

GEORGIA BATTLEFIELDS

Published by Georgia Battlefields Association, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preservation of Georgia's Civil War history and sites. Contact newsletter editor by e-mail: info@georgiabattlefields.org

Bearss 2014 tour will focus on opening of the Atlanta Campaign

Dates: 13-16 March 2014

Hotel: LaQuinta, 715 College Dr, Dalton, just north and west of I-75 exit 333. 706 272 9099. GBA rate is \$84 (\$95 including tax) per night. www.lq.com.

Guides: National Park Service Chief Historian Emeritus Ed Bearss

Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park Chief Historian Jim Ogden

Tour focus: Sesquicentennial of the opening of the Atlanta Campaign, including Ringgold, Tunnel Hill, Varnell, Prater's Mill, Crow Valley, Rocky Face Ridge, Mill Creek Gap, Dalton, Dug Gap, Villanow, Snake Creek Gap, and Resaca.

Reserve your place on the tour by sending \$395 to GBA at 7 Camden Rd NE, Atlanta GA 30309.

GBA member Vince Dooley appointed to Civil War Trust board

GBA member and legendary coach Vince Dooley was appointed to the Civil War Trust board. www.civilwar.org/aboutus/news/news-releases/2013-news/new-trustees-selected.html

The photo below shows Ed Bearss, GBA Vice President Cindy Wentworth, and Coach Dooley during our 2011 annual tour in Augusta.



GBA member Don DeBra dies

We regret to report that Doctor Don DeBra, a Vietnam veteran, died on 18 October from complications of Parkinson's disease. The photo above right shows Don (on the left) and his wife Dee (slightly behind Don) talking to Ed Bearss at Fort McAllister in 2002. This was the last tour during which Don could get out of his wheelchair on occasion. To his last day, Don retained an interest in and knowledge of an amazing range of topics.

Fort McAllister anniversary program

Fort McAllister again has a program to commemorate the 13 December 1864 battle. The winter Muster, Battle, and Candle Lantern Tour will be on 14 December. The fort will open at 8 a.m. with the battle reenactment at 5 p.m. <http://gastateparks.org/FortMcAllister> or call 912 727 2339.

Section of *CSS Georgia* retrieved from bottom of Savannah River

On 12 November, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, assisted by U.S. Navy divers, retrieved a 64 square-foot section of *CSS Georgia* from the Savannah River near Old Fort Jackson. This project will help determine the feasibility of removing the remainder of the wreck prior to deepening of the ship channel. See the June 2012 newsletter for more background on the ship.

Time to apply for annual battlefield preservation grants

The American Battlefield Protection Program annual preservation grant process is underway. See www.cr.nps.gov/hps/abpp/grants/battlefieldgrants/2014grants.html for guidelines and an application form. If you don't have access to the internet, call grants manager Kristen McMasters at 202 354 2037. Mailed applications must be postmarked by 2 January 2014.

These ABPP grants cannot be used to acquire land, unlike those through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Georgia projects received grants in 2009, 2010, and 2012.

150 years ago this month

Major campaigns stop for the winter months, but skirmishing one place or another occurs daily.

As the month opens, the Army of the Potomac is completing its withdrawal across the Rapidan River after the failure of the Mine Run Campaign. Meade could not further damage Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, but he has moved the theater of war back to central Virginia. By mid month, a "high state of religious feeling" is reported in Lee's army.

In eastern Tennessee, Longstreet's Confederates are in danger of being caught between the Federal garrison in Knoxville and the approaching relief force under Sherman. Longstreet withdraws to the northeast, eventually establishing winter quarters at Greeneville. Sherman enters Knoxville on 6 December, formally ending the siege, but skirmishing continues.

Bombardment of Fort Sumter continues. The island in Charleston harbor is now more a mound of rubble than a fort, but the garrison sustains remarkably few casualties until 11 December, when a shell hits a magazine, killing 11 and wounding 41. Ironically, it is the last day on which the Federals shell the fort this month.

Federal cavalry reconnoiters from Rossville to Lafayette in northwest Georgia in mid December. Federal cavalry raids Confederate areas of West Virginia from 8 to 21 December, focusing on railroads. The U.S. Navy operates in St. Andrew's Bay in northwest Florida for ten days towards the end of the month, destroying hundreds of salt works and buildings. On 25 December, U.S. gunboats operate on the Stono River in South Carolina. *CSS Alabama* captures two merchant ships in the Strait of Malacca (northwest of Singapore) on 26 December.

In political developments, both congresses convene on 7 December: The fourth session of the Confederate 1st Congress and the first session of the U.S. 38th Congress. President Davis's annual message is distinctly less hopeful than the one sent in December 1862. On 11 December, Secretary of War Seddon sends his annual report, which cites reduced military effectiveness due to desertion, straggling and, absenteeism. He calls for restricting the exemptions in the current draft law. The congress considers several measures but by the end of the month agrees only to abolish the hiring of substitutes by draftees.

President Lincoln's annual message is read to the U.S. congress on 9 December. His words are much more hopeful than in 1862. The day before, Lincoln announces an amnesty policy that pardons anyone who will take a loyalty oath, except Confederate government officials, senior officers, those who resigned U.S. army or navy commissions to join the Confederacy, and those who refuse to treat captured soldiers or sailors—of any race—as POWs. Lincoln also announces that for any seceded state, whenever one-tenth of the citizens who voted in the 1860 election take a loyalty oath, they may form a new state government and apply to reenter the union.

In command developments, President Davis appoints Joseph E. Johnston to command the Army of Tennessee on 16 December, despite the difficult relationship between the two. Davis next writes to Johnston that the government will provide its full support, then that active operations against the enemy should occur soon. On 27 December, Johnston arrives in Dalton, Georgia, to take command. Polk takes Johnston's place as commander of the Army of Mississippi.

For the Federals, Lincoln writes to Secretary of War Stanton that tense relations with the state government necessitate John Schofield's removal as commander of the Department of Missouri. Lincoln recommends William Rosecrans to replace Schofield. On 27 December, Lincoln and Stanton visit the POW camp at Point Lookout, Maryland.

On 30 December, North Carolina Governor Vance writes to President Davis that negotiating with the enemy may be the only way to reduce discontent in the state.

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December 2013

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