

Rifle range supporters post soldiers' profile

The Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range recently completed posting 72 profiles on its website (www.caswellriflerange.com) for Brunswick County veterans who served in World War I, a project that began in November 2017.

The stories focus on the men who were killed, wounded, died of wounds or died of disease. Seven-hundred, twenty-four men and one woman nurse from Brunswick County were identified as serving their country during the Great War.

The Friends recently began the posting of profiles for 14 nurses identified as serving at Fort Caswell during WWI.

The WWI profiles were part of the Honor a Brunswick County WWI Veteran fundraising project completed in November 2018, the Centennial of Armistice Day (known as Veterans Day), signaling the end of fighting in Europe. The signing the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919 was the official end of the most-deadly conflict to date at that time.

The rifle range, which was chosen as an official United States WWI Centennial Memorial by the National WWI Centennial Commission in early 2018, is the site of the newly installed monument honoring the WWI veterans from Brunswick County. The names of men who gave

their lives during WWI are engraved on the monument.



John (Johan) Daniel Eriksen, an immigrant from Norway and resident of Southport who served in WWI with the 56th Engineers. Eriksen served as mayor of Southport after the war. His great-niece Trudy Young shared photos and letters he wrote to his wife Esther Doshier while serving in WWI.

The original mission of the nonprofit remains the historical preservation of the rifle range; any new donations or fundraising will support that mission. The range is where soldiers stationed at Fort Caswell trained before going to fight overseas, and one of the few remaining physical reminders of that century-old battle. It's located next to what is now Oak Island Golf Course at Caswell Dunes.

The Friends group is planning to publish a book with the profiles and history of the rifle range, but that task is on hold as volunteers determine the date of death and grave locations of the 725 veterans from Brunswick County.

Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact the Friends through the website.

Mark your calendars

Future events include an Oktoberfest, set for Saturday, October 12, at noon at the Caswell Beach Public Services Building. The event will include live music, a polka dance contest, German food and drink.

The Veterans Day Roll Call for Brunswick County will be Monday, November 11, at 11 a.m. at the rifle range.

The public is invited to both events.

—Lee Hinnant