

World War I Snapshot: Matthew Delt 1894-1936

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FRIENDS OF FORT CASWELL RIFLE RANGE

According to his World War I draft registration, Matthew Delt, or Matthew Delts, was born on Orton Plantation in Brunswick County. The handwritten "Columbus (County)" on his NC WWI Service Card appears to be incorrect and should be Brunswick County.

Although his residence is listed as Wilmington on his draft registration, he was working as a laborer in Southport and registered in Brunswick County. By the time he was ordered to report for duty, his residence was again listed as Orton Plantation. He stated he was supporting his mother and sister. Both were dead before he reported for duty, with his father following, dying from pneumonia and influenza.

Matthew was ordered to report for duty on July 15, 1918. He was one of a group of 12 men who reported that day from Brunswick County. All were sent to Fort Dix, N.J. This group included Hiram Van Bellamy and Jackson Brown.

One curious piece of information is that his rank is shown as corporal, which is verified by his VA Master Index. The service cards typically show a progression in rank, beginning with private. Usually, only those soldiers who previously served in the Regular Army or National Guard achieved this rank and achieved it quickly. More research is required to verify the rank. He was honorably discharged on Dec. 19, 1918.

By 1920, Matthew was married to Christianna Jones and began raising a family. The photo of Christianna Jones Delts was shared in Ancestry. She lived over 100 years.

Matthew was killed in an accident on U.S. 40, falling from a truck trailer on April 18, 1936. According to his death certificate, he was laid to rest on Orton Plantation. The exact location of his gravesite is unknown.

[Source for more about the Delts family: Trinkley and Hacker (2018), "African American Lives on the Lower Cape Fear During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries with an Emphasis on Brunswick County and the Orton Vicinity," Columbia, S.C., Chicora Foundation, Inc.]

If you would like to help us honor Matthew Delt or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com or call Friends of Fort Cas-

well Rifle Range at (910) 278-7584.

Published book update

"Brunswick County in the Great War: Preserving the 1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range and the Legacies of the Men and Women Who Served" has sold over 100 books. The book covers the history and preservation of the rifle range, and includes profiles and snapshots of all of the courageous men and women from Brunswick County who served in WWI and have been featured on the website and in local newspapers. Anyone wishing to purchase a book may visit the Friends website at caswellriflerange.com for directions. For more information, call Norma Eckard at (910) 278-7584 or email ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com.

Website update

The Friends of Fort Cas-

well Rifle Range website had 9,658 visitors in 2020. The site is anticipating 11,000 visitors in 2021. Visitors include people from the U.S., France, Belgium, Ireland, United Kingdom, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Germany and Canada. For more information, go to caswellriflerange.com.



Photos contributed

Christianna Jones Delt, wife of Matthew Delt

Delt, Matthew		Columbus	1
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)	* White * Colored.
Residence: Orton Brunswick NORTH CAROLINA			
(Street and house number)		(Town or city)	(County) (State)
* Discharged at South port N.C. * Inducted at South port N.C.		July 15, 1918	
Place of birth: Orton N.C.		Age or date of birth: 22 6/12 yrs	
Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers:			
153 Dep Brig to disch			
Grades, with date of appointment:			
Corp Nov 25/18			
Engagements:			
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.			
Served overseas from † No to †, from † to †			
Honorably discharged on demobilization Dec 19/18, 1918			
In view of occupation he was, on date of discharge, reported 0 per cent disabled.			
Remarks:			
Form No. 724-1, A. G. O. * Strike out words not applicable. † Dates of departure from and arrival in the U. S.			

Matthew Delt's North Carolina World War I service card