



Chapter  
Spotlight

*Brunswick  
Town  
Chapter  
Southport*

*They shall not  
grow old  
As we that are  
left behind  
Age shall not  
weary them  
Nor the years  
condemn  
As the going  
down of the  
sun  
And in the  
morning  
We will  
remember  
them  
Lest we forget.  
— Rudyard Kipling*

## Brunswick Town Commemorates 100th Anniversary of World War I



On a beautiful spring day, under the shade of big old trees and with an ocean breeze blowing through their branches, members of the Brunswick Town Chapter and the Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range gathered for a special centennial commemorative event. The group convened to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World War I – also remembered as The Great War.

Fittingly, it was decided that the event would be held in front of a long-ago-abandoned Rifle Range Target Pit and Storage area built in 1918 for soldiers to practice marksmanship before being deployed to Europe. The Rifle Range Target Pit and Storage area are being restored by Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range.

Homeowners living in the area, including DAR member Norma Eckard, first discovered the site. Since that first day of discovery, Norma has been actively involved in restoring this decaying piece of history.

Brunswick Town Regent Diane Kuebert welcomed DAR chapter members and guests. She began by reading a poem sent to her by State Vice Regent Carole Weiss that came into widespread use during World War I, with the last

line from a poem by Rudyard Kipling.

Although WWI began in 1915, the United States did not declare war on the German Empire until April 6, 1917, because of its increasing aggression towards our interests. America mobilized more than four million citizens during World War I that resulted in over 110,000 deaths and 200,000 wounded. Diane Kuebert said, “Today we remember those who sacrificed their lives fighting in foreign lands and in the trenches where death was all around, and many did not return home. The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution had been foremost in making contributions during World War I. DAR Headquarters in Washington, DC loaned office space to the Federal Government and formed a War Relief Committee. A partner of the DAR during WWI was the American Red Cross, whose founder, Clara Barton was a charter member of the DAR in 1890.

“In 1917, DAR members contributed over \$19,000 to the Red Cross Fund. Members across the country assembled and formed Red Cross Auxiliaries, where they recruited ladies in their communities who taught first aid classes and staffed Red Cross Community rooms

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*“Do Justice,  
Love Mercy,  
and Walk  
Humbly  
with Thy  
God.”*

*Micah 6:8  
from Bible of  
Earl W. Jones.  
1917*



**Cindy Sellers reading her grand-uncle's Bible**

knitting and sewing surgical hospital supplies for the wounded.

They also made 'comfort kits' for the servicemen and clothes for the French and Belgian refugees. A DAR member, Jane Delano founded the American Red Cross Nursing Services, was superintendent of the U. S. Army Nurse Corps, and trained over 8,000 registered nurses for duty. When France ran out of chickens in 1917, DAR campaigned to "re-chickenize" France to help mitigate food loss. The DAR also collected more than \$130,000 for the support of 3,600 French war orphans requiring food and shelter."

Regent Diane Kuebert and Vice Regent Carol Jutte then presented the DAR chapter wreath in memory of those who served in harm's way and sacrificed their lives in WWI.

Brunswick Town DAR Registrar Cindy Sellers then proudly showed the attendees a small Bible that had once belonged to her grand-uncle, Earl W. Jones. It had "Active Duty Testament" on the cloth cover and was published by the New York Bible Society. Inside the front cover, with the date June 5, 1917, is a devotional from and signed by Col. Theodore Roosevelt, the eldest son of the president, who later served as a general in WWII. He stated, "The teachings of the New Testament are foreshadowed in Micah's verse" which says to "Do Justice, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly with Thy God." In "Do Justice," he asks soldiers to "fight valiantly against the armies of Germany and Turkey" for they represent evil on earth. Under "Love Mercy," he says, "Treat prisoners well,



**Regent Diane Kuebert welcomes guests**

succor the wounded, treat every woman as if she was your sister, care for the little children, and be tender to the old and helpless." He says you will walk humbly "if you study the life and teachings of the Savior."

On the opposite page, there is a hand-written letter by General John Pershing that read, "To the American Soldier. Aroused against a nation waging war in violation of all Christian principles, our people are fighting in the cause of Liberty. Hardship will be your lot, but trust in God will give you comfort; temptation will befall you, but the teachings of our Savior will give you strength. Let your valor as a soldier and your conduct as a man be an inspiration to your comrades and an honor to your country." The letter is signed, "Pershing Comdg. Aug. 10'17."

After everyone attending had wiped their tears after Cindy's reading, there was a special time of remembrance allowing members and guests to name and honor an ancestor who served in the war. Our regent began by calling out the names of her grandfather and great uncle. She was followed by about twenty people who called out other names to honor their service. Some added humorous anecdotes such as chapter member, Lucia Lister's who still has her ancestor's wool swimming skivvies.

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For those interested in learning more about the project, you may visit an information website that has been set up at, [ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com](mailto:ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com). The site is packed full of information about the restoration process and how you can help.

Norma Eckard then gave more details about the Rifle Target Pit and Storage area and the efforts being made to preserve this piece of history. The story of preserving the Rifle Pit and Storage Area began in 2011, when members of the Caswell Dunes Neighborhood Landscape Committee came upon a structure covered in weeds and tree limbs and dirt. They could not immediately identify the structure, but it piqued their curiosity. Norma, a member of the committee, decided to seek help from a fellow DAR member, Gwen Causey, who is also a member of Friends of Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson. Gwen quickly advised that the best person to contact was Jim McKee, historian and site manager of Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson who identified the structure. Mr. McKee's credentials are widely known and revered in Brunswick County and throughout the state.

Norma took us through the preservation efforts beginning with cleaning soil and tree limbs off the floor of the pit. Later a group from the State Historic Preservation Office visited the site. The group included engineers, lawyers and others who advised concerning a future preservation plan which included repair of the structure. Monies were raised toward this end and are ongoing. The state submitted a proposal to place the fort on the National Register of Historic Places and that the rifle pit fit into that piece of history because it was once owned by Fort Caswell. The rifle range was sold after WWII to the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. The rifle range would be considered as a discontinuous part of the Fort Caswell Historic District that occupies a 760-acre area at the tip of a peninsula on the southeastern end of Oak Island in Brunswick



**Norma Eckard with reenactor Carl Mauney**

County, including a .50 nautical mile extension east into the Cape Fear River and south into the Atlantic Ocean. In May 2016, the rifle range landed on the Historic Wilmington Foundation's "Most Threatened Historic Places" list. This inclusion will possibly help raise the public profile. The preservation process goes on! Besides Norma Eckard, other Brunswick Town DAR Chapter members have also been involved in the preservation project including chapter member and artist, Helen Radcliffe, who has donated her paintings to raise money, and late member Harriet Barlowe.

A World War I reenactor, Carl Mauney, described the uniform he was wearing, from the steel helmet on his head to the boots he was wearing. He demonstrated how to wear a gas mask and how to carry ammunition and other military gear.

As the ceremony came to a close, one left feeling that he or she had been blessed to be a part of a commemorative event that honored the brave soldiers of the past who fought and died for the freedoms we enjoy today.

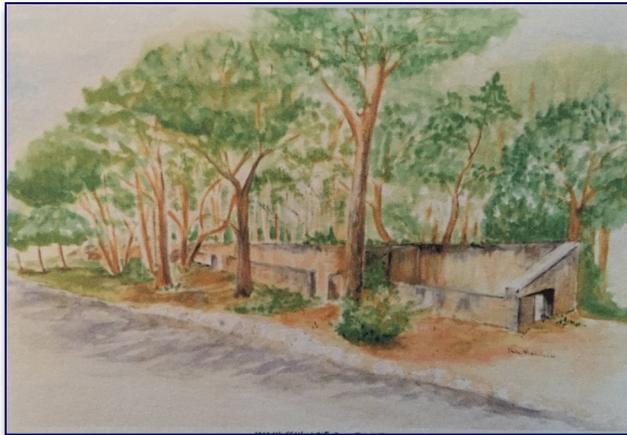
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“We’re coming up on the centennial of our involvement in World War I. To have something tangible that we know was used to prepare our Troops — it’s important.”  
— Jim McKee

## WORLD WAR I RIFLE RANGE PRESERVED

What is 184 feet long, has a depth of 12 feet, is almost 100 years old and left abandoned at Caswell Beach? Hint: It is not a ship or a whale. It is a Rifle Range Target Pit and Storage area built in 1918 so that armed soldiers who were several hundred yards away could shoot at targets north of the structure, practicing marksmanship before being sent to Europe. The Rifle Range Target Pit would become part of the Fort Caswell Historic District.

The story of preserving the Rifle Pit and Storage Area began on a beautiful fall day back in 2011, when members of the Caswell Dunes Neighborhood Landscape Committee



came upon a structure covered in weeds and tree limbs and dirt. They could not immediately identify the structure, but it piqued their curiosity.

One of the committee members was Norma Eckard, who is also a member of the Brunswick Town Chapter. She decided to seek help from a fellow DAR member, Gwen Causey, who is also a member of Friends of Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson. Gwen quickly advised that the best person to contact was Jim McKee, Historian and Site Manager of Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson. Mr. McKee’s credentials are widely known and revered in Brunswick County and throughout the state.

McKee immediately met with the landscape committee to view the structure. About a week or so later, he gave them information on the historical nature of the structure. He identified it as a KD (known distance) target pit and storage area that was built in 1918 for use in World War I for military target practice and as an extension of Fort Caswell. He advised the landscape committee to clean the soil off the floor, as well as remove vines, small trees, etc. He

said that he would seek advice from the State Historic Preservation Office in Raleigh and soon scheduled their visit to the site. The group included historians, engineers, lawyers and others. They

make the determination of which North Carolina places are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. After inspecting the site, it was advised that a “No Trespassing Sign” be immediately placed at the site because of the possibility of collapse due to large cracks in the pit’s doorways (lintels) and center wall.

Norma and her husband, Ron Eckard, were then appointed by the board of directors of the Caswell Dunes Homeowners Association to chair a Special Interests Group to handle the preservation of this important historical project. The Eckards presented progress updates at each board meeting. The Mayor of Caswell Beach Town and the

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**Rifle Range Target Pit  
and Storage Area**

mayor of Caswell Beach Town and the town administrator advised them to get nonprofit status, as a 501(C) (3) would

b e advantageous in securing funds. They followed the advice and obtained nonprofit status as Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range, Inc. Ron

Eckard is the administrator. He also gives informative talks on the project to local clubs and organizations.

Norma says, "We were soon notified by state officials that a proposal was being written to place the fort on the Natural List of Historic Places and that the rifle pit fit into that piece of history because it was once owned by Fort Caswell. The rifle range was sold after World War II to the N. C. Baptist State Convention. Funds were raised by the Special Interest Group to pay for submission of the proposal by the state." In 2013, there were big smiles all over Caswell Dunes. Their hard work had paid off. They received word that the rifle range would be considered as a discontinuous part of the Fort Caswell Historic District.

The engineering study has now been completed and recommendations made to straighten the center wall at a cost of \$20,000 or more. To repair the lintels, patch and seal the walls the cost goes much higher.

You can find out information and follow the progress of this important preservation project by visiting [www.caswellriflerange.com](http://www.caswellriflerange.com). You can even post pictures of family members or friends on the Honor Wall of World War I Veterans. There is an informative website that has been set up that is packed full of information about the restoration process and how you can help. Also needed are ideas and energy to assist with the work to save this structure and prevent additional deterioration. For information email: [ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com](mailto:ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com) The Fort Caswell Rifle Range is located inside the Caswell Dunes subdivision in Caswell Beach, next to Oak Island Golf Course. It is one of a few of its kind remaining in the United States.

Members of the Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range Board of Directors are Norma L. Eckard, president; Russell Barlowe, vice president; Tom Luken, secretary-treasurer; Dave Kesterson, director; Robert Schaffran, director; Ronald M. Eckard, administrator. Russell Barlowe's late wife, Harriet (a member of the DAR), was also very involved in the project.

