

AAR for Daniel's Farmstead, Blackstone, MA

This past weekend (11-12 June) saw: Darwin, Lisa, Mike, Michelle, Andy, Ellie, Dan, Bob, Elodie, and Wayne participated in the reenactment event at Blackstone, MA.

Weather both Saturday and Sunday was wet, wet and more wet.

FRIDAY: Darwin, Lisa, and Wayne arrived about 4pm, followed shortly by Dan. The Brady's arrived about 5pm. Five tents were set up; one for Darwin & Lisa, one for the Mike, Michelle, & Ellie, one for Andy, one for Dan and one for Wayne. Our camp was setup with Morton's Battery to our immediate left and the 35th Cav to our immediate right. Our end tents were just a few feet apart. This arrangement made for a great time sharing with our friends. Once the trailer was emptied, the cannon remove and the fly up it was off to dinner. Our QMSgt recommended an Italian restaurant, Savini's in Woonsocket, RI and the eight of us had an enjoyable meal. Upon our return to camp, 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 light rain, but cleared to allow gun drill at 0900. Bob & Elodie arrived on site around 0845. Everyone fended for themselves for breakfast with a lot of snacks and goodies shared. Henry joined us as a Cannoneer for the morning drill and morning skirmish. Michelle also joined us for the first time as a Cannoneer and trained and learned the position on the box and carried the "Gunner's haversack."

Captain Wayne was the acting Chief of Artillery for this event and after the 1015 walk through, we held our first RHs Activity. Wayne talked about recent Civil War news such as Gettysburg Coin and US Postal 150th Civil War Stamps. In addition, he briefed the 1861 battles that the Richmond Howitzers participated, the Battle of Big Bethel and the Battle of First Manassas. Ellie then gave out a "horse quiz" followed by information on Lee's and Grant's horses. Elodie shared some information on the causes of the Civil War and pointed out that no matter what you call them the central cause of the Civil War was slavery. Everyone was given several handouts of the above to allow further research and reading on their own. I have saved copies for Joe and Aaron.

NOTES:

- (1) Joe did not join us this weekend since he was home with Angle and their new baby girl Sophia.
- (2) Aaron was not with us as he has enlisted in to the USMC via the Delay Entry Program and was drilling with them. Aaron has a "shipping date" (day he leaves for Boot Camp) as 23 January 2012.

After the RHs Activity the Company had lunch and some visited friends in nearby camps.

At 1310 we positioned our cannon a short distance from our camp. We were on a small hill on the right of the battlefield nearest to the crowd. We had a two gun battery with Morton's Battery to our right. We were supported by three dismounted Cav. At 1330 the skirmish began.

In our front was a lane that ran perpendicular to the field and on the front and rear of the lane was a stone wall. In this lane was a small detachment of Union infantry and one cannon.

The battle began with the Union artillery opening up on our position. We returned fire and as a battery we fired three rounds, once together and twice two seconds apart. We held our fire to allow our infantry to advance in our front and take the lane. Once the lane was taken, each artillery company was given permission to fire independently and got two more rounds off. [Five total for this day]

After the fourth round, Pvt Bob was detached to go forward with the dismounted Cav and QMSgt took Pvt Bob's position (#4) on the Gun. Also manning the gun was Dan #1, Henry #2, Lisa #3, Michelle #5 and CPL Mike was the Gunner

After the battle we held a small ceremony to commemorate Michelle's "1st time" in battle with the traditional presentation of a primer wire to be placed on her kepi's chin-strap button to signify this accomplishment. We then rested and spent some down time under the fly or visiting friends.

Dinner time found us gathering around the table as a company to share in what is our newest tradition of "Tin foil" dinner were everyone made their own meals of steak strips, potatoes cubes, onions, and corn. To round out the meal we had some biscuits. Mighty good. We were joined at dinner by George our Adams Express agent, General Lee and Linda from the Cav.

After dinner we were joined by Morton's and the Cav as we sang "Happy Birthday" to Lisa and share in some birthday cake.

What has now become a Richmond Howitzers tradition, what started out as a small kickball game grew to a camp-wide game to include our acting Confederate Commander, LtCol Paul. Because of the closeness of the camps we had many more folks come out to be spectators and watch the game.

As night approached so did the rain, light at first and heavy for most of the night and morning. This slowed us down, but since we had the only large fly in the area many of our friends from the Cav joined us for fun and lots of laughing. We munched on some snacks and the cooking of marshmallows by our marshmallow cooking expert Ms. Ellie It was a good day with lots of fun and many tired Richmond Howitzers. Bob & Elodie departed.

SUNDAY: The morning started wet and cool. As it turned out, QMSgt's tent was flooded by the heavy rain and was packing up to go home. I was approached by other members saying they too were cold and wet and did not desire to remain. I went to the LtCol and informed him that the Richmond Howitzers were departing. Camp was almost completed taken down and our gear packed in our cars or in the trailer, when the SGT Major came by to inform us that the event was cancelled. We said our good byes and left the field around 0915.

NOTES and THANKS

- (1) Nice job to the TEAM work display by the 1st Co., Richmond Howitzers during this weekend.
- (2) Rounds fired 5 – and Thanks to Michelle stepping up and giving being a Cannoneer a try.
- (3) Thank you to Darwin for organizing camp, and arranging for the dinners.
- (4) Thanks for bring the goodies and food for our “Tin foil” dinner.
- (5) Thanks to Ellie and Elodie for their presentations at our RHs Activity time.

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.

Some of you may say this was not a good event and mainly because of the rain. I would have to partially agree, BUT on the other hand, it is the people that we share our time with that makes an event and not where we are, not how big the event is, not how many rounds we shot or the weather. Since we have not been together for six weeks, being together at this event was the HIGH point of the weekend for me and I hope also for you. The weather did hold off and allowed us to get the battle, dinner, a kickball game in and break camp, so that's not too bad.

Next up is:

We have two events coming up and they are both on the same day, 9 July. RiverFest, a Saturday only event and Fort Adams in Newport, RI. We are currently scheduled to go to RiverFest, but as of the time I am writing this the RiverFest committee has not made a commitment to pay us for our participation. Darwin and Dan are trying to get an answer from them. We have already asked, but will continue to pursue an answer. If RiverFest does not offer us the money similar to what we got last year then we will switch our schedule and attend the two day event at Fort Adams. We will get the information out to you as soon as we know which one we will be attending.

Respectfully submitted
Captain Wayne
Commanding Officer
1st Co., Richmond Howitzers