

After Action Report (AAR) for New Britain 2011

The following is a brief summary of action that took place at the Civil War event held at New Britain, CT 15-17 April 2011.

FRIDAY:

Aaron and Wayne arrived at their New Britain hotel around 1600 and were met there by Darwin, Lisa & Dan. With the assistance of CCSU staff we retrieved our trailer from stowage and proceed to Stanley Quarter Park. Due to some difficulty with the hitch, we did not arrive on site to about 1730. We were shortly joined by the Bradys. We quickly put up three A-frame tents and the fly. We shared this site with Morton's Battery.

We conducted a short gun drill so we would be ready for our night firing.

Gun crew

#2 – Darwin	#1 – Dan
#4 – Mike	#3 – Lisa
Gunner – Wayne	#5 – Aaron

At 1930 RHs along with Morton's open fire from a position on one side of a small pond toward the Union artillery position on the other side. Our fire was returned by the Union cannons, which in turn were followed by a volley from our Infantry station to our left on a bridge. This action repeated three times. The Confederate battery got in the last (4th) round.

We stowed our gear and we were off to a nearby Subway shop for dinner. After our meal, Aaron, Wayne and the Bradys proceeded to their hotel and the rest went to their nearby homes.

SATURDAY:

This was a cold cloudy day with threats of rain showers. We meet at our campsite around 0800. While the Liberty Greys marched off to the Open Ceremony about 0930 we proceeded to conduct gun drill as we had a new member, Joe, learning a new position (#2), Darwin took over as Gunner and everyone else manned the same position as for the Friday night time firing. Wayne was overall in charge as the Captain. The drill went well and we all observed that Joe is a quick learner.

The rest of the morning found us huddling around our campfire trying – repeat trying – to stay warm. Temps were in the mid-40's.

For lunch, we visited the vendors across the pond and had culinary delights such as; hotdogs, sausage sandwiches or chicken fingers. Several members had hot coco in an attempt to stay warm.

About 1345 we loaded the gun on the trailer and moved to the battlefield (soccer field). Morton's was on our right and the crowd was behind a waist high fence on our left. CPL Mike & Captain Wayne briefed the crowd on what they would see and when the cannon would fire. This action might have won the crowd over to our side. For at the end of the battle we were taken under fire

and one by one the RHs were “killed.” As each Richmond Howitzer fell to the ground the crowd gave out a moan and yet when our Infantry posted near our position returned fire, when a Union soldier fell, the crowd gave out a cheer.

The gun crew worked very well in coordination with Morton’s and during independent firing. The last round was fired as a battery fire and it could not have been better if both guns were pulled from the same lanyard. WELL DONE. In total we fired 8 rounds.

Some RHs need lessons on the fine art of “dying” – many were observed to be in need of further acting lesson by Andy & Eli. Joe may have been the best.

When the battle was completed, we packed the cannon in the trailer, dropped off the trailer in the trailer park, secured our campsite and we were off to a well deserved early dinner. We had free dinner tickets for a pig roast, but since we had to wait two and half hours for that meal to start and the rain just began, we choose to go to Home Town Buffet. Food choices were many and we ate our fill and got our money’s worth. Once again after dinner the members went home or to a nearby hotel.

Back at the hotel, after some quick showers, Aaron, Andy & Eli took turns on “beating each other up” in many card games of Go-Fish and Old Maid. In one hand, Andy set the record by winning on the first round. After a little reading and a little TV it was early to bed.

This “In Town Quartering” is tough living. Overall a good day.

SUNDAY:

This day began about 10 degrees warmer than yesterday (52) and we even got to see some blue sky and this big yellow circle in the sky – someone told me they believe it was the Sun.

Due to expected rainy weather conditions we re-assembled at camp at 0930. We offloaded the gun from the trailer and moved it to camp.

About mid-day we were joined in camp by Tom Callinan a “Troubadour” who sang and played on his banjo a few familiar songs; such as *When Jonny Comes Marching Home*, *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, and *Dixie*. It was a great treat to be able to sit in our own camp, under our own fly and listen to this music.

We had a light lunch of various snacks and goodies.

The battle began with the Union women trying to cross our lines at the bridge. They were stopped by our pickets and brought back to their lines. Things quickly went down hill from there as pickets on both sides exchanged fire and then the Union cannons open from across the pond on our camp. Quickly we moved our gun into position and began returning fire. The bridge was on our left, Morton’s on our right. The gun crew remained the same as Saturday and performed flawlessly. During this engagement we fired 10 rounds. With the Union pushing our Infantry back through the woods and toward the bridge, we were ordered to take position with the Infantry on the bridge. As we were out of ammo we stood bravely as a show of force to halt the Union advance. The battle ended and cheers rose from both the soldiers and spectator alike

We entertained visitors to our camp for about an hour when we broke camp and proceed home. We left the site about 1500.

NOTES:

(1) We all “Day tripped” this event either from our homes or from a hotel. We did pretty good about getting to the field at the designated time. Remember the normal time for Day Trippers is 0800 “in camp.”

(2) We are a relatively senior gun crew with Joe being the newest member and the prospect of Michelle joining the ranks shortly. There is comfort knowing that we KNOW the Drill, but there is a DANGER that we could get too relaxed and not stay FOCUS on the job at hand. Being on the gun is fun, but do not let the fun get in the way that we get sloppy and become un-safe. The Captain’s and the Gunner’s MAIN responsibility is the SAFETY of the gun crew. BUT it is the responsibility of everyone to remain engaged with the drill and not get distracted by other things around us. There is a TIME and PLACE for everything, but during Gun Drill those things are reduced to those directly related to the drill.

(3) We anticipate getting paid for this event for our attendance and for the powder we shot. Once we have check in hand we will let you know what we received from the State of Connecticut.

(4) THANKS to ALL for making this a very successful start to our 2011 season.

NEXT Civil War reenactment event:

29 April-1 May: CMD, Lincoln, RI

We are planning to setup on Friday afternoon, and spend the night on site. We additionally plan to spend all day Saturday on site, but due to other commitments we will leave after breakfast on Sunday.

Yours in Service
Captain Wayne