

Chairman of the Board Joel Eastman called the meeting to order at 8:25 P.M.. Eastman pointed out that since all the reports had been or would be published in the newsletter, each chairperson would mention the most important points in his report, and ask if there are any questions. He also explained that Board member John Weaver and Committee Chairmen Mark Berhow and Glen Williford were absent due to important family matters.

Treasurer Terry McGovern summarized the healthy finances of the CDSG, and stated that an audit by Charlie Robbins would be published in an upcoming newsletter. Terry also reported for Membership Chairman Glen Williford that membership had declined from 451 in 2003 to 429 in 2004. In response to a question from the floor, Joel remarked that Glen had done a number of studies and concluded that membership was remarkably stable. He also announced that an increase in dues would not be necessary this year.

Terry reported that the CDSG Press was now offering quantity discounts on the purchase of ten or more volumes of the second edition of *American Seacoast Defenses* at \$10.00 each plus \$5.00 each for shipping, provided that the volumes were donated and not sold. Terry also asked members for suggestions as to where and whom CDSG should donate remaining copies of the first edition of Mark Berhow's reference guide. Terry next asked members to submit suggestions for titles for the next CDSG Press reprint.

Terry announced that there were few requests for grants submitted to the CDSG Fund and urged that members look for worthy projects.

*CDSG Journal* Editor Bolling Smith gave members a brief description of how their journal was produced. He introduced Bill Gaines and Dale Manuel as some of the most productive authors in the past year. He urged members to submit more articles and also to write letters of appreciation to those authors whose articles they enjoyed reading.

Preservation Committee Chairman Gordon Bliss reported that Battery Farnsworth and Battery Connamicut had been saved from destruction. In San Francisco, the alternative chosen for the road expansion was beneficial for preservation efforts. Unfortunately, the Portsmouth (NH) Armory will most likely be demolished.

Nominating Committee Chairman Alan Hardey described the process by which he and the other committee members (the past three Chairmen of the Board of Directors) had selected the next two candidates, Sam Stokes and Jon Seward. Joel emphasized how important the position of director was and encouraged members to take the election seriously and vote for the person they felt was best suited to join the board.

Chairman Eastman reported that with the visit to Charleston and Savannah, the CDSG had visited last important US harbor defenses, and next year's visit to Portland, ME would start the circle of harbor visits for the second time around. John Martini has agreed to run a San Francisco meeting in 2006, Gordon Bliss will do Boston in 2007, and Dale Manuel Galveston in 2008.

In regard to Special Tours Terry announced that he would plan a tour of Finland, Norway or Spain in 2005 and that Glen Williford will run a tour of Corregidor in 2006. He asked that members contact him or Glen if they were interested in participating.

There being no further business, Joel adjourned the meeting at 9:00 P.M.. Respectfully submitted, Elliot Deutsch, Corporate Secretary.

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## **Report from 2004 Conference at Charleston/Savannah**

Bolling Smith

The 2004 St. Babs annual conference of the Coast Defense Study Group combined the three smaller defenses of Charleston and Port Royal Sound, SC, and Savannah, GA. Each of these defenses was too small for a separate conference, yet combined they threatened to make one conference too large. The decision was made to combine the three into a four-day conference, with strict scheduling to ensure that the key sites were seen, with emphasis on sites not easily accessible. The conference presented a unique challenge - multiple sites over 500 miles from the organizer. Sites belong to some dozen and half different property owners, not counting several batteries on Fort Screven to which we could not gain access. Two sites, Castle Pinckney in Charleston Harbor, and the dynamite gun site at Hilton Head, are normally inaccessible, but once approval was given, authorities at both sites were extremely hospitable. Fortunately, the only boats required were the regularly scheduled boat to Fort Sumter and one chartered boat to Castle Pinckney. Neither presented any unusual problems, and both were relatively inexpensive.

There are many fascinating things to see and do in the area, so a number of spouses and families accompanied the 60 registered attendees. By combining harbor defenses, there are some 19 locations within the continental United States that have enough seacoast defense sites to justify a conference. Charleston, Port Royal, and Savannah were the last harbor defenses to be covered by a CDSG conference, completing the continental U.S. defenses. Next year, we begin again with Portland, Maine.

The conference commenced on Wednesday afternoon, April 28, 2004, with registration at the first of two hotels, the Mount Pleasant, SC, Quality Inn and Suites. In the evening, while registration continued, the first presentations were given.

In the morning of Thursday, April 29, we began with a visit to Battery 520, the casemated WWII 12-inch BCLR battery at the Marshall Reservation, part of Fort Moultrie, on Sullivan's Island. The battery has been converted into three homes, with a fourth home built above the PSR. Thanks to the great hospitality of the owners, we were allowed inside the center portion of the magazine traverse and welcomed into the No. 2 end of the battery, which is currently a home. The No. 1 end has also been converted, but appears vacant and no one could be located to authorize entry. After the battery, we visited the PSR, where the owners graciously welcomed us inside the old structure, above which their home sits.

After visiting Battery 520, we drove to Patriots Point, where we caught the scheduled 10:45 boat to Fort Sumter. There, Ranger Chris Meekow gave us a guided tour of the fort. We were particularly grateful to him for unlocking those areas of Battery Huger (2 x 12 in - 1 DC and 1 BC) not normally open to the public. We caught our boat back to Patriots Point, arriving at 1 PM. We had an hour and a half to eat lunch and drive to the



The 2004 CDSG Meeting attendees at Fort Moultrie. Photo by Alex Holder.

Charleston Maritime Center for our boat to Shutes Folly and Castle Pinckney. A number of people chose to briefly visit Whites Point Garden Park, perhaps better known as “the Battery,” at the tip of Charleston.

We left a few minutes after our scheduled departure time of 2:30 to allow several people running late to not miss the boat. After a short cruise in calm water, we landed at Shutes Folly and walked the short distance to the Second-System Castle Pinckney. The fort has been filled with sand, but we were able to walk over and around it, under the close observation of the large population of pelicans roosting in trees there. One Confederate 10-inch columbiad was found, as reported, largely buried in the sand atop the fort. After a full exploration of this seldom-visited fort, our boat took us back to the Maritime Center by way of the Battery.

Returning a little after 4 PM, we drove back to Sullivan’s Island, where the fire department allowed us inside Battery Capron-Butler (16 x 12 in BLM), an early “Abbot quad” mortar battery. The city of Sullivan’s Island, concerned about liability, has filled three of the four pits, but the interior magazines and corridors were intact. After the mortar battery, we ate supper on our own and reassembled at the hotel for the evening’s presentations.

On Friday, April 30, we began the day by checking out of the hotel and driving back to Sullivan’s Island, where the Sullivan’s Island Fire Department cheerfully allowed us access to Battery Thomson (2 x 10 in DC). Somewhat marked by its use as a haunted house, the battery was still interesting and informative.

Next we drove down the road to the Fort Moultrie visitor’s center and crossed the street to the old fort, which combines a Second-System brick fort, Endicott-era batteries, and a WWII HECP. Battery Bingham (2 x 4.7 in Armstrong) contains a 4.7 in gun, while Battery McCorkle (3 x 3 in MP) has a 3 in M1911 dummy RF gun. Battery Lord (2 x 3 in Ped. Mt.) has been destroyed by the NPS. As the group finished at the old fort, NPS historian Rick Hatcher opened Endicott-era Battery Jasper (4 x

10 in DC) and arranged for WWII-era BCN 230 (2 x 6 in, never armed) to be opened. Normally, only one emplacement of Battery Jasper is open. Behind the battery, a brick powerhouse contains a 25 kW gasoline-powered motor generator. To the left of Jasper, Battery Logan, a hybrid battery (1 x 6 in Armstrong, 1 x 6 in DC) is open, although abandoned and relatively ignored.

The last battery at Fort Moultrie was Battery Gadsden (4 x 6 in DC). One traverse now houses the Edgar Allen Poe Branch of the Charleston County Library, while two contain the Gadsden Cultural Center. Representatives of both organizations were on hand and delighted to show us through their structures.

After Battery Gadsden, attendees drove across Charleston and south to Beaufort, and then out to St. Helena, on Port Royal Sound. Gathered together as a group, we all drove to Fort Fremont and examined the two batteries, Jesup (3 x 10 in DC) and Furnace (2 x 4.7 in Armstrong). Jesup was somewhat overgrown but accessible. Furnace, relatively simple like others of its type, is in bad shape. A house, since burned, had been built on top of the battery; debris and heavy vegetation largely hide the battery.

Upon leaving Fort Fremont, we drove to Pooler, Georgia, where we checked in to the Comfort Inn and Suites before going out for supper. After supper, we enjoyed several slide presentations.

Saturday morning we drove into Savannah to Forsyth Park, site of the Chatham Artillery’s two dummy batteries - one for a 10 in DC, one for a 12 in BLM. The park was exceptionally attractive, and local member Karl Schuler had arranged a key to get into the open-topped mortar battery, now a scent garden for the visually impaired. The larger building that once housed the dummy 10 in gun is currently being renovated, so access could not be arranged, but the outside was fascinating.

From Forsyth Park we drove to Fort Jackson, a Second-System brick fort on the Savannah River. There, James Burns, the head interpreter, gave an outstanding introduction to the fort and to a soldiers’ life in it during the 19th Century.

After Fort Jackson, it was a short drive downriver to Fort Pu-

laski, the very historic Third-System fort that was occupied by Confederate forces before land-based Union siege batteries with rifled guns reduced the fort at ranges previously thought impossible. At Fort Pulaski, we were surprised and delighted that the long-time historian, Talley Kirkland, came in on his day off to lead an outstanding tour of the fort, combining humor and many years of study. At Fort Pulaski, we ate our bag lunches, walked to the Endicott-era Battery Hambright (2 x 3 in MP, never armed) built to guard a minefield in the river, and dodged intermittent rain showers.

The last stop on Saturday's itinerary was Endicott-era Fort Screven on Tybee Island at the mouth of the Savannah River. We met at the Tybee Island Historical Society museum in former Battery Garland (1 x 12 in BC), across from the lighthouse. Cullen Chambers, director of the society, made us feel especially welcome, and after we toured the museum, he led us on a walking tour of Fort Screven, as the intermittent rain continued. After exploring one emplacement of Battery Brumby (4 x 8 in DC), we viewed the outsides of Battery Fenwick (1 x 12 in BC), Battery Backus (1 x 6 in & 2 x 4.7 in Armstrong guns on Ped. Mts.), and Battery Gantt (2 x 3 in MP), all converted into private homes as housing prices have skyrocketed on Tybee Island. The mortar battery, Habersham (8 x 12 in BLM), is abandoned; one pit is greatly overgrown, the other one is used to store equipment, including satellite dishes. Liability concerns, including recent rattlesnakes sightings, prevented our entering the battery. The mine casemate that was once nearby no longer exists at all.

After the batteries, Cullen continued to lead us by non-tactical buildings, such as the bakery and the YMCA. As the group trudged in the steamy heat, Cullen delivered us to an immensely appreciated break, with fruit, cheese, and cold drinks. After enjoying the rest and the refreshments, we completed the walking tour of Fort Screven, highlighted by officers' row facing the ocean. The tour concluded at the theater, which is being rebuilt. After that, we drove back to the hotel to prepare for the annual banquet.

The banquet, emphasizing seafood, was enjoyed at the hotel, followed by the annual business meeting. After the conclusion of the business meeting, we enjoyed the final presentations of the conference. During the four nights of the conference, evening presentations were given by Andy Grant - current



Battery Habersham, Fort Screven. Photo by Alex Holder

developments at Fort Mott, NJ; Nelson Lawry - defenses of Singapore and Corregidor; Terry McGovern - defenses of Gibraltar and aerial slides of the defenses of Long Island Sound; Jonathan Prostack - restoration of Battery New Peck, Fort Hancock, NJ; Tom Vaughan - evolution of mortar battery design; and Joel Eastman - Harbor Defenses of Portland.

Sunday, May 2, was geographically somewhat awkward. The two sites on the agenda were north and south of the city. First, an hour's drive brought us to Hilton Head. Here, Civil War earthwork fortifications, first Confederate, then Union, were followed by a Spanish-American-War emergency battery (two 8 in BLR on 15 in Rodman ML carriages) and a rare 15 in pneumatic dynamite gun. A piece of concrete believed to be part of



Hilton Head dynamite battery. Photo by Alex Holder

the parapet was all that could be found of the emergency battery, but the dynamite gun (called the "steam gun" locally) was much more complete than the similar battery at Fort H.G. Wright, and had been cleaned up since the last time any of our group had seen it. Access to these two sites is always exceptionally difficult, and was only made possible by the active efforts of Robert Insley, who lives in Port Royal Plantation, where the batteries are located. Bob was assisted by several of his friends from the Coastal Discovery Museum on Hilton Head Island, and everyone enjoyed the friendly exchange of information.

After the dynamite gun battery, some drove over to Fort (Battery) Mitchell, a small but relatively well-preserved earthwork Union fortification built to prevent Confederate use of the creek between the island and the mainland.

The last scheduled event of the conference was an hour and a half's drive to the south, Fort McAllister State Park. This remarkably well-preserved (reconstructed) Confederate earthwork fort was the key southern point in the Confederate defenses of Savannah. Despite an array of biting insects, the park and fort were extremely attractive and well maintained, possibly the best surviving example of a Civil War earthwork fort. Park manager Danny Brown shared with us an excellent presentation illustrating the progressive growth of the battery into a major fort that withstood Union naval attacks and only fell to a full-fledged land assault when Sherman's army reached the coast.

The optional tour extension, organized and led by Gordon Bliss, was the next day, Monday, May 3. The first stop, in the rain, was Fort San Marcos, the old Spanish fort at St. Augustine. After that, a few hardy souls braved the weather to take the NPS boat over to Matanzas, the tower that guarded the southern approaches to St. Augustine.

At 1 PM, we met at Fort Caroline, and then drove to the unique Spanish-American War battery at St. John's Bluff. The battery, built for two 8 in BLR on 15 in Rodman ML carriages, was not armed before the end of the war, but today it is the only one of its type remaining, missing only some sand covering that was never placed on top of the magazine.

The last stop was Fort Clinch. This Third-System brick fort is not unique, but only Alabama's Fort Gaines shares its detached scarp (or Carnot wall). At Fort Clinch, Frank Ofeldt, uniformed as a Union engineer NCO, gave a particularly informative and enjoyable tour of the fort. At the conclusion of the visit to Fort Clinch, the last few members scattered to make their different ways home.

The conference was a complete success. We were grateful for generally good weather, and for the great hospitality of the property owners. Bob Nebergall and Karl Schuler, our men on the scene in Charleston and Savannah, provided essential assistance in securing access to many locations, as did Bob Insley at Hilton Head. I was personally grateful for the way a number of members quickly volunteered to unload supplies, check in people, and manage the evening presentations. This willingness to share responsibility for group functions certainly bodes well for the future of the organization.

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## **Preservation Committee Report**

Gordon Bliss

The summer has been slow in terms of new preservation items to talk about. One that has only recently come up is connected with Fort Norfolk, a second system fort near downtown Norfolk, VA. We visited it on the 2000 Conference. They have discovered the remains of a ravelin outside the fort, in an area where a new building is going to be put up shortly. They are busily working to do as much excavation to uncover possible artifacts and document the site before construction begins. By the time you read this, development work on the property should have begun. I expect most of us think of preservation in terms of protecting existing structures, but the work they are doing next to Fort Norfolk - excavating for artifacts, searching for ruins, and documenting what they find in a buried site, is also preservation and sometimes the only way we can find out about a site. I encourage people to keep a look out for empty sites where there may be remains of structures or other artifacts so that if it looks like development is about to happen there, a proper archeological dig may occur. For many development projects, this is a requirement if there is evidence that historic remains are in that site.

In other news, the restoration of the north casemates at Fort Adams has earned a preservation award from the state. Also, work has been done to clear Battery Whiting at Beavertail and continuing efforts on Conanicut Battery and the fire control stations behind them. My thanks to Walter Schroder for these news items.

The Doyle Drive project in San Francisco, which had alternatives that would have resulted in the complete removal of a set of batteries, is now looking more positive. A new alternative, which looks to be the favored one, will not only keep the batteries but make them more visible and accessible than they are now. My thanks to those members in the area that went to the public meeting and supported keeping the batteries.

On the threatened list, right now I am keeping it pretty much as before - the Portsmouth Armory has been dropped from the list as the new library is going ahead. Having read that buildings on the main post area of Fort Stevens (an area not part of the state park) may be under threat of redevelopment, I am going to add that to the list. I am still looking for a number 1 threatened site and challenging the membership to nominate a site that deserves our top attention. I am still going to take it as a good sign that no sites have been put forward for that distinction. Though all sites under threat will be considered for this list, I am giving priority to those that are actively threatened by people-driven activities over those threatened only by the forces of nature or neglect because I believe we have a better chance of doing something about them.

The current list:

1. ? - What do you think belongs here ?
2. Fort Stevens Main Post - Due to possible redevelopment of the main post area outside of the park boundary.
3. Fort H.G. Wright main gun batteries - Due to continued local dumping of material and damaging of batteries.