

CAVE HILL NATIONAL CEMETERY

The Oldest Existing Civil War Monument

The Battle of Rowlett's Station

On December 17, 1861, the 32nd Indiana Infantry (nicknamed the "1st German" regiment as it consisted entirely of German immigrants) engaged Confederate forces near Munfordville, Kentucky, in the Battle of Rowlett's Station (also known as the Battle of Green River). While both sides withdrew from the field, the Union regiment successfully defended a vital bridge over the Green River. Thirteen men in the regiment were killed; 11 were buried on a knoll near the bridge.



"Battle of Rowlett's Station," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, January 18, 1862.

After the battle, the regiment camped near Munfordville for a little less than two months. During this period, Private August Bloedner carved an intricate monument from a local outcrop of limestone to mark the graves of the fallen.

The 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument, also known as the Bloedner Monument, was placed on the soldiers' graves in January 1862. On the monument, Bloedner sculpted an intricate frieze of an eagle with wings outstretched, clutching in its talons two cannons. The eagle is flanked by two American flags, an olive sprig and an oak branch. Below, in German, the inscription reads:

Here lie men of the 32nd First German Indiana Regiment sacrificed for the free Institutions of the Republic of the United States of North America.

They fell on 17 Dec. 1861, in an Encounter at Rowlett Station, in which 1 Regiment of Texas Rangers, 2 Regiments of Infantry, and 6 Rebel Cannons, in all over 3000 Men, were defeated by 500 German Soldiers.

Bloedner also inscribed the names of the 13 soldiers who fell, with birth dates and places. The 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument is believed to be the oldest Civil War monument still in existence.



32nd Indiana Infantry Monument, 1955. The German inscription is largely intact but areas are flaking off.
Photograph ©Louisville Courier-Journal.

Relocation to Cave Hill National Cemetery

In 1861, the Union buried soldiers who died at camps and hospitals in the Louisville area in a soldiers' lot within Cave Hill Cemetery. In 1863, this lot was established as Cave Hill National Cemetery.

In 1867, the remains of the 11 soldiers buried on the battlefield and the 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument were moved to Cave Hill National Cemetery. At this time, the monument was installed on a Bedford limestone base with this inscription:

*In memory of the First Victims of the 32. Reg. Indiana Vol.
Who fell at the Battle of Rowletts Station, Dec. 17, 1861*

August Bloedner

Christian Friedrich August Bloedner was born March 1, 1827, in Altenberg, Germany. He studied sculpture and painting before immigrating to the United States in 1849, settling in Cincinnati, Ohio. Bloedner enlisted in the Union Army as a private in August 1861, and was promoted to sergeant in January 1863. He was wounded on September 20 of that year in the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia. In October 1863, he was promoted to first sergeant, and mustered out in September 1864, after completing his three-year enlistment. He returned to Cincinnati and worked as a stone cutter before dying of heart disease on November 17, 1872, at age 46.

Conservation Efforts

The 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument was carved from St. Genevieve limestone, a soft and porous material. As a result of environmental factors, by 2000 more than half of the original inscription was lost, and the frieze was eroded. In contrast, the base of Bedford limestone remains in good condition.

In 2002, the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration (NCA), attempted to protect and conserve the monument in its location at Cave Hill National Cemetery. However, by 2008, it was apparent that despite these efforts, the monument continued to deteriorate.

To prevent further loss, and to properly conserve it, in December 2008 NCA moved the monument from the cemetery to a temporary climate-controlled facility.



32nd Indiana Infantry Monument, 2011.

As of 2010, the 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument is on display in the lobby of the Frazier History Museum, located at 829 West Main Street, Louisville. Access to the monument is free.

New Monument

In December 2011, a new monument was installed in Cave Hill National Cemetery. The new monument features the original inscription in German on the front and an English translation on the back.



FLORENCE NATIONAL CEMETERY

Florence Prison Stockade

In early September 1864, General William Tecumseh Sherman's Union army took Atlanta and came within striking range of the large Confederate prison at Andersonville, Georgia. The Confederate government responded to this threat by transferring many of the prisoners from Andersonville to Florence, South Carolina, over 300 miles to the northeast, where a new prison was hastily constructed by enslaved persons. The first Union prisoners arrived in mid-September.

The Florence Stockade, located just south of here, was approximately 23 acres bisected by a stream and enclosed by a tall fence constructed from logs set vertically in the ground. A high parapet around the outside of the fence gave the guards a vantage point over the prison, and a deep moat prevented escape by tunneling. Conditions were miserable in the open-air stockade. The prisoners had very little food and only such shelter as they could create for themselves, including hovels dug into the ground. Many died from disease, starvation, exposure or wounds suffered prior to their capture.

In late February 1865, the prison stockade was abandoned and the prisoners relocated to camps in North Carolina as a result of approaching Union forces. Over the course of nearly six months, 12,000 Union prisoners were held in the stockade, 2,802 of whom died.



Counting Off the Camp. This image depicts the counting of prisoners by the Confederate guards. When a full count was taken, all of the prisoners were placed on one side of Pye Branch and counted as they crossed back over the bridge.

From the collections of the Lackawanna Historical Society, Scranton, Pennsylvania



View of the trenches and rostrum at Florence National Cemetery

Cemetery and Trench Graves

The Florence Stockade casualties were buried in 16 trenches located approximately a quarter mile north of here. The bodies were buried without benefit of coffins and were simply marked with wooden stakes. Confederate officials also used another small piece of land nearby for burials.

After the war, the Office of the Quartermaster General located the graves of Union soldiers and established national cemeteries throughout the country. Florence National Cemetery was established in 1865 around the trench burials. Bodies from the other burial ground and from Darlington, Chesterfield, and Marion counties were reinterred in two new sections. Though the names of Union dead buried in the trenches were recorded, it was not possible to match names with graves. The wooden stakes that marked the burial locations were later replaced with 6 x 6 inch marble blocks. Today, the trenches are designated with upright markers inscribed with the number of individuals buried in each row.

Archaeological Investigation

As part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' expansion of Florence National Cemetery, archaeological investigations of a 10-acre parcel were conducted in 2005 and 2006.

These excavations resulted in the identification of a camp used by the Confederate guards north of the stockade, composed of a series of dugout shelters and tent stands. The dugouts consisted of a square area excavated 3 feet to 4 feet below ground, with log walls above ground and a roof covered by pine branches or "shelter halves" (canvas sheets used to form an A-frame tent). A fireplace and chimney were located at one end of each shelter. These structures, along with supporting features such as privies, latrine trenches and trash pits, were arranged in roughly regular rows called "company streets."



South Carolina "Palmetto" uniform button recovered from the camp.

A total of 5,828 historic artifacts were recovered through the excavations, including military items such as ammunition, bayonets and canteens. Day-to-day items used by the Confederate prison guards were also found, including bottles, dishes, pipes and cooking implements.



Aerial photograph of the 10-acre project area.



SALISBURY NATIONAL CEMETERY

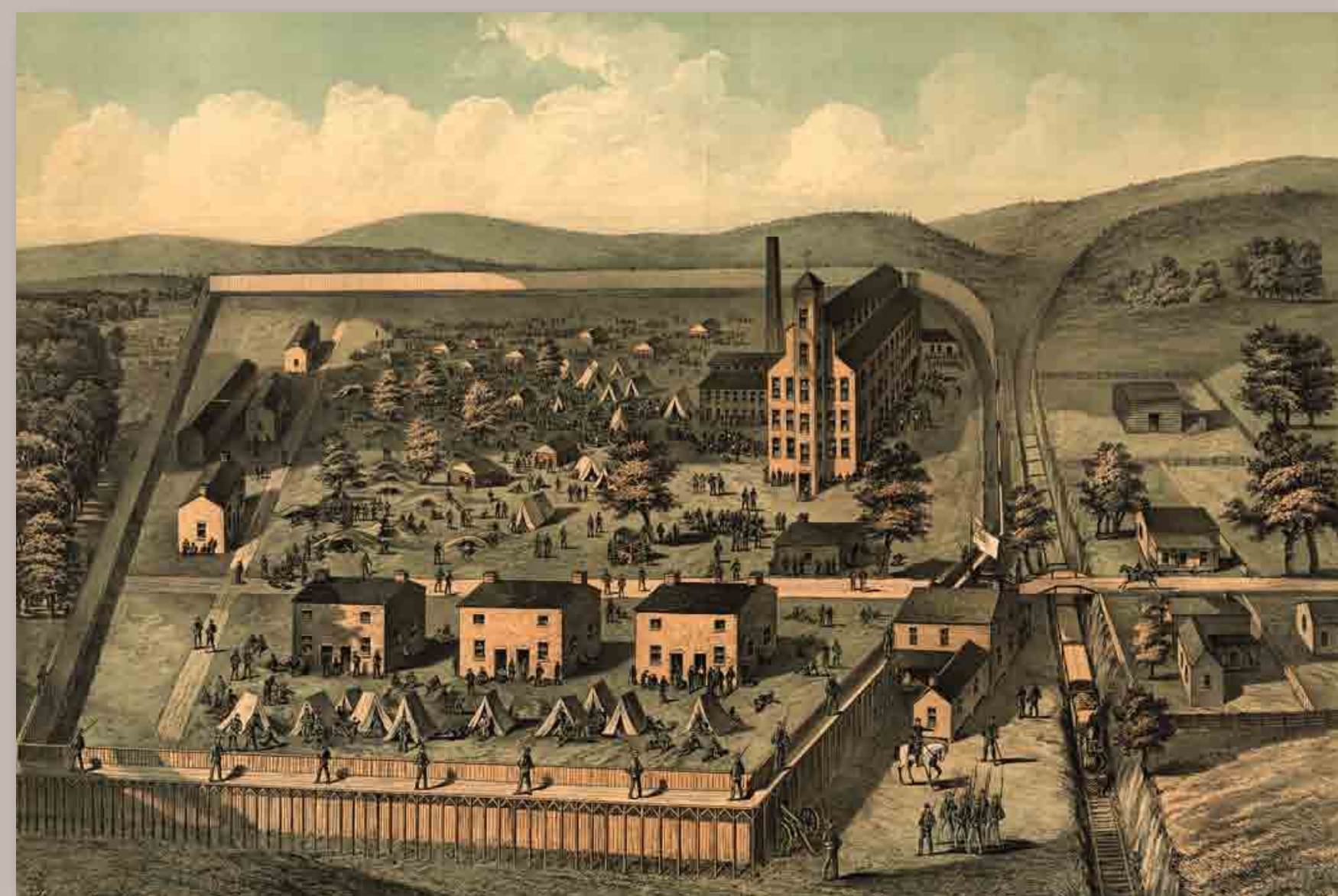
Salisbury Prison and Trench Graves

Salisbury Prison was established by the Confederate government in October 1861 on the site of an old cotton factory. In preparation for the first prisoners, a portion of the grounds was enclosed by a stockade fence. Designed to hold about 2,500 persons, the prison was intended for Confederate soldiers who had committed military offenses and prisoners of state. However, the first Union soldiers arrived in December from Richmond, Virginia, in an effort to reduce the number of prisoners of war (POW) there.

During the early years of the war, prisoners at Salisbury were provided adequate shelter, rations, water and sanitation. But all that changed on 5 October 1864, when 5,000 POWs were transferred to the prison. By the end of the month, more than 10,000 men were incarcerated at Salisbury.

Overwhelmed by a population four times larger than intended, prisoners were quartered in every available space. Those without shelter dug burrows in an attempt to stay warm and dry. Rations and potable water were scarce. Adding to the poor conditions was an unusually cold and wet winter. Disease and starvation began to claim lives, and all buildings within the stockade were converted to hospitals to care for the sick.

Each morning, the dead were gathered from the grounds and placed in the “dead house.” Later, they were removed for burial in trench graves located in a cornfield west of the prison. Though there are no complete burial lists for the prison and no headboards were used to mark the graves, records indicate that approximately 3,700 men died between October 1864 and February 1865. Surviving prisoners were released at the end of February when a POW exchange was carried out. Union forces burned down the prison in April.



“Bird’s Eye View of Confederate Prison Pen at Salisbury, N.C., taken in 1864.”

By C.A. Kraus, 1886,
J.J. Bufford’s Sons Lith.
Library of Congress



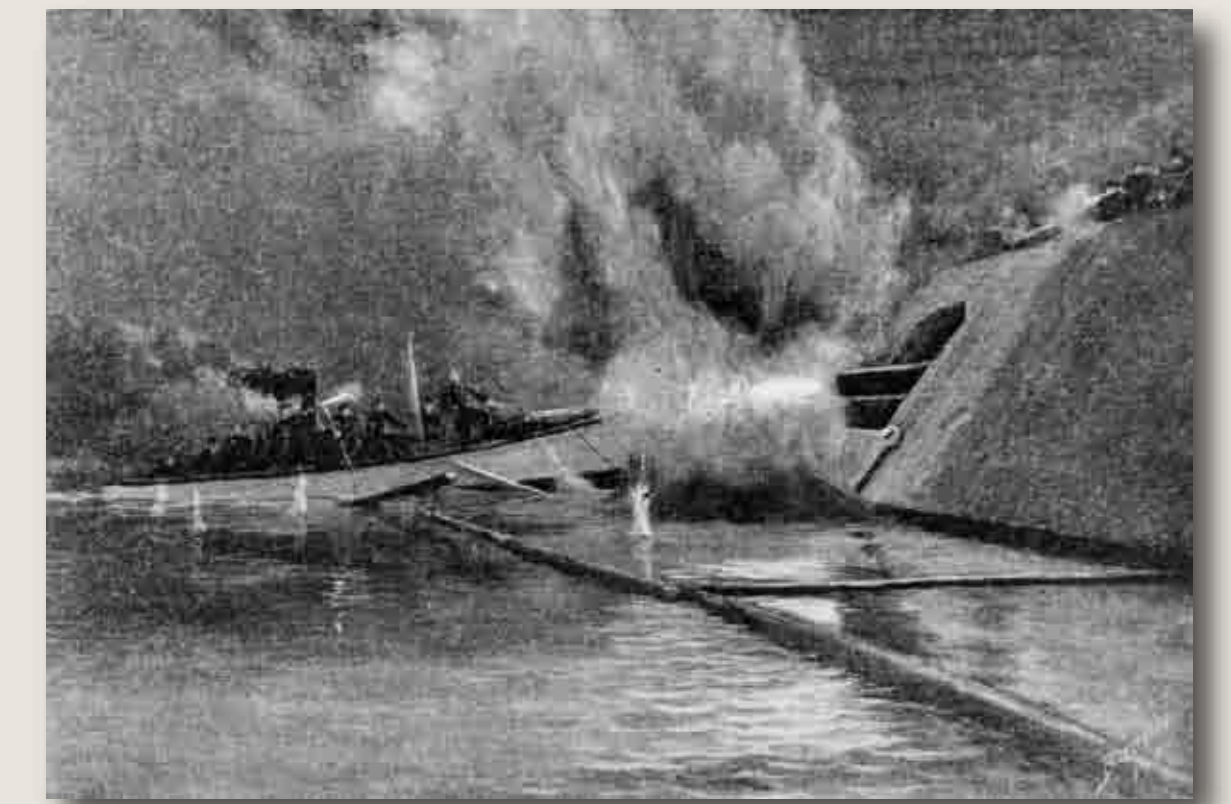
Detail of Unknown Soldiers Monument from postcard, circa 1900.

Unknown Soldiers Monument

After the war, the Office of the Quartermaster General worked to locate the graves of Union soldiers. National cemeteries were established, and bodies were removed from battlefields and other locations to these hallowed grounds. Inspection reports from 1866-69 record 13 to 18 trenches present at Salisbury. Early speculation as to the number of dead ranged from 1,800 to more than 10,000. Because there was not a comprehensive list of the dead, the government decided to erect a monument to commemorate the soldiers who died at the prison and place “Unknown” markers at the ends of the trenches. During this time, the Army began reporting an estimated 11,700 burials based on limited trench excavations. This number was ultimately inscribed on the memorial. However, based on earlier documentation and the death figures from 1864-65 when the prison population peaked, a much lower number is more likely.

Lorenzo Deming, Medal of Honor Recipient

Lorenzo Deming, Landsman, U.S. Navy, served on board *U.S. Picket Boat No. 1* in action, 27 October 1864, against the Confederate ironclad *Albemarle*, which resisted repeated attacks by Union Naval vessels. The picket boat, equipped with a spar torpedo, passed the enemy pickets and made for the *Albemarle*. Under fire, the small boat plunged on, jumped a log boom that encircled the vessel and exploded its torpedo under the port bow. The picket boat was destroyed, and most of the crew of 15 was either taken prisoner or drowned. Deming is recorded as entering Salisbury Prison and dying there in February 1865. He is presumed to be buried in the trench graves. A memorial marker was erected in the Deming plot at Fairview Cemetery in New Britain, Connecticut, in 1991, where there is also a large private memorial commemorating his service.



Attack on the CSS Albemarle.
Originally published in “Deeds of Valor,” Perrien-Keydel Company, Detroit, 1907. Naval History and Heritage Command



Courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command

The Medal of Honor, the highest award for military valor that can be bestowed upon a person in the U.S. Armed Services, was created during the Civil War. In December 1861, President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation authorizing “medals of honor” to be bestowed upon sailors and marines who “shall distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action and other seamanlike qualities during the present war.”

A similar bill authorizing medals for noncommissioned officers and privates in the Army was passed 12 July 1862. For the Civil War, 1,522 Medals of Honor were awarded. The medal pictured is the style awarded to Navy and Marine Corps personnel between 1862 and 1912. Such a medal was bestowed upon Deming’s shipmates after they were released from prison in March 1865, and Deming’s medal was sent to his widow.



Richard Thompson, Public Affairs,
VA Connecticut Healthcare System

