

# The Powder Magazine

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 4

WINTER 2016

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST

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## Exhibit, more to honor Fort Fisher vets at 151<sup>st</sup> event

On Saturday, January 16, 2016, Fort Fisher State Historic Site will observe the 151<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> battle of Fort Fisher by unveiling “Distinguished by their gallantry in action: Fort Fisher’s Medal of Honor Recipients.” The program will feature compelling authors and speakers, dozens of Union and Confederate reenactors, special tours, and a new exhibit focusing on the 72 soldiers, sailors, and Marines who received the Medal of Honor for their actions at Fort Fisher near the end of the Civil War.

Free and open to the public, the program will be held from 10 am to 4 pm. The site will debut a new exhibit in the visitor’s center concentrating on the 72 soldiers, sailors, and Marines who received the Medal of Honor from June 1864 to January 1865. Although never



David Meisky

presented to their recipients, five Medals of Honor on loan from the U.S. Navy will be among the articles featured in the exhibit, along with two others.

Of course it wouldn’t be an anniversary at Fort Fisher without ground-shaking cannon firings, so

visitors can count on periodic blasts courtesy of the site’s 32-pounder rifled and banded cannon, the site’s 12 pounder Napoleon cannon and a 10-pound Parrott Rifle.

If you’ve ever had questions about Confederate currency, you won’t want to miss the intriguing presentation by Buena, Vista, Va., native David Meisky, a reenactor and historian who portrays William “Extra Billy” Smith, a Confederate general, businessman, and politician.

A former history major at George Mason University, Meisky is retired from the Fairfax County, Va., Public Library and loves spending his time living in the past. Meisky will speak at 11 am in the site’s auditorium. At 2:30 pm, local historian and author Richard Triebe, will discuss Fort Fisher POWs in the auditorium.

**Continued on page 8**

## Gragg & Richard to headline Friends’ Annual Meeting

Members of the Friends of Fort Fisher and their guests are invited to attend the Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 16, 2016 at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel in Carolina Beach. Join us for check-in, coffee and pastries beginning at 8:00 a.m. and then at 9:00 a.m. hear professional genealogist Diane Richard, President of Mosaic Research and Project Management, share tips for tracing your an-



Rod Gragg

cestors followed by author, historian and Director of Military and Veteran Studies at Coastal Carolina University Rod Gragg speaking on the heroes and veterans of Fort Fisher. Meet your Board of Directors and other members, guests and Fort Fisher descendants. Beginning at 10:30 a.m. members and guests can listen to a site update and Friends report,

**Continued on page 10**

# From the site manager, Jim Steele...



Dear Friends:

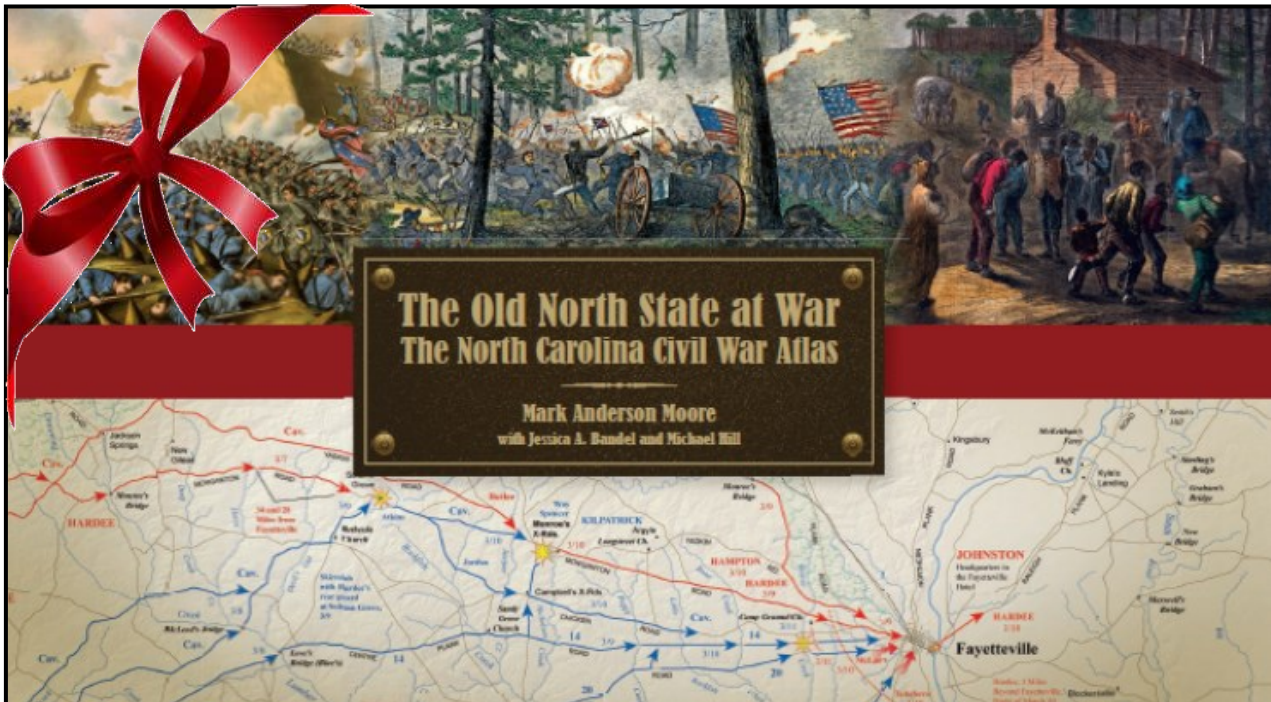
It is the New Year, and on Saturday, January 16 we will present our anniversary program commemorating the Battle of Fort Fisher. This will be the 151<sup>st</sup> anniversary; it is hard to believe the sesquicentennial series is now behind us. But we are not slowing down. This year you can look forward to Civil War Trust Park Day on April 2, Confederate Memorial Day service on April 30, and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary program commemorating Fort Fisher's role in World War II on October 15. And, of course, all summer long we will present our successful "Junior Reserves" children's programs and the "Beat the Heat" lecture series. We hope that you can make it to all of these great events.

Some of you may be aware of a tremendous change to our department. This winter it became official that elements of the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources have been transferred to Cultural Resources. We are now called the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Secretary Susan Klutz explained "this realignment will allow the DENR attractions and the DCR assets to bring their collective expertise, experience and talents together to strengthen our wonderful properties and to engage visitors to experience the best our state has to offer." So we welcome North Carolina State Parks, Aquariums, the Zoo and Museum of Natural History to the family. I expect that all of our organizations will benefit from this collaboration, but especially those here on Federal Point.

In closing, I encourage everyone to become a member of the Friends of Fort Fisher. The Friends are key to everything we do here and your participation is crucial. If you are already a member thank you so much for your continuing support. Come see us soon!

Sincerely,  
Jim

## What's new in the Fort Fisher museum store? Why... *THE OLD NORTH STATE AT WAR-THE NC CIVIL WAR ATLAS*



The North Carolina Civil War Atlas is a comprehensive full-color study of the impact of the war on the Tar Heel State, incorporating 99 original maps. The only state-level atlas of its kind, the book is a sesquicentennial project of the North Carolina Office of Archives and History. The large format (11"x17") volume highlights every significant military engagement and analyzes the war's social, economic, and political consequences through tables, charts, and text. Manuscripts, election returns, newspapers, census records, and other sources were used to prepare the narrative and compile the tabulated data. Every significant Civil War military engagement in the state is highlighted in this lavishly illustrated, full-color, 200-page, hardbound volume. Available now in the Fort Fisher museum store for \$85 per copy, plus tax. Get one now for the history lover on your Christmas list.



# Fort Fisher State Historic Site



# Park Day 2016

Join us for

As part of Civil War Trust Park Day 2016, individual and group volunteers are needed Saturday, April 2, from 8:30 to 1:00 pm to help beautify and preserve Fort Fisher State Historic Site, the largest earthen fortification in the Confederacy, which once protected the port of Wilmington and the vital blockade running trade on the Cape Fear River.

Civil War Trust Park Day brings history enthusiasts together in an effort to help keep our nation's heritage not only preserved, but pristine. Since 1996, the Civil War Trust has sponsored Park Day, an annual hands-on preservation event to help Civil War — and now Revolutionary War — battlefields and historic sites take on maintenance projects large and small.

Volunteers aged 10 and up, of all ability levels, are encouraged to participate. Many activities are appropriate for groups such as scout troops, service clubs, and church youth groups. Volunteers will be treated to a free t-shirt and lunch provided by the Friends of Fort Fisher (the non-profit group which supports the site and makes all programming possible) along with its

sustaining members—Troy and Lori Barbour, Mike McCarley, Tammy and Jack Moore, Brian and Deedra Nunnally, Jim and Catherine Taylor, Patrick O. McCullough, Forrest Goodman, Jr., Wilson Grab, and Ivarlee E. & Thomas E. Mulligan.

All Park Day volunteers are asked to register in advance by calling the site at (910) 458-5538 or emailing [john.moseley@ncdcr.gov](mailto:john.moseley@ncdcr.gov). Gloves and tools will be provided.



Save the Date!

Park Day is Saturday, April 2, 2016

## Meet Capt. Thomas Taylor, trusted comrade of Col. William Lamb and master at running the blockade

Thomas Taylor was the super-cargo (owner's representative and load master) for the Anglo-Confederate Trading Company, one of the most successful blockade-running firms of the Civil War. Due in no small part to Taylor's resourceful vigilance the company's good fortune was remarkable.

In fact, the enterprise was so profitable that it is reported that in the fall of 1864 that the company paid out dividends to their investors amounting to 250 percent above the original cost of a share of stock. In the competitive high stakes business of blockade-running both Taylor and the Anglo-Confederate Trading Company flourished; and though the company never operated more than four runners at a time, over the course of the war its fleet of vessels would include the *Banshee*, *Banshee II*, *Will of the Wisp*, *Night Hawk*, *Stormy Petrel*, *Tristram Shandy* and *Wild Rover*. Excepting one late war run after the fall of Fort Fisher, all of Taylor's runs were either destined to, or departed from, Wilmington, North Carolina. In these comings and goings the solicitous association that he fostered with Fort Fisher Commander Colonel William Lamb cannot be overstated.

In his book, *Running the Blockade*, Taylor described the exhilarating task of entering the Cape Fear River through New Inlet during the war, "Now the real excitement began, and nothing I have experienced can compare with it. Hunting, pig-sticking, steeple-chasing, big-game shooting, polo – I have done a little of each – all have their thrilling moments, but none can approach running a blockade; and perhaps

my readers can sympathize with my enthusiasm when they consider the dangers to be encountered, after three days of



**Captain Thomas Taylor**  
Original image donated to Fort Fisher SHS  
by Sally Lamb Scott

constant anxiety and little sleep in threading our way through a swarm of blockaders, and the accuracy required to hit in the nick of time the mouth of a river only half a mile wide, without lights and with a coast-line so low and featureless that as a rule the first intimation we had of its nearness was the dim white line of the surf."

It was in April of 1863, his initial attempt to run the blockade and his first

run on the blockade-runner *Banshee*, that twenty-one year old Taylor received his baptism of fire. It was also on this occasion that he first made the auspicious acquaintance of Colonel Lamb that was, "soon to ripen into a warm friendship." After all, it was the propitious flash and roar of Fort Fisher's guns, "like music to our ears," that dissuaded the pursuing Federal gun boats from continuing their chase of the *Banshee*. In fact he may very well have had this incident in mind when he wrote of Lamb, "...and many a smart vessel did his skill and activity snatch from the very jaws of the blockaders. He came to be regarded by the runners as their guardian angel; and it was no small support in the last trying moments of a run to remember who was in Fort Fisher."

So indebted and grateful to Colonel Lamb were Taylor and his employer that at Thomas' suggestion the firm subsequently presented Lamb with a battery of six Whitworth rifles. When harnessed to mules these long range field guns extended the reach of the fort exponentially.

They soon developed such a reputation both above and below the Mason and Dixon Line that until the fall of Fort Fisher the Confederates were successfully able to hold the Federal blockaders at bay.

Taylor would go on to complete eight round trip runs with the *Banshee*. When she was finally captured on her ninth attempt in November of 1863 the serendipitous Taylor was not aboard. By then, however, she had returned a 700 per cent profit to her English owners, and *Banshee II* had been completed and was ready to join the company's fleet of runners.





## NC Senator Brent Jackson (R-District 10) tours Fort Fisher, offers thanks and support for site's mission

The staff of Fort Fisher State Historic Site and several Friends of Fort Fisher board members enjoyed the privilege of hosting a visit by NC Senator Brent Jackson (R-District 10) and his staff.

Senator Jackson is co-chairman of the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee, and the immediate past co-chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural and Economic Resources and the Senate Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources Committee. He is also co-chairman of the Joint Environmental Review Commission, Joint Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission and the Agriculture and Rural Caucus of the North Carolina General Assembly. Additionally, Sen. Jackson sits on the Senate Finance Committee, Rules and Operations of the Senate Committee and Senate State and Local Government Committee.

Accompanied by NC Historic Sites Director Keith Hardison, Sen. Jackson and his staff braved less-than-ideal weather conditions to tour a number of sites overseen by his committee, including Fort Fisher. Shortly after the tour, Sen. Jackson described his motives in a thank you note to site manager Jim Steele. He wrote, "Mr. Steele, thank you for the tour of the Fort Fisher Historical Site last week. It is great to have such passionate citizens. I was pleased to see the professional manner in which your operation is run – it is a true asset to the state. I believe that it is important for legislators to visit our state-owned sights and tourist attractions in order to gain firsthand knowledge of the facilities that are affected by our decisions. Our attractions are one of our major economic drivers and help support our large tourism industry. I appreciate the time you took to give us an in-depth tour and

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High atop the fort's sixth traverse, Fort Fisher Site Manager Jim Steele, left, leads NC Sen. Brent Jackson (R-District 10) on a tour of Fort Fisher.

show us the behind the scenes operations of the fort. You all have done a nice job preserving the site and have an impressive wealth of knowledge about the fort and its history. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my office if we can ever be of service to you or any of your employees. Thank you, Brent."

Of this gesture—and for taking the time to see in person why Fort Fisher is the most visited state historic site in North Carolina—we say, no, thank you, Senator Jackson. Your support is critical and very much appreciated. Please come back and see us again soon.—*The staff at Fort Fisher & the Friends of Fort Fisher*



# Unique volunteer opportunities await at Fort Fisher

Looking for a unique opportunity this summer? Know someone who might be interested in working at North Carolina's most visited State Historic Site?

One of the site's original volunteers, Mary Holloway, started conducting costumed guided tours around Fort Fisher. After her passing in 1985, the Friends of Fort Fisher sponsored a summer internship program in her honor.

Since 1986, these interns have assisted the site staff in numerous capacities such as visitor services, special events, historical research and programming. Last year, Fort Fisher was visited by over 800,000 people eager to learn about our role in the Civil War, North Carolina and United States History.

We are looking for individuals wishing to understand the day to day operations of a historic site, including gift shop and visitor services and daily tours. Our daily summertime tours include a guided, costumed interpreter and may include historic weapons demonstrations. In addition, interns will work with site staff to develop an internship project of their choosing. Projects are available in educational program development, event planning, or site-specific research. The Mary Holloway Intern position is available from mid-May to mid-August, 28 hours a week. Gain invaluable experience working in the public history field at North Carolina's most visited Historic Site. Help us educate, entertain, and enlighten our visitors. For more information on these unique opportunities, please contact John Moseley at 910-458-5538, ext. 201.

**WE**  **VOLUNTEERS**





# Exhibit, more to honor Fort Fisher vets at 151<sup>st</sup> event, cont'd from page 1

Mr. Triebe will also be available to sign copies of his books about Fort Fisher POWs.

For the young and young at heart, the site's Junior Reserves program, "Attention Cannoneers!" will educate visitors about Civil War artillery from 11 am to 2 pm. Using math and science, visitors can hone their artillery skills by launching water balloons with the site's artillery simulator.

Visitors, residents, and motorists are advised that noise from cannon firings is extremely loud. Visitors are warned to stay out of barricaded firing ranges for their own safety. Smoking is prohibited in the firing areas. Visitors are cautioned to turn down any hearing aids, warn children, and control pets during all firing. Please note, due to circumstances beyond our control, all demonstrations and program components are subject to change.

All Fort Fisher programming is made possible by support from the Friends of Fort Fisher and its sustaining members: Troy and Lori Barbour, Mike McCarley, Tammy and Jack Moore, Brian and Deedra Nunnally, Jim and Catherine Taylor, Patrick O. McCullough, Forrest Goodman, Jr., Wilson Grab, and Ivarlee E. & Thomas E. Mulligan.

The tentative program schedule is as follows:

—Exhibit unveiling and introduction: 1:30 pm in visitors center

—David Meisky, Confederate currency presentation: 11:00 am in the auditorium

—Artillery demonstration and interpretation by costumed interpreters: 10:00 am, 12:00 pm 2:00 pm, and 4:00 pm

—Infantry demonstrations and interpretations by costumed interpreters: 10:30 am, 11:30 am, 1:30 pm, and 3:30 pm

—"Attention Cannoneers!" water balloon artillery simulator: 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

—"Design Your Own Medal" activity: 11:00 am to 2:00 pm


—Regular site tours: 9:30 am, 11:30 am, 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm

—"Above the Scenes" paid tour: 11:00 am and 1:00 pm

For more information, please call the site at 910-458-5538.

## 290 FOUNDATION (BVI) INC.

Dedicated to Recording the Naval History  
of the American Civil War 1861-65  
for future generations...



For full information on membership visit our website or  
Email: [290admin@onetel.com](mailto:290admin@onetel.com)  
<https://sites.google.com/site/290foundation/home-1>

# Welcome New Friends of Fort Fisher 4th Qtr 2015



**David Benford**  
Wilmington, NC

**Tom Fagart**  
Concord, NC

**Dr. Michael E. Goins**  
Wilmington, NC

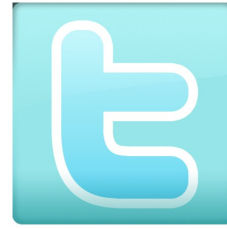
**Robert Maffitt**  
Wilmington, NC

**Kenneth D. Roach**  
Windsor, CT

Thank you for supporting NC's most visited battlefield & National Historic Landmark



Look for us on...



## Join the Friends of Fort Fisher

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Palisade Society	\$40
Mounds Society	\$100
Blockade Runner Society	\$250
Gibraltar of the South Society	\$500
Col. Charles F. Fisher Society	\$1000

### BENEFITS

Palisade Society – basic level of annual support includes attractive decal and member card, listing in *The Powder Magazine* quarterly newsletter, 10% discount on all purchases from our Fort Fisher Museum Shop and invitations to member only events

Mounds Society - level of annual support includes all of the above benefits plus one complimentary honorarium or memorial in one issue of *The Powder Magazine* newsletter

Blockade Runner Society - level of annual support includes all of the above benefits plus a 6”x 9” engraved brick paver on Fort Fisher’s Walk of Honor

Gibraltar of the South Society - level of annual support which includes all of the above benefits except a larger 9” x 9” engraved brick paver, and a specially selected book annually from the Museum Shop

Col. Charles F. Fisher Society - level of annual support which includes all of the benefits of the Gibraltar level except the engraved brick paver is a permanent beautiful blue/gray 12” x 12” stone and may include an engraved emblem or logo

### Other ways to contribute:

Memorial and Honor Gifts, Artifact Donations, In-Kind Gifts, Volunteers, Named Gift Opportunities, Bequests – Contact the Friends Executive Director for information

### MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

New                       Renewal

All society memberships are based on a calendar year (Jan-Dec). Contributions are tax deductible, less the fair market value of goods and services received.

If you choose to waive your membership benefits, your contribution is fully tax-deductible.

I wish to waive my society membership benefits  
 I will be an Annual Society Member

### Membership Categories

Palisade Society	\$40	_____
Mounds Society	\$100	_____
Blockade Runner Society	\$250	_____
Gibraltar of the South Society	\$500	_____
Col. Charles F. Fisher Society	\$1000	_____

### Payment

Cash     Check     Credit Card  
 Make checks payable to **Friends of Fort Fisher**  
 VISA    MasterCard    Discover

Mail to: Friends of Fort Fisher  
 1610 Fort Fisher Blvd., Kure Beach, N.C. 28449

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_  
 Account # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ 3-digit security code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Payments or donations may be made securely on our website [www.friendsoffortfisher.com](http://www.friendsoffortfisher.com)

## Fort Fisher State Historic Site

1610 Fort Fisher Blvd. South

Kure Beach, NC 28449

Phone: (910) 458-5538

E-mail: [fisher@ncdcr.gov](mailto:fisher@ncdcr.gov)

[www.nchistoricsites.org/fisher](http://www.nchistoricsites.org/fisher)



Diane L. Richard

## Gragg and Richard to headline Friends of Fort Fisher Annual Meeting on January 16, 2016

Continued from page 1

including the status of our "Telling Their Story, Phase II" campaign projects. New directors will also be elected. The Annual Meeting will conclude by 11:30 a.m. so everyone can visit Fort Fisher State Historic Site to enjoy the events planned for the 151st Anniversary Observance of the Battle of Fort Fisher. To assist us in planning the Annual Meeting, please RSVP to Paul Laird by January 10th so name tags, handouts, ballots and refreshments can be prepared. Thank you for another great year. Your Board of Directors and staff at Fort Fisher look forward to seeing you on January 16th!

THE POWDER MAGAZINE

This newsletter was proudly produced with support from the Friends of Fort Fisher

Friends of Fort Fisher  
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John M. Coble, Chairman  
Brian Nunnally, Ph.D., Vice Chairman  
Col. (Ret) John E. Craig, Treasurer  
W. Paul Harris, Secretary  
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Mike McCarley  
Mark McLamb  
Norm Melton  
Harry Parham  
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M. Tyrone Rowell  
Dennis St. Andrew  
James Steele, III {ex officio}  
Paul Laird, Executive Director {ex officio}



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