



Supporters of the Fort Caswell Rifle Range show off a painting sold to raise money for the restoration effort.

Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range

Group works to preserve, restore site

By Lee Hinnant
Staff Writer

The Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range are seeking assistance from the public to help make—and remember—history from the Great War.

The non-profit group is working to preserve and restore the rifle training range at Caswell Beach, a rare relic from 1918 that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Members are asking the public to send in copies of photographs of men and women who served in World War I. They can be family members or friends and do not necessarily have to be from North Carolina, although anyone with a Brunswick County connection is certainly welcomed.

“There are many people here whose grandparents served in the war,” said Joyce Crabtree. “There are probably enough pictures from Brunswick County to fill up the wall.”

The friends group is making a Wall of Honor that it will display at special occasions, such as the upcoming Kentucky Derby fundraiser set for the Caswell Dunes clubhouse on May 7.

Eventually, the group may use some of the materials for a permanent display at the rifle pit just a few yards away off what’s now Oak Island Golf Course. They hope to finish the wall in time for the centennial of the Great War in 2018.

“We’re trying to bring in a more



Photos by Lee Hinnant

Norma Eckard looks over some of the contributions already made toward the Wall of Honor or noting the Great War. The public is invited to contribute photographs and other documents showing those who served.

human element,” said Norma Eckard, who has worked for years with husband Ron to save the rifle range.

“When we first got here years ago, the rifle range was just sitting there ready to fall in,” said Norman Sprinthall, whose father served in the 103rd Field Artillery, 26th Division, in France, and is depicted on the wall. Several other Caswell Beach resi-

dents have contributed copies of photographs, along with information about their loved ones’ units and history.

Next up for the rifle pit itself are engineering studies of the structure, soil around it and the trees threatening the walls. The pit has been cleaned and fitted with temporary braces, but preservationists are working on a more permanent solution that maintains

the original architecture.

Contributions to the Wall of Honor may be mailed to Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range, 5 Foxfire Trace, Caswell Beach, NC 28465. Questions may be directed to Norma or Ron Eckard at normaron@mindspring.com.