

## AAR for Fort Nathan Hale

This past weekend (28-30 August) saw: Darwin, Lisa, Aaron, Mike, Michelle, Andy, Ellie, Dan, Kat, Rachel, Gwen, Teddy (Union Dismounted Cav.), Bob and Wayne participated in the reenactment event at Fort Nathan Hale, New Haven, CT.

Weather; the remains of Hurricane Danny caused some wind, but mostly a steady rain on Friday through till Saturday late morning. Sunday was a very nice day.

**Friday:** Darwin, Lisa, Kat, Rachel and Gwen, Wayne, Aaron and Dan arrived about 3:30pm. Four tents were set up; one for Darwin/Lisa, one for Kat/Rachel/Gwen, one for Aaron and one for Wayne. We got the word that the Brady's were slowed by traffic so off to dinner we went. We ate at Village dinner and the eight of us enjoyed some relaxation, great conversation and a bit to eat. We arrived back at camp about the same time that the Brady's did (6pm). Everyone pitched in and the Brady's and Teddy's tent plus the fly was put up. The cannon was left on the trailer. Michelle, Andy and Ellie spent the night at a local hotel and Darwin and Lisa returned home for the evening. Dan slept in the Robinson's tent for the evening. Candles were light by our own candle lighting expert (Kat) and some stories and tells were shared, but it wasn't long before most people turned in for the night.

Besides the 1st Co., Richmond Howitzers, we had present Morton's Battery and a few members of the 17<sup>th</sup> Tenn. Infantry.

**Saturday:** We woke up to some light rain. Members were on their own for breakfast. Michelle, Andy, Ellie, Darwin and Lisa were all back in camp early enough to bring some hot coffee, tea and treats for everyone to enjoy.

We did not do gun drill or hold morning colors due to the rainy weather.

Lunch was on your own, and several members took their wagons to nearby taverns, while others relaxed and ate what they brought under the fly.

The reenactment field was flat with trees and hills to the east & west. To the north of the field was a road and on the south side the ocean. [NOTE: this is where the Union camp was located. The Confederate camp was located beyond the tree-line and on a hill to the east.]

We started our battle scenario at 1400

Morton's battery was on our left and Captain Wayne was in charge of this two gun section. Col Lee was on the field and directed the very few infantry that were present. The scenario was "The attack on Fort Royal and amphibious landing." We were in position on the bluff overlooking the sea. We soon came under fire by the Union warship the USS John Paul Jones. The Richmond Howitzers and Morton's returned fire and kept up this fire until each had fired eight rounds. Due to our light infantry support we were quickly surrounded on three sides by the Union forces that came up from the beach. While we tried to hold them off we were soon outnumbered and I am sad to say we lost many a good men that day trying to save our cannon.

Back in camp, after a little rest, dinner was ordered and delivered by a local Pizza parlor.

After dinner we started a kickball game. We had about seven Confederates [RHs] against six Yankees and Andy; Due to the very small size of the field we used the "light" ball. The game swung back and forth with the score

very close all game. There were some outstanding defensive plays (even Lisa caught a ball) but when the sun went down those Damn Yankees made a comeback and won 5-4.

Back in came we caught our breath and munched on some snacks to include the cooking of marshmallows by our marshmallow cooking expert Miss. Ellie. It was a good day with lots of fun and tired Richmond Howitzers.

Darwin and Lisa spent the night, while Mike joined his family in their hotel. Dan, not sure where he slept, in his truck or in the Brady's tent?

**Sunday:** Members once again were on their own for breakfast. Michelle, Andy, Ellie, and Mike were all back in camp early enough to bring some hot coffee, tea and treats for everyone to enjoy. That included the "big bad breakfast cookies."

After breakfast, Lisa took out the game "Do you know America?" Teams were boys against the girls with Ellie picking the category cards and Wayne reading the questions. After several rounds and some lucky guesses, the game ended in a tie with much protest from the ladies.

Wayne handed out several article from the Civil War News Newspaper having to do with the cutting of trees at the Battlefield of Gettysburg. Each article was read and then discussed before we moved to the next article. It was one of the "drills" that after you read one article you said "That makes sense or I agree with that." Then you read the next article and said the exact same thing but this time the article is the completely opposite view. And that happen almost every time as we read five articles.

Bob and General Lee joined us about mid-morning for Sunday's events.

Because of the weather and the necessity to move the cannon by trailer to the battlefield, we left the cannon on the trailer as much as possible and once again we did not conducted gun drill. I as Captain made that decision based on the seasoned gun crew members that we had and the recent events we participated in.

Since we did not "die" with a flair when we were over-run by Union forces, I asked Andy and Ellie to hold "dying lessons." I was pleasantly surprised when I returned from Officer's Call to find all cannoneers lined up with Andy and Ellie out front conducting this training. While improvements were made, I see more training in the future.

Our camp was the farthest away from the center of any activity and visitors need to make an effort to find us and visit. I mentioned to Andy and Ellie that young boys and girls are very interested in seeing them, hearing from them, and that they are our best recruiters in that regard. Once again I was pleasantly surprised to find both Andy and Ellie up on the ridge to the right of our campsite talking to visitors and ushering them down to see us. Ellie even had either a tin of cookies or a tin boiler filled with M & Ms that she offered to our visitors. They both get my highest "WELL DONE" for their efforts.

On Saturday we had about 150 spectators and on Sunday that number jumped to 400 watched the battle.

The battle began similar to Saturday accept this time we were positioned about 40 yard further back. This put the crowd very close and their cheers where nice to hear every time we fired our cannon.

With Bob's arrival and Morton down a man, we "loan" Teddy who was earlier trained by Aaron on the ammo box. QmSgt. Darwin was our gunner for this battle.

Once again we came under fire by the Union ship the USS John Paul Jones. The Richmond Howitzers and Morton's returned fire and kept up this fire until each had fired five rounds.

On this day, Captain Wayne was the senior field officer on the battlefield. General Lee was close by.

The Union force made two frontal assaults. The first one when they came over ridge from the sea they formed a battle line and fired two volleys. Morton's Battery quickly took these men under fire with a round of canister. When the smoke cleared nearly all the Union soldiers were dead or wounded. A second wave came over the ridge and likewise formed a battle line and fired two volleys. Like Morton's Battery, the Richmond Howitzers quickly took these men under fire with a round of canister. When the smoke cleared nearly all the Union soldiers were dead or wounded. We saved the fort and the battle was a Confederate victory. YEAH!

Our infantry advanced taking what prisoners they could and the Captain of the Infantry accepted the sword of the Union commander.

The gun crews BOTH days performed their duties professionally and safely. "WELL DONE!"

**FIRST** occurred at this event:

- (1) First time that Teddy camped out with the RHs
- (2) First time that Captain Wayne was the Acting Chief of Artillery and senior field officer on the battlefield.

**NOTE:** Fort Nathan Hale is a very nice site. Small but nice. I understand, if there is another event here in the future that it will be held in a nearby and larger field.

There was a 3 minute TV Channel 8 News report (video) on the Saturdays Battle. A very nice view of Mike and Lisa. You see some other company members behind the reporter's shoulders. Here is the link. I am not sure how long it will remain available.

[http://www.wtnh.com/dpp/news/new\\_haven\\_cty/news\\_wtnh\\_new\\_haven\\_civil\\_war\\_reenactment\\_200908291835](http://www.wtnh.com/dpp/news/new_haven_cty/news_wtnh_new_haven_civil_war_reenactment_200908291835)

We anticipate receiving a Cannon bounty for our services.

My Son, Daughter-in-law, Grandson and my Daughter-in-law's parents came to see the battle and joined us back at camp where they had birthday cupcakes for everyone.

Thanks for all who made the trip and made it a safe and enjoyable time.

Next up is Lincoln, RI (12-13 September)

Respectfully submitted

Captain Wayne

Commanding Officer

1<sup>st</sup> Co., Richmond Howitzers