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# Hardtack and Black Powder

By Jean Bullard

"Yep, I tripped over a tent peg and ripped 'em up the rear," explained Sgt. Nicholas Bleser after borrowing a needle from Sgt. Michael Thomas.

Actually the two men were NPS interpreters attending the Military Arts Course, Park Service living history training held last month in West Virginia.

They swapped military yarns while Mike sketched and Nick lay on a cot in his long underwear mending his 1880's frontier infantry uniform by the light of a candle stuck in his bayonet.

"Did you ever hear about the needle during the siege of Fort Sumter?" asked Mike. "The soldiers had only one needle, so they set up a mending schedule. Each man in turn did his own repairs in a room with a bare floor so the needle would not be lost."

(See *HARDTACK*, page 2)



J.P. Barnett, Shiloh, watches Mike Thomas, Fort Washington, finish his drawing.



## Hardtack and Black Powder (From page 1)

"Sorry, ma'am, camp followers have to keep 3 miles from camp. That's regulations," announced the cavalry NCO from Fort Laramie, Wyo., who greeted me when I arrived at the Leetown camp. Bill Henry's bushy drooping moustache almost hid his grin, but I could see his hazel eyes twinkle behind small rimmed glasses. He really was handsome in his 1872 style dark blue fatigue blouse trimmed in yellow piping, red bandana at his neck, black boots, and wide-brimmed felt campaign hat with a white pipe stuck in the hatband. His sky blue kersey wool pants were reinforced with white canvas and had wide yellow stripes denoting cavalry. He looked as if he had stepped straight from a history book.

Bill guided me to the Civil War Sibley tent which was to be my quarters shared with four women taking the Military Arts Course. I placed my knapsack on the cot and noted a blackened candle lantern hanging from the center tent pole. That gave me the hint that I had better not use my modern flashlight.

### SOLDIER VITTLES

Supper was in progress, the rump-  
led looking crew with their tin cups  
and plates gathered at a long wooden  
table or in groups on the grass.

"This stew is special," said Don

Adams, the cook sergeant from Stones River Battlefield, Tenn. "We made it with a pork stew recipe from Sanderson's *Culinary Hints For The Soldier, 1862.*" It had a hearty flavored thick gravy with lots of carrots, potatoes and cabbage. The salt pork made it rather strong, but not as potent as the black coffee.

Hardtack completed the menu. I was given a piece about 4 inches square, nearly a half inch thick, and impossible to break. They handed me a tent peg kept on the table for that purpose. After a half hour of soaking it was edible. The trainees had been living on this fare for several days.

### FROM 20 AREAS

From east and from west they had gathered, 22 trainees, 6 inter-  
*Photos by Jean Bullard*



Out of the past - five men in uniform: Bob Krick, Fort Necessity; John McCauley and Jack Taub, Minute Man; Bill Meuse, Saratoga; and Nolan Oswald, Pea Ridge.

pretive instructors, and 2 safety officers. Twenty NPS forts and battlefields were represented from Texas to Florida, Alabama to Nebraska. Trainees included historians, rangers, technicians, guides, interpretive specialists, park managers, museum specialists, and a conservation aid.

The two week Military Arts Course under the leadership of Living History Specialist Bill Kay, SERO, was designed to teach living history interpretation at its finest.

Lectures, discussions, demonstrations and do-it-yourself practice were the key methods of getting across how to interpret the various aspects of soldier life of the different periods. The first week was spent mainly in class and laboratory work at Mather Training Center. The second week was at the Leetown camp and firing range.

### HISTORICAL FLAVOR

History took on a strong sense of reality when the group set up their tents at Leetown, experiencing first hand the dust and sounds of the firing range, the sweet smoky smell of the campfire, the molding of their own bullets, the salting of meat, baking of hardtack, and the tastes and textures of soldier rations. They even slept in their uniforms



Bob Nelson of Fort Donelson signals the #3 gunner to aim the 1841 cannon to the right.

which was an advantage at 6 a.m. when the loud Revolutionary drum startled them to an instant but sleepy appearance. "Man, you can learn so much this way!" commented one ranger.

#### MUSICAL CAMPFIRE

After full days of lectures, demonstrations, and drills, there was time for swapping technical historical information. ("Sorry, that's before my time. You'll have to ask Lee Wallace.") There was also time for telling military stories and for songs around the campfire.

By firelight the soldiers in dusty wrinkled uniforms sat around eating goober peas (peanuts), drinking, and singing of home or battlefield. You could easily imagine it was another century. Some of the authentic bawdy verses to familiar tunes were not written for wives or sweethearts.

After a particularly noisy rendition I heard Paul Swearington comment, "It takes a tin ear and a cast iron constitution to survive in this crowd."

Other songs gave different viewpoints:

"Jeff Davis rode a dapple grey  
and Lincoln rode a mule.  
Jeff Davis was a gentleman  
and Lincoln was a fool."

Bob Krick sang "The Battle of New Orleans," then all joined in "We're Tenting Tonight On The Old Campground," followed by "Bonnie Blue Flag" and many others. Saddest song was Bob Nelson and his

guitar about a dying soldier's message to his wife and "two tiny babes."

#### SAFE GUNFIRE

"Teaching them respect for, but not fear of firearms is my main objective," explains Tony Stark, SERO safety officer.

"They are learning what they need to do safety-wise to protect both the public and employees. They have gained through first hand experience here a knowledge of what black powder\* really is."

Tony showed the trainees a dramatic but gory film of a cannon firing in which part of one man's hand was shot off and another man lost use of his left eye and hand. While this scene was still vividly in mind, Tony explained the absolute necessity of following exactly the military manual for each kind of arms.

What might look to the uninitiated like a lot of unnecessary "play acting" is actually a routine designed so that each man on the gun crew is doing the right thing in the

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\*Black gun powder is a mixture of sulfur, charcoal and saltpeter.

right place at the right time. War-time misfiring of muzzle-loading cannons caused many injuries and deaths. "After the Civil War you could tell an artillery man's gun position by which arm was missing," one of the boys in blue told me.

By shooting arms from different periods, trainees could relate their own weaponry to other historical periods, and learn other types for future transfers.

Group discussions brought out the problems of demonstrations at individual areas. Trainees began to take a new look at their own programs and plan for a safer future.

"In SERO," explains interpretive specialist Don Robinson, "no one can participate in firing unless he has attended a training session such as this or can prove his competence to the regional safety officer."

#### BACK TO THEIR FORTS

Superintendents of the 20 areas will be told about those factors that affect their own programs. Returning trainees will be history-conscious interpreters following the military manual of the period they represent. As Bill Meuse of Saratoga Historical Park, N.Y. put it, "We've got to get away from the 'dog and pony show' business."

(Continued on page 8)



"Beans for breakfast, beans for lunch, beans for supper!" Note tent peg on table for breaking hardtack.

Clockwise: Ed Trout, Horseshoe Bend; Jack Taub, Minute Man; Ray Geerdes, Kennesaw Mtn.; Kathy Kirby, DeSoto; Bill Kay, SERO; Kathy Dilonardo, Fort Putaski; and Dick Russell, MWRO.



# THAT THE BLIND MAY SEE

## NESA For the Blind

When Jerry Hobbs, chief ranger at Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, set out for the Alabama School for the Deaf and Blind one day last April he didn't know he'd be laying the groundwork for a NESA (National Environmental Study Area) program for blind students.

Jerry's mission was to work with a faculty member in constructing a detailed map of the park to help blind visitors. "I went . . . armed with material for the map and, for some unexplainable reason, a copy of Horseshoe Bend's NESA program," says Jerry. "Some time during our discussion about the map the idea of having a NESA program for the blind was formulated, material was discussed, and plans for the first trip were laid out."

Students at Southern Union College were subsequently trained to guide the blind students through the environmental study area. →

## The Blind Now "See" Cape Cod

By Marjorie Burling

"Isn't this lovely? It's real cool!"

Nothing unusual about these remarks describing a nature trail, but they were made by a young lady who is totally blind while she was walking along the guided nature trail recently established for the blind at Cape Cod National Seashore.

On a bright, sunny, warm May day at Cape Cod, this trail, first of its kind in the Northeast Region, was dedicated with a ribbon cutting ceremony performed by Patricia Gifford, a young blind student from the world-renowned Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Doris Doane, Park Technician at the Salt Pond Visitor Center

in Eastham, conceived of the idea of adapting one of the interpretive trails for the blind and handicapped. Working closely with the Massachusetts Association for the Blind and the Hale Reservation in Westwood, Mass. (where there is another trail for the blind) Mrs. Doan, Park Technician Dennis St. Aubin, and members of the Area Services Division at Cape Cod worked out a unique guided trail.

The quarter mile trail, which begins at the amphitheater near the Salt Pond Visitor Center, winds down the hill through a wooded area onto Buttonbush Pond (by means of a boardwalk) and returns through

The College's interest in the park's NESA goes back to an earlier time when Superintendent Tom Mulhern, along with Jerry Hobbs,

responded to the logistical problem of getting school children to the park by transplanting the NESA concept to the schools.

Southern Union students and faculty volunteered to be on-site instructors. Then, at the suggestion of Tom and Jerry, the College set up its own environmental study area. Guiding and interpreting for elementary school children became part of the College's curriculum and the College students now earn academic credit for their work.

In May the Alabama School for the Deaf and Blind brought 46 students to Horseshoe Bend. For many of these young people it was their first school trip of any kind. Twenty-seven Southern Union College students divided the children into very small groups "and in four hours introduced them to whole new elements of their world."

The School for the Deaf and Blind plans to send all of its 700 handicapped students (including adults) to Horseshoe Bend during the summer and fall school terms. A translation of the park's environmental handbook and map into braille is being discussed.



" . . . some of the students who were totally blind would say 'this is beautiful'. Making them aware made me proud to have been a part of it."



Photo by Richard C. Holbrook

grassland to the bicycle trail.

The entire length of the walk is defined by a bright yellow polypropylene rope, with pieces of garden hose taped to the rope to indicate an obstruction or step. Styrofoam balls are also attached to the rope to indicate trail markers, which are printed with extra large lettering for the partially sighted and in braille for the blind.

There are things to touch and smell (trees and shrubs along the trail) and one marker calls attention to the various birds that may be heard. A lift box exhibit of shells found in nearby Nauset Marsh is at one of the trail markers, and these are mounted on bolts so that both sides of the shells can be touched.

The week of the dedication a class of children from Perkins School for the Blind participated in the NEED (National Environmental Education Development) program at Cape Cod for a week, living and studying in a former Coast Guard station in Eastham, and taking field trips on the lower Cape.

After several weeks in operation Cape Cod National Seashore has had many favorable comments particularly from the handicapped and elderly who can grasp the rope and thus are able to participate in an interpretive activity other than that offered at a visitor center.

One woman who has had two open heart operations said "It was just the right length, and the rope gave good support for anyone that has any kind of a handicap such as I have." Once a week a class studying ecology in a nearby elementary school walks the trail, and one week the whole class walked the entire trail with their eyes closed.



# Under our hat

**FEDS IN PEACE CORPS:** The Civil Service Commission and the Peace Corps have announced that Federal employees may serve 2 years as Peace Corps Volunteers without losing tenure, eligibility for promotion, retirement or other benefits if leave without pay is granted by their employing agency. All overseas expenses are fully covered by the Peace Corps and a readjustment allowance of up to \$1,800 is provided upon return to the U.S. For further information, write the Peace Corps, Office of Volunteer Placement, Washington, D.C. 20525.

**YOSEMITE OUTDOOR SEMINARS:** Five week-long seminars are offered in August by the Yosemite Natural History Association: Alpine Botany and Ecology; Living Glaciers; Yosemite, Laboratory for Teaching; and Interpretive Techniques. Courses limited to 25 people will be conducted by Dr. Carl W. Sharsmith and Lloyd Brubaker, both long time ranger-naturalists at Yosemite. For information write YNHA, P.O. Box 545, Yosemite National Park, California, 95389.

**WHAT'S NEW IN RETIREMENT** is the Commission's question and answer booklet about the recent changes in the Civil Service Retirement System. It is available to employees upon request to their personnel offices.

**SUMMER IN PARKS FILM:** "An Option" is a new film just released on the Summer in the Parks program. This twenty-minute film explores the many facets and activities of the Washington-based program and portrays the grass roots community involvement. Key individuals from the community and from the Service explain the problems and

successes of Summer in the Parks. The film's background music was specially written by a Washington composer and special titling effects add to the film's general appeal. Prints of "An Option" will soon be available through the Film Distribution Center at Harpers Ferry Center, West Virginia, for loan to organization and individuals.

**WANTED—PROBLEMS AND SUCCESSSES WITH VIPs:** The Division of Recruitment and Employee Evaluation is now preparing material on suggested ways to work effectively with volunteers in parks. VIP Coordinator Ann Bowman is asking for any comments or suggestions from field and Regional personnel. If you have encountered problems in working with VIPs or have suggestions or ideas on how to successfully use volunteers, please send them to Ann Bowman, WASO-OPR. The compilation of this material will be sent to all areas.

**HENDRIX DIRECTS WSC:** Glenn Hendrix is the new director of the Western Service Center, succeeding



Bill Bowen who has retired. Glenn was chief of environmental planning and design at WSC prior to his new appointment. He has also served in SERO, at Lake Mead, and in WASO.

# Summing Up Environmental Interpretation

By Bob Carpenter

All National Park Service interpretive programs are basically environmentally oriented. Two, however, have been developed which are particularly aimed at school children. They are the result of NPS determination to make the National Park System a relevant part of our evolving society.

The first, National Environmental Education Development (NEED), is a process for making the various subjects in an on-going school curriculum meaningful in terms of human environment.

The second, National Environmental Study Area (NESA), uses the same basic process approach and can be adapted for use in any location, by any age or interest group—from pre-schoolers to goldenagers.

Both programs are designed to develop in the participant a personal sense of awareness and involvement in the total environment and a basis for making value judgments about one's own individual responsibility for environmental actions.

NEED does not provide new courses but is designed to augment existing school curriculums from kindergarten through the 12th grade.

Each area tells its own different story but contains the same message of man's involvement and interrelationship with all other life and everything that surrounds and supports it.

Teacher workshops, conducted by the sponsoring resource agencies in cooperation with the local school system, introduce teachers to the NESA, provide resource material on the area, and suggest ways of adapting the on-site experience to the entire range of classroom studies. The teacher decides how best to fit the information into the daily curriculum studies. As the student acquires an environmental awareness he develops his own personal set of attitudes, assumes responsibility for the condition of the environment and is motivated to do something about it.

Through cooperative action the NESA program has spread to other Federal agencies, to state, regional and city parks and even to school yards. NESAs can be established wherever people are interested in conducting programs in environmental education. An environmental study area can be any place on earth.

# NEW LIFE FOR

By Ernst Christensen

The need for historically authentic breeds of plants and animals for living history farms will be met by a joint venture agreed to in early May by the NPS and the Association for Living History Farms and Agricultural Museums.

The Association is a new organization formed to assist the burgeoning concept of using living historical farms to tell the important agricultural aspect of our nation's history. At present the many (and in most instances new) attempts to use this type of interpretation are functioning in a "learn as we go" manner. Expertise and guidelines as well as communication among various enterprises are virtually non-existent, but these needs the Association will now fill.

The National Park Service is a leader in this field. It utilizes the living historical agricultural interpretation in nearly a score of park areas. NPS too is in need of expert help. Its objectives are in close accord with those of the Association.

The Park Service, with Director Hartzog's enthusiastic backing, has taken the initiative in developing a close alliance with the Association and will provide that organization with as much immediate assistance as may be possible.

The Service will grant the Association a special use permit on the 85 acre Clagget Tract in Piscataway National Park, Maryland. This land will provide a place to develop the beginning of a genetic pool of agricultural plants and animals and will initiate the concept of a reserve and genetic pool for endangered and rare native plants.

The Clagget tract will become an experiment station designed to re-learn agricultural techniques of the past and to back-breed historical types of crops and livestock.

The Service and the Association will cooperate in developing an inventory of historic farm implements and tools, agricultural plants and

Region	Total Areas Involved	Total NESAs	No. of Students Using NESAs	Total NESA Workshops	No. of Teachers at Workshops
SW	9	10	4,212	21	192
SE	24	28	23,538	89	2,229
NE	11	12	8,852	32	742
NW	9	10	5,183	3	58
PWM	1	1	2,189	4	189
W	8	8	2,318	9	89
NCP	6	7	16,597	54	926
<b>Totals (as of Jan. 1, 1971) 68</b>					
		76	62,829	212	4,425

The chart indicates status of NESA use as of Jan. 1, 1971.



## PLOUGHSHARES INTO SWORDS — an Historical Precedent Repeated

By Bill Meuse



Lofton Johnson expertly demonstrates a technique from the past with a "Ho! Shorty" for a right turn or a "Ho! Buckskin" for a left. Lofton with 27 years of experience training and driving oxen really loves his work showing off his beautifully behaved team before visitors at "Wakefield", George Washington's Birthplace.

animals characteristic of various periods in American history and information relating to the history of agriculture.

The ultimate dimensions of this joint venture are enormous. It will be able to produce the correct breeds of plants and livestock for specific living historical agricultural needs and it can furnish the breeding stock for future hybrid development.

The venture can assure the survival of many species of life forms that could be of inestimable value to the future. It will provide opportunities for research and for communicating information. From these efforts there will develop techniques and knowledge for conserving and demonstrating the farming methods and household activities of our prideful past.

Even as late as 1780, the Commonwealth of Virginia, like many of her sister colonies, was still searching for sources of warlike supplies and materiel. Most badly needed were items of heavy ordnance—cannon. The war was not going particularly well—a British army was rampaging the Carolinas, and Virginia's long and tortuous coastline was especially vulnerable. Virginia finally managed to purchase a number of cannon from Spain, and then opened negotiations with a foundry in France for the casting of iron cannon to order.

### Striking A Bargain

The French foundry was more than willing to cast the guns for Virginia, but the negotiations came to a complete standstill over the matter of payment. The foundry was naturally quite unwilling to accept Continental or State script, and Virginia seemed unable to come up with the required amount in hard cash.

A bargain was finally struck, and the foundry agreed that for every four pounds of iron delivered to it, one pound would be cast into cannon. Nothing more is heard of this peculiar agreement, and it may be assumed that the smashing victory at Yorktown and the resulting end of open hostilities put an end to Virginia's quest for foreign ordnance. The basic idea has merit, however, and has been resurrected.

### Ordnance Needed

Saratoga, where victory made French assistance and the success at Yorktown a reality, is presently as desperate for ordnance as the "Old Dominion" ever was.

With the bicentennial rapidly approaching and a battlefield yet to be reconstructed, no less than fifty cannon are required to rearm long silent emplacements, and these are not something that can be built overnight at the last minute.

We share a similar financial problem with many other parks in these

troubled times in that our operating funds are completely inadequate to meet the needs. Cooperating Associations have provided a few of the needed cannon, but are incapable of assistance on the large scale required. Assistance, as was frequently the case during the Revolution, often comes too little or too late.

### Scrap to Cannon

Last winter, shortly before the snow buried Saratoga under several feet of whiteness, we literally went on a "treasure hunt" around the park. As the park lands had been acquired, piece by piece, farms and homes had been bought up for the land and the buildings demolished. The woods were dotted with old cellar holes and foundations, filled with inconceivable junk. We knew where they were and had a pretty good idea as to what was in each one. Systematically we checked out the more promising one, loading anything we found of cast iron onto a truck. By day's end we had over a ton and a half of scrap iron, consisting of old automobile engine blocks, cast iron stoves, plow shares, farm machinery, grates, and a number of old cast iron signs left over from the days when we were a state park. The next day the truck headed for the foundry, and the load was turned over to them. In a short while they called us up and said we could have some of it back. We went up and loaded a beautiful and newly cast 800-lb. six pounder cannon into the truck and brought her home. She has replaced an original piece on the battlefield, and now stands guard in the American defenses on Bemis Heights.

So, we succeeded in cleaning up some unsightly spots in the park, came up with a good (albeit unusual) example of recycling scrap, and the end result was a badly needed product. So much for cannon barrels. Anyone know where we can get some carriages?

## Hardtack and Black Powder

(From page 3)

Favorable comments from the field are already arriving such as this from Charlie Sharp, Superintendent of Fort Laramie National Historical Site: "Historian Bill Henry has returned with some good ideas and a greater understanding of the problems of living history. I believe these sessions are not only valuable, but necessary for proper presentation of any military history program. There is no middle ground in living history. It has to be GOOD or else. As a result of this latest course, we are more aware of what goes into it."



High school class watches rifle drill demonstration by Don Adams, Stones River; Bowie Lanford, Vicksburg; Ray Geerdes, Kennesaw Mtn., Walt Snelling, Fredericksburg and Kathy Kirby, DeSoto.

"The flavor of soldier life really came through to me," says Kathy Dilonardo of Fort Pulaski, Ga. "Now I have a much better idea of what I want to convey to our interpreters."

### THE FUTURE BENEFITS

The Military Arts Course participants feel that they will now be pointing the way toward moving shooting demonstrations into a proper perspective with the many other aspects of presenting the history of the period. According to Doug McChristian of Fort Larned, Kans., "Actually little of the soldiers' time was spent on the firing line. They put in more time fighting boredom than the enemy."

Trainees and instructors agreed that future training should be con-

tinued to prevent the law of averages catching up with living history interpreters still using improper firing methods.

Long-range benefits received by the trainees and instructors will improve interpretation in all areas

where these men and women work now or in the future.

The effects of even the smallest details are lingering. As one technician said last week, "I still can't get the feeling of those suspenders off my chest."

## A Great Record for Living Interpretation

By Nan Rickey

Living interpretation is not only soldiers, drills, camp cooks and cannon—as hardly anyone alive needs to be told. The Service has some really good interpretation going in other subject areas too—and it's not only dipping candles, either. If there's anyone who still doesn't know about the great goings-on at places like Sitka, Cape Cod or Catoc-tin, their heads have probably been buried in an old-format master plan.

So while we stand at attention to give three for Bill Kay and his tenting troopers, let's also salute some other parks where imagination and living interpretation have really paid off. How about that Mystery Tour at Hopewell? One night last August 350 people took a lantern tour of the village, encountered the furnace lighting up the sky, riders on horseback shadowing the village streets, and girls cooking supper on the banked coals of the worker's cottage.

Did you miss hearing about the Old Stone House, smack in the center of urban Georgetown? A handsome and talented bright-eyed gal there plays 18th century "mother" to your

girls from the surrounding city who come to learn from her the crafts and homemaking skills of the period. They help her make their costumes, bake wafers, weave and spin—all innocent of consciousness that they are interpretation for other visitors.

And then there is St. Gaudens where a sculptor—an artist in the most classic sense—has picked up the legacy of the master, chiseling, cutting and molding once more among the New Hampshire hills. Of course, his work is done in his own idiom and does not even attempt to mimic St. Gaudens. But isn't that what art is all about: the very personal communication of one man? If the visitors were fascinated by the processes, we don't doubt that many also sensed this verity.

Come to think about it—does anyone remember that candlelight tour of Laramie's Old Bedlam? Have we considered "pocket music" concerts (harmonica, jew's harp) in Civil War trenches? Or Indian cooking in baskets with hot stones? The record is great, and tomorrow can be greater still.

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