



Members of the Friends of the Ft. Caswell Rifle Range unveiled the county's first permanent public monument to those who served in World War I a century ago. Photos by Lee Hinnant



About 75 people came to mark the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day.

Caswell Beach

Groups celebrate Veterans Day

Granite monument unveiled at Ft. Caswell Rifle Range

By Lee Hinnant
Staff Writer

In a reverent but upbeat ceremony, history buffs and community leaders joined residents of Caswell Beach Sunday to mark Veterans Day and the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War.

About 75 people participated in the events, sponsored by the Friends of the Ft. Caswell Rifle Range and featuring the cannons from the Southport Historical Society. They noted Armistice Day with prayers, music, readings, recitations of the names of local veterans and ceremonial cannon fire.

The highlight of the event was the unveiling of a granite marker noting the sacrifices made by Brunswick County residents during the Great War. It stands in front of the rifle pit at Caswell Dunes, a place once used for training American soldiers in long-range marksmanship before they shipped off to fight in Europe. The rifle pit is an ongoing preservation project and is

listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The monument is unique in Brunswick County.

Participants read the poem "In Flanders Fields," recited the names of local veterans, described the life of soldiers and offered thoughts on how much they gave to save America and the world from the Nazis.

"It's been a long, hard job and I'm glad it's here," said Norm Eckard of the new WW I monument. "This monument is dedicated to the men and women of Brunswick County, N.C., who served their country during World War I with honor, courage and commitment."

Several descendants of veterans participated in the event, which included refreshments and a light lunch afterwards.

Supporters of the rifle pit plan another ceremony for April 6, 2019 and are continuing to gather information for profiles on men and women who served.

To learn more or donate, visit www.caswellriflerange.com.



Norma Eckard of the Friends of Ft. Caswell Rifle Range was mistress of ceremonies.



Ron Eckard of the Friends of Ft. Caswell Rifle Range displays a plaque from the World War I Commission that was presented to the Town of Caswell Beach and the Caswell Dunes Homeowners Association.



The "Thor" cannons from Southport Historical Society marked Veterans Day with blasts before and after unveiling of the monument and the reading of names of local veterans from the Great War.



Re-enactor Carl Mauny shows a visitor the rifle issued to Marines in the Great War.