



Daughters of the American Revolution Regent Diane Kuebert honors the 100th anniversary of U.S. involvement in World War I at a ceremony Saturday.



Norma Eckard of Friends of the Fort Caswell Rifle Range addresses the crowd Saturday at the range site at Caswell Dunes. Re-enactor Carl Mauney showed the group his gear and spoke of life in the trenches 100 years ago.

Photos by Lee Hinnant

## Tribute held at Fort Caswell Rifle Range at Caswell Beach

# Ceremony honors 100th anniversary of World War I

By Lee Hinnant  
Staff Writer

Preservationists and history buffs honored the memory of American troops who entered the Great War a century ago at a ceremony Saturday at the Fort Caswell Rifle Range at Caswell Beach.

The simple, somber event gave tribute to the men and women who served to help liberate Europe from the grip of the Germans during World War I. Many of the men who served in the trenches learned long-range marksmanship at the rifle pit, now a part of the Caswell Dunes subdivision.

Efforts to restore the 100-year-old rifle range are continuing, and a contractor started the next phase of work Monday.

Members of the Brunswick Town Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution and Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range offered remarks and placed a wreath at the rifle pit, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic re-enactor Carl Mauney talked about a soldier's life during the war, and attendees gave tributes to friends and relatives who served.

Six National Guard units trained at Fort Caswell before taking ships to Europe to fight in the trenches, said Norma Eckard, chairman of the Friends group.

"It is important to acknowledge that our grandfathers and their fathers were here or on other military posts preparing for service that caused many of them to lose their lives on the field of battle in

France and other battlefields of Europe," Eckard said.

"At that time, our military lacked a strong Army, Navy and modern weapons. Yet our ancestors rose to the occasion and represented us well in that historic struggle in France, protecting the freedom of our allies. This struggle was the beginning of the United States' ascension as a world leader, and we have managed to maintain that position for 100 years since."

Eckard challenged the audience to help save the rifle pit and honor those who helped save Europe from despots.

"Very few of these rifle range structures remain today; some say none have survived as well as this one, anywhere," she said. "We have been challenged by fate and the passage of time with the responsibility of remembering the Great War. This structure helps us remember our ancestors who gave their lives in that struggle where 10-million died and 20-million were wounded."

"Let us not fail to rise to the challenge as our ancestors did many, many years ago. Saving this structure, remembering the men that perished is significant," Eckard continued.

"Historic preservation is important to help future generations recognize and understand that freedom is not free, it comes with a cost. If this piece of history is not preserved we will never get it back, and that will be unfortunate."

To learn more about the rifle range, visit [www.caswellriflerange.com](http://www.caswellriflerange.com).



Engineer Paul Shivers leads visitors around the Fort Caswell rifle range.