Macon. The Confederate flag will be lowered and the US flag raised at the exact moments these actions took place 150 years ago as Union forces formally took possession of Fort Macon.

Friends of Fort Macon
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2012/2013

Membership Renewal Dues

Individual/Family \$15 Contributor \$30

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Business/Organization \$35

Business Lifetime \$500

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Atlantic Beach, NC

Bert & Gwen Pitt
Macclesfield, NC

Casper Marine
Swansboro, NC

Donald Williams
Williams Investments Corp.
Charlotte, NC

**Atlantic Veneer
for Mike Krazeski**
Beaufort, NC

Outer Banks Lighthouse Society
Morehead City, NC

Safrit Building Supplies
Beaufort, NC

Alan Woddward
Pleasant Gardens, NC

Karl Weiss
Woburn, MA

**Bill Humphrey-SCV
Lewis Armisted #130**
Jacksonville, NC

Chalk and Gibbs
Morehead City, NC

Estate Planning Center
Morehead City, NC

**Munden Funeral Home
and Crematory**
Morehead City, NC

Piedmont Civil War Roundtable
Charlotte, NC

Stampers Jewelers
Beaufort, NC

Discovery Diving
Beaufort, NC

Bradford H. Piner
Beaufort, NC

Outer Banks History Center
Manteo, NC

Coastal Press & Signs
Morehead City, NC

Gary Partin
Goldsboro, NC

Oceanana Resort Motel and Pier
Atlantic Beach, NC

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**Woodsmen of the World
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Newport, NC

**Calvin Wellons
Wellons Enterprises**
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David P. Robertson, DDS
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