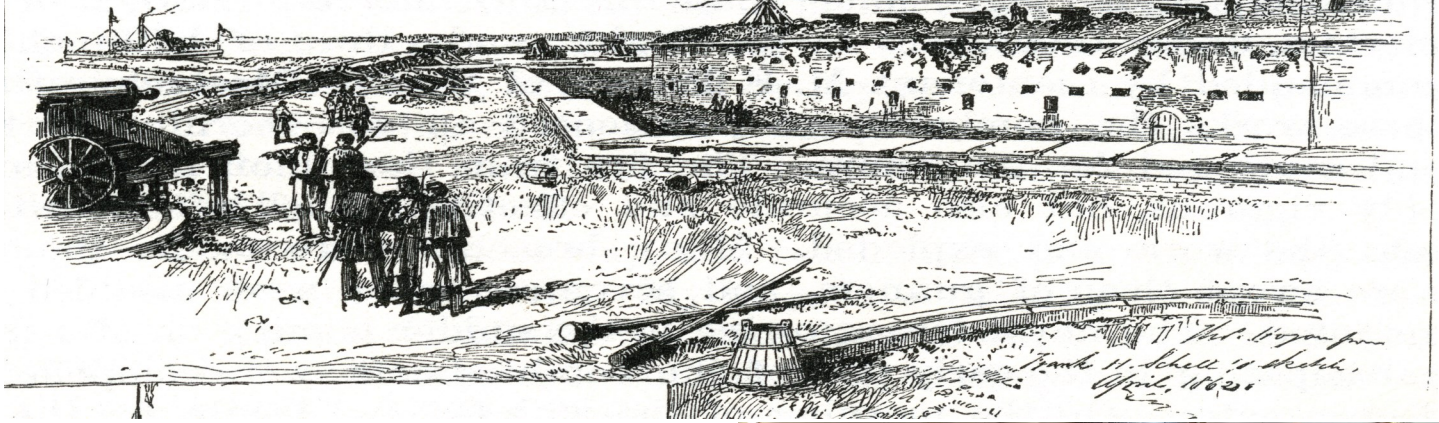


Fort Macon Ramparts

Newsletter Published by the Friends of Fort Macon

Summer and Fall 2023



TWO 24-POUNDERS MOUNTED

In 2021, Fort Macon State Park received two replica 24-pounder cannons that were purchased through the Friends of Fort Macon to go on display on the fort's covertway, or outer wall. These cannons are representative of an important part of the fort's nineteenth-century armament. Upon its completion in 1834, the fort received 17 24-pounders as its first armament. During the siege of Fort Macon in 1862, at least 18 of the fort's 54 cannons were 24-pounders. Most of these were mounted on the southeast and east fronts of the fort's covertway, and this is where the two replica 24-pounders were to be placed. The next step toward mounting them was to have two aluminum replica gun carriages fabricated on which to mount them.

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In December 2021, the park contracted with the Beaufort firm of Hancock and Grandsons to fabricate the chassis and top carriages for the two gun carriages. This company had previously made the gun carriages for our 8-inch and 10-inch columbiad cannons. While this was going on, Ranger Paul Terry fabricated the hardware for the gun carriages, included two complicated elevation screws and two sets of axle, hub, and wheel assemblies for the top carriages.

The project suffered some delays due to supply-chain shortages in obtaining some of the needed materials, so it was not until this spring that the gun carriages were finally completed and brought over to the park maintenance area. Friends of Fort Macon president Mark Greiner painted the gun carriages, and the park staff was able to



Above, painting the top carriages and preparing them to be mounted. Below, the two chassis are mounted into place on the fort's outer wall.



mount the two aluminum chassis on the covertway on April 11.

The top carriages were much heavier than the chassis and could not be lifted into place by the park staff as we did with the chassis. In addition, each 24-pounder barrel weighs almost 6000 pounds. A crane was necessary to lift and place these components. On April 18, we hired a

crane and lowered the top carriages and 24-pounder barrels onto the two chassis. They are now complete and in place. Soon they will be joined by a third 24-pounder, which has been ordered and may arrive late this year or early next year. 📷



The Birth of Fort Macon State Park

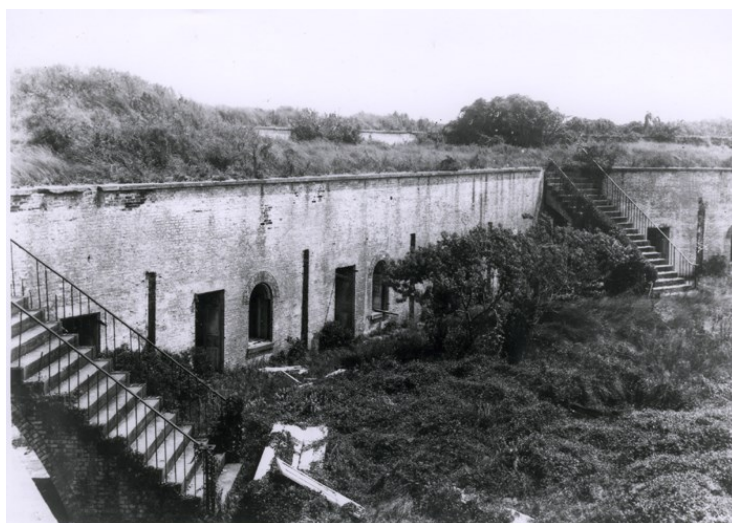
By Paul Branch

The centennial anniversary of Fort Macon State Park will occur on June 4, 2024. On that date in 1924, the fort and the surrounding lands comprising the Fort Macon Military Reservation were granted to the State of North Carolina for public purposes by Congressional Act. How the aging fort went from being one of the War Department's surplus military posts to North Carolina's second state park in 1924 is recounted here.

In the years immediately following the end of the First World War, there prevailed a definite desire throughout the world to maintain peace and ensure that nothing like the “Great War” would ever happen again. In the early 1920s, world leaders were seeking to reduce the threat of militarism, arms races, and expansionism that had contributed so heavily to the outbreak of the Great War. During 1921-22, the world's first arms-control conference was held in Washington, D.C., between a number of maritime nations to limit naval expansion. Under the resulting Washington Naval Treaty, the US Navy fleet was subsequently cut back in size, and a number of its ships were scrapped. Congress, meanwhile, made reductions in the size of the US Army during 1921-22 and decreased the US War Department's appropriations. It was in this spirit of military disarmament and downsizing at this time that the War Department was forced to take a long, hard look at its vast holdings of property as well. Across the nation, there were numerous old military camps, frontier posts, and seacoast forts that had outlived their usefulness and were no longer needed by the department. They represented a drain on the department's resources. What could the department do to downsize and divest itself of these unwanted holdings?

On March 4, 1923, the 67th Congress passed Public Law 501: “An Act Authorizing the sale of real property no longer required for military purposes.” This Act authorized the Secretary of War to sell off the unwanted properties of his department and return the proceeds of the sales to the Treasury Department. The Act also listed the specific installations and parcels across the country that were to be sold off. Each of the properties was to be appraised for value. Once the appraisals were approved, the Secretary of War was to contact the governor of the state in which each property was located and offer the first option to purchase the property according to its appraised value for that state, or county, or municipality in which the property was located. If the property was then purchased, the law stipulated that the property must be used for “public park purposes” and would revert back to the United States at such time that it ceased to be used as a park. However, if this option for sale was not exercised by either the state, county, or municipality within six months, then the property would be offered for public sale. One of the properties listed for sale in North Carolina was “Fort Macon, Old Topsail Inlet, two miles from Beaufort and Morehead City, Carteret County.”

Since December 1903, Fort Macon had been closed as a military post by the Army. It lay dormant and forgotten during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Army did not even see the need to reactivate it when the United States entered the Great War in 1917. Very quickly, weeds and vines choked its abandoned parade ground, hunks of plaster fell from its ceilings, woodwork rotted, and ironwork rusted away. Livestock owned by members of the US Coast Guard Lifesaving Station next door roamed freely and grazed on its grounds. The only human visitors were occasional parties of hunters, fishermen, swimmers, or any adventurers who were hearty enough to fight their way through the thick, mosquito-infested underbrush to see it.



Although the fort was largely forgotten, the announcement that the War Department was moving to sell off the Fort Macon Military Reservation served to bring the old fort back into public consciousness across the state once again. Interest began to build as to what was going to happen to the fort. Newspapers began to publish articles that the state should ensure the fort was returned to the people of North Carolina and preserved as a public park for its historical and sentimental value. After all, the fort had been a fixture on the North Carolina coast for almost a century and was closely tied with the state's history. A battle had been fought there, and the blood of North Carolina soldiers had been spilled there. Also, there was already a park that had been acquired and preserved by the state eight years earlier—Mount Mitchell State Park in Yancey County. Turning Fort Macon into a second state park would give North Carolinians a state-owned public park at the state's two extremes, the mountains and the coast. However, if no advantage was taken of this once-in-a-lifetime purchasing opportunity, then the fort would be lost forever to public sale.

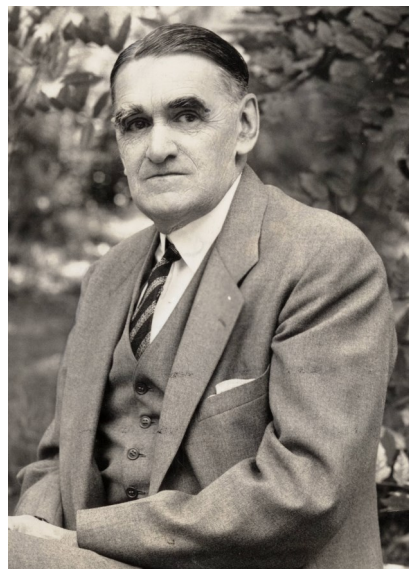
While North Carolinians pondered the possibilities, the Army went ahead with its obligations mandated under Public

Law 501 to appraise the unwanted military properties in question. It was probably at some point during the late summer of 1923 that the Fort Macon Military Reservation, comprising 412.33 acres, was appraised at a value of \$7500 (about \$130,000 today). While this might not seem like a huge sum by modern standards compared to the wildly exorbitant, over-inflated sum that 412 acres of beachfront property would command today, it must be remembered that undeveloped beachfront property was not thought to be overly valuable at that time. The \$7500 appraisal was officially approved by the Army on September 25, 1923. On October 4, General John J. Pershing, Army Chief of Staff and Acting Secretary of War, officially notified North Carolina Governor Cameron A. Morrison of the appraisal amount and that the state now had six months to exercise the first option to purchase the Fort Macon Military Reservation. The clock was now ticking.



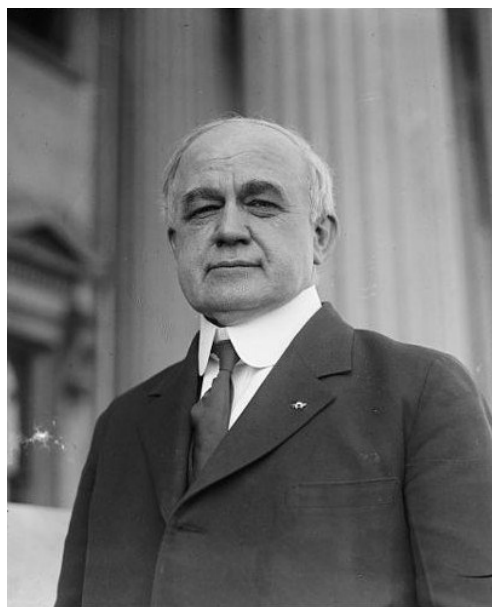
Governor Cameron A. Morrison

For North Carolina, this could scarcely have happened at a worse time. Normally, the state legislature would appropriate the necessary funds to buy the reservation for the state. Unfortunately, the legislature was not in session at this time and would not be for some months after the expiration of the six months option. Consequently, there were no uncommitted funds available that could be diverted or earmarked for the purpose. Governor Morrison had to admit that he was powerless to do anything. In reply on December 12 to an inquiry on the matter from Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, director of the state Geological and Economic Survey, Morrison stated: "The State has no funds which can be used in this manner, and the only way I think you can secure this property is by public subscription. I will appreciate anything you can do along this line." Because Pratt's department would be the agency



Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt

that had jurisdiction over state parks, Pratt began efforts to secure the reservation by public donation, which was the next logical step to raise the money.



Congressman Charles L. Abernethy

Over the next several weeks, requests were sent out to a number of prominent North Carolinians asking for donations of between \$100 and \$500. Unfortunately, while people expressed interest and support for the project, only two checks for \$100 each were received. It quickly became painfully obvious that the funds would never be raised in time by public subscription. To make matters worse, Pratt was soon forced to resign as director of the Geologic and Economic Survey due to ill health, and it seemed the efforts to acquire the fort might now languish without his driving force. Before leaving office in February 1924, however, Pratt took one final step that turned out to be of great importance. He contacted North Carolina's US Congressman Charles L. Abernethy and US Senator Furnifold M. Simmons to see if they could somehow help the situation by introducing legislation to secure the reservation for the state in the new 68th Congress now in session. Both men were anxious to help.

Accordingly, on February 20, 1924, Congressman Abernethy introduced House Bill 7145 calling for the Fort Macon Military Reservation to be granted to the State of North Carolina for public park purposes.

Under this bill, if passed, the reservation would be removed from the list of military properties to be disposed of and simply conveyed to the state without cost. There were two provisions in this bill, however. First, a total of 22.6 acres of the reservation would not be included and would remain reserved for the use of the US Coast Guard Station adjacent to the fort. Second, the federal government would always retain the right to erect and maintain any buildings or structures "as may be incident to the purposes of the Treasury, War, Navy, and Commerce Departments" in the national interest. In the US Senate, Senator Simmons introduced a similar bill, S.



Senator Furnifold M. Simmons

2560, at the same time with the same provisions. Part of the argument used by Abernethy and Simmons that the reservation should be returned to the state was the fact that the land comprising the reservation had originally been acquired by the State of North Carolina and ceded to the federal government for the purpose of erecting fortifications for the state's defense in the early 1800s. It seemed only fair, then, that the land should be returned to the state if it was no longer needed for military purposes.

Of course, these two bills changed the whole dynamic of the situation. The ticking clock was stopped, and the Fort Macon Military Reservation was temporarily set aside from the list of military properties to be sold by the War Department pending the outcome of these bills in Congress. As might be expected, however, the War Department was not in agreement with the way this matter was being handled by Abernethy and Simmons. Secretary of War John W. Weeks wrote to Senator Simmons on April 28 that "prior to the passage of [Public Law 501 of March 4, 1923] the question of the donation by the United States of some of the properties listed therein to States, Counties or Municipalities was thoroughly considered by Congress, the result of which was the Act in question which afforded a fair method of acquisition. . . in view of the policy of Congress with respect to the disposal of such properties as evidenced by the Act of March 4, 1923, I regret to advise that I cannot acquiesce in the passage of H.R. 7145 and S. 2560." However, if the two Fort Macon bills were successful, of course, the War Department would have no choice but to convey Fort Macon to North Carolina.



Secretary of War John W. Weeks

While the Fort Macon bills made their way through the legislative process over the next few weeks, Public Law 501 was now revised by the 68th Congress as House Bill 9124, with the same title and text as P.L. 501 concerning the sale of real property no longer needed for military purposes, but with proposed amendments to be added. One of the amendments proposed for this bill was the addition of Abernethy's Fort Macon bill, which was introduced into Bill 9124 when it came up for consideration by the whole House on May 21, 1924. The House passed the bill, including the attached Fort Macon amendment. When the bill went to the Senate on May 23, it was likewise passed there with the Fort Macon amendment included. Thus, it was now official that the Fort Macon Military Reservation would be returned to the state, thanks to the timely work of Congressman Abernethy and Senator Simmons.

On June 4, 1924, House Bill 9124 was officially signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge as Public Number 193, "An Act Authorizing the sale of real property no longer required for military purposes." The part of this law concerning Fort Macon read:

"That there is hereby granted to the State of North Carolina without cost to the State, for public uses, all lands belonging to Fort Macon Military Reservation, and now the property of the United States, together with all the improvements thereon, and that the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby, authorized

and directed to convey to the said State all right, title, and interest of the United States in said lands and improvements, to be held and used by said State for public purposes: *Provided*, That the following described land is reserved and granted to the Treasury Department for Coast Guard purposes . . . containing twenty-two and six-tenths acres, more or less: *Provided further*, That the Government at all times has the right and privilege of preserving, erecting, and maintaining on said reservation such buildings as Coast Guard Stations, signal stations for pilots, lighthouses, and so forth, as may be incident to the purposes of the Treasury, War, Navy, and Commerce Departments."

Even with the passage of this law, it took about three and a half months for the property to actually be conveyed by the War Department to North Carolina. A quitclaim deed was executed by Secretary of War Weeks on September 9, 1924, and notarized. It was then delivered to Governor Morrison on September 18. The deed stated:

"Know all men by these presents, That the United States of America, by and through John W. Weeks, Secretary of War, acting under authority of the Act of Congress approved June 4, 1924, (Public No. 193, 68th Congress), has remised, released and forever quitclaimed, and by the presents does hereby remise, release and forever quitclaim unto the State of North Carolina, as grantee, all right, title and interest of the United States of American in and to all that tract of land lying on the extreme east end of Bogue Island in Carteret County, State of North Carolina, known as the Fort Macon Military Reservation, containing approximately 412.33 acres of land . . . Provided further, that this conveyance is made upon the express condition and limitation that tracts or parcels of land hereby quitclaimed shall be limited to use for public purposes by the State of North Carolina, and upon cessation of such use the estate hereby quitclaimed shall revert to and revest in the United States without notice, demand, or action brought."

The deed also exempted the 22.6 acres of the reservation for Coast Guard purposes and stipulated again the provision that the United States always held the right to preserve, erect, and maintain such buildings and structures as needed for the Treasury, War, Navy, and Commerce Departments. The only cost throughout this process of transferring the reservation to the state, according to the *Raleigh News and Observer*, was for the nominal consideration of one dollar, which was paid by Congressman Abernethy.

Even though Fort Macon was now officially the property of the State of North Carolina, there were a few odds and ends to tie up over the months that followed. The Fort Macon deed was filed and registered in the Carteret County Register of Deeds Office in Book 45, page 175, on January 14, 1925. On March 10, 1925, Joint Resolution Number 41 was passed by the North Carolina Legislature, officially accepting the Fort Macon deed from the US Government and granting the administration of the new park to the N.C. Geological and Economic Survey, which was soon reorganized as the Department of Conservation and Development. Since no Division of State Parks existed at that time, Fort Macon State Park would be administered by the Forestry Division of the new department, as was Mount Mitchell State Park.

Because this was such a unique milestone in the state's modern history, state officials felt the need to have some sort of ceremony to acknowledge and publicize the new park. Consequently, July 17, 1925, was the date planned for the occasion, which would be held at the fort. The public and a whole slate of dignitaries, including new Governor Angus W. McLean, Congressman Abernethy, and Senator Simmons, about 300 persons in all, made their way over to the fort that afternoon aboard boats provided by the State Fisheries Division and private citizens. Congressman Abernethy, in whose district the fort was located, represented the federal government in symbolically presenting the fort to Governor McLean, representing the state. In this simple but impressive ceremony, amid numerous speeches and applause, Fort Macon's course was now firmly set as the second state park of North Carolina for the enjoyment of all North Carolinians and their guests. 📍



Governor Angus McLean

Photo credits: Library of Congress, and NCPedia

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS AT FORT MACON STATE PARK

By Mark Greiner, President of the Friends of Fort Macon

I would like to let everyone know about two events that are coming up in the future. The first will be our take on the Halloween season, which will be called **"Fear in the Fort."** Yes, it will be conducted inside the fort in several of our casemates. But be prepared, this will be no ordinary Halloween event like we sponsored in the past. It will be suspenseful, it will be riveting, it will be heart pounding, it will be breathtaking, but above all, **IT WILL BE SCARY.** This will not be for the faint of heart, so it will be given a rating of PG-13. No one under the age of 13 will be allowed in without a parent or guardian. May not be appropriate for young children. It will be scheduled for two nights, October 20th and 21st, 2023, from 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. Tickets will \$10 each and will be available in the Visitor Center on the night of the event starting at 6:15 p.m., with the last being sold at 9 p.m. If you are in the area and would like to help in some capacity during the event, please contact us for more information.



One of the next events we are planning for will be the 100-year anniversary of Fort Macon becoming North Carolina's second state park. On June 4, 1924, the State of North Carolina was granted the property from the federal government, so we are planning to celebrate the park's centennial, starting Saturday, the 1st of June 2024, through the week, ending on the next Saturday, the 8th of June 2024. We are currently working on the schedule. We do have a sneak peek for you. On the first weekend, we are planning a Military Through the Ages (MTA) event, with soldiers from the time of Fort Dobbs in 1756 through World War II. On the June 4th, we will celebrate different events throughout the day and hoping to end with fireworks. On the final day, June 8th, we are planning on having an artillery barrage, firing our cannons in fort against artillery emplacements on the beach.

We hope you will mark your calendars to join us during this important centennial celebration of Fort Macon State Park. 📅

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

By Randy Newman

It is hard to believe that the summer season is coming to an end. I would again like to thank the tour guides and front desk volunteers for the outstanding work they did this summer. With the crowds we have, the park could not offer as many programs as we did without their help. The summer concerts were well attended this year. I would like to thank Randall Parker of Parker Buick and GMC for his continued sponsorship of the concert series. Also, a special thanks to the U.S. Coast Guard for providing volunteers for the Evening Gun Program.

As the fall approaches, the park looks forward to working with the Friends in the planning of "Fear in the Fort", a Halloween event to be held on the evening of October 20 & 21, 2023. This will be a Halloween event to raise money to help continue the restoration of Fort Macon.

Remember, Fort Macon State Park will be turning 100 years old as a state park on June 4, 2024. Please mark your calendar for June 1-8, 2024, and come and help celebrate this event. More details on schedule events will be out soon. 📅



Fort Macon State Park Centennial

**Fort Macon State
Park turns 100
years old on June
4, 2024. Join us
for celebrations
and events during
June 1-8, 2024, for
this milestone in
the park's history.**

Volunteer Spotlight: Jake and Margaret Jennette

For many years, Jake and Margaret Jennette have been familiar faces as volunteers at Fort Macon State Park. Margaret has worked at the visitor center information desk helping park visitors since the information desk volunteer program began in 2010. Jake has been a living history reenactor doing programs for the public and assisting with the interpretation of Fort Macon since 1996. Both are lifetime members of the Friends of Fort Macon. However, after so many years of service to the park, they decided this year to sell their home and move to South Carolina to be near their children. While it is with sadness that we see them go after being fixtures at this park for so many years, we wish them nothing but joy and happiness in starting this new phase of their lives with their family in South Carolina. At our request, Jake wrote this article detailing the unique journey of his love of history and association with Fort Macon.

Hello, I am Jake Jennette, known as Old Sarge to most of you associated with Fort Macon. For nearly 30 years, I have been portraying and doing living history as The Old Sarge. Much of this time has been at Fort Macon doing talks about soldier life, weapons demonstrations, cannon demonstrations, and the interpretation of Fort Macon's history. This is my journey through living history and my time as a reenactor at Fort Macon.

My interest and involvement with military history, especially the Civil War/War Between the States, goes back to when I was about 5-years old. A friend of my dad had a farm outside Goldsboro NC, where one of the last battles of the Civil War was fought—what is now known as Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site. He called one day to tell us he was going to be plowing up a field and asked if we wanted to come and see what treasures we might uncover. This was back in the 1940's, so he was still using a mule and gang plow, and the progress was slow enough to walk behind. And treasures we did find—a cigar box full of Civil War minie bullets, a belt buckle, and round musket balls used by the smooth bore muskets.

Another point of interest in Civil War history was that my great-great-grandfather and several of his brothers were soldiers stationed at Fort Macon with the 10th North Carolina heavy artillery. My great-grandmother would talk with me often and at length about the stories she heard from them. So, at that young age, I did become very interested in military things. Growing up, I played "soldier" a lot. Summers I would put on my soldier gear (helmet, cartridge belt, canteen, gas mask cover, and the homemade wooden rifle) and head out to the woods with friends, often with a sandwich and a full canteen with us so we did not have to interrupt our "war."



Jake and Margaret Jennette

This interest and participation in the military has been a major part of my professional and recreational life. I joined the Marine Corps after one semester in college was wasted. It was absolutely the right choice. My career spanned ranks from Private to Staff Sergeant First as an aviation electrician, then I was selected to attend the Marine Officer Programs. On completion of those, I became a Marine infantry officer, retiring as a Major. All of this, of course, involved real soldiering and all it brought with it, the good and the bad. It was my life for a little over 20 years.



Fast forward about 10 years. I visited a Civil War living history event in Georgia, where I was living at the time. Absolutely, I got hooked on this hobby. They put together enough of a uniform for me that day so I could participate. That was all she wrote for me, and it became my life's passion. I was intrigued by the idea that most of these men were interested in the historical, factual side of that war and presenting it to the public. About the same time, I had the opportunity to buy a 200-

Musket firing demonstration in the parade ground.

volume set of military history books, well over half being Civil War related. I have kept all the latter ones, and they have served as my references and guides as I went through this adventure.

In 1994, I moved back to North Carolina at Swansboro and really settled into the reenacting/ living history of the Civil War. Being so close to Fort Macon was the cherry on top of my dream. In 1996, I began doing my Old Sarge living history display of a soldier's kit in the sally port of Fort Macon on the weekends and eventually included musket firing demonstrations. For several years, I was often accompanied by a lady reenactor who portrayed my wife. She did wardrobe presentations, including demonstrating the ladies dress of the period by outfitting a lady visitor in the layers of period clothing.



Jake Jennette on the Fort Macon cannon crew with Friends of Fort Macon president Mark Greiner (right) in 2004.

Not long after this, the park staff began to discuss the possibility of firing one of the cannons. This would be a program for the public that comprised the authentic loading, firing, and cleaning of the cannon. The park's 6-pounder cannon in the parade ground was safety checked, and we pulled together a crew from the rangers and reenactors, who were then safety trained and certified to fire the weapon. I eventually became a certified black powder weapons instructor for the State. As time progressed, the number of cannons in the fort that were fireable increased. One of the original 10-inch siege mortars in the fort parade ground was also brought up to fireable status. The crews required also increased over the years to what is now a full-fledged cannon program using several different cannons in the fort.

Also during this period, Ranger Paul Branch was putting together the Restored Commissary and Restored Kitchen/Messroom exhibits in the fort. He was interested in trying to get together enough tableware to set up the messroom. Authentic dishware is rare and thus very expensive. At the time, my wife Margaret was working in ceramics as a hobby and came up with the idea of making plates that could be painted

and modeled in the antique blue feather pattern of the period pieces. So, we set out and made enough replica plates and platters over a period time that are the ones on display today in the Kitchen/Messroom.

Another problem Paul had was with displaying the hard tack in the Restored Commissary. Any real hard tack that was made with flour was quickly rendered useless because of the humidity. The bread squares absorbed the moisture and crumbled. Back to the drawing board for a solution. Margaret and I went again to the ceramic idea and made about 100 ceramic squares that replicated the hard tack that now fills the display box in the Commissary exhibit.

Concurrent with my work at Fort Macon, I became involved on a national level with reenacting at the major east coast Civil War battlefield reenactments and living history events. I held many positions on military staffs and was eventually elected to serve as the Commanding General of the Army of Northern Virginia, General Robert E Lee. This enabled me to be totally involved from the very beginning on the planning and execution of all the 150th Anniversary Civil War reenacting events over a 5-year period from Manassas to Bentonville. It was truly the highlight of my reenacting life. After the 150th Bentonville anniversary event in 2015, I retired from active reenacting and came back to my original role as Old Sarge at Fort Macon. As my physical ability to work with the cannons became impossible, I have been able to continue my efforts in teaching through a living history demonstration, occasional musket firing demonstrations, and talks at my beloved Fort Macon.

So, many thanks to everyone who was with me along this journey: Superintendents, Rangers, the Friends of Fort Macon, and fellow reenactors. ☺



Portraying General Robert E. Lee at a battle reenactment.

Nature Spotlight: Southern Flannel Moth (Adult) or Puss Caterpillar (Larva)

The Southern Flannel Moth, *Megalopyge opercularis* is a common moth in the Live Oaks of Fort Macon State Park and the general area, which is best-known for the larva, the puss caterpillar, which is one of the most venomous caterpillars in the United States.

Adult moths do not sting; however, the caterpillar has sting hairs which carry toxic venom inside them. Merely brushing up against the hairs can cause them to break off and inject this venom. The sting is not lethal; however, it causes extreme discomfort. 🐛



Puss Caterpillar (Larva)



Southern Flannel Moth

Model 1910A1 Azimuth Telescope

Recently, the Friends of Fort Macon were able to purchase an original Model 1910A1 Azimuth Telescope for Fort Macon State Park to use for its World War II Coast Artillery interpretation. These rare instruments were used for horizontal-base range finding by Coast Artillery troops for observing and spotting. They have 10- and 15-power magnification for observation and measure horizontal angles up to 360 degrees. They were used in wartime in base end stations and observation posts for observing and tracking enemy targets and pinpointing their locations. Successive azimuth readings from the telescope to a moving enemy vessel over given intervals of time, in conjunction with readings from a vertical-base range finder known as a depression position finder, allowed a target's speed and range to be estimated. Azimuth and range data was then transmitted to plotting rooms to determine firing coordinates for gun batteries.

This telescope will be used at the park during World War II living history demonstrations to explain its use and function during the occupation of the fort by the Army in World War II. It is complete with its original lenses, tripod, and carrying cases and will reside in the Restored World War II Barracks. 📷



Left, a soldier of the 244th Coast Artillery using an azimuth telescope at Fort Macon in 1942. Below and right, the telescope mounted and ready for use.



BABY RIGHT WHALE

By Laura Eckart

You might remember a baby whale was seen in the waters of the Morehead City Port turning basin back in January of this year. This whale was a species called a Right Whale. The Right Whale is one of the world's most endangered large whale species, and researcher's guesstimate fewer than 350 Right Whales are left in the world. Right Whale numbers took a massive decline in the early 1890's from commercial fishermen hunting them. While hunting is no longer a major threat to the species, human interactions are still the leading cause of mortality. Vessel strikes, entanglement in fishing gear, and even increasing levels of noise in the ocean are all a danger to the Right Whale. Since 2017, Right Whale numbers are still declining from injury and illness. Because only about one third of Right Whale deaths are documented, it is safe to assume that deaths are outpacing births for the population. In an effort to try to enhance the population size, biologists are continuously conducting aerial surveys, ship-board studies, and even necropsies on deceased Right Whales.

When the baby Right Whale was found deceased off the Morehead City Port just a couple days after it was first spotted, the North Carolina Marine Stranding Network went out to retrieve the carcass for necropsy. Now, you might be thinking to yourself, what does this have to do with Fort Macon? Well, where else in Beaufort Inlet could we tow an almost 2,000-pound whale for necropsy? Fort Macon inlet beach! The Marine Stranding Network, along with biologists from UNC-W, NC State University, and Duke Marine Lab, brought the baby Right Whale to Fort Macon's inlet beach to perform a necropsy. The remainder of the whale was then buried so that the bones could be cleaned off by insects and preserved. When this two-year cleaning process is complete, we hope to be able to uncover these bones, and, with the help of Bonehenge (located in Beaufort, NC), recreate the life-size skeleton to hang in the Visitor Center lobby for everyone to enjoy and learn more about this amazing species.



Right now, it is estimated that we will need to raise around \$20,000 to put the skeleton back together and display it. If you are interested in helping raise funds for this project, we have a Mosquito Endurance Run on our nature trail planned as our main fundraising event. The run will take place on March 23-24, 2024, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Interested parties can go to the ultrasignup.com website for more information. Donations to the Friends of Fort Macon whale fund are also accepted. If the whale bones are later found to be too degraded to use for display, all whale funds then will be applied to maintain the Fort Macon nature trail. 📍



Above and left, necropsy on the dead baby right whale. Right, a concept of what the assembled skeleton will look like in the Fort Macon visitor center.



MOSQUITO ENDURANCE RUN

**MARCH 23-24, 2024
7PM-7AM
FORT MACON STATE PARK
ATLANTIC BEACH, NC**



**Solo Ultra / 3-Member Teams: 3 mile loop
4/5-Member Teams: 1.25 mile loop**

One complete Lap of the course qualifies you for an official finish. Runners may run continuously throughout the race or take extended breaks during the race. Total milage for runners and teams will be calculated by the number of laps they complete before the finish line closes at 7 AM

**Runners MUST have a headlamp
Pancake breakfast provided after the race**

**Packet Pick-up: March 22 & 23
at Fort Macon Visitor Center**

Sign up at ULTRASIGNUP.COM

The Ramparts



**FRIENDS OF
FORT MACON**

2303 EAST FORT MACON ROAD
ATLANTIC BEACH, NORTH CAROLINA, 28512

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