

The Bugle



Quarterly Journal of the
Camp Curtin Historical Society
and Civil War Round Table, Inc.

Spring 2014
Volume 24, Number 1



Civil War Heavy Artillery

"The field upon which we now stand will be known as classic ground, for here has been the great central point of the organization of our military forces. When my administration of public affairs will have been forgotten and the good and evil will be only known to the investigation of the antiquarian, Camp Curtin, with its memories and associations, will be immortal."

- Governor Andrew Curtin, 1865

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2014 Upcoming Camp Curtin Events

Schedule subject to change. Updates in future issues of *The Bugle*.

May 18 - Louisiana Tigers Presentation

Ben Duke will speak on "*The Civil War Adventures of my Reb-Yank Grandfather*" at the National Civil War Museum. See back cover for more details.

June 20-22 - Civil War Days

The annual commemoration of the Confederate invasion of Cumberland County and the Union defense of the Harrisburg area. Details in next issue of *The Bugle* and by email notices.

August 9 - Summer Picnic

Our annual picnic for members and friends will be in the pavilion at Negley Park, Lemoyne.

September 7 - Harrisburg Cemetery Tours

Join us on a walk through history and meet the "residents" of the Harrisburg Cemetery



We need your email!

As you all know, mailing costs are increasing and it would help us greatly if we had everyone's email. We will be able to send you updates on Society activities and any changes in scheduling. Rest assured, we will not share our email list with any other organization or business. If you have an email, please send us a message at CampCurtin@verizon.net so that we can add it to our list.

Cover: *Battery Rodgers at Hunting Creek and the Potomac near Alexandria, Va. Two examples of heavy artillery were in the fort, a Parrott Rifle in the foreground and a Rodman Gun in the background. Both were mounted on iron carriages. This issue covers the basics of Civil War heavy artillery. Special thanks to the Library of Congress Collection for period photographs.*

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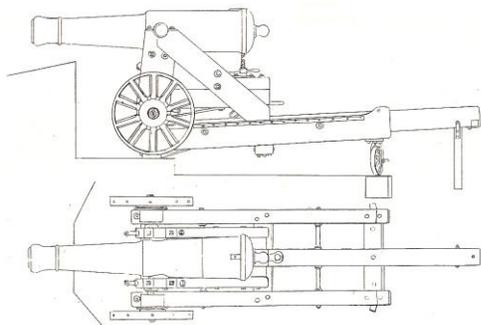
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The Big Guns - Civil War Heavy Artillery

During the Civil War, artillery was classified as heavy or light depending on the maneuverability and size of the guns. Light or field artillery pieces were moved by small teams of horses and were used by armies in the field for both offensive and defensive operations. Heavy artillery was used primarily in fixed fortifications for defending cities or in siege operations against such forts.

In the Union Army, the heavy artillery units tended to stay together as regiments and saw very little action, living relatively safe and comfortable lives in the forts around Washington. Late in the war, however, when there was less of a threat to the capital, Lt. Gen. U. S. Grant pulled the “Heavies” out of the forts and used them as infantry during the campaign to capture Petersburg and Richmond.

Prior to the Civil War, two versions of the **Seacoast Gun** were standard armament for the forts that protected the nation’s seaports. The guns were classified by the weight of their solid shot. The 32 Pounder version had a 6.4 inch bore, used 8 pounds of gunpowder, and the barrel (tube) weighed 7,200 pounds. The 42 Pounder had a 7 inch bore, used 10.5 pounds of powder and weighed 8,500 pounds. The barrels were about 10 feet long, made of iron, and usually mounted on wooden carriages. The smoothbore Seacoast Guns could shoot over one mile at a five degree elevation.



Drawing from 1862 U.S. Army Ordnance Manual showing side and top views of a Seacoast Gun mounted on a wooden barrette carriage.



32 Pounder in a Washington Fort

Columbiads were iron smoothbore artillery pieces that could fire shot and shell at a high angle of elevation using a heavy powder charge. Like the Seacoast Guns, they were usually used in fortifications along rivers and in defense of ports. The first Columbiads, 50 Pounders, were used in the War of 1812.

By the 1840s they were being made in larger versions and slowly replacing the Seacoast Guns. They were usually described by their bore diameter. The 8 inch version fired a 65 pound solid shot, used 10 pounds of gunpowder, and the barrel weighed 9,200 pounds. The 10 inch version fired a 128 pound solid shot, and the barrel weighed 15,000 pounds.

In casting these big barrels, they were cooled from the outside and this often led to a weakness that could cause bursting when the gun was fired. Thomas Rodman (right), of the U.S. Ordnance



Department, developed a new casting procedure that cooled them from the inside and made them stronger and less susceptible to cracking. He also improved the gunpowder used in the cannons. In a test between the old method and Rodman’s method of casting, the old version burst after 73 firings but the improved version

never burst and it was fired over 1,500 times. Rodman's process was so successful that the new version of the Columbiad was generally called a **Rodman Gun**.

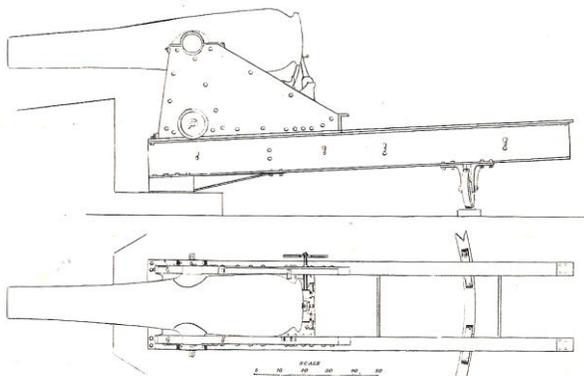
During the Civil War, the Rodman Guns were produced in 8, 10, 12, 13, and 15 inch models. Two were even made with a 20 inch bore. By comparison, it should be noted that World War II battleships mounted 16 inch guns.



15 Inch Columbiad/Rodman Gun

The 15 inch Rodman Gun weighed over 50,000 pounds and fired solid shot of 425 pounds and exploding shells of 300 pounds. At 6 degrees of elevation it could shoot over one mile and at 28 degrees it could shoot almost three miles.

The Confederates continued to produce their Columbiads by the old method and experimented with banding for strength and rifling for distance, but they were inferior to the improved Union models.



Drawing from 1862 U.S. Army Ordnance Manual showing side and top views of a Rodman Gun mounted on an iron barrette carriage. The same type of carriage was used for the Parrott Rifles.

Rifling of artillery was one of the great innovations in warfare during the Civil War. Robert Parrott (right) is best known for his 10 and 20 Pounder Rifles used by the field artillery but larger **Parrott Rifles** were produced in 100 Pounder (6.4 inch), 200 Pounder (8 inch) and 300 Pounder (10 inch) sizes. The barrels weighed 9,700, 16,300, and 26,500 pounds. All of Parrott's pieces are recognizable by the thick reinforcing band at the breech of the cannon.



100 Pounder Parrott Rifles

These big guns were susceptible to bursting, usually at the muzzle, when shells exploded prematurely. Even so, the longer range and penetrating power, especially of mason forts and ironclad ships, made them desirable to both the Union Army and Navy. These big rifled guns were capable of shooting over four miles.

A Civil War era mortar was a short artillery tube designed to be fired at a high degree of elevation (45 degrees), using a relatively small powder charge. The chamber of a mortar was specially designed to concentrate the charge in a small area so the projectile could receive as much of the propelling explosion as possible. Mortar projectiles usually exploded while still high in the air and rained fragments down on fortifications and enemy soldiers.

Siege and Seacoast Mortars were made in 8, 10 and 13 inch models. The 13 inch version's tube was 53 inches long, weighed 17,000 pounds and could fire a 200 pound shell over two miles. Big mortars saw service during the Peninsula Campaign in 1862 and the Siege of Petersburg 1864-65. They also saw service on special mortar boats in the Mississippi River.



13 Inch Mortar during the Siege of Petersburg

Pennsylvania provided six regiments for artillery service during the Civil War. The 1st Regiment of Pennsylvania Artillery was assigned to serve as light artillery but five other regiments were designated as heavy artillery.

The 2nd Pennsylvania Artillery (112th Pennsylvania Volunteers) served as heavy artillery at Fort Delaware and in the defenses of Washington from 1862 to 1864. In May, the regiment was assigned to the Army of the James and fought at Cold Harbor and the Siege of Petersburg as infantry. After the end of hostilities, the regiment was distributed by companies throughout southern Virginia on provost guard duty and was finally mustered out in January 1866.

The 3rd Pennsylvania Artillery (152nd Pennsylvania Volunteers) batteries were dispersed and served as heavy artillery in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. Besides heavy artillery duty, some units were assigned to field artillery, gunboats, guarding Confederate prisoners and other duties.



Officers of the 3rd Pennsylvania Artillery posing at Fort Monroe. Service in the fixed forts was relatively easy, with little action, comfortable barracks, and regular meals. These officers even had the opportunity to obtain and wear the full dress uniform, complete with hat feathers and gold bullion epaulettes.

The 4th Pennsylvania Artillery (189th Pennsylvania Volunteers) was actually a temporary unit formed in the spring of 1864, when the “heavies” were pulled from the forts to serve as infantry. The men came from the 2nd Pennsylvania Artillery that had over 2,000 men, twice the normal number for a regiment. The unit was also known as the 2nd Pennsylvania Provisional Heavy Artillery. It fought in the Overland Campaign and the Siege of Petersburg, suffering heavy losses at Cold Harbor and the Crater. In August 1864, the men were returned to their original unit.

The 5th Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery (204th Pennsylvania Volunteers) was raised in the summer of 1864 and assigned to the forts defending Washington. Briefly, they served as infantry guarding the Manassas Gap Railroad and engaged Mosby's Rangers. The regiment returned to the Washington forts and ended their service with little action.

The 6th Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery (212th Pennsylvania Volunteers) was raised in the fall of 1864 and assigned to the forts defending Washington. They were assigned to guard the Orange and Alexandria Railroad in Virginia and later returned to the Washington forts and also ended their service with little action.

\$8,500 Raised for GNMP

The 11th Annual Civil War Preservation Ball on March 29th was a great success. The sell-out event raised over \$8,500 for the Gettysburg Monument Endowment Trust Fund, bringing the total for 11 years to \$75,000.

Dance music was provided by the Philadelphia Brigade Band and the dancing was led by the Victorian Dance Ensemble. Boy Scout Venture Crew 1861, portraying the 1st Pennsylvania Reserves Fifes and Drums, greeted the arriving guests and Mr. Lemuel's Red Mill Serenaders played during the intermission.



Over 200 people came to dance in the beautiful rotunda of the Pennsylvania Capitol Building. Guests travelled from Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia and ranged from preteens to seniors.

Special guests included State Representative Harry Readshaw and his wife Carol, State Representative Dan Moul and his wife Lori, Gettysburg National Military Park Superintendent Ed Clark and his wife Heidi and son Reid, Barbara Mowery, President of the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association, and President Abraham Lincoln, portrayed by Jim Getty.

Next year's ball will be held on March 15, 2015. For more information about upcoming events, visit www.CivilWarDance.org.

Descendant Brigade

Membership in the Camp Curtin Descendant Brigade is open to men, women and children (12 years of age or older) who are direct or collateral descendants of a soldier who passed through Camp Curtin from April 18, 1861 to November 11, 1865. Descendants of civilians who worked or volunteered at Camp Curtin are also eligible.



The application fee is \$25.00. Accepted members will receive a membership medal (above), membership certificate, and a one year membership in the Society. Subsequent dues will be \$15.00 per year.

Numerous Pennsylvania units passed through Camp Curtin as well as troops from Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Wisconsin, and the U.S. Regular Army. The Ladies Union Relief Association of Harrisburg is one of the civilian organizations that worked at Camp Curtin.

For more information and an application form, visit our website at www.CampCurtin.org.



Total Civil War Losses Recalculated

For over a century, the total deaths from battle and disease in the Civil War was given as about 620,000. New research, however, has raised that figure to about 750,000.

Dr. J. David Hacker, a demographic historian from Binghamton University in New York, has recalculated the death toll using newly digitized census data from the 19th century and other sources and methods not available to earlier historians to derive his new estimate.

GNMP Living History Programs



Gettysburg National Military Park will be hosting living history programs with Union and Confederate units at the Pennsylvania Memorial (Stop No. 12 on the Auto Tour), Pitzer Woods (Stop No. 6), Spangler Spring (Stop No. 13) and Meade's Headquarters (Taneytown Road). These programs are a great opportunity to see some of the best reenactment units in action, with weapons firing demonstrations, drill and camp life. Programs will continue through October. Maps and information will be available at the Park Visitor Center. For more information telephone 717-334-1124 ext. 8023, or visit www.nps.gov/gett/.

May 3-4

Battery F, 1st Pennsylvania Artillery, Pa. Mem.

May 17-18

44th Georgia Infantry, Pitzer Woods
71st Pennsylvania Infantry, Pa. Mem.

May 24-25

U.S. Regular Infantry, Meade's HQ
Battery D, 1st Pennsylvania Artillery, Pa. Mem.
10th Virginia Infantry, Spangler Spring

May 31- June 1

21st Georgia, Co. B Infantry, Pitzer Woods

June 7-8

119th New York Infantry, Pa. Mem.
Baltimore Light Artillery, Pitzer Woods

June 14

The Wildcat Regimental Band will perform at the GNMP Visitor Center as well as present an evening concert at the Pa. Mem.

June 14-15

1st North Carolina Artillery, Pitzer Woods
Gettysburg Blue and Gray Reunion programs at the Angle (Saturday only)

August 14-15 GNMP Annual Civil War Music Muster

All types of Civil War era music will be performed by the 46th Pennsylvania Regiment Band, 77th New Regimental Volunteers, Steve Ball, Connecticut Valley Field Music, Fort Delaware Cornet Band, Irish Volunteers, David Kincaid, Libby Prison Minstrels, and Susquehanna Travellers. The Victorian Dance Ensemble will demonstrate dances of the period and invite the audience to join in to experience the civilian side of the 1860s. Friday's afternoon performances will be at the Park Visitor Center and Saturday's performances will be throughout the day at the Dobbin House and Park Visitor Center. Evening concerts will be at the Pennsylvania Memorial. Later this summer, a complete schedule will be available online and at the Park's information desk.

June 21-22

146th Pennsylvania Zouaves, Pa. Mem.
13th New Jersey Infantry, Spangler Spring

June 28-29

20th Maine Infantry, Pa. Mem.
20th Maine Hospital, Meade's HQ
2nd Maryland Infantry, Pitzer Woods
23rd Virginia Infantry, Spangler Spring

July 5-6

The Mifflin Guard Infantry, Pa. Mem.
Confederate Mil. Forces Infantry, Pitzer Woods

July 12-13

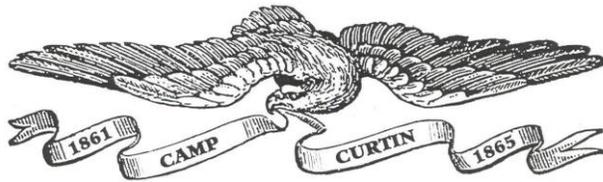
6th New Hampshire Infantry, Spangler Spring
Fletcher's CSA Battery, Pitzer Woods
Battery M, 2nd U.S. Artillery, Pa. Mem.

July 19-20

Battery B, 1st Rhode Island Artillery, Pa. Mem.
Calvert Fife & Drum, Pa. Mem.
2nd U.S. Cavalry, Co. H., Pitzer Woods
4th Virginia Infantry, Spangler Spring

July 26-27

CSA Sharpshooters, Spangler Spring
3rd Virginia Infantry, Pitzer Woods



The Camp Curtin Historical Society
presents

Benjamin Duke

speaking on

The Civil War Adventures of My Reb-Yank Grandfather

*Tracing his footsteps from Baton Rouge to Antietam
to Gettysburg to Richmond to Berwick, Pa.*

2:00PM, Sunday, May 18, 2014

at the National Civil War Museum

Reservoir Park, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Dr. Duke will relate the unusual story of his grandfather, a Cajun teenager born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, who served under General Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley with the 7th Regiment of the Louisiana Tigers as Private Victor Braud. Later he served under General Ulysses Grant in the siege of Richmond as Corporal George Duke, 104th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment. He is buried in Berwick, Pennsylvania.

Benjamin Duke is a former teacher in the Hershey public schools. He spent 40 years on the faculty of a university in Tokyo, Japan, retiring to Mechanicsburg. He is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University and earned his Ph.D. from the University of London. Ben is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harrisburg Civil War Round Table.

This presentation is free. Bring a friend.

For information call 717-732-5115 or email genjenkins@aol.com