

AAR for Fort Adams, Newport, RI

This past weekend (18-19 July) saw: Darwin, Lisa, Aaron, Mike, Michelle, Andy, Ellie, Al Jr., and Wayne participated in the reenactment event at Fort Adams.

A first for the season, we had good weather both Saturday and Sunday. We did get some heavy rain late Friday night that woke most folks up, but had little impact on us.

Friday: Three tents were set up; one for Darwin/Lisa, one for the Brady's and one for Wayne. Everyone arrived before 3pm and in a reasonable time a site was picked and tents and fly was up. Our campsite was very unique in that we had the Cavalry, Morton's Battery, and Dement's Battery and us in a tight "box" configuration, with three cannon [first time we had three cannon to work with] at the top of the box. We all shared and played well together using one fire pit. Later, Wayne loaded the Brady's in his car and the Robinsons followed in their van as we toured the Ocean Drive, and saw several Mansions on Bellevue Ave. Dinner saw us at Applebee's. Many of you know that we have [and if we haven't we will now] establish what I would call "Darwinism." Many things that happen to Darwin he brings on to himself and there are others that he just happens to be in the right place at the wrong time. Case in point, Applebee's has the largest glasses used at any restaurant I know of, Darwin was passed a dish which caught on the straw on his drink, which caused him to quickly have the contents splash across the table and into his lap. A direct hit. A drenched Darwin. Darwinism #1. Back in camp, a fire was started, our new candle chandelier was lit and stories and tells were shared. But it wasn't long before most people turned in for the night.

Saturday: We woke up to find out in the middle of the night mysterious forces were at play as we were "ducked." Someone had laid 30 or so rubber ducks in front of the Robinson's tent. In addition, ducks were found on the tables, chairs, on the cannon and on the windshield wipers on the Robinson's car. While we cannot be 100% sure who perpetrated this deed, it smells and looks like something those Cav folks would do. [Note: some of you might remember that I believe the event was Amesbury, that we were camped near a small pond and at the edge of the small pond was a very small dock, and on this dock was a duck. Pvt Lee [then Ms. Lisa] took her camera and slow walked forward so she would not scare the duck in order to take a close-up picture. Well she got her picture and the duck did not fly away and the reason the duck did not fly away is the duck was a decoy and was made of wood.] After a breakfast of French toast and sausage, several members arrived in camp; Bob and Al, Jr. were on station bright and early with Paula dropping off Aaron a little later in the morning. We did some gun drill on the Cannon. We started our battle scenario at 1530 and since the battlefield outside the north wall of the fort is small we were only able to fire four rounds. Bob got a chance to come up to join the Cav and was able to fire his pistol to hold off the approaching Yankees. We had great support from the Cav who helped us move the cannon to and from the field. While the cannon was being cleaned, and Aaron's tent put up, Wayne and Lisa took a drive to a local tavern and picked up some vittles for our hungry cannons (KFC). About this same time, several younger members of the Cav invited Pvt Andy to go for a swim in the bay. I heard him say as he jumped off a high perch, "Better take a look, because I am not going to do this again." After dinner we started a kickball game. While we started with almost only the Richmond Howitzers, we used a similar philosophy as they did in the movie "Field of Dreams." Build it and they will come." Our version went like this; "Start playing and they will come." And they did. We had Confederates, we had Yankees, we had civilians, and we had the old, the young and the feebleminded. We had about 10 members on each side, two umpires and many more spectators cheering their team on. We even had the Colonel played and pitched. I don't remember the score (one team beat the other) but a great time was had by all. Back in camp we caught our breath and munched on some snacks. Later we all attended the "Social" where several kinds of pies were served and songs played by a four-member string band. Derrick, a young man from the Cav, got fancy up and wore a Citadel cadet's dress uniform, he

looked sharp. Derrick took our very own, Ms Ellie for her first and several other dances too. So very cute and so very brave to try new period dance as the music played. Ms. Ellie was smiling and beaming so wide I thought her lips would wrap around her head if it got any bigger. Although when I looked over at the “proud” mother she was beaming almost as much. After the Social, it was back to camp and the cooking of marshmallows by our marshmallow cooking expert Ms. Ellie. It was a good day with lots of sun and fun and tired Richmond Howitzers.

Sunday: Saw Darwin, Lisa, Aaron and Wayne having breakfast served at Newport Creamery. While the Brady’s stayed and had breakfast of bake goods, cereal and the “big bad breakfast cookie,” in camp. Bob and Al Jr. returned for Sunday’s events. We conducted gun drill with new people in new positions. We ran Al Jr. through several drills at the number 2 position and fired an actually round. During this firing we had two actual miss-fires. The gun crew performed their duties professionally and safely. On the third try and with a primer from Major Karl, the gun was cleared. After securing from drill we inventory the primers and removed three that appeared old and added ten new ones. During battle we had no problems. During the day the Cav instructed Al Jr. on the safety of carrying, loading and firing a pistol. We look for more training at the next event which will be a prelude for him being allowed to load and fire his pistol during a future battle. We had a treat in that one of the staff members at Fort Adams whom we became friends with took us on a private tour in the dark tunnels under the fort that not everyone gets to see. Darwinism #2. One should duck [not rubber duck as we found on Saturday morning] but duck as to lower one’s head before going through a low tunnel. Good thing Darwin has a hard head and good for those behind him who now knew to duck. Thanks Darwin. Once again during the battle due to the size and movement of the infantry we were only able to get four rounds. Being situated near to the crowd we could hear their approval every time we fired. We were able to clean the gun on the field, while Mike and Aaron went for the trailer. Shortly after returning to camp we got the word we were able to break camp. I want to give a special thanks to Bob and Al Jr., (and Aaron) who were Day-trippers and did not have a tent to pack-up so they took the lead in taking down the fly and helping everyone else. This significantly enabled all members to quickly and efficiently pack their belongings and be on the road to home much easier and faster than at past events. Nice job!

NOTE: Fort Adams is a very nice site. The location, right on the bay is breathtaking and that alone is worth the trip. Fort Adams Trust has done a lot of renovation in the past years and it was noted with pleasure.

I would highly recommend attending another event held at Fort Adams. The low numbers of Union may have been caused by the fact that there was a Union-only event held the same weekend at Fort Trumbull. The only downside to this event was the lack of sufficient bathroom/port-a-johns. I talked to the Fort staff and they had hoped the new inside restrooms would have been sufficient. They noted that they got enough feedback that port-a-john in the alleyways near where the cars were parked will/should return.

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

Next up is Woodbury (15-16 August); where we hope to see the entire Company present for service. This event is the first ANV [translated means, a BIG event] held in New England for a very long time and is the first I know of in the last 10 years. BIG events are cool, but extra safety and precautions must be taken to ensure a good time.

Respectfully submitted

Captain Wayne

Commanding Officer

1st Co., Richmond Howitzers