

AAR for Woodbury, CT

This past weekend (15-16 August) saw: Darwin, Lisa, Aaron, Mike, Michelle, Andy, Ellie, Dan, Kat, Rachel, Gwen. Kevin and Wayne participated in the reenactment event at Woodbury, CT.

Weather both Saturday and Sunday was very warm with temps in the mid-80's on Sat and low 90's on Sunday.

FRIDAY: Darwin, Lisa, Kat, Rachel and Gwen arrived about 2pm and Wayne, Aaron and the Brady's arrived about 4pm. Dan showed up a little later. Six tents were set up; one for Darwin/Lisa, one for the Brady's, one for Kevin/Kat, one for Rachel/Gwen, one for Aaron/Dan and one for Wayne. Once the trailer was emptied, the cannon removed and the fly up it was off to dinner. Some folks said we got lost looking for a restaurant; I would like to set the record straight, we just found a new way to a new location. We ate at JD's and the twelve of us enjoyed some relaxation, great conversation and a bite to eat. Back in camp our new candle chandelier was lit and we held a surprise birthday party for Aaron who turned 16. Aaron's actual birthday was Saturday, but we did it a day early so the beautiful (and delicious) cake that Michelle made would not "melt." The cake (see pictures in the picture album online) was round in shape and the top was a design of the Richmond Howitzers coin. Some stories and tells were shared, but it wasn't long before most people turned in for the night.

SATURDAY: The morning started with some low fog that lasted almost to 1000. In hindsight this was a blessing as it kept it from getting too hot too soon. Everyone fended for themselves for breakfast with a lot of snacks and goodies shared. We held morning colors, followed by gun drill. Randy joined us as a Cannoneer for the morning drill and morning skirmish.

During the skirmish we had two four gun batteries, one on the left wing and another on the right wing. We were part of the right wing. Artillery units present included: 1st Richmond Howitzers, Jackson's VA Flying Artillery, Morton's Battery, Morgan's Artillery (2 cannons), Knibb's Battery, Artillery (Jimmy Cochrane's group from VA), Middlesex Artillery, and Dement's Battery. During the skirmish, which lasted 30 minutes, we fired four rounds. What was very nice about this event was our last tent on our company street was only ten yards from our gun position for all events for the weekend, making manning the gun quick and easy.

For the next couple of hours we enjoyed some lunch, walks through the Town of Unity, and visitors to sutlers where we met and shared some stories with many friends we have not seen in a while. Such as George our Adams Express agent, Tanya, who once again put up here cemetery complete with headstones and coffins. Plus meeting Maryalice and catching up what she and Kevin have been up to.

Cpl. Kevin, who had to work the morning shift, came in time to join us for the afternoon "Rolling Thunder." This saw all eight guns lined up and starting from the right fire one after another in honor of past members who passed away. Our own Lily Markiewicz was remembered in a short service after the cannon firing by Pastor Joe.

The battle saw us manned and ready at 1430 and in a great display of multiple cannon action we fired eight rounds.

After the gun was cleaned we rested and spent some down time under the fly or visiting friends. Dinner found us gathering around the table as a company to share in BBQ spare ribs, potato salad, biscuits and toast salad. Mighty good.

What has now become a new Richmond Howitzers tradition, what started out as a small kickball game grew to a camp-wide game. We even had some Union players. Thanks to QmSgt Darwin we had "official" kickball bases, a

scoreboard (ably manned by Michelle) and a roster tablet (ably manned by Kat). It was an evenly matched game and the Red team beat the Blue team in the last inning by a booming homerun by our very own Pvt. Mike.

As night approached and the dark skies shown with stars we caught our breath and munched on some snacks and the cooking of marshmallows by our marshmallow cooking expert Ms. Ellie assisted by Ms. Gwen. One of our new friends we meet during the kickball game was a Union member named Teddy. During the evening, our Southern Bell, Miss Rachel took on a most dangerous mission as she returned to the Union camp with Teddy. Miss Rachel went beyond the call of duty as not only did she bring back vital information on Union forces, she recruited Teddy whom we look forward to joining us at our next event. It was a good day with lots of sun and fun and many tired Richmond Howitzers.

SUNDAY: The morning started warm and the day continued to get hot. Between breakfast and lunch we had gun drill were we switched positions around from those held on Saturday. It was a good practice as we had to concentrate a little harder as we were too familiar with the position from yesterday and the new positions had different requirements and responses. For both days, QmSgt Darwin was the gunner and did a nice job. It was also nice to have Pvt. Aaron back on the ammo chest now that he has come of age. During the morning skirmish we did similar action like we did on Saturday, but were able to shoot six rounds.

We had the fortune to have our fly next to General Lee's fly and tent so between skirmish and battle we were able to chat with the General and when President Davis and his wife made a call on the General we too had the good fortune to have President and Mrs. Davis spend sometime chatting under our fly. For most, if not for all, this was the first time we had the opportunity to see and meet the President and his wife.

The battle started around 1330. Due to the heat and the closeness of our gun, which was already inline, we waited to the last minute to leave the cool of the fly to man the gun. During the battle we were able to fire nine rounds and could have fired more if I did not order the Gunner to conserving ammo for the next event in two weeks.

About 1430 wagon were in camp and break down of tents began. All members were a great help in pitching in with company equipment and getting it and the cannon loaded on the trailer. It was a pleasure to see members helping one another as the heat was affecting all of us. I personally want to thank Michelle and Ellie for helping me pack up my gear, for without their assistance it would have been tough to do because the heat was affecting me that much.

By 1600 the camp was cleared, the gear packed and we were saying our goodbyes. One of the nicest, well planned, well laid-out and well executed, not to forget the largest in soldiers and cannons present, event we have seen here in New England. Nice job also to the TEAM work display by the 1st Co., Richmond Howitzers.

NOTES and THANKS

(1) During this event we had three misfires. Two the primer did not fire and one the primer "fizzled" but the powder did not go off. Each time the gun crew handled the miss-fire procedures flawlessly and the round was fired successfully on the second attempt. QmSgt Darwin has contacted the vendor who sold us these primers and found out that this batch was made from chemicals that unknowingly had expired and mostly likely contributed to the miss-fires. The vendor, with no cost to us, will replace our order with new primers.

(2) The totals for both days; we fired 28 rounds. A record for a two-day event. NICE !

(3) Thank you to Darwin for organizing camp, arranging for dinner and not running over any fire hydrants.

(4) Thanks Lisa for organizing the “surprise” birthday party for Aaron and for Michelle for baking the cake.

(5) Thanks to our “Bella Spy” (Rachel) for bring in a new recruit

(6) Thanks to Mike for the repairs to our trailer – this is certainly a “beyond the call of duty” action.

I am sure I am forgetting someone or something special, but not intentionally. I am so PROUD to be part of the Richmond Howitzers for the effort and freely giving and contributing of all members not only at this event but throughout the entire season. It is a pleasure to see the caring “family” we have become.

We have two events coming up, one next week at Fort Nathan Hale, and in about a month, one at Lincoln, RI. From the registrations we have submitted, it looks like most everyone is planning on being their which is GREAT. There is a third event in October (Groton, MA) and the Event Coordinator is trying to finalize the arrangements and most likely will happen, but we will have to wait and see.

And lastly, it currently looks like we have a nice showing of people going to Gettysburg in November, where we hope to join up with Ron and Emily. For those who do not have hotel reservations, you should try to make them if there is a hint that you might want to attend, know the cancellation policy if it turns out that you can not make it. It is always a difficult chore, especially at the “late time” to find a reasonable hotel.

Next up is Fort Nathan Hale (29-30 August) – See you there.

Respectfully submitted

Captain Wayne

Commanding Officer

1st Co., Richmond Howitzers