



AUGUST 2020

# THE RUNNER



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 8



## *This Day in the War - August 5, 1864 - Battle of Mobile Bay*

"I'm going into Mobile Bay in the morning if 'God is my leader' as I hope he is...." wrote Admiral Farragut to his wife August 4th. In the morning his Union fleet of 18 ships including four monitors entered Mobile Bay, passing between the fearsome forts guarding the three-mile channel. Admiral Farragut had desired to launch the long-delayed attack since resuming command of his squadron in January. In addition to the staunchly armed Forts Gaines and Morgan were three small gunboats and the formidable *CSS Tennessee*, said to be the most powerful ironclad afloat. Furthermore, only a narrow passage in the harbor channel remained unblocked by obstructions and torpedoes or mines. Farragut had his four ironclad monitors in the starboard column led by *Tecumseh* and 14 wooden ships in the port column, with *Brooklyn* in the lead and *Hartford* as flag. At 5:30 am the fleet moved in, and Fort Morgan opened on *Brooklyn* shortly after 7 am. Action became general between the Yankee navy and Fort Morgan.

The Confederate fleet joined in. *USS Tecumseh* headed for *CSS Tennessee*. Then one or more torpedoes exploded under her. In seconds *Tecumseh* went down prow first, two hundred yards from the enemy. Shortly after this Admiral Farragut in the port rigging of *Hartford*, is said to have shouted, "**Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.**" Regardless of just what he said, that is what the fleet did. There were anxious moments as *Hartford* took the van. However, the rest of the fleet passed the forts with minor loss. Three Federals rammed the sluggish *Tennessee* by midmorning. The Union monitors opened and *Tennessee*, rather vulnerable despite her armor, went out of control. Confederate Admiral Franklin Buchanan suffered a broken leg. At 10 am, after heavy pounding, *Tennessee* surrendered.

Admiral Farragut had again proved that ships could handle forts. Closing Mobile as a confederate port set the stage for land operations against the city.

Reference - E.B. Long with Barbara Long. *The Civil War Day by Day - An Almanac 1861-1864*, Garden City, NY; Doubleday 1971

This is a very brief description of this event. For additional reading these books tell the story:

**West Wind, Flood Tide: The Battle of Mobile Bay** by Jack Friend

**Farragut at Mobile Bay** by Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt - Audio book narrated by Glenn Hascall

**The Battle of Mobile Bay and the Captures of Forts Powell, Gaines and Morgan** by Foxhall Alexander Parker

**The Last Siege: The Mobile Campaign Alabama, 1865** by Paul Brueske

Our August meeting has been cancelled. We hope to see you in September.



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## *Civil War Cannons relocated to Fort Fisher*



A 32-pounder Naval Cannon located on the grounds of the North Carolina State Capitol. Cast in 1848, captured at Norfolk in 1861, and converted to a 6 inch rifle for use at Fort Caswell. (Photo courtesy of Daderot via Wikimedia Commons)

Two Civil War cannons that flanked a Confederate monument on the Union Square grounds in Raleigh since 1902 now have a new home at Fort Fisher.

The naval cannons were removed with the 1895 monument on the orders of Gov. Roy Cooper last week after they were vandalized.

On Sunday afternoon, they were situated next to the fort's earthen mounds in full public view. Michele Walker, spokeswoman for the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR), which oversees Fort Fisher and all state historic sites, said they will remain on display because they are from the same era as those already on display at the historic site.

Fort Fisher was a Confederate fort during the Civil War. It is having a \$23 million renovation of its visitors center and grounds.



## *Ed Bearss, A Tribute*

The Blue and Gray Education Society is advocating for the Congressional Gold Medal for Ed Bearss. This award for people whose contributions to America and the world elevate them above their peers. Ed Bearss would be one of those people. He personifies all it is too be an American, Duty, Honor, and Country over 53 years of service. He has an unbroken string of more than 65 years as an educator whose students included Presidents, senior government officials and citizens from all walks of like. For more than seven decades he was the architect of our Public history, crafting the boundaries of new national parks and guiding America's historians, members of Congress and Administrations through landmark preservation studies that established national priorities for preservation of land that is the basis of the 30 year old American Battlefield Protection Program.

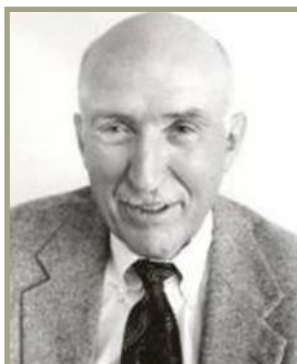
Ed Bearss is a soon to be 98 year old disabled combat wounded WW II veteran and Marine who is Chief Historian Emeritus of the National Park Service. He enlisted in the Marines April 28, 1942 at the age of 18. As part of the 3rd Marine Raider Battalion, he had a brief stint on Guadalcanal. Later reassigned to the 7th Regiment, First Marine Division, he was part of the landing force at Cape Gloucester on December 26, 1943. On January 2, 1944 he was hit and wounded 4 times by enemy machine gun fire while crossing Suicide Creek. After 8 months in a body cast and 18 additional months of convalescence, Corporal Bearss was discharged in March 1946.

After securing a degree from Georgetown University in 1949, Bearss went to work for the Naval Hydrographic Office and then back to school earning a masters degree at Indiana University in 1955. Ed started work on a doctorate but suffering a shortage of funds he returned to the work force in the Office of the Chief of Military History. He was subsequently granted two honorary doctorates. In September 1955 he entered the National Park Service as historian at Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Bearss quickly advanced to regional historian in 1958 and blessed with what many believed to be a photographic memory, Bearss' work and exceptional speaking abilities put him on the road traveling as many as 270 days a years. He became the point man for the Civil War Centennial (1961-1965) drawing boundaries for new parks at Wilson's Creek, Missouri and Pea Ridge, Arkansas. He found forgotten fortifications at Grand Gulf, Mississippi and located the *USS Cairo*, a Union ironclad that struck a min and sank in the Yazoo River in December 1962. It was raised through the singular efforts of Bearss who, when the public funding was unavailable, went on the gameshow "The \$64,000 Challenge" and won \$20,000 to match a donation. The gunboat, the only one of its kind from that era, was raised in October 1964, is now restored, and on display at Vicksburg, NMP.



Edwin Bearss  
as a young Marine



The best leaders collect information widely, listen to everybody, and then decide by themselves.

— Ed Bearss —

(Continued on page 4)

*Ed Bearss, A Tribute, cont.*

Bearss served as the NPS Historian in charge of 19th and 20th century sites. With the expansion of the parks, Bearss' expertise became the foundation of that growth and the sites became an exhaustive "who and what?" across the country to include a dozen states, Guam, and numerous other sites were crafted through his expertise and research. His work on Presidential sites included Eisenhower Farm, Herbert Hoover, William Howard Taft, US Grant and Jimmy Carter. This work was capped by his integral role working directly with President Lyndon Johnson to establish and incorporate the LBJ Ranch into the NPS. Bearss enjoyed a lifelong friendship with LBJ and Lady Bird. He was named Chief Historian of the NPS in 1981 and held the position for more than 14 years.

It was said of Bearss that he knew not only every battle and battlefield, but every facet of it. During his 14 years at NPS he helped craft National Park Policy. He was the driving force in the battlefield preservation studies commencing with the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report. His encyclopedic memory ran herd on a collection of the nation's finest academic and public historians producing the national guidance on preserving battlefields and establishing priorities and core, essential areas that needed protection. The resulting American Battlefield Trust Protection Program has matched more than \$300,000,000 in land acquisition and preservation. Other organizations launched from Bearss' work are Blue and Fray Education Society, American Battlefield Trust, Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and Central Virginia Battlegrounds Trust. They form the heart of tax payer supported efforts at preservation saving the national budget millions of dollars in land acquisition funds annually.

Upon retiring in 1995 he stepped up his game continuing to advocate for historic preservation and conducting thousands of tours and lecture over the next 23 years for all manner of organizations, companies, and non profits. He was the most popular historian for Smithsonian Associates, History America Tours, and National Geographic. He literally raised millions of dollars for the preservation of America's treasures.

He was the recipient of The Purple Heart, Department of Interior Distinguished Service Award 1983, American Battlefield Trust Edwin Bearss Award for Preservation Leadership, NPS Edwin Bearss Fellowship Award, and numerous other awards. Bearss received the Honorary Licensed Battlefield Guide from the Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides at Gettysburg. He was the only person ever granted a guide badge without passing the testing and examination requirements.

Dr. Bearss has published literally hundreds of articles in all manner of scholarly and public documents, essay compendiums and other public educational forums. He has published more than 20 full length books.



These are his most popular titles:

*Receding the Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg, The Campaigns that Changed the Civil War*

*Fields of Honor, Pivotal Battles in the Civil War*

*Smithsonian's Great Battles and Battlefields of the Civil War*

*The Campaign for Vicksburg in three volumes*

*The Battle of Compens*

*Hardluck Ironclad, The Sinking and Salvage of the Cairo*

*Decision in Mississippi*

If you would like to support this effort, please contact your Congressional Representative and tell them you support [HR 7385](#).

Click on the link above to read the resolution.

## Member News

### To the Members & Friends of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table:

Bill Jayne, our CWRT President, has prepared a short (4 min) video announcement related to several issues, including our scheduled 13 August meeting and the Fall schedule for your viewing edification and enjoyment.

Simply click on this [YouTube link](#) and you have Bill in your office, on your iPad or cell-phone. As always, we welcome your questions and or suggestions.

### Membership News & Dues

We are approaching September and the beginning of a new Round Table season. It is also membership renewal time.

The Steering Committee has, in past years, declared the month of August as an Early Bird month, a month in which you could renew you individual or family membership for \$25 as opposed to the regular rate of \$30. Due to the unusual nature of this year however, the Early Bird rate of \$25 (individual or family) rate will apply until the evening of our first meeting, which we hope will be 10 September.

Should we be unable to hold a September meeting, then the \$25 rate will be honored until 8 October although we fully expect to be able to hold regular meetings, in the usual place, with health protocols in place as per our published schedule.

We have a full slate of speakers on tap, each coming some distance (see July edition of The Runner). The Round Table pays their travel expenses as well as their meals and lodging while in Wilmington. Your dues, plus the revenue from the raffle and/or auction are necessary in order to bring speakers to our meetings. Other expenses such as refreshments, Post Office Box rental, Internet registration, printing and sundry supplies add to our annual budget. You and your dues are critical to our program.

Please mail your check, (CFCWRT) to PO Box 15750, Wilmington, NC 29408 at your convenience. Those who joined in March or later will receive an email exempting them from this dues request.

My personal thanks to all.

Bruce Patterson  
Treasurer - Membership

### ***Fridays with Grant***

The CWRT Congress proudly presents Fridays with U. S. Grant. Dr. Curt Fields, the preeminent Grant living historian tells the Grant story in his own words. To register for a virtual seat, click [this link](#). All sessions are at 7pm Eastern

*August 7th*

[Letters from Grant](#)

*August 14th*

[Getting into The War](#)

*August 21st*

[Fort Donelson to Shiloh](#)

*August 28th*

[Appomattox Surrender](#)



## *Jacob Rohrbach Inn - Summer Lecture Series*

The Jacob Rohrbach Inn in Sharpsburg, Maryland, hosts an annual summer lecture series, and this year has not been an exception. Just recently, they have started the option of gathering safely in person for the outdoor presentations, but for those of us who are far away or not ready to attend a gathering, there is an online option for some of the 2020 presentations via the [Inn's Facebook Page](#).

We've been featuring some online "weekender" options during the pandemic and this one seems like a great option for learning some in-depth Antietam history (while enjoying the comfort of your air-conditioning).

Here's what's been featured so far and there are links to the videos that have been released on Facebook:

June 3 – Gordon Dammann – "The Wounding of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr"

June 10 – Brad Gottfried – "Lee Invades the North: A Comparison of 1862 & 1863"

June 17 – Darin Wipperman – "Immortal Respect: Col. Henry Post and the 2nd U.S. Sharpshooters in the Antietam Campaign"

June 24 – Alann Schimdt – "The Dunker Church"

July 1 – Jim Rosebrock – "Goodbye Captain" Artillery at the Burnside Bridge and Final Attack

July 8 – Sharon Murray – "The Long Gray Line of '54"

July 15 – Richard P. D'Ambrisi – "Baseball in the Civil War"

July 22 – Laura Marfut – "Longstreet's Attack on French's Right."

July 29 – Nigel Wainwright – "The Civil War and The World"

And here's what's coming up in the next few weeks if you want to mark your calendar to watch for online content or take a little drive to attend in-person: (Check the Inn's Facebook page since the schedule and location is subject to change)

Aug 5 – Matt Borders – "The Loudoun Valley Campaign of 1862: McClellan's Final Advance"

Aug 12 – Justin Mayhue – "Small Arms Weapons at Antietam"

Aug 19 – Alex Rossino – "A Very Personal Fight: Robert E. Lee's Role on the Field at Sharpsburg, September 17, 1862"

Aug 26 – John Schildt – "The 'What Ifs' of the Maryland Campaign"

**Note:** These outdoors programs will be held at the Jacob Rohrbach Inn on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Even though those programs are outdoors, attending guests are to wear face coverings and to social distance as much as possible. Additional program details are [available here](#).



## Virtual History

### American Battlefield Trust

Here is a sample of their digital resources

- ◆ Animated Maps - See the entire Civil War unfold, from Fort Sumter to Appomattox and beyond.
  - ◇ Shiloh
  - ◇ Vicksburg
  - ◇ Gettysburg
  - ◇ Antietam
- ◆ Virtual Tours - Experience the Civil War like never before and tour the battlefields in panoramic view. Jump from battlefield to battlefield using virtual tours that offer historic detail on battle highlights and points of interest, compelling photography, lively video, in-depth articles and more.
- ◆ Battle App™ Guide - While GPS-enabled to help lead you around in person, our [Battle App™ guides](#) for iOS and Android devices can be accessed from anywhere in the world to bring you “onto the field” with leading historians.

### Ed Bearss - [YouTube videos](#)

- ◆ Ed Bearss on the Western Theater of the Civil War
- ◆ Ed Bearss on the Civil War
- ◆ Ed Bearss on JEB Stuart at Gettysburg - Part I & Part II
- ◆ Ed Bearss on Arlington Virginia in the Civil War
- ◆ Battle of the Wilderness with Ed Bearss
- ◆ Battle of Gettysburg - Ed Bearss on General Meade
- ◆ The Battles of South Mountain Maryland during the Civil War

These are just a few of the many available.

## Wreaths Across America - July Virtual Concert

This past month, Wreaths Across America transitioned their annual concert into their first ever Virtual Concert. It is still available for viewing - watch on [this link](#).

*“During our Giving in July Virtual Concert I talked a lot about the need to polish our patriotism. And the more I think about this, the more it resonates with me. During difficult times it can be hard to see the good, and I personally feel that it is what we are experiencing right now in this country. It’s time for people to come together to unite in their communities and find common ground. I hope Wreaths Across America’s mission to Remember the fallen, Honor those that served and their families, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom can be one of these unifiers. I can guarantee you that National Wreaths Across America Day is going to happen this December, so please join us in the mission and get involved in your community today! Let’s work together to polish our patriotism and let it shine.”*

**#AmericaProud #AmericaStrong**

**- Karen Worcester, Executive Director, Wreaths Across America**

“Some people tried to hurt us to protect themselves, their family and communities...This was one of the consequences of civil war. People stopped trusting each other, and every stranger became an enemy. Even people who knew you became extremely careful about how they related or spoke to you.”

**– Ishmael Beah,**  
*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*

## *Wreaths Across America*

**National Wreath Day is Saturday  
December 19, 2020**

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table will attempt to repeat the goal of our prior two years purchases of 60 (or more) wreaths during October & November.



## *Sponsors*



SPECIALIZING IN REGIONAL AMERICAN SEAFOOD, SIGNATURE DISHES, HAND CUT FISH, STEAKS AND CHICKEN ALONG WITH FRESHLY MADE DESSERTS. WE PRIDE OURSELVES IN USING THE FRESHEST POSSIBLE INGREDIENTS AND PREPARING THEM WITH LOVE.

**THE RUNNER** is the official monthly newsletter of the CFCWRT.

If you have member news or news about Civil War events that you think would be of interest to the CFCWRT membership, send an email with the details to the editor, [Sherry Hewitt](#). Thank you.

**The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table** is a non-profit organization made up of men and women who have a common interest in the history of the Civil War. The meetings include a speaker each month covering some aspect of the Civil War. This serves our purpose of encouraging education and research into that historical conflict.

Click here for membership information: [Membership Application](#)

## *Steering Committee—Officers*

President: [Bill Jayne](#) (910) 386-9203  
Vice President: [Greg Willett](#) (910) 777-3935  
Sec/Treas: [Bruce Patterson](#) (910) 794-8905

Membership: [Linda Lashley](#)  
Tours/Trips: [Dale Lear](#)  
Runner Editor: [Sherry Hewitt](#)  
Raffle Master: [Ed Gibson](#)  
Webmaster: [Richard Buggeln](#)  
Refreshments: [John Moore](#)

## **CAPE FEAR CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

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You can find us on the Web! [Cfcwrt.org](#)

Visit us on Facebook: [CFCWRT](#)



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