



Rebel Underground

Sons of Confederate Veterans
Major John C. Hutto Camp # 443
Jasper, Alabama

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2017 Alabama honors Southern soldiers on
Confederate Memorial Day

The Major John C. Hutto Camp, Walker Co., of the Sons of Confederate Veterans sponsored a memorial service at the Confederate Monument on the Walker County Courthouse square on April 9.

A wreath was laid in honor of the 1,900 Walker Countians who served in defense of their State in the War For Southern Independence. Photo Special to the Eagle

**Please join the Major John C.
Hutto Camp on Sunday, May 19,
2019, at 2:00 pm for our regular
camp meeting**

**Speaker is Dr. Michal LeVasseur, a
retired alliance liaison for the
National Geographic Society, will
speak on**

“The Sanders’ Civil War Letters.”

During her career as a geographer and a geography and science educator, Dr. LeVasseur maintained faculty positions at the University of South Florida, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Jacksonville State University.

Michal formerly served as the Executive Director of the National Council for Geographic Education before joining the National Geographic Society as Director of National Teacher Institutes in Washington, D. C. and as geography education liaison to several states.

Dr. LeVasseur is the author of several geography books, research articles, chapters in books and atlases and was program author for a middle-school geography book series. Her current Civil War research is focused on the publication of the Sanders’ letters, an article focused on the 11th Alabama and 11th Pennsylvania regiments at the Battle of Frayzer’s Farm, and an article focused on the provisions of artificial limbs for Alabama Civil War veterans.

May 15, 1862
The Battle of Drewry's Bluff



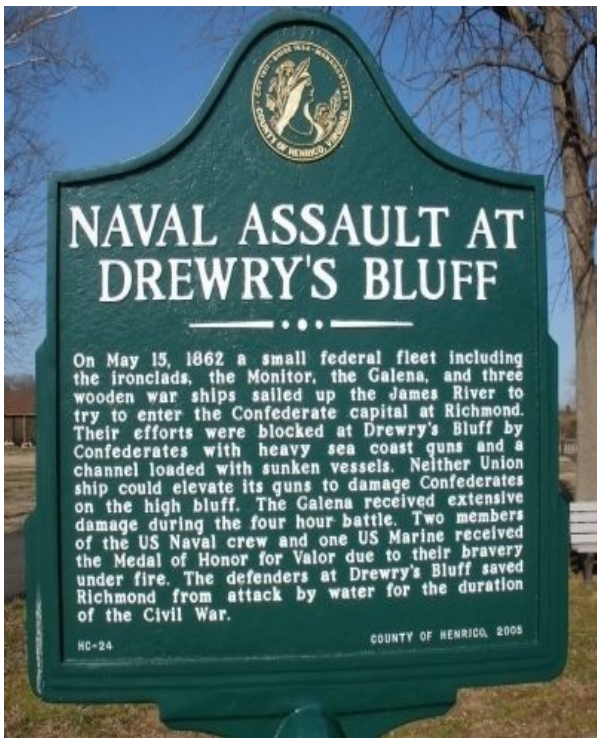
View from within Fort Drewry of the James River taken during the Civil War. Library of Congress

During the Civil War, Drewry's Bluff was known as a "Perfect Gibraltar" along

the James River protecting the city of Richmond. In May of 1862, while the defenses at Drewry's Bluff were still under construction, a Federal fleet including the famous ironclad USS Monitor sailed up the James with plans to shell Richmond into submission. On May 15 that fleet was stopped at Richmond's last line of defense – Drewry's Bluff.

Union forces were stationed aboard warships in the river and Confederate forces were high on a fortified bluff.

A bloody Civil War clash between Union Navy ships and Confederates defending a promontory overlooking Virginia's James River was the only time in history when U.S. Marines tangled directly with Marines.



Richmond was the Confederate capital and vulnerable to attack by the Union

Army on land, and by the Union Navy through the navigable James River. In March 1862, Confederate Captain Augustus H. Drewry ordered the construction of fortifications and the installation of large guns on his property, which was on a 90-foot bluff above the James River, and just seven miles from Richmond.

Of course, it was only a matter of time until such a clash would unfold. Once the states of the deep and upper South left the Union during the secession crisis of 1860-61, like the other military services, the U.S. Marine Corps suffered its share of defections.

In sheer numbers, however, the resignations were few compared to the Army and Navy, if for no other reason than the Corps itself was the smallest

branch of the U.S. military. Its prewar strength was around 1,800 men, a little more than 10 percent the size of the Army and 20 percent of the Navy.

Confederate Marine Corps



Example of Confederate Marine Corps uniform (Confederate Marine Lt Frances

H. Cameron in 1864)

Despite its slim numbers, the Corps was hit hard. While few enlisted men quit, this was not the case in terms of officer defections, especially on the junior level. For whatever reason, the states of the upper South were a primary source of Marine officers, and once the states severed bonds with the Union, most of their native sons followed suit. Nearly one-third (20 of 63) of its officers left. Of those, 19 served as the principal architects and leaders of the newly created Confederate States Marine Corps.

The Corps lost some of its most promising and brightest officers, many from Virginia. First Lieutenant Israel Greene was perhaps the best known at the time because he had led the Marines who subdued John Brown and his followers in 1859 at Harpers Ferry. Another son of the Old Dominion, Captain George H. Terrett, had distinguished himself at the battle of Chapultepec in the Mexican

War. And still another Virginian and hero of Chapultepec was First Lieutenant John D. Simms, who, along with First Lieutenant Julius E. Meiere of Maryland, would see action at the Battle of Drewry's Bluff.

Defections notwithstanding, the role Marines played in the Civil War would be the same as it had been since the creation of the Corps in 1798. Unlike 20th- and 21st-century Leathernecks, who would serve (and continue to serve) on extended expeditionary missions or as amphibious strike forces, 19th-century Marines functioned primarily as an arm of the Navy.

Whether it be ashore or afloat, Marines performed a variety of tasks, such as guarding shipyards, enforcing shipboard discipline, serving on deck as sharpshooters, repelling boarders, manning guns on ships, and occasionally joining landing parties for brief operations ashore. In fact, if Union commanders had recognized the tactical

import of this last role, the outcome at Drewry's Bluff might have been different.

Following the repulse of the Union flotilla in May 1862, Drewry's Bluff saw no battle action for two years. Captain Sydney Smith Lee (General Robert E. Lee's brother) took command of the site and supervised its expansion and strengthening into a permanent fort.

While some workers constructed an outer line of entrenchments to protect the land approach to Richmond, others built improvements for the fort, including a chapel, barracks, and quarters for the officers.

During this time, Drewry's Bluff became an important training ground for the Confederate Naval Academy and the Confederate Marine Corps Camp of Instruction.

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