

Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range Great War commemoration Friday

By Lee Hinnant
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Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range will hold their second Great War commemoration ceremony Friday, April 6, at 10:30 a.m. at the historic site at Caswell Dunes. The public is invited to attend and tour the site at the conclusion of the ceremony.

The rifle pit is one of the few remaining World War I sites and was the place where Fort Caswell soldiers learned long-range marksmanship before being shipped overseas to fight. Once overgrown, neglected and in danger of collapse, the rifle pit has been cleaned, mostly stabilized and has benefitted from a seven-year preservation effort by a non-profit group.

Preservationists intend to fully stabilize the rifle range and, when funds are available, erect a separate monument to veterans.

On Friday, several volunteers will read aloud

the names of all 242 known Brunswick County veterans of the Great War. Members of the Daughters of the American Revolution and historic re-enactor Carl Mauney will participate, as will members of the Brunswick County Historical Society, Southport Historical Society and Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range.

Friday's event marks the 101st anniversary of the entry of the United States in the war. The event will include a wreath-laying, a discussion about the importance of the rifle pit, a prayer and a tour of the rifle pit site.

The Friends group has been profiling Brunswick County veterans on its website since last year and raising money for a permanent war memorial. The profiles and fundraising progress may be viewed at www.caswellriflerange.com.

The next fundraiser will be the Derby Day dinner, set for Saturday, May 5, from 2:30 to 7 p.m. at Caswell Dunes clubhouse. There will be tabletop horse races, a catered meal and contests for the best-dressed couple and best ladies hat. Details are also on the website.

Another significant upcoming date is November 11. On the 11th hour, of the 11th day of the 11th month, the Great War officially ended. Armistice Day is now known as Veterans Day.



The Memorial Stone is planned to be placed beside the historic 1918 World War I Fort Caswell Rifle Range on November 11, 2018, or as funds become available.