



The Picket Post

The Central Virginia Civil War Collectors Association

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WWW.CVCWCA.COM

July 2014

Meeting Time & Date

Our meeting location is the American Legion Hall at 2522 Indale Road in Glen Allen and our meeting date is the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:15 pm.

Our upcoming meeting is July 22, 2014 and Master Restorer, Roland Frodigh, will present *Relic Restoration* and will discuss how he can bring that relic you hit with your shovel back to its original glory! Please bring items in need of restoration.

Monthly Meeting

Relic of the Month –



Perry Cummings friend's philosophy is you won't find it if you don't go. Perry put this to the test and went out and it was hot and humid. He was rewarded with a Confederate I. He found another reading and it was the cuff I that took ROM!



Jack M – Jack displayed this J hook. He also found 10 bullets, but gave them to 10 little schoolgirls on an outing.



John Billeter found a company letter M. Mitch Billeter found several wire lanyards off friction primers.



Ran Hundley brought a number of reins guides. Note the second and last of the four pieces that are regularly mistaken for sword hangers. Ran's sword was identified as Colonial. He also found a Block I button with gilded EML & Co. back.

This Month's Presentation – Ron Rigney presented *Hut Digging in Culpeper and at Berkeley Plantation*. Ron was invited to dig at some Virginia hut site events. He noticed that at all the hunts were always the same 5-8 guys. He made a point to talk to all of them and learn and now he is one of them! It is hard work and can take 1-2 days to dig out a single pit. There are still lots of pits left, though, both Colonial and Civil War.

Once, Ron found a .69 and began digging and found broken glass and knew he was in a pit and ended up digging over 80 .69s. He found a trash pit with a lot of bottles and ended up with lots of bottles and then found a rare US Hospital Department bottle. Trash pits are the most common since there was no trash pickup. He found 85 Spencers in a rifle pit of Custer's troops. Latrine and privy pits can produce some amazing finds. One group found a latrine pit that was six feet deep and tens of feet long. Had bottles and some buckles. Ron has never has found a CS trash pit.

There are lot of huts in Northern Virginia. Some are clean. Others have a lot. Some are nothing more than a couple of soldiers who made a small fire pit and used it and threw in a few bullets and some bottles, maybe two foot square. But some pits can be 6-7 feet across.

How do you find a pit? There is really no secret. But you need to know your machine and what it is telling you. Ron likes to go deep for readings to find pits. His Minelab GPX 5000 is a great machine for deep signals. You will have to learn your machine to figure out what a deep signal is. And be willing to do a lot of digging to learn!

Any place where CW soldiers camped will have pits. He once hunted a Union camp that was "hunted out" and no one hunted it any more. The landowner told him to not dig pits because of the size. So be sure and be clear with the landowner what size holes you intend to dig.

It is sometimes possible to tell that the backfill of a pit is softer than the surroundings, but some other times there is no difference. When it is soft, you know exactly where the limits of the pit are. Some ash layers smell like the fire was burned yesterday! Ash and broken glass are good signs. When you find that you are in a pit, use a small hand shovel. Sometimes you can tell you are at the floor of a pit when the soil gets noticeably harder. A Garrett Pinpointer can be used to find exactly where the relic is

A lot of union pits have cow bones in them because the Union troops often had cattle with them. Colonial pits often have duck bones.

Ron dug two BH bottle seals at Berkeley Plantation in a pit and donated them to the museum there, but borrowed them for tonight's meeting. He found a smokers brazier that kept hot coals used to light pipes. And 753 buck & balls in one pit! His best trash pit had 21 whole bottles. Most, having been thrown away, are broken.

Be sure to bring all the tools you need. Bring towels to wrap your bottles in. Plan to find a pit and be prepared. Bring your axe for roots. Bring a sieve to sift for porcelain

and glass buttons, marbles, which are mostly Colonial. There were more brass items in the CW era.

Some relic hunters now use only a probe and never use a machine! They look for softer earth, outline a pit and dig. Ron's items below are what they find when we spend a day for a shot minie!



Ron's BH, for President Benjamin Harrison, wine bottle seals recovered from a trash pit at Berkeley Plantation.



A smoker's brazier where hot coals were kept to keep tobacco pipes lit. The broken pieces inside are what most of us find!



Three of many animal gut cartridges recovered by Ron.

Buttons recovered with cloth still remaining!



A piece of hardtack that survived 150 years after being tossed into a fire pit! It certainly responded to the call:
'Tis the dying wail of the starving:
"O, hard tack, hard tack, come again once more!"
You were old and very wormy, but we pass your failings o'er.
O, hard tack, come again once more!



Leather and fabric remaining from a knapsack.



A small assortment of the many bottles Ron has recovered from Colonial times through the Civil War era.



A few of 753 buck & ball cartridges recovered in one hole!





Pieces from a brogan.



Jack Mountcastle displayed these period bottles. One inkwell in the bottom picture came from Erlangen in northern Bavaria where there was a German artillery outpost in the 1870s. It was found in a German officers trash pit.



One of Ron's best finds is this USA Hosp. Dept. bottle!

Displays –



An example of why careful excavation is necessary in a hut site. The round bottom of this Richmond-made Confederate ink bottle was spotted in the side of a hole from which a pocketknife was recovered! The potter's fingerprints remain. Note the swirl made when flattening the base.



Pair of officers buckle & stud "dolphin" dress spurs. This rare example exhibits a number of unusual features. The neck is riveted onto the arms, as was often done, but the ends of the arms are also riveted on indicating that the strap plates could also be switched out. The most interesting feature is that, whereas a leather strap typically goes beneath the instep, here there are brass pieces that can be bent under the instep!

CVCWCA Caps & Patches!

Thanks to David Garnett for taking the initiative to do a new run of CVCWCA caps and patches. These have the club logo as shown on the upper left of this page, which David personally designed. \$17.00 for hats with patches sewn on. \$5.00 for patches alone. Contact David at 746-4668.

CVCWCA on Facebook!

Thanks to Robyn Bradshaw, our club treasurer for taking the initiative to create a Facebook page for the club. Visit us today, search for CVCWCA and become a friend!

Thanks from the MOC!

Robert Hancock, Senior Curator at the Museum of the Confederacy, greatly appreciates our donation to the Museum. The contribution will enable the MOC to purchase and utilize the state-of-the-art photography equipment needed to effectively digitize the Museum's collection. Robert sends his most sincere thanks to the Central Virginia Civil War Collectors Association!

Upcoming CVCWCA Programs

Ideas Wanted – David Garnett requests that members submit ideas for upcoming programs. If anyone wants to give a presentation, please also let David know.

Aug 26 – Craig Bell. *VA Manufactured Arms & Weapons*

Sept 23 – *Club Mini Relic Show*, an annual favorite

Oct 28 – *Club Annual Meeting at the MOC*, hosted by Robert Hancock

(MISSING MONTHS ARE TBA,
EXCEPT DEC. WHEN THERE IS NO MEETING)

President	Jack Mountcastle, 789-9818
Vice Pres./Show	Allen Lane, 928-1006
Vice Pres./Programs	David Garnett, 746-4668
Secretary	Bob Baird, 798-5555
Treasurer	Robyn Bradshaw, 339-0469

Upcoming Shows & Events

Remember, before traveling any distance to attend a show, be sure to call and verify the dates and time!

July 18, 2014 Talk, "Recollections of the Battle of the Crater," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. Noon. Free with museum admission. moc.org

July 19, 2014 Walking tour, "Hazards on the Homefront," visiting prison and other downtown Richmond sites. Meets at the Museum of the Confederacy. \$15. Registration required: 855-649-1861 extension 121.

July 19-20, 2014 The National Civil War Show and Antique Arms Show held at RIR Complex Richmond Va. Contact Steve Sylvia 540-672-4845.

July 20, 2014 Lecture, "The Siege of Petersburg: The Stories the Cemeteries Tell," at the Petersburg National Battlefield visitor center. 11 am and 2 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/pete

July 22, 2014 Lecture, "Appomattox: Victory, Defeat, and Freedom at the End of the Civil War," at the Virginia State Library, 800 E Broad St, Richmond. Noon. Free. lva.virginia.gov

July 30, 2014 Anniversary programs, ranger tours, "The Battle of the Crater," at the Petersburg National Battlefield. Program at time of the blast (5:30-6:15 am), keynote speech at 10 am, special anniversary tours 7-9 am and 1-3 pm. Free with park admission. Walking tour at nearby Blandford Church 7-8:30 pm (free). nps.gov/pete

Aug. 1, 2014 Panel discussions, "Battle of the Crater," 10 am-noon at Gillfield Church, 209 Perry St, Petersburg; 1-3 pm at St. Paul's Church, 10 Union St, Petersburg. Free. nps.gov/pete

Aug. 2, 2014 Living history, "Battle of the Crater," day-long camps, demonstrations and talks at the site on the Petersburg National Battlefield. Shuttle parking in downtown Petersburg. nps.gov/pete

Aug. 3, 2014 Living history, artillery demonstrations at the Petersburg National Battlefield 1-4 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/pete

Aug. 8, 2014 Lecture, "The General-in-Chief: Grant Takes Command, 1864-1865," at General Grant's Headquarters Unit of the Petersburg National Battlefield in City Point (Hopewell). 7 pm. Free. nps.gov/pete

Aug. 9, 2014 Living history and ranger tours at General Grant's Headquarters Unit of the Petersburg National Battlefield in City Point (Hopewell). 9 am-5 pm. "Military Justice and the Civil War" programs at 10 am and 2 pm. Real-time City Point explosion tour at 11:40 am. Free. nps.gov/pete

Aug. 9, 2014 Walking tours, "Military Justice at City Point," at Grant's HQ at City Point (Hopewell). 10:30 am, 1 and 3 pm. Free. nps.gov/pete

Aug 13, 2014 Talk, "The Siege of Petersburg Begins," at the Museum of the Confederacy in Appomattox. 12:15 pm. Free with museum admission. moc.org

Aug. 14, 2014 Lecture, "Nature's Civil War: Common Soldiers and the Environment in 1862," at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond. Noon. \$6. www.vahistorical.org

Aug. 15, 2014 Talk, "The Fall of Atlanta in Gone with the Wind: History or Fiction?" at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. Noon. Free with museum admission. moc.org

Aug. 16, 2014 Van tour, "1864 Bermuda Hundred Campaign Tour," Leaves from Henricus Historical Park. 10 am-2 pm. \$15. Register: chesterfieldhistory.com (click Civil War Tours).
Aug. 17, 2014 Bus tour, "Grant's Third and Fourth Offensives: Battles of the Crater and Weldon Railroad," at the Petersburg

National Battlefield. 1-4:30 pm. \$25. Reservations: 804-732-3531 extension 200.

*Thanks to Dennis Madison for the
Calendar of Events for this month's newsletter!*

CVCWCA Newsletter

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