



Dade Battlefield Society's
*Fort Armstrong
Gazette*
SUMMER 2012



Heritage to Horizons by Steve Rinck

On April 14, a special program was initiated at Dade Battlefield Historic State Park that promises to become an annual invitational experience. On that day, Major General Emmett R. Titshaw, Jr., Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard, brought several of his instructional officers and 14 officer candidates on a staff ride to the park as part of his recurring theme, "Heritage to Horizons." The General's intent was to help the young, aspiring lieutenants to achieve a better understanding of conditions that existed at a very important time in history and of how strategic military decisions that were made then had far-reaching impacts on future events.

Hosted by Ranger George Webb and three directors of the Dade Battlefield Society, the program met our guests' needs and then some! We

provided the perspectives of soldiers, Seminoles and Black Seminoles of 1835, as well as the nature of warfare between the asymmetric forces of uniformed, disciplined military

personnel and native fighters who used their familiarity with the environment when engaging an enemy force. General Titshaw commented upon "how the Seminoles capitalized on their strengths," and of the importance of "paying attention to some signs that were out there." He addressed his staff of the significance of what they learned when he said, "Whether its 1835 here or outside the wire in Afghanistan, those things are the same."

We are very proud and honored to have been able to bring the events of so long ago to a state of relevance to those of modern times. Another staff ride, with a new group of officer candidates, has already been scheduled for 2013. Be sure to view the professional video of the visit at www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y0j4qQ9Ewc.



Officer Candidate School Staff Ride, Dade Battlefield Historic State Park April 14, 2012. From left: Major General Emmett R. Titshaw, Jr., Adjutant General, Florida National Guard; Steven Creamer, Dade Battlefield Society Board; Steven Rinck, Dade Battlefield Society President; John Griffin, Dade Battlefield Society Board; Lt. Colonel (Ret.) Greg Moore, Command Historian, Florida National Guard; Col. Grant Slaydon, Commander, Regional Training Institute, Florida National Guard.

Seminole Wars - Events Calendar 2012

Oct. 12 and 13: A Road Back in Time, Dade Battlefield Historic State Park, Bushnell

Oct. 19-21: Alligator Warrior Festival, O'Leno State Park, High Springs

Nov. 17 and 18: Soldier and Militia Encampment, Fort Christmas Historical Park, Christmas, FL

Dec. 7 and 8: Candlelight Experience at Fort Foster, Hillsborough River State Park

**177th Anniversary of
Major Dade's Battle
33rd Reenactment
January 5 and 6, 2013**

What Happened to Dade's Cannon?

by Dale Beremand

While reenacting for some years, I have heard several stories not only about the type of cannon present at Dade's 1835 Battle, and also about what may have happened to it after the battle was over.

The cannon's type can be narrowed down to two possibilities. The first is the U.S. Model 1819 six pounder, a.k.a. "Walking Stick" because of its length. There is a picture of one of these on page 32 in *Field Artillery Weapons of the Civil War*. There is also a fine specimen in front of the visitors center at Chickamauga National Battlefield Park.

The second cannon type that could have been used was what I will call the M1827 for the year its manufacturing contract was awarded. Ninety of these were completed by 1832, so one certainly could have made it to Florida by late 1835. There are no surviving cannons of this type, unless one is indeed buried

at Dade Battlefield! The carriage was likely a double trail. Experiments with single trails were underway, but the type was not standardized until 1836, too late for Dade.

The first story I heard about the fate of Dade's cannon was that it had been scrapped during the 1930s Depression, or perhaps in a World War II metal drive. Sad, if true.

The second story says that the cannon was retrieved in 1842 when the soldiers' bodies were exhumed. It was then supposedly taken to St. Augustine and buried in the mass grave with all the U. S. victims of the Second Seminole War. I can't imagine that the gun would be buried after all the effort to recover it.

Still another account says it was taken back north. Other artifacts were taken, but none of them weighed 750 pounds



or needed a wagon or carriage for transport.

Lastly is my own opinion. After the battle, Indians buried the carriage and threw the tube into a pond. When General Gaines' men buried the dead a few months later, that cannon was recovered and used to mark the officers' mass grave. The report of the 1842 exhumations and reburials had no mention of the cannon. It is my guess that no carriage or wagon was taken to recover the gun, and after the exhumation the tube was just pushed over into the empty grave and buried. I think the gun is still there! Only an archaeological excavation can support this theory.

World War II Commemoration Weekend

August 4 and 5
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

This summer, we once again remember the most widespread armed conflict in history and celebrate both military and popular civilian culture in the 1939-1945 era. Participating will be uniformed reenactors representing both Allied and Axis forces who will demonstrate weaponry and other items common to the times. The event will also feature mechanized vehicles, working communication stations, big band music, period vendors, and food. Actual WWII veterans are expected to be present, all on the site of an actual wartime encampment.

In the words of Sam Howell, President of the WWII Historical Association of Florida, "The Dade Battlefield WWII Weekend event this



Photo by Willis Tate

year will be, by far, the biggest and most challenging WWII event in Bushnell from times past." For the first time ever, we are coordinating a mock battle between enemy forces, and it will be produced on our regular battle mound so that it may be safely viewed by the public. It will be both an exciting and educational experience that honors all who served, so please come! (Only \$3/carload, too!)

Dues Announcement

For this issue of *The Fort Armstrong Gazette*, members who have last paid dues in 2012, 2011, or 2010 are receiving copies. Future issues will be sent only to those members who are current with their dues. If everyone remains current, up to 10% of the funds needed to produce our annual reenactment of Dade's Battle could be realized. On June 1st, more than 100 newsletter recipients owed dues for 2012, payable as of July 1. Annual dues of \$10.00 may be sent to Dade Battlefield Society, 7200 CR 603, Bushnell, FL 33513; they may also be paid via PayPal on our website, www.dadebattlefield.com.

(Initials of those WHO HAVE ALREADY PAID 2012 dues are as follows: BB; PB; JB; HB; LC; AC; RC; HD; LE; JF; DF; WG; TL; AM; HO; JR; SR; BR; GR; TR; PR; PS; JS; JV; AW; and KW. Thank you!)