



Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler Camp #863, Conyers, Ga.

# GEN. JOE'S DISPATCH



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## Coming Events

December 13, 2011 - **Regular Meeting of Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler Camp #863** - Masonic Lodge, Conyers, Georgia

January 10, 2011 - **Our Camps Lee - Jackson Dinner** - Masonic Lodge, Conyers, GA.

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## Archeologists Study '61 Aquia Creek Land-Naval Battle Site

Scott C. Boyd (November 2011 "Civil War News")

STAFFORD COUNTY, Va. – An archeological study at the site of the Battle of Aquia Creek failed to uncover any artifacts from the battle, but did find evidence of two wharves where there was a key logistical hub for the Union Army in Northern Virginia during the Civil War.



The May 29-June 1, 1861, duel between Union warships and Virginia land batteries on the Potomac River was one of the first naval actions of the war.

Data from the study will be used to nominate the site for inclusion on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. A 30-minute educational documentary will also be made.

Multiple state and local jurisdictions are involved where the 1861 battle was fought. Aquia Creek and associated Aquia Landing are in Stafford County in Virginia. The creek runs into the Potomac River, which marks the border with and is considered part of Maryland.

The principal land area for the battle is found in Stafford

County's Aquia Landing Park, established more than 30 years ago. The former railroad bed leading to the landing is now a paved road into the park.

The Stafford County Department of Economic Development sponsored the study which was directed by the county's tourism manager, Margaret Clay "M.C." Moncure.

"The entire project ran just under \$80,000," Moncure said.

The key to the funding was a \$77,700 grant in 2010 from the American Battlefield Protection Program, the National Park Service program that channels funds to preserve significant battlefields on American soil.

"Without the grant, we couldn't have done this for a long, long time," Moncure said.

The project, including in-kind donations, had an overall value of \$135,000-\$140,000, according to Megan Orient, a county consultant who assisted Moncure.

Organizations donating time included the Maryland Historical Trust's Maritime Archaeology Program and the Institute of Maritime History, both of which did underwater work. Hope Springs Marina gave use of the marina. Travelhost magazine donated the filming and production of the documentary.

Underwater archeologists made two findings, according to Troy Nowak, with the Maryland Historical Trust's Maritime Archaeology Program.

The site of the wharf was already known, Nowak said. The tips of the old pilings can be seen at low tide. What they found, however, was evidence of at least two different wharves: one dating to the Civil War and one to the late 19th century.

Near the location of the Union warships during the battle, the underwater team found some "anomalies in the earth's magnetic field," according to Nowak. "We don't exactly know what it represents."

Further study would be required to verify whether those anomalies were iron shot and shell fired from shore, but Nowak said he considers that "unlikely."

The terrestrial archeology was done by a team led by Joseph F. "Jo" Balicki from the Alexandria, Va., office of John Milner Associates. Balicki also served as project manager, coordinating the archeology on land and water.

He said that all the findings of the terrestrial archeology were negative. The battle site was largely destroyed by construction conducted there since the war. No evidence of Union ordnance was found.



## Our Commanders Comments

By: Commander J. H. Underwood



Compatriots;

Since our last meeting Thanksgiving has come and gone and now Christmas is fast approaching. I hope your holiday season is off to a good start and this Christmas will be your best

ever.

I would like to thank Mr. Robert C. Jones of the Kennesaw Historical Society for his presentation on the Battle of Griswoldville at our last meeting. I enjoyed his program and learned a lot about that little known battle and hopefully you did as well.

Our next meeting is on December 12th and as of now I do not have a guest speaker. Any of you that may have something to share with the camp the floor will be open during our regular program time and your presentation would be appreciated.

Even though we don't have a scheduled program this is a very important meeting. As I mentioned in the article at the bottom of page 3 the floor is open to nominations for Person of the Year and Compatriot of the Year. These nominations will be closed and the camp will vote for our 2011 Person of the Year and Compatriot of the Year at the December meeting.

In addition to that we will be finalizing our plans for the upcoming Lee-Jackson Dinner in January. We still have to decide who will cater the event. I will also be discussing the program and asking for your help in compiling a list of people that we will need to send special invitations.

As you may know by now Commander Jeff Bailey of the Confederate Memorial Camp #1432 has agreed to present the program, a narration of "The Promised Land" at this years Lee-Jackson dinner. This program is based on the farm journal

of Mr. Thomas Maguire that we now have available to the public for a \$10.00 donation. Commander Bailey's presentation will have special meaning as I have invited two of Thomas Maguire's great great granddaughters and they have agreed to come. I also intend to invite Mr. Thomas Livesy, the current owner of The Promised Land plantation home.

It will also be my pleasure to induct another member into our ranks. Candidate Bruce Farrow has qualified and will be initiated as our newest Compatriot. I know you will want to be present to welcome Bruce into our ranks.

So as you can see, even though we don't have a formal program for this months meeting, we have a lot of business to attend to. As always I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

J. H. Underwood

Commander.



## Archeologists Study '61 Aquia Creek Land-Naval Battle Site

By: Scott C. Boyd (Nov. 2011 "Civil War News") Continued from page 1.



One of the most interesting historical aspects of the battle was that the troops opposing the Union warships were still considered forces of an independent Virginia, according to Balicki.

The Old Dominion voted to secede from the Union on April 17, 1861, and ratified the Ordinance of Secession on May 23, but was still in the process of joining the nascent Confederate States at the time of the battle. The state's army and navy were under the overall command of Robert E. Lee.

The terminus of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad was at Aquia Landing, a peninsula that juts into the mouth of Aquia Creek at its confluence with the Potomac. A wharf provided a river link to the railroad.

Virginia troops occupied several positions along the Potomac to provide a forward defense of the state's border with the Union. Troops under the command of Col. Daniel Ruggles fortified the landing with a four-gun battery. They were joined by Walker's Legion from Tennessee.

On May 29, three ships of the Potomac Flotilla under Commander James H. Ward, USN, began the action against the battery at Aquia Landing. The steamers USS Thomas Freeborn, USS Anacostia and USS Resolute bombarded the battery for an hour, but neither side had much success due to the long range because of the low tide, according to Ward's report (*Official Records of the Navies*, Series I, Volume 4, pages 490-491).

On May 30, Ward went downriver from Aquia Landing and took some men ashore to reconnoiter Mathias Point. It was an unoccupied, but superior, possible location for a rebel battery to interdict traffic on the river.

May 31 brought a resumption of the Aquia Landing bombardment, Ward t

June 1 brought a five-hour ship-to-shore duel, ending inconclusively, as before.

Virginia Navy Capt. W.F. Lynch, commanding naval defenses of the Potomac, took exception to Ward's published charac-

terization of the Southern troops as running from their guns under fire at the battle. He wrote a letter to the editor of the Fredericksburg News on June 9 to complain and give his version of events (*ORN*, Series I, Volume 4, pages 499-500).

Ward was later killed at the Battle of Mathias Point on June 27, becoming the first Union naval officer lost in the war.

Confederate forces withdrew from the Potomac defenses in early March 1862 as Union Maj. Gen. George McClellan moved the Army of the Potomac to Hampton Roads to begin the Peninsula Campaign.

Aquia Landing thereafter became a crucial link in the logistical chain for Union troops in Northern Virginia.

Balicki is putting together the final research report. Moncure said she expects it to be finished and ready for public release by the end of this year.



# The Confederate Cemeteries of Covington

and Oxford (10th & 11th Soldiers in the series)

Continuing Project by Compatriot Gene Wade



Headstone: W. A. ALAERSON  
58<sup>th</sup> AL



Actually:  
WILLIAM  
ASBERRY  
ALVERSON  
COMPANY  
D, 58<sup>th</sup> AL

This soldier  
enlisted Janu-  
ary 20<sup>th</sup>, 1862  
in Company I  
of the 18<sup>th</sup>  
Alabama In-

fantry Regiment at Ashville, Alabama. (St. Clair County) for three years or duration of the war. This unit, sometimes referred to as the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, eventually became part of the 58<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment likely in early 1863 and then became part of the 32<sup>nd</sup>/58<sup>th</sup> Alabama regiment. Even unit historians are unclear on which of these units were consolidated with each other and when but it is clear that this soldier fought in the Atlanta Campaign and considered himself as a member of the 58<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry as Hill Hospital records indicate

William Asberry Alverson was promoted at some date as a Corporal. It appears that this soldier fought at battles at Corinth, Mississippi, and at Shiloh, Tennessee. His unit was then for awhile stationed at Mobile, Alabama. The regiment was then sent to Tennessee and participated in several lesser battles and then was heavily engaged at Chicamauga, GA where in a desperate charge captured four pieces of union artillery and broke the union lines. Unfortunately, this battle resulted in KIA and wounded of 148 of 254 men. The 58<sup>th</sup>

was then consolidated with the 32<sup>nd</sup> Alabama. This consolidated regiment 32/58<sup>th</sup> Alabama then fought at Missionary Ridge and suffered 250 casualties (KIA and wounded) of 400 men. The consolidated regiment then wintered at Dalton, GA and later fought at Nash Farms, GA.

At Resaca (May 1864), within a few minutes, the regiment lost 95 killed and wounded out of 300 engaged. The unit then fought at New Hope and Kennasaw Mountain losing a number in each. The 32<sup>nd</sup>/58<sup>th</sup> also fought in the bloody battles around Atlanta and a long list of casualties tells the story of brave conduct.

It is unknown exactly when Corporal William A. Alverson became ill or when he was evacuated. What is known is that the hospital records of Hill Hospital, Covington, Georgia, shows that "W.A. Alverson, Corporal, 58<sup>th</sup> Alabama died of Chronic diarrhea on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, 1864". This may seem an inglorious death but it is very clear that Corporal William Asberry Alverson bravely served through some of the most deadly battles of this war before he met his demise. The 58<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment effectively ceased to exist after the battle of Franklin, Tenn and surrendered at Meridian, Miss at war's end with a hand full of members surviving.

William Asberry Alverson was born Feb 26, 1839 in Alabama to Charles Asberry Alverson and Sarah F Golden both of South Carolina He was married to Nancy Emily Pope Alverson in 1857 at St. Clair, Alabama and then moved to Mississippi for a time where his one known child, Sarah Alverson was born in 1857. It appears that his brother Richard Alverson, who survived the war,

also served in the same regiment and was surrendered at war's end.

Headstone at Covington  
shows:  
J. ALLEN  
28<sup>th</sup> MS CAV



Actually:  
JOHN ALLEN  
CO G, 28 MS  
CAV

This soldier was  
likely one of the  
youngest and least  
experienced pri-  
vates in his com-  
pany. Private John  
Allen enlisted on  
March 15, 1864 at  
Fannin, Rankin

County, Mississippi for three years. The census of 1860 (Sept) shows he was age 14 so that indicates he was perhaps only age 17 or perhaps 18 at time of enlistment.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Cavalry Regiment consisted of eleven companies and was formed during the spring of 1862 mainly from counties around Jackson, Mississippi. The regiment suffered heavy casualties due to numerous battles and illness in 1862 and 1863 in Mississippi and Alabama and routinely served under the command of Nathan Bedford Forrest. Soon after Private Allen enlisted, the 28<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Cavalry moved from Mississippi to Carthage, Alabama and then to Rome, Georgia on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1864. The 28<sup>th</sup> Mississippi then fought at Adairsville, Georgia with heavy casualties, fought at Cassville on May 20, and then moved to



## Nominations for Person/Compatriot of the Year are Open

By: Commander J. H. Underwood



Compatriots;

At our November 8th meeting nominations for Person of the Year and Compatriot of the Year were opened. The following people have been nominated for Person of the Year: Soren Dresch with Ruffin Flag Co., Madelyn Stark, president James M. Gresham Chapter

of the UDC, John Black of Dixie Depot and Judy Hardegree with the William Harris Homestead Foundation.

Nominations for Compatriot of the Year so far are 2nd Lt. Cmdr. Jerry New and Camp Webmaster Hal Doby.

Nominations for these honors will remain

open until our next meeting on December 12th. If you want to nominate someone please send me an e-mail, call me or be at the next meeting.

Those that know they can't make the December meeting may go ahead and vote via e-mail or regular mail prior to the December meeting.

**MAJ. GEN. JOSEPH WHEELER CAMP #863,  
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## The Confederate Cemeteries of Covington and Oxford

(10th & 11th Soldiers in the series)

*Continuing Project by Compatriot Gene Wade*



Dallas, Georgia, skirmishing. On May 28th the regiment was dismounted temporarily and fought in the trenches on the extreme south of the line extending from northeast of New Hope Church, southwest of Dallas. From there, they charged and drove in the federal skirmishers and encountered heavy rifle and cannon fire from the main line of the yankees. The charge of the Mississippi 28<sup>th</sup> was successful but they were forced to retire before taking possession of the cannons. The regiment had 20 killed and wounded, "a severe price to pay for feeling the enemy" one of the men wrote home.

After this, the regiment skirmished continually as the armies moved closer to the Marietta line, skirmished on that line in the yankee rear near Powder Springs, picketed the Chattahooche River and then moved to West Point July 17 to meet Rousseau's expedition. The 28<sup>th</sup> took part in the 28 July Battle of Atlanta and later fought near Jonesboro in Late August 1864

Alas, Private Allen became sick in June or early July 1864 probably while in the line near New Hope. We only know that Private John Allen died on July 15, 1864 at Hill Hospital,

Covington, Georgia of an unknown illness. Records of this hospital show he left the following possessions left behind: 2 shirts, 1 coat, 1 blanket, 1 jacket, 1 hat, 1 pr shoes, 1 pr drawers, 1 pr pants and 1 pr socks.

Private John Allen was age 17, or perhaps a young 18, when he died on July 15, 1864 indicating that he served in the army only about four months before his death. Because of the rapid and constant movements of the brigade, he likely received only rudimentary training after enlisting..

Private John Allen was evidently single. According to census records, his parents were Henry and Elizabeth Allen, originally of Georgia. He appears to have had six brothers and one sister, all born in Mississippi. Five of the brothers, including John, served in Company G of the 28<sup>th</sup> Miss Cavalry. Brother James died of wounds at Foard's Hospital at Marietta, GA on June 22, 1864. Brother George died of illness on March 8, 1863 in a hospital at Grenada, Miss. Brothers Peter and Nathan both enlisted in April 1862 and are listed as de-

serters on March 1, 1865 but both had been hospitalized in Mississippi for long term illnesses and since the end of the war was obvious, and having lost two brothers, it is understandable that they join the flood of soldiers leaving the Confederate Army. The other brother, William, likely also served in the Confederate Army but it appears he served in a unit other than the 28<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Cavalry and his service cannot be positively identified.



**Confederate Memorial Wall  
Covington Georgia**